



"We are at a critical moment. It's not yet there. So what we have just done is a pause."

Qatari PM Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani on Gaza truce

The Daily Star

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

SECOND EDITION



DHAKA SUNDAY DECEMBER 7, 2025

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 315

AGRAHAYAN 22, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

JAMADIUS SANI 15, 1447 HJRI

16 PAGES: Tk 15.00

Seat-sharing snub riles BNP allies

Party fields 272 candidates; no seats allotted to partners yet

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Discontent runs deep among BNP's partners as the party has announced 272 candidates, leaving allies in the dark about how many seats might be left for them.

With only days to go before the election schedule is likely to be unveiled, BNP has yet to hold any formal talks with them on seat-sharing.

Party insiders suggest it may ultimately keep around 15 of the 28 remaining vacant seats for its partners, far fewer than they had hoped for.

The fate of the remaining 13 seats is still undecided: no aspirants were announced for six due to fears of internal conflicts; three remain vacant as the party has yet to find strong, reliable candidates; and four are empty due to unresolved constituency boundary-related issues.

Senior BNP leaders said the party does not want to risk losing seats by nominating partners, mainly due to the recent amendment to the Representation of the People Order 1972. The amendment has made it mandatory for candidates in an alliance to use their own electoral symbol

"Whether these [vacant] seats will be given to the allies will be decided and announced later. I still don't know who is expressing anger over the seat-sharing issue."



BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain

instead of the coalition leader's symbol.

Nearly two dozen leaders from like-minded parties that joined the simultaneous movement with BNP have expressed resentment, saying the party has sidelined them and broken its word.

On behalf of the 12-Party Alliance, its coordinator Syed Ehsanul Huda, in a press release yesterday, said that allied leaders were "surprised and upset."

BNP nominated its own candidate in the Kishoreganj-5 seat, which Huda had been campaigning for.

Saiful Haque, general secretary of the Biplobi Workers Party and coordinator of Ganatantra Mancha, said, "Is BNP now walking on the Awami League's old path? Awami League used to do this, leaving some seats and not giving any to others. Now a distance has been created [between the allies and BNP]."

Saiful, who is the Mancha's candidate for Dhaka-8, said BNP had announced its own candidate there in the first round of declarations. "In

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Illegal brick kilns have invaded Ghumai Beel in Chattogram, Bangladesh's second-largest wetland and one of the key granaries in the district. Fertile topsoil from paddy fields is being stripped for brick-making, while industrial waste dumped into the beel is eroding the land's productivity. Although the law prohibits kilns near farmland and water bodies, the practice persists.

Those who pressed for election now want to delay it

Islamist party leaders tell Sylhet rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Leaders of Islamist parties said yesterday that those who were once adamant in their demand for the national election are now conspiring to delay it.

"Those who were all about the election have now started speaking

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'Khaleda not fit to fly at this moment'

Decision after 48hr observation ends tonight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia remains under close observation at Evercare Hospital, and her travel to London for advanced treatment will be delayed until doctors declare her fit to fly by air ambulance.

BNP first scheduled Khaleda's flight for Friday, then rescheduled it to today, but both attempts fell through as her health



slightly worsened, and the air ambulance had not arrived.

Khaleda's medical board met at the hospital last night to review her test reports. Dr Zubaida Rahman, wife of BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and a member of the board, attended the meeting.

The medical board said Khaleda's travel will be delayed as she is not

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Hasina's stay in India is her call

Says Jaishankar



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's stay in India is her personal decision, influenced by the circumstances that led her to the country, said Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

He made the comment during an interview at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit yesterday.

Asked if Hasina was welcome to stay in India for as long as she wants, Jaishankar said she went to India under certain circumstances, which were clearly a factor in what happens to her.

"But again, that is something in which she has to make up her mind."

Hasina fled to India in August last year following the mass uprising that led to the end of her 15-year rule.

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal gave her death sentence in absentia for "crimes against humanity"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

INDICATOR	NAT'L AVERAGE	POOREST HOUSEHOLDS	RICHEST HOUSEHOLDS
Child mortality (under 5)	33 per 1,000	39 per 1,000	22 per 1,000
Stunting	24%	32%	16%
Wasting	13%	15%	10%
C-section	52%	34%	68%
Total Fertility Rate	2.4%	2.8%	2.2%

The development Bangladesh has seen in recent decades has not been inclusive, leaving poorer segments of society behind.

Shafiqun Nahin Shimul, a professor at the Institute of Health Economics at Dhaka University

Child deaths higher among the poor, little care for mothers

Nationwide survey shows how inequality is deepening health disparities among households

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Inequality is delivering a dual blow to Bangladesh's poorest families: children are nearly twice as likely to die before age five, while their mothers are three times less likely to receive adequate healthcare compared to the wealthy.

These disparities are laid bare in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2025, which surveyed 63,000 households. The findings reveal that economic and educational gaps are actively driving life-and-death outcomes for the country's most vulnerable.

According to the data, under-five mortality stands at 39 per 1,000 live births among the poorest population, compared to just 22 per 1,000 in the richest group.

The child mortality rate climbs to 48 per 1,000 live births among mothers with no education or only pre-primary schooling, dropping to 22 per 1,000 among those with higher education.

The survival of the child is inextricably linked to the care of the mother. The survey, conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

(BBS) with UNICEF support, highlights a massive gap in antenatal care (ANC).

While 99 percent of pregnant women in wealthy households received ANC at least once, the rate

The disparity is also evident in education, as only 21 percent of children from poor families complete upper secondary schooling, compared to 66 percent in well-off households. The picture is almost the same for primary education.

drops to 84 percent among the poorest women. The gap widens for quality care: 68 percent of women in the richest group received the recommended four or more visits, compared to only 23 percent in the poorest group.

"It is alarming that women and

children from the less educated and poorer groups lag behind in almost all indicators," said Shafiqun Nahin Shimul, a professor at the Institute of Health Economics at Dhaka University. "But the trend is not unusual."

Explaining the reasons, he said the development Bangladesh has seen in recent decades has not been inclusive, leaving poorer segments of society behind.

The government's contribution to health and nutrition services remains small, forcing people to rely heavily on private healthcare. Poorer communities have limited access to private healthcare, he added.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the economy still faces multiple challenges, including high inflation and soaring food prices – which have hit low-income households the hardest, particularly in terms of nutrition, he said.

"All these factors likely contributed to the disparities," he told The Daily Star on November 26.

Apart from efforts to improve the macroeconomy, the government

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

HSBC Export Excellence Awards 2025

Accelerate your international success

Tonight (7 December)

Exporters are a key driving force behind Bangladesh's continued economic progress. HSBC Export Excellence Awards returns to honour Bangladesh's outstanding exporters who have opened up a world of opportunities beyond borders and elevated the nation's presence on the global stage. Tonight, we are commemorating the winning enterprises across four key categories. In the presence of:

Chief Guest	Special Guest	Guest of Honour
H.E. Sk. Bashir Uddin Honourable Adviser Ministry of Commerce Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	H.E. Sarah Cooke British High Commissioner to Bangladesh	Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur Honourable Governor, Bangladesh Bank

Stay tuned for the result announcement.

Scan to know more about the award

In association with:

Ministry of Commerce | British High Commission Dhaka

HSBC | Opening up a world of opportunity

Issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited in Bangladesh

Bangladeshi expat shot dead in South Africa

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

Criminals in South Africa's Limpopo town shot dead a Bangladeshi expatriate on Friday.



Aminul Islam

The victim is Aminul Islam Siddique, 45, of Gorail village in Bhatgram union of Mirzapur upazila, said his family.

According to family sources, Aminul migrated to South Africa about 15 years ago in search of better livelihood.

He used to run a departmental store called, "Akash Supershop", in Limpopo town, bordering Zimbabwe. On Friday night, some local criminals entered his shop and shot him in the head six times from a close range and fled. He died on the spot, said his family members.

Aminul leaves behind a son and two daughters.

Milton Siddique, his cousin, said Aminul's body will be brought to Bangladesh within a week after necessary formalities are completed.

Contacted, Rashidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Mirzapur Police Station, told The Daily Star that police received no such information till now.



Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman addresses a joint rally organised by Jamaat and seven like-minded parties in Sylhet city's Alia Madrasa ground in the Chowhatta area yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Don't use religion card in election campaign

Urge Hindu community leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The experiences of religious minorities regarding elections have been extremely painful, worrying and alarming, said the Bangladesh Puja Ujjapon Parishad and the Mahanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee.

"In past elections, religion has always been used in campaigns – communal hatred and incitement have triggered bloody chapters," said Joyonto Kumar Deb, president of the Mahanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee, at a discussion titled "13th National Parliamentary Election and Our Expectations".

After elections, the defeated party carries out attacks – but the victorious party has also been seen doing the same.

"The primary victims of election-related violence are religious and ethnic minorities," he added.

In his written statement, he presented a nine-point list of demands.

Notable among them is: banning the use of religion in all elections; ensuring adequate minority representation in national and local elections; deploying the army and specialised forces for at least one month before and after elections to protect minorities; and taking strict action to stop attacks, looting and extortion against religious and ethnic minority communities.

"Those who drafted the Constitution of 1972 were not elected by the people of Bangladesh – they were elected to draft Pakistan's constitution,"

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Hasina's stay in India is her call

FROM PAGE 1

committed during the mass uprising.

Bangladesh government wrote to India seeking the extradition of Hasina, once in December last year and then after the verdict last month.

India said it would consider the request.

On the relationship between Bangladesh and India that remains strained since the ouster of Awami League government, Jaishankar emphasized on India's stance on the need for a credible democratic process in Bangladesh.

Referring to past political issues in Bangladesh, Jaishankar said, "What we heard was that people in Bangladesh, particularly those who are now in power, had an issue with how the elections were conducted earlier. Now, if the issue was the election, the first order of business would be to do a fair election."

"As far as we are concerned, we wish Bangladesh well. We think as a democratic country, any democratic country likes to see the will of the people ascertain through a democratic process," he said.

He expressed optimism for the future of the bilateral ties, stressing India's democratic preference for its neighbour.

"And I am quite confident that whatever comes out of the democratic process would have a balanced and mature view about the relationship and hopefully things would improve."

India is a well-wisher for Bangladesh, Jaishankar said.

Those who pressed for election now want to delay it

FROM PAGE 1

in a different tune. This is not a good sign. They've realised that the people are prepared to show them the red card in the upcoming polls," Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman said yesterday.

He made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest at a joint rally organised by Jamaat and seven like-minded parties in Sylhet city's Alia Madrasa field in the Chowhatta area in the afternoon.

Shafiqur said, "People had shed blood hoping that politicians might learn a lesson for their misdeeds and start afresh. However, a certain group is still following the old ways."

"They were not willing to accept reforms, were not interested in implementing the July charter, but later, forced the government to hold the referendum on the same day as elections."

The Jamaat ameer said, "Some face backlash for extortion, while others enforce it with more power."

Islami Shashantantra Andolan Ameer Charmonai Pir Syed Fazlul Karim said, "A party's stance against reforms is visible. They went crazy for the elections... Now they are trying to delay the elections."

Khelafat Majlis Ameer Mamunul Haque said, "The Islamist leaders of the country shed blood, were executed, but did not bow to misdeeds. A group of Bangladeshis, backed by Western powers, is trying to impose new fascism on us after we overthrew a fascist party. We will not accept any neo-fascists in the country."

Among others, Nizam-e-Islam Ameer Sarwar Kamal Azizi, Khelafat Andolan Ameer Habibullah Miaji, Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (Jagpa) Vice-President Rashed Pradhan, and Bangladesh Development Party President Anwarul Islam Chan also spoke at the rally.

Seat-sharing snub riles BNP allies

FROM PAGE 1

the second round too, BNP has fielded candidates for seats that should have been set aside for the allies," he said, adding that a place of distrust, doubt and uncertainty had now emerged.

In Jhalakathi-1, BNP leader Rafiqul Islam Jamal was nominated, though Bangladesh Labour Party Chairman Mostafizur Rahman Iran has been campaigning there.

In response, Iran announced that the Labour Party would cut its ties with BNP, saying, "BNP is going back on its words and dreaming of returning to power alone by excluding its partners."

Fariduzzaman Farhad, coordinator of the Jatiyatabadi Samamona Jote, had been campaigning for the Narail-2 seat, where BNP has fielded its own candidate.

"This is the character of BNP. When they're in trouble, they need everyone. And when they think they'll come to power, they forget their allies," said Farhad, who contested with BNP's symbol in the 2018 polls.

BNP insiders said Pirojpur-1 might be kept for the 12-party alliance, where Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar) Chairman Mustafa Jamal Haider is an aspirant.

BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain said, "Discussions are underway with partners regarding the seats that have been left vacant. Whether these seats will be given to the allies will be decided and announced later. I still don't know who is expressing anger over the seat-sharing issue."

Earlier on November 3, BNP released a preliminary list of candidates for 237 constituencies. A day later, the ticket for Madaripur-1 was suspended. Then on December 4, it announced candidates for 36 constituencies.

In total, the party has now

announced candidates for 272 constituencies. The remaining 28 constituencies will be announced "in due course," said party secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

15 SEATS OPEN

BNP has yet to finalise its picks in 28 constituencies, and senior leaders say at least 15 of them are being kept aside for alliance partners.

Nilphamari-1 is among the vacant ones, where BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's nephew Shahrin Islam Tuhin and Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Secretary General Monzurul Islam Afendi are both seeking nominations.

Party sources said the final decision will be made after discussions with allies.

In Bogura-2, Nagorik Oikya Chairman Mahmudur Rahman Manna will run as an alliance candidate. Similarly, BNP withheld nominating its own candidate in Patuakhali-3, where Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur intends to contest.

BNP also kept Jhenaidah-2 and -4 vacant.

In Jhenaidah-2, both Gono Odhikar Parishad General Secretary Rashed Khan and the district BNP president are lobbying for the nomination. Party sources said the BNP nominee may eventually be moved to Jhenaidah-4.

Dhaka-13 has been kept for Nationalist Democratic Movement Chairman Bobby Hajjaj, while Dhaka-17 remains open for Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andaleev Rahman Partho.

No candidates were announced for Bagerhat-1, -2 and -3, and Gazipur-1, due to pending constituency boundary-related legal issues at the appellate division.

Other constituencies being considered for allies

include Narayanganj-4, Sylhet-5, Lakshimpur-1 and -4, Chattoagram-14, Brahmanbaria-2 and Mymensingh-10.

Two strong contenders for Brahmanbaria-2 are BNP leader Rumeen Farhana and Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam leader Junayed Al Habib.

In Brahmanbaria-6, Ganosahati Andolan nominated its Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki, while the Liberal Democratic Party named its Secretary General Redwan Ahmed for Cumilla-7.

13 SEATS UNDECIDED

BNP withheld nominations in at least six seats due to fears that selecting one candidate could spark clashes among rival factions.

The strongest rivalries were reported in Lalmonirhat-2, Jhenaidah-1, Jhenaidah-4, Narsingdi-3 and Chattogram-11.

The party also held back nominations in Nilphamari-2, Pabna-1 and Mymensingh-10 due to a shortage of strong contenders.

BNP FIELDS CANDIDATES IN NCP ASPIRANTS' SEATS

Many insiders said that though there is discussion of forming an alliance with the National Citizen Party, BNP has already fielded candidates in seats where NCP has also announced aspirants.

BNP named MA Kaiyum for Dhaka-11, while NCP Convener Nahid Islam is campaigning for the same seat.

It also announced Emdadul Haque Bharasha for Rangpur-4, while NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen may run there.

The party announced the aspirants for Dhaka-9, Dhaka-18, Dhaka-14 and Cumilla-4, from where NCP leaders Tasnim Jara, Nasiruddin Patwari and Ariful Islam Adeb are expected to run respectively.

'Khaleda not fit to fly at this moment'

FROM PAGE 1

physically fit for a long flight. Khaleda's 48-hour observation period will end tonight, after which doctors will decide the next course of action.

Khaleda's personal physician, AZM Zahid Hossain, said, "Her travel abroad is being delayed, and her health condition will determine when she can go for advanced treatment."

Briefing reporters outside the hospital yesterday afternoon, Zahid said an air ambulance is on standby for the BNP chief.

"But even though it is ready, the highest priority is proper medical care, safety, and security for Begum Khaleda Zia."

Stating that her condition must be suitable for the long flight, he said, "We must remember that the flight will take 12 to 14 hours, and the human body undergoes changes at high altitude. It is not always possible for a seriously ill patient to cope with that."

Meanwhile, Zubaeda spent nearly nine hours at the hospital yesterday, visited Khaleda, and later left for her Dhanmondi residence. She arrived in Dhaka on Friday.

Syeda Sharmila Rahman, wife of Khaleda's late son Arafat Rahman Koko, and BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir also visited the hospital yesterday.

Fakhrul on Friday said Khaleda's scheduled flights to London on Friday and today were postponed because of technical issues with the air

ambulance and the medical board's recommendation that she not travel.

The 80-year-old former prime minister was admitted to Evercare on November 23 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.

The BNP chief has long been battling multiple health complications, including liver cirrhosis. She has a pacemaker and has previously undergone stent procedures in her heart.

Meanwhile, at different parts of the country, special prayers were offered for her recovery.

'PAY NO HEED TO RUMOURS'
Talking to the reporters at the briefing, Zahid once again urged people not to pay attention to rumours circulating on social media about Khaleda's condition.

"Many rumours are being spread online. I sincerely request everyone, as a mark of your respect and affection for the leader of the country, not to spread misinformation or confuse the public."

Zahid asked people to pray for her recovery. "Pray to Allah. Even in more critical situations than this, she recovered through your prayers and Allah's mercy."

'WE SINCERELY APOLOGISE'

Zahid, also a BNP Standing Committee member, expressed regret over the inconvenience caused to other patients during Khaleda's

treatment.

"Many patients admitted to the hospital, along with their relatives, may be facing various difficulties because of our presence. For this, we sincerely apologise."

"We seek your understanding and cooperation, as it will be difficult to continue her treatment effectively without your support."

Meanwhile, BNP leaders and activists continued to gather outside Evercare Hospital yesterday to enquire about Khaleda's health, despite repeated instructions from the party not to crowd the hospital premises.

Members of the SSF, police, and BGB were stationed inside the hospital. The road in front of the hospital's main gate has been cordoned off to keep out the crowd of visitors.

AIR AMBULANCE

The air ambulance, arranged by Qatar, to transfer ailing BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to London is expected to arrive in Dhaka soon.

According to sources at the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), a German aviation company, FAI Aviation Group, sought, through a third party early yesterday, permission to land in Dhaka on December 9 and leave for London on December 10.

The CAAB has forwarded the request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for necessary approval, an official of CAAB said.

Child deaths higher

FROM PAGE 1

must take more initiatives targeting the poorer and less educated sections, he noted.

The survey released on November 16 shows that child stunting is 32 percent among the poorest population, compared to 16 percent in the richest group.

The rate of wasting – an indicator of severe short-term undernutrition – stands at 15 percent in the poorest households against 10 percent in the richest group.

The disparity is also evident in education, as only 21 percent of children from poor families complete upper secondary schooling, compared to 66 percent in well-off households. The picture is almost the same for primary education.

OTHER KEY INDICATORS

One of the major findings of the study is the rise in the total fertility rate (TFR) to 2.4 after decades of decline.

The TFR is 2.8 among the poorest population, compared to 2.2 among the richest group, the study shows.

The rate is 2.7 among women with only primary education, dropping to 2.1 among those with higher education.

Mymensingh has the highest TFR at 2.8. In 2022, the division also recorded the lowest literacy rate – 67.09 percent, according to the Population and Housing Census.

The adolescent birth rate is 120 per 1,000 women among the poorest households, compared to 61 per 1,000 in the richest group.

The rate is 155 per 1,000 among adolescents with lower secondary

education, falling to 20 per 1,000 among women with higher education.

"... it suggests that increased access to education could be a decisive factor in reducing adolescent fertility and thus ensuring the well-being of adolescents," reads the survey's preliminary report.

Poverty and education are key drivers of disparities in terms of child marriage, which has declined slightly but remains widespread, with 47 percent of women married before the age of 18.

The rate is as high as 69 percent among women with no schooling or only pre-primary education, compared to just 13 percent among those in the richest group.

Similarly, 65 percent of women in the poorest households were married before 18, against 42 percent in the richest ones.

2 DIFFERENT INDICATORS

According to the study, 68 percent of women in wealthier households give birth through caesarean section, compared to 34 percent among poorer women.

Similarly, the C-section rate is 75 percent among women with higher education, falling to 20 percent among those with no schooling.

The rate of early initiation of breastfeeding is 38 percent among the poorest women against 24 percent among those in the richest households.

Similarly, the rate is 35 percent among women with primary education, compared to 26 percent among those with higher education.

Country trapped

FROM PAGE 12

towards decarbonisation gradually.

"We should have ensured that the current and upcoming governments wouldn't fall into that particular lobby's traps," he added.

The three-day conference will continue until December 8. Today, around eight technical sessions would be held between 9:30 and 5:00pm.

At the inaugural session, experts have urged urgent revision of the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP) to increase the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix.

Energy transition is a long-term process and the interim government has initiated multiple policies and programmes to expand renewable energy, said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Advisor to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The priority should not just be setting targets but achieving them.

In the past, ambitious targets were set, but renewable electricity generation remained minimal.

Therefore, a realistic and implementable roadmap is crucial, said Rizwana, who inaugurated the event.

Effective energy transition requires the integration of technical knowledge, sound policies and skilled human resources, said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Reducing reliance on foreign consultants and building institutional capacity while ensuring domestic ownership of policy implementation is now an urgent priority, he added.

The government spends about Tk 40,000 crore a year on electricity subsidies, said Shahriar Ahmed Chowdhury, Chairman of the Centre for Renewable Energy Services at United International University.

"Allocating even half of this to renewable energy could transform the

sector, which would save the entire fuel cost in the next 10 years. Current electricity policies are not renewable-friendly, slowing progress."

He urged prioritising the issues in the revised IEPMP in collaboration with domestic experts.

The Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development (BWGED) organised the event in collaboration with 16 partner organisations.

BWGED coordinator Kazi Maruful Islam chaired the session while Manusher Jonno Foundation's Director (Rights and Governance) Banasree Mitra Neogi, LEAD Bangladesh's research director Md Shimonuzzaman, ActionAid Bangladesh's manager (Just Energy Transition) Abul Kalam Azad also spoke among others.

S Africa hostel shooting leaves 11 dead: police

AFP, Johannesburg

Gunmen stormed a hostel in South Africa's capital Pretoria yesterday, killing 11 people including a three-year-old child at a site police said was illegally selling alcohol.

The attack is the latest in a string of mass shootings that have shocked the crime-weary country of 63 million people, which suffers one of the highest murder rates in the world.

"I can confirm that a total of 25 people were shot," police spokeswoman Athlenda Mathe said, adding that 14 had been taken to hospital.

Ten had died at the scene in Saulsville township, 18 kilometres (11 miles) west of Pretoria, while another died in hospital, she said.

Three gunmen entered what Mathe described as an "illegal shebeen" within the hostel at around 4:30 am (0230 GMT) and indiscriminately fired at a group of men who were drinking.

Pubali Bank PLC steps into a new era of Digital Banking

To unlock a faster, safer and smarter banking experience, please complete your **BIOMETRIC REGISTRATION**

পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
PUBALI BANK PLC

Open your Account from anywhere

PI Banking - a Pubali Bank apps

"ISLAMIC BANKING CORNER" TO PROVIDE ISLAMIC BANKING SERVICES IN ALL BRANCHES AND SUB-BRANCHES OF PUBALI BANK

SM Ali still unmatched in Bangladesh journalism

Speakers tell *Star* Itihas Adda marking his 97th birth anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has yet to see another journalist who matches SM Ali, the founding editor of *The Daily Star*, in regional stature or in the depth of his writing on politics, economics and culture, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They said Ali envisioned a progressive, democratic and humane Bangladesh, and fulfilling that vision would be the most meaningful tribute to him.

The remarks came at the sixth edition of *The Daily Star Itihas Adda*, titled "SM Ali's Journalism and Worldview," organised at *The Daily Star Centre* to mark his 97th birth anniversary.

Nurul Kabir, editor of *New Age* and president of the Editors' Council, said SM Ali's hard work defined him as much as his talent. "He was an exceptionally hardworking man. Talent alone does not produce results unless it is

matched by effort," he said.

He said Ali's readiness to endure financial hardship showed how deeply he was committed to journalism. "If he had chosen any other profession, he would not have accepted this degree of struggle."

Kabir said Ali valued training from the outset, believing professional education worked only when joined with hard work and judgement.

He said Ali's earlier writings revealed "how perceptive he was," combining experience, knowledge and vision to understand events with unusual clarity. "Many would be surprised to see how accurately he could grasp what was coming."

Kabir said SM Ali developed a liberal political consciousness early in life, influenced by thinkers like Bentham and John Stuart Mill, and matured during a period of rising global

SM Ali was a liberal democrat, respectful of others' opinions, and believed in the growth of different ideas in society. He dreamt of a pluralistic society for Bangladesh and for the world.

NURUL KABIR
Editor of *New Age*



From left, Editor of *Charcha* Sohrab Hassan, Editor of *New Age* Nurul Kabir, former ambassador Farooq Sobhan and Joint Editor of *The Daily Star* Aasha Mehreen Amin at the sixth edition of *The Daily Star Itihas Adda* yesterday. The event titled, "SM Ali's Journalism and Worldview," was organised at *The Daily Star Centre* to mark SM Ali's 97th birth anniversary.

PHOTO: STAR

Onion imports resume today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The agriculture ministry has announced that onion imports will resume today in order to stabilise the domestic market.

According to a press release issued yesterday, 50 import permits will be issued daily, with each permit allowing the import of up to 30 tonnes of onions.

Only importers who applied for permits since August 1 will be eligible to reapply, and each importer may submit only one application.

The ministry said the measure will continue until further notice to keep onion prices at a reasonable level.

Yesterday, onions were sold at Tk 150 per kg in Dhaka's retail markets, up Tk 20-30 per kg from last week.

Traders said prices have risen sharply because early-harvest onions have not yet arrived and no new import permits have been issued in recent weeks.

The Department of Agricultural Extension estimates last season's harvest at over 39 lakh tonnes, enough to meet domestic demand. However, it projects that an additional 6-7 lakh tonnes of imports will be needed to offset post-harvest losses.



89% journos fear assault during 2026 polls

Study warns of rising threats, digital harassment, weak safety systems

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An overwhelming 89 percent of journalists anticipate facing physical assault while covering the 2026 national election, according to a new study.

The findings were revealed yesterday in a study titled "High Risks, Low Preparedness: Journalist Safety in 2026 Elections", conducted by Digitally Right under the Media Safety in the Digital Age initiative, in collaboration with the Fojo Media Institute, Sweden, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

Miraj Ahmed Chowdhury, executive director of Digitally Right, presented the findings at a roundtable at *The Daily Star Centre* in Dhaka, attended by editors and senior media managers.

Based on a survey of 201 journalists from 19 districts and 10 in-depth interviews, the research points to a highly polarised and volatile environment ahead. Beyond physical violence, 76 percent expect verbal harassment, while 71 percent fear intimidation.

Risks are significantly higher for women. According to the study, 50 percent of female journalists fear sexual harassment, and 40 percent fear sexual assault during election coverage.

AT A GLANCE

- ▶▶ 76% expect verbal harassment; 71% fear intimidation
- ▶▶ Risks higher for women: 50% fear sexual harassment
- ▶▶ 75% expect disinformation attacks; 65% fear hacking
- ▶▶ Over 90% cite political actors as main source of threats
- ▶▶ Digital safety protocols absent in 77% of newsrooms

The study also warns of intensified digital harassment, with 75 percent of respondents expecting disinformation campaigns targeting them or their newsrooms, and 65 percent fearing hacking attempts.

More than 90 percent identified

political actors as the main source of violence or harassment. Law enforcement agencies and extreme religious groups were also cited as major threats, particularly by women and regional correspondents.

Despite these risks, newsroom preparedness remains low. Respondents said there is often no designated person or system to manage safety threats.

Fewer than one in four journalists reported receiving safety gear or training from their employers. Digital safety protocols are largely absent, with 77 percent reporting no such measures in place.

The survey also found a gender gap in preparedness, with male journalists being nearly three times more likely than women to have a personal safety plan.

Dhaka Tribune Editor Reaz Ahmad criticised the rapid, unregulated expansion of media outlets, saying many unqualified individuals are running television stations and newspapers.

He said most media owners are

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Bangladeshi mariner stranded on drone-hit tanker

Adrift for 5 days, he remains stuck in Bulgarian waters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

Initially rescued from his drone-hit oil tanker, a Bangladeshi mariner has become stranded again on the damaged vessel after joining a salvage team.

Mahfuzul Islam Plabon, 4th engineer of the MT Kairos, along with nine other crewmen, has been stuck on the ship for five days. They are facing food shortages and are unable to contact port authorities or the owning firm. During this time, the crippled vessel has drifted close to the Bulgarian coast.

The MT Kairos was reportedly attacked by Ukrainian drones in the Black Sea on November 28. The damaged tanker was later towed near Istanbul anchorage from deep sea on December 1 by a tugboat hired by the ship's Chinese owner.

However, once the tugboat left, the 10 crewmen remained trapped on board as they were unable to drop anchor due to the engine and power system being out of order. The vessel drifted towards the Bulgarian coast amid rough weather, but local authorities have yet to respond, Plabon told *The Daily Star* yesterday afternoon in a WhatsApp call.

Three other Bangladeshi crewmen, who were rescued earlier along with all 25 crew members by

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Mahfuzul Islam

Tarique Rahman may return home anytime: Khosru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said the party's acting chairman Tarique



Rahman may return to Bangladesh at any time as all preparations for his homecoming have been completed.

"Who is raising questions about Tarique Rahman not returning? I really don't understand. Those who want to talk can keep talking. But we know he will come. He will return home very soon," he told reporters at a hotel in Banani.

He said arrangements, from Tarique's residence to his office, have nearly been completed.

"The work on preparing his office is also almost done. The party has already completed all necessary preparations based on his plans for Bangladesh. So, he can come back to Bangladesh at any time," he added.

He expressed hope that BNP would form the next government with public support and that Tarique Rahman would lead the new cabinet as prime minister.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Street vendors occupy not only the footpath but also a major portion of this road in the capital's Jatrahari, setting up numerous stalls that force pedestrians onto the street and disrupt vehicular movement. The photo was taken yesterday.

Seven of a family burnt in gas blast in Agargaon

4 suffer burns in Narayanganj

STAR REPORT

Eight people, including seven members of a family, suffered burn injuries in an explosion caused by a suspected gas line leakage at a tin shed house in Agargaon early yesterday.

The blast occurred around 4:30am at a government quarter on Paka Market Road. The injured were taken to the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The victims are Md Abdul Jalil Mia, 50; his wife Arneeza Begum, 40; their sons Asif, 19, and Sakib, 16; Asif's wife Monira, 17; their granddaughters Eva, 6, and Isha, 6; and neighbour Firozul Alam, 35.

Dr Harunur Rashid, resident surgeon at DMCH, said Firozul suffered 21 percent burns, Jalil 12 percent, and Arneeza 10 percent. Others received burns on their hands and legs. An injured eight-month pregnant woman was treated and referred to the gynaecology department.

Jalil's son-in-law, Arfan Mia, said Arneeza went to the kitchen to cook early in the morning while others were asleep. As she lit a match, a powerful explosion occurred, triggering a blaze and injuring all eight. Neighbours rushed in to rescue them.

Injured Asif said they had been smelling gas inside the house for the past one and a half

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Man stabbed to death by 'muggers'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A man was stabbed to death allegedly by muggers on the staircase of the Tongi flyover on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Siddiqur Rahman, 55, of Babuganj upazila in Barishal. He had been working as a store officer at an electricity transformer manufacturing factory in Keraniganj.

The incident took place around 8:00am near the Bata Gate area of Tongi, said Md Wahiduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Tongi Police Station.

According to police, Siddiqur was on his way to work when he was intercepted by muggers. They stabbed him several times before fleeing with his valuables.

Police later took him to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Inspector (Investigation) Atikur Rahman of Tongi East Police Station said the body was sent to a morgue for autopsy. "We are working to identify those involved in the incident and will take legal action. The investigation is ongoing," he added.

Siddiqur's younger brother, Idrisur Rahman, demanded justice for the murder.



The convocation of Atish Dipankar University of Science and Technology was held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday. University Grants Commission Chairman Prof SMA Faiz was present as the chief guest. Former state minister for education Dr ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milan was the convocation speaker. UGC member Prof Mohammed Anwar Hossain attended as special guest. The university Chairman M Shamsul Alam Liton and Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Jahangir Alam also spoke.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Rare Himalayan vulture rescued in Kurigram



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A rare Himalayan griffon vulture was rescued from Kurigram's Nageshwari upazila on Friday.

Locals first spotted the bird perched on the branch of a small tree in Sukandighi area of Bhitorbhandh union in the afternoon, sparking curiosity as vultures are hardly seen in the area.

Volunteers from the Green Village Foundation reached the spot and informed the Forest Department. With their assistance, the bird was rescued and taken to the Kurigram Forest Office.

Kurigram Forest Department official Sadikur Rahman said the vulture would be handed over to the Rangpur Forest Division.

"It is a rare species. After necessary medical treatment, it will be released back into its natural habitat," he added.

Delay in bridge work puts locals at risk in Magura



MOHSIN MILON, Benapole

For nearly one lakh residents of Shreepur upazila in Magura, the absence of a bridge over the Kumar river has turned daily life into a test of endurance. People from more than 20 villages still rely on small, fragile boats to cross the river for schooling, healthcare, marketing and trade.

Villagers on the north bank, including Bartala, Goyeshpur, Alfapur, Sabinagar, Joka and Chandikhali, must travel to Hat Shreekol for essential services, while those from Shreekol, Saroingar, Khordorahua, Daribila, Dairpol, Rannagar and Baraipara depend on Langobandh Bazar on the opposite side.

With no bridge in sight, residents say livelihoods, education and safety remain at constant risk.

"During monsoon, the water rises and it becomes extremely risky to cross. Sometimes we can't reach school at all," said student Hasibul Islam of Goyeshpur.

Farmers face similar hardship. "Boats can't carry heavy loads. We have to take long detours via Shreepur or Fajilpur bridges, which increases cost and trouble," said Hossain Ali, a farmer.

Wasmine Biswas, general secretary of the Shreekol Bazar Committee, said, "A bridge would boost business on both sides and ease movement for everyone."

"A bridge is vital for improving communication," said Abu Sayeed Molla, headteacher of Shreekol High School. "LGED officials visited the site on October 15 and gave us hope that approval for a bridge may come soon."

Upazila Engineer Prasenjit Chakraborty said a formal proposal has already been submitted and reviewed by senior officials. Hopefully, the work for a bridge would begin soon.

NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 1334 OF 2025

In The Matter of:
An application under sections -81(2) and 85(3), read with section 396 of the Companies Act 1994.
In The Matter of:
Khandaker Md. Quamrul Ahsan. -And- Petitioner
-VERSUS- Respondents
Blue Reef Shipping Limited and another

Notice is hereby given that the Petitioner above-named filed and moved an application under Section 81(2) and 85(3), read with section 396 of the Companies Act 1994, whereupon the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division, presided over by His Lordship Mr. Justice Ahmed Sobel was pleased to pass an order by admitting the same on 14.08.2025. If any related concern or anybody is interested to oppose the said application, he is entitled to do so by an advocate or in person. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned upon payment of prescribed fees.

Khondaker Nazmul Ahsan
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
LEGUM SOLUTIO
Flat No.H-1(1st Floor), Hashenoor Green Cottage 6/4, Segunbagicha, Dhaka

SIFAYET ULLAH, City

Bangladesh Railway's revenue from container transportation, long regarded as its only reliably profitable operation, has fallen to its lowest level in nine years, raising concern among officials and service users.

According to data from the Railway's Transportation and Commercial Department, the segment earned Tk 77 crore in FY 2024-25. The last time earnings dipped this low was in FY 2015-16, when revenue stood at just over Tk 73 crore.

This marks the fourth consecutive year of decline. Revenue peaked at Tk 135 crore in FY 2021-22 before sliding steadily

to this year's level.

Cargo volume has dropped even more sharply. The railway transported 15.6 lakh tonnes of goods in FY 2021-22, but the figure fell by around half to 7.3 lakh tonnes in the last fiscal year.

Officials attribute the downturn mainly to a shortage of locomotives, which has crippled container services on the Dhaka-Chattogram route, introduced in FY 1986-87 to boost freight earnings.

Four pairs of container trains are scheduled to run daily between Chattogram and Kamalapur ICD in Dhaka, but only two pairs operate on most days, said Nazrul Islam, chief master of the Chattogram Goods

Port Yard.

"We need 13 locomotives, but we regularly receive only five to six. Because of this, we cannot operate the scheduled trains," he said.

During a visit to the yard last week, three fully loaded rakes were seen waiting for departure, stalled due to the lack of engines.

Despite delays, many users continue relying on container trains for two key advantages: cargo security and the convenience of completing customs and clearance procedures at Kamalapur ICD, where all relevant agencies are stationed together.

Mohammad Nabi, who represents a Narayanganj-



We need 13 locomotives, but we regularly receive only five to six. Because of this, we cannot operate the scheduled trains.

NAZRUL ISLAM

Chief master of the Chattogram Goods Port Yard

based garment manufacturer, said delays have worsened significantly.

"We now receive containers 18 to 20 days after they are unloaded from ships. Earlier it never took more than 5 to 7 days," he said.

Tariq Imran, deputy chief operating superintendent of BR (East Zone), said, "We are not getting locomotives on time. As a result, we cannot run trains according to schedule, and revenue automatically drops."

Moreover, 82 of the 140 locomotives assigned to the East Zone are more than 20 years old, exceeding their standard lifespan. The zone requires 118 to 120 engines daily to maintain full operations but can use only 78 to 80, according to railway data.

East Zone General Manager Md Sabuktageen said, "We are trying to repair several locomotives on a fast-track basis. The government is also moving ahead with the purchase of new engines."

Revenue drops to Tk 77cr, lowest in 9 years

Cargo volume falls from 15.6 lakh tonnes to 7.3 lakh tonnes in 3 years

Locomotive shortage leaves loaded rakes stranded

Users report delays of 18 to 20 days, up from 5 to 7 days earlier

Majority of East Zone locomotives over 20 years old

Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 3

the Turkish Coast Guard, are now returning home by flight, he said.

Two oil tankers came under attack by the Ukrainian navy off the coast of Turkey on November 28. Four of the 25 crew members on the MT Kairos were Bangladeshis. The ship was empty at the time and was crossing the Bosphorus en route to the Russian port of Novorossiysk from Egypt's Suez port to load crude oil for China.

All 25 crewmen were taken to Turkey immediately after the attack. Ten later returned to the damaged tanker about 30 nautical miles off the Turkish coast on November 30 for inspection and salvage work.

Plabon said they recovered documents, including passports and certificates, and handed them to the tugboat crew before the ship was towed to Istanbul outer anchorage.

After the vessel drifted near Bulgaria, the stranded mariners contacted the Bulgarian coast guard, but they refused to rescue them. The crew eventually managed to drop anchor in Bulgarian waters.

Most of their food stock was damaged in heavy rain, forcing the 10 crewmen to take shelter in a small cabin of the burnt-out ship. Plabon has contacted leaders of the Bangladesh Merchant Marine Officers Association in Chattogram.

BMMOA General Secretary Md Shakawat Hossain said they have contacted the International Transport Federation in Turkey and Bulgaria to rescue the stranded mariners.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Department of Fire Service & Civil Defence 38-46, Kazi Alauddin Road, Dhaka

Memo No. 58.03.0000.017.07.040.25.13865

Date: 01/12/2025

Invitation for e-Tender Notice No. FS&CD (Foreign Procurement Section): 04/2025-2026

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

SL. No.	e-Tender ID No.	Name of the equipment's & quantity	e-Tender publishing date & time	Last selling date & time	Closing & opening date & time
1	1168764	Fire Rescue Tender Medium- 11 Nos.	07.12.2025 at 09.00am	04.01.2026 at 12.00pm	04.01.2026 at 15.00pm

This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal & no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. For more details please contact help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Note:

- (I) Quantity of equipment may be increased or decreased due to budget reductions and increases without showing any reason.
- (II) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all e-Tenders without showing any reason at any time of the procuring process.
- (III) Tender Notice will also be published in FS&CD website: www.fireservice.gov.bd

GD-2671

Md. Shahid Atahar Hossain
Director (Admin & Finance)



জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

গাজীপুর-১৭০৪

স্মারক নং- ০১(৮৯৬)জাতীয়বিঃপ্রশাঃ/২০১০(অংশ-৪)/১/ ০৭৯২

তারিখ: ১৯ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ
০৪ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যাপক (শ্রেণী-৩) পদে ইংরেজি (১টি), কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স (১টি); সহযোগী অধ্যাপক (শ্রেণী-৪) পদে আইন (১টি), টুরিজম এন্ড হসপিটালিটি ম্যানেজমেন্ট (১টি); সহকারী অধ্যাপক (শ্রেণী-৬) পদে ইংরেজি (১টি), শিক্ষা (১টি), সমাজবিজ্ঞান (১টি), হিসাববিজ্ঞান (১টি), আইন (১টি), পরিসংখ্যান (১টি), নিউট্রিশন এন্ড ফুড সায়েন্স (১টি) এবং প্রভাষক (শ্রেণী-২) পদে ইংরেজি (১টি), বাংলা (১টি), হিসাববিজ্ঞান (১টি), ফিন্যান্স এন্ড ব্যাংকিং (১টি), রসায়ন বিজ্ঞান (১টি), পদার্থ বিজ্ঞান (১টি), গণিত (১টি), পরিসংখ্যান (১টি), প্রাণিবিদ্যা (১টি), মনোবিজ্ঞান (১টি), ভূগোল ও পরিবেশ (২টি), নিউট্রিশন এন্ড ফুড সায়েন্স (১টি) এর স্থায়ী শূন্য পদে শিক্ষক নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে জন্মসূত্র বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে ০৭/১২/২০২৫ থেকে ০৫/০১/২০২৬ তারিখ পর্যন্ত Online-এ আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত সকল শর্তাবলী ও আবেদন ফরম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট jobs.nu.ac.bd এ পাওয়া যাবে।

০৪.১২.২৫
মোস্তা মাহফুজ আল-হোসেন
রেজিস্ট্রার

GD-2672

SAGAING REGION 18 killed in Myanmar airstrike 20 others hurt

AFP, Tabayin

Eighteen people were killed in an airstrike on a town in central Myanmar, according to a local official, a rescue worker and two residents who spoke to AFP yesterday.

Myanmar has been rocked by civil war since the military snatched power in a 2021 coup, and its battles with numerous anti-coup fighters have brought frequent airstrikes that often kill civilians.

Two bombs were dropped on Tabayin township in Sagaing region on Friday evening, with one hitting a busy teashop, according to a local administration official.

He told AFP that 18 people were killed and 20 were wounded in the attacks.

"Deaths were high at the teashop as it was crowded time," he said.

Lanka unveils cyclone aid plan as rains persist

AFP, Colombo

Disaster-hit Sri Lanka has unveiled a major compensation package to rebuild homes damaged by a deadly cyclone, even as the island yesterday prepared for further landslides and flooding.

The government has confirmed 607 deaths, with another 214 people missing and feared dead, in what President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has called the country's most challenging natural disaster.

More than two million people — nearly 10 percent of the population — have been affected.

Survivors will be offered up to 10 million rupees (\$33,000) to buy land in a safer location and build a new house, the finance ministry said in a statement late Friday. The government is also offering one million rupees as compensation for each person killed or permanently disabled.

The Disaster Management Centre said more than 71,000 homes were damaged.



Palestinian children, many from displaced families, gather in the yard of the UNRWA Deir al-Balah Joint School in central Gaza yesterday, during the first phase of the fragile US-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. PHOTO: AFP

Gaza talks at critical moment: Qatar's PM

Says truce not complete without 'full withdrawal' by Israel

AGENCIES

The nearly two-month-old ceasefire in the Gaza Strip will not be complete until Israeli troops withdraw from the Palestinian territory under a peace plan backed by Washington and the UN, mediator Qatar's prime minister said yesterday.

"Now we are at the critical moment... A ceasefire cannot be completed unless there is a full withdrawal of the Israeli forces, (and) there is stability back in Gaza," Qatari premier Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told the Doha Forum, an annual diplomatic conference in the Gulf state's capital.

Qatar, alongside the United States and Egypt, helped secure the long-elusive truce in Gaza, which came into effect on October 10 and has mostly halted two years of fighting between Israel and Hamas.

Under a second phase of the deal, which has yet to begin, Israel is to withdraw from its positions in the territory, an interim authority is to take over governance, and an international stabilisation force (ISF) is to be deployed.

Arab and Muslim nations have been hesitant to participate in the

➤ Arab, Muslim nations hesitant to join new stabilisation force

➤ First goal should be to separate Palestinians from Israelis: Turkey

➤ Doha meeting addressed developments on the ground in Gaza

new stabilisation force, which could end up fighting Hamas.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, also speaking at the forum, said talks on the force were ongoing and critical questions remained as to its command structure and which countries would contribute.

But its first goal, Fidan said, "should be to separate Palestinians from the Israelis".

"This should be our main objective. Then we can address the other remaining issues," he added.

Hamas is also supposed to disarm under the 20-point plan first outlined by US President Donald Trump, with members who decommission their weapons allowed to leave Gaza. The group has repeatedly rejected the proposition.

Turkey has indicated it wants to take part in the stabilisation force, but its efforts are viewed unfavourably in Israel, which considers Ankara too close to Hamas.

"I think the only viable way to finish this war is to engage faithfully and forcefully in peace talks," Fidan said. Sheikh Mohammed said Qatar and fellow truce guarantors Turkey, Egypt and the US were "getting together in order to force the way forward for the next phase" of the deal.

"And this next phase is just also temporary from our perspective," he said. "If we are... just resolving what happened in the last two years, it's not enough," he continued, calling for a "lasting solution that provides justice for both people".



"US is still our biggest ally. I think we haven't always seen eye to eye on different topics, but I think the overall principle is still there."

EU foreign policy chief
Kaja Kallas
on US security strategy

Israeli push for buffer zone poses risk to Syria Says President Sharaa

AFP, Doha

President Ahmed al-Sharaa warned yesterday that Israel's demand for a demilitarised zone in southern Syria would endanger his country, as Israeli forces continue to operate in the area.

Israel sent troops into a UN-patrolled buffer zone which has separated Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Heights since 1974. Sharaa's Islamist forces toppled Syria's longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad's on December 8 last year.

Israel has also carried out repeated incursions deeper into Syrian territory since then as well as carrying out bombings, and has said it wants a demilitarised zone in the country's south.

Sharaa told the Doha Forum that Syria insists on the importance of the 1974 disengagement agreement with Israel "that has held for over 50 years — in one way or another it is a successful agreement".

Tampering with the deal, "which enjoys international consensus and the consensus of the (UN) Security Council, and seeking other agreements such as a demilitarised zone... could lead us to a dangerous place," he said.

The United States is involved in negotiations between Israel and Syria to address the security concerns of both sides, Sharaa said, noting international support for Syria's demand that Israel withdrawal to its pre-December 8 positions.

Lebanon arrests six after attack on UN patrol

AFP, Beirut

The Lebanese army has arrested six people after gunmen attacked UN peacekeepers patrolling in the south of the country, the military said yesterday.

The UN force, known as UNIFIL, had reported that six men riding on three mopeds opened fire on a patrol vehicle Thursday without hurting anyone.

Yesterday's statement said the army's intelligence directorate had followed up on the attack and arrested six Lebanese suspects.

The army said it would not tolerate attacks on UNIFIL, which it said carries out an important stabilising role south of the Litani river, near the Israeli border.

UNIFIL peacekeepers have been tasked with acting as a buffer between Israel and Lebanon since March 1978, and with monitoring the November 2024 ceasefire that sought to halt more than a year of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Sunamganj
☎ 0871-63457, ☎ 0871-61631
E-mail: eesun@rhd.gov.bd / eerhdsunamgonj@gmail.com

Memo No. 35.01.9000.472.07.001.25-4217 Date: 03/12/2025

e-Tender Notice

Tender ID No. & Package No.	Name of work	Tender document last selling / download ing date & time	Tender security submission last date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time
1183516 02/e-GP/ DEV/SU N/EE/R HD/ 2025- 2026	Reconstruction of Flexible Pavement from 1st to 10th km (Ch. 0+100 to 9+300) and 22nd km (Ch. 21+400 to 22+000) of Gobindaganj-Chhatak-Dowarabazar (Z-2802) Road including Earthwork, Construction of Bus-Bay, Intersection, Footpath Cum Drain, Concrete Slope Protection, Sign Signal, Road marking etc. under Road Division, Sunamgonj during the year 2025-2026.	14-Dec-2025 16:00 hours	15-Dec-2025 14:00 hours	15-Dec-2025 15:00 hours
1183645 03/e-GP/ DEV/SU N/EE/R HD/ 2025- 2026	Construction of 4-Lane Rigid Pavement from 10th Km to 13th Km (Ch. 9+300 to 13+000) of Gobindaganj-Chhatak-Dowarabazar (Z-2802) Road including Construction of Median, Bus-Bay, Intersection, Footpath Cum Drain, Earthwork, Concrete Slope Protection, Sign Signal, Road marking etc. under Road Division, Sunamgonj during the year 2025-2026.	14-Dec-2025 16:00 hours	15-Dec-2025 14:00 hours	15-Dec-2025 15:00 hours

The above e-Tenders are published in the National e-GP System Portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>. All information and guidelines are available in the e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Ahmed Ullah
Dr. Mohammad Ahad Ullah
ID No. 602136
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Sunamganj

GD-2673

Russia strikes Ukraine's power, transport sectors Says Kyiv; Poland scrambles jets overnight

REUTERS, Kyiv

A large-scale Russian drone and missile attack damaged power facilities in eight Ukrainian regions, causing blackouts and forcing nuclear power plants to cut power output, officials and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said yesterday.

Russia has intensified its attacks on Ukraine's energy sector and infrastructure in recent weeks, targeting power stations and railway hubs as winter deepens and the war approaches its fourth anniversary.

There was no breakthrough in US-brokered talks this week aimed at ending the conflict.

Ukraine operates three nuclear power plants which produce more than half of the country's electricity and IAEA said the plants cut production due to "widespread military activities overnight".

The Ukrainian military said Russia had launched 653 drones and 51 missiles on Ukraine overnight. Ukrainian forces downed 585 drones and 30 missiles, the military said.

Power and heat generation facilities in Chernihiv, Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, and Dnipropetrovsk regions were targeted in the attack, Ukraine's ministry for development of communities and territories said.

It said on Telegram that 9,500 customers remained without heat and 34,000 without water supply in the southern Odesa region.

"Port facilities (in Odesa) have also been attacked: part of the infrastructure has been de-energised, and operators have switched to backup power from generators," the ministry said.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Special Branch, Bangladesh Police, Malibagh, Dhaka

Memo No. 44.01.0000.094.07.008.25/408 Date: 06/12/2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal for the following items. Interested tenderers are requested to visit (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) website for details.

Sl No.	Tender ID	Procurement item name	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender closing date and time
1	1187846	Archway Metal Detector	21 December-2025, 17:00	22 December-2025, 12:30
2	1188480	QDE System (Questioned Documents Examination System)	21 December-2025, 17:00	22 December-2025, 12:30
3	1189156	Integrated Travel Document Reader (Boading Pass, MRP, MRV, E-Passport, Smart Card, Resident Card, etc)	21 December-2025, 17:00	22 December-2025, 12:30
4	1189827	E-Passport Reader	21 December-2025, 17:00	22 December-2025, 12:30
5	1189891	Forensic Workstation	21 December-2025, 17:00	22 December-2025, 12:30
6	1190702	Sound Box	21 December-2025, 17:00	22 December-2025, 12:30
7	1190840	Day Vision Binocular	21 December-2025, 17:00	22 December-2025, 12:30
8	1190929	Precision Air Conditioner (PAC) Maintenance	21 December-2025, 17:00	22 December-2025, 12:30
9	1190083	64 Channel PA (Sound System)	21 December-2025, 17:00	22 December-2025, 12:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies are allowed. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Mohammad Yousuf Ali
Mohammad Yousuf Ali, BPM
Special Superintendent of Police
Special Branch, Bangladesh Police, Dhaka
0258316896
E-mail: ssfinancesb@gmail.com

GD-2670

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Don't leave women migrant workers to suffer in silence

Better skills and protection mechanisms are key

It is concerning that the migration of women workers abroad has been gradually declining over the last four years. What is truly worrying is the reason behind it: unsafe working conditions and abuse in destination countries. Despite countless media reports and studies by organisations working with migrant workers, many of these women continue to endure physical abuse and have nowhere to turn for help. Some are trafficked and forced into prostitution, and many return to their homeland in body bags, with the causes of their deaths not properly investigated. Most of them go to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Jordan, and Lebanon.

It is little wonder that the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) has found a significant decline in the number of women going abroad for work. A recent study by the Ovivashi Karmi Unnayan Programme found that 94 percent of returning women experienced regular physical and mental abuse, 47 percent reported sexual harassment, while 97 percent were denied medical care. Meanwhile, 80 percent were not given adequate food, and 82 percent had to work from early morning until midnight. According to the Wage Earners' Welfare Board, the bodies of 412 female migrant workers were returned since 2021, with 84 of them having died by suicide.

There are cases in which women have been thrown from rooftops after enduring prolonged torture and given no medical treatment. Death certificates, however, rarely reflect the abuse and mental trauma that may have led to these deaths. This horrifying reality has been widely publicised for many years, yet the previous government did little to ensure the safety of migrant workers or to investigate the deaths of so many women. Women are often offered only low-paying jobs, such as domestic work, because they lack skills, including language skills. As housemaids, they are at the mercy of their employers and often confined to the house 24 hours a day, which increases the risk of abuse.

We, therefore, urge the authorities to immediately ensure that women workers do not go abroad without the necessary safeguards. Like Indonesia and other countries, providing them with skills training for caregiving and nursing will allow them to access jobs that are safer, more dignified, and better paid. Better residential training, including orientation sessions on workers' rights and the culture of the destination country, should be offered. Bangladesh's high commissions in these countries must be more proactive in protecting women migrant workers who find themselves in danger, and helplines should be made available to all workers and their families. Bangladeshis involved in forcing women migrant workers into sex work must also be brought to book.

Equally importantly, there must be diplomatic dialogue with host countries to ensure that allegations of abuse by their own citizens are taken seriously and that necessary action is taken. We must stop treating our citizens as cheap labour to be exported, disregarding the inhuman conditions under which many end up working.

Don't help bury inconvenient truths

JU must address allegations about the performance of its probe bodies

A probe committee usually represents a mechanism for discovering the truth, but in most cases across our public system, it means paperwork that often serves no purpose or never even sees the light of day. When a scandal or accident or crisis occurs, we see that a committee is formed, time passes, memories fade, and the probe report, if it appears at all, is rarely acted upon. Unfortunately, the example set by Jahangirnagar University (JU), one of our leading public educational institutions, failed to mark a departure from this tired pattern.

In the wake of the student-led mass uprising that toppled the Awami League government last year, the university administration was in a feverish mood to address a backlog of grievances ranging from plagiarism and sexual harassment to unnatural deaths and murder on the campus. The authorities have since established at least 39 committees to investigate these incidents. On the surface, this might look like a rigorous house-cleaning. If we look deeper, it proves to be nothing but a rote ritual.

Despite spending nearly Tk 40 lakh on "sitting allowances"—a fee paid to committee members simply for turning up—less than half of these bodies have submitted their reports. And there's been a disturbing asymmetry: when the accused are students, the wheels of justice apparently turn with surprising speed. Inquiries into the students were completed, and punishments were meted out. But when the probe involved teachers, the process allegedly slowed. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the law department. For months, students have demanded the resignation of two associate professors, accusing the pair of a campaign of "physical and mental torture." Separately, another probe body was formed against a teacher after a student alleged that he had published her academic article under his own name without permission. One year later, the matter remains unresolved. Students allege the administration frequently forms probe bodies only to delay or bury investigations without taking meaningful action.

The vice-chancellor, however, argues that the administration is overwhelmed by complaints spanning 54 years. This is a convenient shield. The delays speak less of administrative burden than of a lack of intent. In Bangladesh, the idea of probe committee has long been a favoured tool not to reveal the truth, but to buy time until the public loses interest. The students who led the uprising demanded a departure from the impunity of the past. Instead, they are witnessing its replication in different forms. We urge the JU authorities to expedite all pending probe-related works and provide justice or solutions without delay regardless of the identity of the accused involved.

Why a supply chain mindset is key to fixing our education



Professor Dr Shams Rahman is vice chancellor of East West University.

SHAMS RAHMAN

What comes to your mind when you hear "supply chain management"? Perhaps transport, logistics, inventory, production, distribution, procurement, and all sorts of related jargon. But what if we took a step back and looked at it as something more? What if it is not just a business buzzword but a mindset that helps us recognise how everything is connected and manage processes to create real value in the bigger picture? As an educationist, here are my two cents on the supply chain mindset in education, and how its failures lead to socioeconomic losses.

In a factory, from acquiring raw materials to shipping finished products, every step affects the end result. One small glitch at the start, or even halfway through the process, can trigger a chain reaction of problems down the line. Now imagine applying that same logic to something seemingly different, like education.

Instead of seeing education as just a mix of classrooms, textbooks, and exams, what if we started viewing it as a supply chain? The "raw materials" are curious young minds, the "processes" are the methods, tools, and environments necessary for teaching and learning, and the "finished product" is a capable, well-rounded graduate. This perspective can help us identify weak points, improve flow, and raise the overall quality of education, just as a good supply chain improves efficiency.

Our education system, much like a production line, moves through several linked stages. We take in children, our valuable raw materials, and through years of learning, we aim to produce skilled, knowledgeable, and confident graduates who can thrive in the workforce.

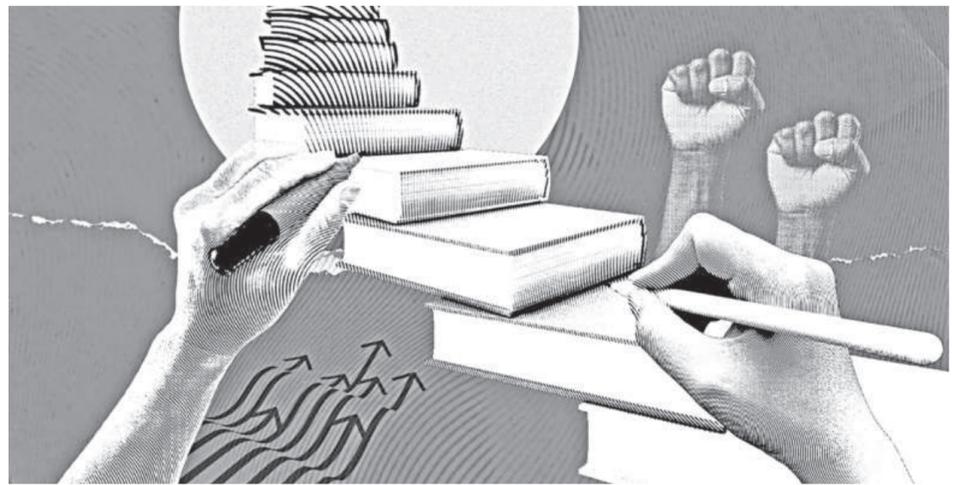
The foundation for all development is set at the primary school stage. It is where children learn basic literacy, numeracy, and how to interact with the world. If a student struggles here, that weakness does not simply vanish. It becomes harder and costlier to fix as they move up the chain.

Next comes secondary school—our specialised assembly line. Here, students begin focusing on specific subjects and developing independent interests. However, this is also where cracks in the system become more visible. Many teachers lack proper training, resources are outdated, and the pressure to memorise facts for the SSC and HSC exams overshadows real learning. Think of this faulty process as a weak supplier that keeps lowering the quality of production in a factory. The result is students who may score well but lack the critical thinking or practical skills necessary to apply their knowledge effectively.

Finally, we reach the tertiary level,

which should act as the final stage. A university is where students refine their knowledge and prepare for real-world challenges. Yet this stage often exposes more failures, as students who may progress without learning to think critically and truly understand core concepts begin to fall behind. Dropouts rise. Due to weak ties with industries, many graduates remain unprepared even for the jobs available.

The World Bank's Development Report 2024 gives us a clear picture of this disconnect. Between 2016 and 2022, Bangladesh's manufacturing industry grew by 9.1 percent annually, yet employment in the same sector



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

declined by 9.6 percent. This illustrates a widening gap between education and employability, like a factory producing goods that no one wants to buy. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2023), more than 20 million students are enrolled across all levels of education—roughly 27 percent of the total workforce—but many never reach their full potential.

While World Bank suggests that Bangladesh's unemployment rate for 2024 is 4.7 percent, some researchers estimate the real rate at 10 percent. According to the BBS, the number of unemployed people in the country rose from 2.46 million in 2023 to 2.62 million by December 2024, an increase of 160,000 within a year. The situation is worse for university graduates. Just think, 29 percent of unemployed youth between the ages of 15 and 29 are university graduates. A 2025 estimate by bdjobs.com reveals that out of around 700,000 graduates entering the job market each year, fewer than 100,000 can secure formal employment. Many end up in low-paying informal jobs

system, many underprepared graduates fall through the cracks. This happens because our teaching, learning, and assessment systems do not align at different stages of education. When lessons focus on memorisation rather than understanding and critical thinking, you naturally end up with graduates who can pass exams but not solve critical problems. To fix this, we must move from rote learning to competency-based education. Students should be measured not just on what they know, but on what they can actually do.

Then comes the role of teachers, the people running the production line. Teachers are expected to do so much but are given so little support. We must understand that investing in them, particularly through continuous professional development in modern pedagogy, communication, emotional intelligence, and real-world skills, is an investment in the nation's future.

Another challenge is students' growing dependence on AI tools. While useful for research, many use them to

term innovation slows. Many talented individuals also leave the country, while social frustration rises. Ultimately, the entire nation bears the cost.

An education system that fails to prepare students adequately is like a broken supply chain, wasting resources, increasing reliance on foreign expertise, weakening the economy, and threatening future growth. And the solution is not just to open more schools or enrol more students. It is to view education as a holistic journey, a supply chain that transforms a curious child into a well-rounded professional. We must align all stages of it into a cohesive system to ensure proper teaching, curriculum, assessment, and industry preparedness.

If we can do that, Bangladesh won't just be producing graduates; it will be producing high-value professionals who are skilled, adaptable, and ready to meet global demands. That's how education stops being just a pathway to a degree and starts becoming a force that creates real value for every individual as well as for society at large.

Israel stands exposed even if global powers fail to act



Yousef SY Ramadan is the ambassador of Palestine to Bangladesh.

YOUSEF SY RAMADAN

Israel's problem is that despite its military power and its economic and technological superiority in the Middle East, it has limited capacity to portray its destructiveness as successful victories.

This limitation lies not only in Israel's small size and population, but more in the fact that it owes a large extent of its political, military and economic strength to the United States. Without unlimited US support, it could neither have executed what it has done so far, nor continued a genocidal war for more than two years without bearing heavy economic losses and civilian casualties. Even with US backing, Israel cannot evade international pressure and condemnation.

Overall, this war has revealed the depth of Israel's dependence on the United States—so much so that fears

are rising within Israel about the possible erosion of its independence and the transfer of decisions relating to war and peace to the White House. The UN General Assembly resolution calling for an end to Israel's 1967 occupation, and its withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank, further demonstrates Israel's isolation from the rest of the world and its reliance on the US.

Furthermore, the rise of other Arab and regional powers, such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey, in parallel with the atrophy of Israel's position in US strategy in the Middle East—as evidenced by Washington's increased reliance on them on issues concerning Gaza and Syria—signals a weakening of Israel's independent standing. This is also reflected in the indifference towards the narrative

of "normalisation," especially after the decline of Iran's influence in the region.

The trajectory of the genocidal war creates a pathway to a future in which Israel can be seen and treated like any other state, without exceptional global indemnity for acts such as genocide.

Israel has exposed its reality as a colonial, settler, racist and theocratic state—one that practices genocide against other people. It has lost precisely where it once sought recognition for itself.

Israel has forfeited its claim to monopolise the status of the "victim" after pursuing a brutal policy of genocide, and it has forfeited its image as a democratic state by enacting openly discriminatory policies towards Palestinians. It has lost the sympathy it sought to cultivate in the West. It can no longer be viewed as a "single weak state targeted by ferocious neighbours" that, in "self-defence," can justify threatening or killing them. It can no longer play the victim card.

As a result, Israel is losing its legitimacy on the international stage, echoing the mechanisms and dynamics that led to the collapse of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Israel has also become a political,

security, military, financial and moral burden on Jewish communities in the West, while losing its status as a safe haven for Jews. It has become the only place in the world that poses a danger to Jewish lives because of the policies of Israel's rulers.

Globally—from governments to societies—Israel is increasingly viewed as a state acting against international values, standards and resolutions, and as a security, political and financial burden. It has become a destabilising force and a threat to the values of freedom and equality by manipulating and conflating anti-Israel sentiment with anti-Semitism. That strategy, too, has stopped working. Today, it is clear to the world that Israel's attempt to dodge criticism by invoking religion or the history of the Holocaust has long been a tactic to evade accountability for the inhuman killing of another population over generations.

The war has exposed Israel's weakness and the impossibility of eliminating the Palestinian people or removing their cause from international and Arab agendas. Israel's attempt to annihilate Palestinians without restraint has led to the current international backlash against it.

Breaking down the new populist playbook in Bangladesh



Asif Bin Ali
is a doctoral fellow at Georgia State University, USA. He can be reached at abinali2@gsu.edu.

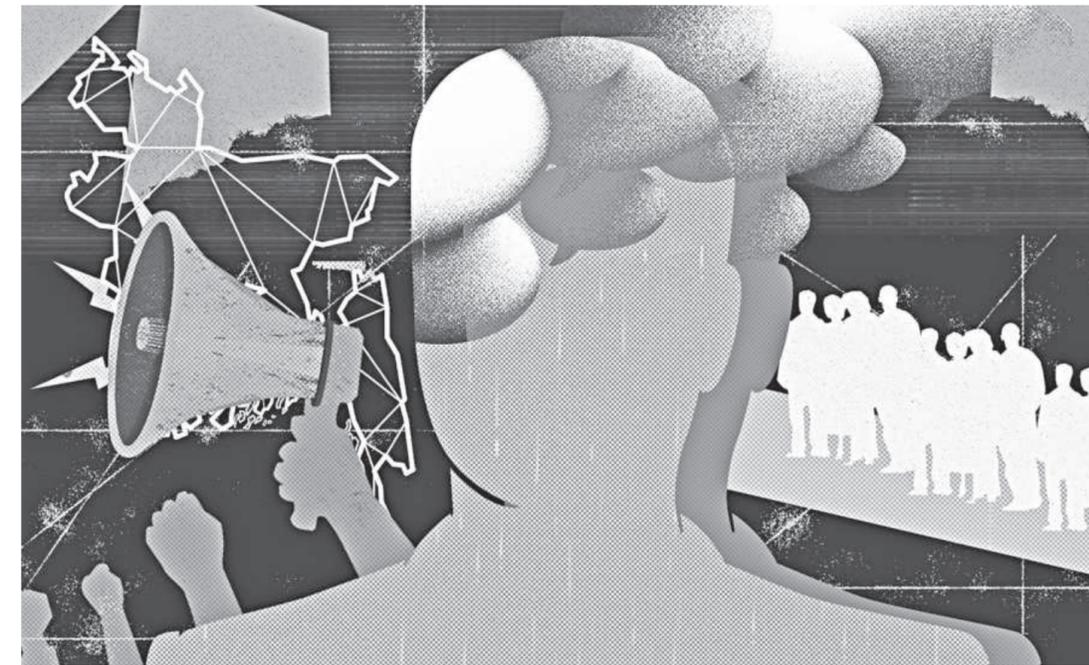
ASIF BIN ALI

The way people speak in Bangladesh's politics has changed a lot. Political messaging today mostly entails Facebook Live, YouTube speeches, *waaz* gatherings, viral videos, memes, slogans, filthy language and abuse, and tearful, dramatic livestreams. All of this has coalesced to provide the scaffolding for a populist political communication that is as much a reflection of the chaotic time we are living in as a continuation of political trends from recent years. Others can dress it up in theory, but in simple language, those who keep saying, "I speak for the people; everyone else is bad," are basically doing this kind of politics.

In my view, this political messaging has three main layers. First, it builds a pure character called "the people." Here, "the people" are always honest, oppressed, religious, patriotic, and heirs of the martyrs. Second, against this concept of a pure people it builds a group of tainted elites or "traitors." They are invariably labelled as foreign agents, looters, Mir Jafars, enemies of religion, or enemies of the nation. You can add any other label if you like. Third, the story incorporates examples of "enemy" figures, which can vary based on the context. Sometimes the enemy is a particular political party. Sometimes it is the women's rights movement. Sometimes minorities, or "Western culture," or "Indian influence." The more this three-layered story is repeated in songs, in *waaz*, in Facebook posts and addictive videos, the deeper it settles in people's minds.

In today's Bangladesh, there are two

When slogans like "we want the rope," "ban them," or "wipe them out" become normal in marches, when many clap under videos of death on social media, when the state or political parties continue to tolerate or tacitly support this trend, people slowly start to believe that political problems can only be solved by erasing the other side. One day we will see that even in small disagreements people do not look for compromise; they look for ways to finish their opponent.



'Many people think that the old authoritarian chapter is over and a new era has begun. But if the language of politics remains as vitriolic as before, changing faces will not change the character of power.'

VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

different strands of right-wing populism walking side by side and, in many places, shaking hands. One strand uses a revolutionary nationalist tone built around the July 2024 uprising and the memory of martyrs; the other works through religious platforms, madrasa networks, and the language of *waaz*. From the outside, they may look like opposites. But if you look closely at the structure of their communication, you see that they are playing the same game in different jerseys.

After the July uprising, some platforms started presenting themselves as "the voice of the martyrs" and "the true representatives of the people." In their language, "people" mainly means students, protesters, grieving families, and ordinary citizens. As the enemy, they single out Awami League. The entire party is framed as "terrorist," "killer," and "enemy of the nation." Along with that come demands to cancel its registration, put it on trial, ban it, and so on. In practice, it is an attempt to erase the party from politics altogether. At

the beginning, this sounds like a demand for justice, and many accept it that way, because the memories of abduction, murder, and repression under the authoritarian Awami League regime are still raw. But slowly, when this language moves out of legal space and enters the realm of purification and "finishing off the party," it is no longer just a language of protest. It becomes a language of right-wing populism.

with the enemies.

The language, dress, and stage of these two strands are different, but they converge at one point: both speak "in the name of the people." Both declare one or more parties "illegitimate" rather than treating them as political rivals. Both want to mould the state and constitution into their own shape. Both are convinced that they are so morally superior that no one else has the right to

this creates for our democracy. For me, the first big risk is that the ground for multi-party politics becomes narrower. When we keep hearing "ban this party" or "throw that party out of the country," we start to normalise a sort of informal civil-war language without even noticing. Today you may hate one party and try to have it banned. Tomorrow someone else may try to ban your party. Ironically enough, before Awami League saw its activities banned, it cultivated this culture of exclusion by enabling repeated calls for banning BNP and Jamaat, with the latter actually seeing it happen towards the end of Awami League's tenure. The lesson from this is that once the politics of bans and "finishing off" are accepted, no one controls where they stop.

The second big risk is the safety of minorities and people with different views. When everyday language teaches that the will of the majority is the only law, that one group's personal reading of religion is the "constitution," and that anyone who disagrees is a traitor, then minorities, women, converts, atheists, and people with different politics are pushed into a life of fear. Many go silent. Some try to leave the country. Some quietly nurse a desire for revenge. Slowly, society starts to crack from within.

The third risk is the weakening of institutions. Populist language almost always says that courts, election commissions, universities, and the media are never neutral and that they are all agents of the "enemy." Often there is some truth in some of the accusations. But when entire institutions are written off in one sweep, law is replaced by the word of populist leaders and influences as the final authority.

Another frightening side is the romanticising of violence. When slogans like "we want the rope," "ban them," or "wipe them out" become normal in marches, when many clap under videos of death on social media, when the state or political parties continue to tolerate or tacitly support this trend, people slowly start to believe that political problems can only be solved by erasing the other side. One day we will see that even in small disagreements people do not look for compromise; they look for ways to finish their opponent.

Many people think that the old authoritarian chapter is over and a new era has begun. But if the language of politics remains as vitriolic as before, changing faces will not change the character of power. Those who dismiss political or ideological rivals out of hand "in the name of the people" today can easily capture all institutions tomorrow, using that same pretext. Democracy is not just about ticking a box on a ballot paper. It demands a basic foundation of inclusion and compromise where you treat your opponent as a human being, acknowledge their right to exist politically, and accept their safety as non-negotiable. Populist political communication is slowly eroding that foundation. If we completely lose that, then even if democracy or election exists on paper, it will be little more than a hollow ritual.

question them.

It is also worth looking at how this populist communication works in practice. The first thing is language. There is no detailed policy discussion, no balanced reasoning. There are short, aggressive lines, insults, mockery, religious quotes, and words of war. People are pulled into emotion very quickly and have no time for close analysis. The second thing is platforms. Through Facebook Live, YouTube, TikTok, shorts and reels, political leaders or influencers walk straight into people's homes. There is no presenter, reporter, or editor in the middle, so what they say gets absorbed as a kind of raw truth. The third thing is the religious stage. When *waaz* speakers frame the state, women, the law, and the constitution, for example, in the language of "halal vs haram" and "faith vs disbelief," then a different opinion is no longer just an opinion. It becomes hostility to religion. Such rhetoric creates fear, and people hesitate to ask questions.

The real question is what kind of risk all

Uncertain politics, unsettling economy



AN OPEN DIALOGUE

Dr Abdullah Shibli
is an economist working at a non-profit fiscal intermediary. He previously worked for the World Bank and Harvard University.

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

Bangladesh's much anticipated parliamentary elections are scheduled for next February. And they could not have come at a more fraught time for the country. More than 16 months have passed since the interim administration took office, and unofficial estimates indicate a downward trend in the government's approval ratings. Compounding the situation and muddying public sentiment are the uncertain outcomes of the betting games played out on social media.

One does not need to be a born pessimist to urge the interim administration to scale back its promises and carefully manage the electorate's expectations.

Several "what if" scenarios could influence the missing pieces in the country's political jigsaw puzzle. The first is the timeline for the return of BNP's acting chief from exile in London. The second is the feasibility of the referendum or "gono vote" proposed by the chief advisor. The third concerns the possibility of an alliance between BNP and the other two parties, Jamaat and NCP. Finally, the ebb and flow of violence and tension—partly linked to the ICT judgment against the former prime minister, who fled to India on August 5 last year—adds to the uncertainty. Political parties have voiced their positions on these issues, leaving voters puzzled, with some appearing indifferent to the outcomes.

Alongside the political maelstrom, economic uncertainties have compounded the existential crisis for ordinary citizens. Recent inflationary projections have raised

rate volatility, and de-escalation of hatred and the blame game.

The road to a post-election "magic land" still has rough patches ahead. Medium- and small-business owners face continuous unrest on the streets, which has instilled fear and uncertainty. Investors are wary of entering an ecosystem that has endured repeated shocks, while job creation remains virtually at a standstill.

vegetables, eggs, onions, and meat—remain beyond the reach of the average consumer.

On the positive side, the country's foreign exchange reserves are rising—a notable achievement of the current government. Critics, however, argue that this is partly due to a lower import bill, resulting from reduced demand, consumption, and affordability. Direct foreign investment has dwindled to a trickle, and the International Monetary Fund

hundreds of factories remain closed, partly due to politically displaced owners going AWOL and shortages of gas and electricity.

There are, however, some silver linings. The garment industry is likely to continue, even with a 20 percent tariff on exports to the US, benefiting from higher tariffs on India and China. The country signed a 30-year lease on Laldia Container Terminal in Chattogram, representing an investment exceeding \$550 million—one of the largest Public-Private Partnership (PPP) investments in the nation's history. In April 2025, Bangladesh received around \$650 million from the World Bank to develop the Bay Terminal Marine Infrastructure Project in Chattogram. Both initiatives are expected to create significant employment.

In sum, if political instability continues, it will negatively impact the economy, discourage investment, and make life more difficult for the common citizen. Political uncertainty, lack of government policy, corruption, and banking sector stress remain key factors weakening the economy. While economic recovery is possible, political stability and effective policy implementation are essential.

Bangladesh is passing through a crucial juncture, with international lobbies increasingly active. Fortunately, Hasina is no longer central to national politics, although sympathy and support for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League persist among a small segment of the population. Much will depend on the next election. Once a political government is formed, there may be accommodation for grassroots leaders and members of the Awami League.

What the country urgently needs is sanity. It must address critical national issues such as law and order, political stability, restoring confidence in the business sector (both local and foreign), and reviving the languishing education sector and youth development programmes to create employment opportunities.



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

concerns about resolving bread-and-butter issues. There is hope that, in the coming weeks, as the cool winds settle in, some progress will emerge towards stability, with less chaos and mob rule, moderation in price and exchange

For fixed-income and low-to-middle-income earners, the price of essentials has not fallen despite positive inflation numbers. A survey of retirees last week revealed that, except for potatoes, most items—including

(IMF) awaits engagement with the elected government. Unemployment stood at 2.73 million in the October-December period of fiscal year 2024-2025, while prices have surged due to informal levies. Meanwhile,

Whether it's the soul-stirring 'Buker Ba Pashe', the tender pull of 'Takey Olpo Kachhe Dakchhi', or the rain-soaked longing of 'Tumi Brishti Cheyechho Bole'—behind these tracks stands one voice quietly stealing the show—Mahtim Shakib. Under this young talent's belt are standout tracks like 'Pakhi Pakhi Mon' and 'Megh Balika'—songs that earned him back-to-back wins at the Blender's Choice The Daily Star - OTT & Digital Content Awards.

SHARMIN JOYA

Mahtim dropped by The Daily Star's office for an exclusive photoshoot and a candid chat, where he spilled some tea about his career over cups of lemon tea. He began his musical journey in 2018 with three covers before making his original debut. "I started with a Rabindranath mashup, *Ei Mon Tomake Dilam*, and *Ei Poth Jodi Na Shesh Hoy*. Within a month, I released my first originals, *Mon Bojhena* and then *Buker Ba Pashe*, he reminisced. "I feel fortunate that people accepted me so early on."

Like many Bangladeshi kids, Mahtim once dreamed of becoming a cricketer—and even an astronaut. "But none of those seemed to be my path; only music remained. In 2010, I participated in a reality show, and in 2013, when my voice changed during puberty, I realised how much I missed singing. That's when I knew music was what I wanted to pursue."

Mahtim began training at age four at Chakrabak Academy. "My first steps came from Nishi Sir, Shuvro Sir, and Dipu Sir. I was fortunate to train under Ustaad Rafiq Mahmud, and now I'm learning folk and dotara from Fakir Arif Baul."

As a trained singer, did starting with covers ever bother him, given the orthodox view that artists should begin with originals?

"If we don't cover Rabindra Sangeet or Nazrul Sangeet, aren't we drifting from our roots? Even our film songs—*Beder Meye Jochhona*, *Chumki Cholechhe Eka Poth*, *Ei Mon Tomake Dilam*—these are cultural crown jewels we cannot ignore."

He added, "It's true some believe cover artists struggle with originality, but when I started, I was well received."

Though he loves folk, he also explored ghazals and contemporary genres. Many may not know his debut playback was in the 2019 Shakib Khan film *Moner Moto Manush Pailam Na*. The song *Pran Juriye Jay*, composed by Shafiq Tuhin, was a duet with Kheya.

How did his voice reach West Bengal's music directors? "It was the brilliant Arindom Bhattacharya. He was in Dhaka for personal work and reached out to meet me. He said he thought *Ei Mon Tomake Dilam* was my original and wanted to pro quo it for SVF. I told him it wasn't mine (laughs). He later said he found my vocal texture interesting and wanted to work with me someday."

During COVID, SVF called him for his Tollywood debut with *Takey Olpo Kachhe Dakchhi*—and that's how it began.

In today's content-driven world, Mahtim shares new songs regularly, including covers. "The algorithm has shifted; it's less about quality and more about quantity. To stay in the game, we must post regularly. But I can't create

a meaningful new track every day—art takes time."

For Mahtim, music isn't merely a career or passion. As a self-critical artist, he has focused more on originals this year. "Music is like breathing—something I love far beyond earning a living." He has voiced for films like *Dewaler Desh* (2024, *Beche Jaoa Bhalobasha*) and *Jongli* (2025, *Maya Pakhi*), and in Tollywood films like *Prem Tame* (2021, *Takey Olpo Kachhe Dakchhi*) and *Cheeni 2* (2023, *Tumi Jantei Parona*).

An old soul at heart, he uses social media strategically. He runs two YouTube channels and pages on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok—but only for professional purposes. "I'm not someone who's always on the phone (laughs)! I have no personal accounts. I only appear online as much as needed for work. You're either a consumer or a creator; I'd rather focus on creating quality content and practising music. It takes time and energy. I also have a team to manage."

With everything combined, leisure is scarce. "Apart from practising my craft, my me time is meditating, working out, and spending time with my beloved cat. My life is 95% music; the rest is family and friends—and I must admit that my close ones have compromised a lot for me."

With a contract at SVF until 2027, Mahtim hopes to explore more originals, including folk and other genres.

He considers himself not just a musician but a storyteller. "I like telling stories, through singing, writing, or directing music videos. I've tried acting in commercials, but it didn't feel right. I also used to do digital painting."

Clearing a few misconceptions about this artiste, he shared, "First, people often mispronounce my name, and sometimes make it something else, even Mahtab! Then they assume I'm very young—but I'm not! Some think I'm from India, which is untrue. I was born and raised in Dhaka. I'm not from Chittagong either—my grandparents are from Narshingdi. There's more, but let's save that for another time!"

Behind the curtains of MAHTIM'S MELODY



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

TRENDY STREAMS

NETFLIX
The Girlfriend



APPLE TV+
Down Cemetery Road



HULU
Percy Jackson and The Olympians



CHORKI
Thursday Night



HOICHOI
Anusandhan



OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



'Raga Odyssey' | Eastern Classical Festival
 Dec 5-6 | 5pm - 11pm
 Banani Block A, Banani



'Cafe de Volte'
 Dec 7-8 | 7:30pm - 9pm
 Studio Theater Hall, BSA



'Monoscura-Vision Through Monochrome'
 Dec 9-11 | 12pm onwards
 Army IBA, Savar

STYLE STATEMENT

MILEY CYRUS



At the world premiere of *Avatar: Fire and Ash*, Miley Cyrus commanded the red carpet with a look that blended rock-star confidence with old-Hollywood drama. Draped in a sweeping black mermaid gown embellished with jet-black sequins, she brought a bold, midnight shimmer to the premiere's fiery backdrop. The bodice's sculpted silhouette flowed into cascading tulle tiers, creating a silhouette that shifted effortlessly between edgy and ethereal. Her tousled waves, smoky eyes and diamond necklace echoed Miley's signature balance of glamour and rebellion, while her visible tattoos added a raw texture to the ensemble.

'PRIME TARGET'

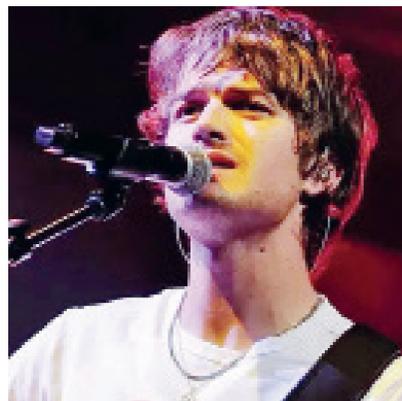
TV TALKIES



Apple TV+ dives into high-stakes paranoia with *Prime Target*, a tightly wound conspiracy thriller led by Leo Woodall. The series follows a Cambridge mathematician who becomes the focus of a global manhunt after stumbling onto a predictive algorithm tied to political assassinations. Each episode layers tension with sleek pacing, shadowy espionage, and a sense of technological dread that feels alarmingly contemporary. A sharp, binge-ready watch for fans of intelligent, fast-moving thrillers.

WHAT'S PLAYING

'End of Beginning' by Djo



Djo's *End of Beginning* drifts in like a half-remembered dream – the kind that flickers at the edge of nostalgia, soft around the edges but unmistakably electric. Joe Keery slips into his synth-soaked alter ego with ease, sending his voice gliding over warm bass lines and neon-lit production that feels lifted from an '80s after-hours universe. It's intimate, a little uncanny, and achingly self-aware – very much the sonic cousin of the world that first made him a cultural fixture.

And yes, the *Stranger Things* shadow is impossible to ignore. There's a touch of Hawkins in its mood: that bittersweet blend of childhood echoes, suburban melancholy, and the quiet terror of growing up.

After its viral revival, *End of Beginning* has surged past hundreds of millions of streams, becoming a generational comfort track. It's the kind of song you play on a night when the streetlights blur and your younger self feels just a few steps behind you.

Amir Ali passes away

CITY DESK

Amir Ali, a Language Movement veteran, journalist, teacher, and researcher, passed away in London on November 28, said a press release.

Born on May 26, 1936, in Mymensingh, Amir Ali's ancestral home was in Kathuria village under Sharsha upazila in Jashore. He received his BA and MA in English Language and Literature from Dhaka University, and later earned an LLB degree. He was imprisoned for participating in the Language Movement. He was among the founders of the then East Pakistan Chhatra Union.

He began his career as a columnist for the then Pakistan Observer newspaper. He later served as the head of the Department of English Language and Literature and as an associate professor at Jagannath College.

On March 27, 1964, he travelled to Britain for higher education. He went on to obtain a postgraduate degree from the University of Surrey, London, and an MSc in Sociology from Birkbeck College, University of London.

As a leading figure during the Liberation War, Amir Ali worked closely with Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury.



After collecting olives from nearby trees, a man sorts them into baskets in Naogaon's Kalikapur village, which saw a good yield this year. The produce is being sold to traders at Tk 20 per kg. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

The abuse that leaves no bruise

FROM PAGE 12

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Controlling behaviour cuts across education, income, and geography. From villages to Dhaka's middle class areas, husbands dictate when women can leave home, how long they may be out, whom they must meet, and even when they must return.

The VAW Survey found nearly 40 percent of women need permission to access healthcare; 29 percent face mistreatment linked to in-laws; a quarter report insults to their parents; and 15 percent are restricted from recreational activities.

Women reported partners trying to stop them from seeing friends or family, demanding to know their whereabouts, showing jealousy when they spoke to other men, [monitored their behaviour], or enforcing permission to access healthcare. Other forms included forcing women to wear a veil, restricting education or work, limiting outings, insulting parents, and monitoring social media.

Regional variations are stark: Khulna and Barisal report prevalence above 73 percent, while Dhaka has 63 percent. Rates are higher in disaster-prone regions (73.2 percent vs 65.3 percent), and urban areas outside city corporations exceed the national average at 70.4 percent.

Younger women are most at risk: 59.1 percent of girls aged 15-19 report current controlling behaviour, dropping sharply after age 60. Education and

wealth reduce vulnerability; 71.5 percent of women with no or pre-primary education report lifetime exposure, compared with 54.8 percent of graduates.

Raisul Islam, programme officer at the National Helpline Centre for Violence Against Women and Children-109, said they received 19,584 calls related to psychological abuse in the first eight months of this year. "Most calls involve husband's domination, restrictions on movement, control over clothing, interference in personal freedom, and denial of financial support."

NORMALISATION OF PATRIARCHAL CONTROL

Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said women's subordination stems from the belief that they are meant to be controlled. "Many men feel entitled to decide if their wives can work, reflecting a patriarchal power imbalance. Controlling behaviour is a core feature of patriarchal masculinity that harms both women and men."

She said the behaviour has worsened over time. "Household competition and stress have increased, reducing empathy and placing greater pressure on young women. This mindset has been so normalised that many women do not even recognise it as violence. They assume it is simply how things are supposed to be."

Dr Sunjida Shahriah, physician and psychotherapy practitioner, said controlling behaviour often hides behind concern or family honour. "Small restrictions

accumulate over time, making women accept them as routine. With no visible injuries and low awareness, such abuse remains unseen, leaving survivors unsure if they are being harmed at all."

Although the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 recognises controlling behaviour as psychological abuse, no other law does, explained Advocate Sifat-E-Noor Khanam of BLAST. "This makes it almost impossible to prosecute," she said.

"Implementation is negligible. Many women, social workers, and even lawyers are unaware of the law's provisions, leaving complaints filed under the wrong laws and courts unresponsive to psychological harm."

"Most women say the abuse began with small disagreements, then escalated over five or ten years. By the time they seek help, it has become unbearable and sometimes violent." Highlighting the lack of state support, she said, "Victim Support Centres allow only five-day stays. Women don't just need shelter. They need a survival plan, income, and long-term protection. The state has left the biggest gap here."

Farhana Yeasmin, deputy commissioner of the Women Support and Investigation Division at Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "Women come to us only when violence becomes physical. By then, the psychological abuse has been ongoing for years."

"I've been in charge for a year and have not seen a single case filed for this type of abuse, not one."

THE INVISIBLE WOUNDS

Dr Shahriah said controlling behaviour leaves deep emotional scars, often more lasting than physical abuse. "Long-term coercive control triggers trauma, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Gaslighting distorts memory and reality, while constant surveillance, insults, or financial penalties trap women in a mental prison."

Gaslighting is when someone makes you doubt your own memory, feelings, or reality so they can control the situation or shift blame.

She said survivors need trauma-informed, empowerment-focused care, including counselling to restore autonomy, psychoeducation to reduce self-blame, and life skills to counter economic dependence. "Support groups can help break isolation."

Advocate Sifat said solutions require systemic change. She outlined three steps: educating children early about gender equality, establishing state-funded shelters so women can report abuse securely, and reforming the law to explicitly recognise psychological abuse with clear proof standards.

"Awareness alone is not enough," Fauzia Moslem warned. "Women must reclaim their skills and decision-making to break free from controlling environments, especially where control is subtle, relentless, and shatters their lives in silence."

Iqbal Ahmad no more

CITY DESK

Prof Iqbal Ahmad, an educator and freedom fighter, passed away yesterday. He was 77, said a press release.

He is survived by his wife, a son, and two grandchildren.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at Dhaka University Central Mosque, and the second janaza at Siddheshwari Girls' School Field on Bailey Road. Later, he was laid to rest in Banani Graveyard.

Born on September 20, 1948, in Narsingdi, he was the eldest son of Alauddin Ahmad, a former member of the National Assembly from Monohardi-Kapasia constituency in East Pakistan, and Jahanara Ahmad.

Ahmad earned his BSc (Hons) and MSc from Dhaka University, MSc in Industrial Administration from Aston University, UK, and MS in Industrial Relations from the Institute of Social Studies, the Netherlands.

He served for more than three decades at the Institute of Business Administration, Dhaka University, as professor and director, teaching in the DBA, MBA, EMBA, and BBA programmes and supervising MPhil and DBA students.

He also served on several private sector boards and, until his passing, was an independent director of Uttara Bank PLC. An active Rotarian and dedicated social worker, he authored notable works on Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations.



Anisul, Manju to announce

FROM PAGE 12

new alliance, adding, "Everything will be made clear in the briefing."

In mid-July, leaders of four JP factions appeared on the same stage at a memorial event marking the sixth death anniversary of party founder HM Ershad and called for uniting the Jatiya Party under one umbrella.

It was organised by

Pallibandhu Ershad Smriti Sangsad. Manju, who is also a former minister, joined as the chief guest, while leaders of Jatiya Party (Raushan Ershad), Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar), and Jatiya Party (Matin) were also present.

The organisers said they came together on the same stage as part of a broader unity process on Ershad's death anniversary.

At the event, several JP leaders sought forgiveness for their past mistakes, saying they unconditionally apologised to the people.

On August 9, the JP formally split into another faction, led by Anisul Islam Mahmud, following a council session.

Founded in 1986 by HM Ershad, the Jatiya Party has a long history

of factionalism, having already split at least six times.

The five other factions are: GM Quader-led Jatiya Party (JaPa), Anwar Hossain-led Jatiya Party (JP), Andaleev Rahman Partho-led Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), MA Mukit-led Bangladesh Jatiya Party, and Mostafa Jamal Haider-led Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar).

Ex-Jubo Dal

FROM PAGE 12

over to the police last night. He was taken to Keshabpur Upazila Health Complex following the handover. Subsequently, Ujjal was taken to Jashore Central Jail. Jailer Abid Ahmed said, the Jashore jail received Ujjal with a medical certificate stating "public assault" issued by the upazila health complex at around 9:30pm. Ujjal was then moved to the jail's medical centre around 10:30pm.

Suspecting internal bleeding, jail authorities shifted Ujjal to Jashore General Hospital when he fell ill again, where doctors pronounced him dead, said the facility's resident doctor, Bazlur Rashid. The deceased's elder brother Afzal Hossain alleged that Ujjal was tortured.

Jashore district Jubo Dal Member Secretary Ansarul Haque said, "There is no approved Jubo Dal committee in Keshabpur. Ujjal's name was in the convening committee, but it was never approved. He worked as a party activist but was expelled due to controversial activities."

Maj Md Mahfuz, commander of Keshabpur army camp, could not be reached for his comment immediately.

EC meets today

FROM PAGE 12

would be used for the referendum.

He said the EC had reviewed pre-schedule preparations at a meeting yesterday.

According to EC officials, there will be nine agenda items at today's meeting. These include overall preparations for the 13th parliamentary election and referendum, pre- and post-schedule activities, coordination with field-level administration, registration of political parties, and reviewing the NID correction application system and finalisation of the relevant SOP.

4 civilians

FROM PAGE 12

attacked with "light and heavy artillery" and that mortar fire had struck civilian homes.

Residents on the Afghan side of the border told AFP the exchange of fire broke out around 10:30 pm (1800 GMT) and lasted about two hours.

"Light and weak firing started then the tanks started firing and the mortars hit our houses," said Mahmood Khan, adding that a niece and two cousins were wounded.

Don't use religion card in election

FROM PAGE 2

said poet and thinker Farhad Mazhar.

These historical facts must be clear.

"Politics and law are not the same thing. No mass uprising in this country ever followed the constitution. After the 5th August revolution, when the oath was taken on 8th August, I said at that very moment - this is a constitutional counter-revolution. Lawyers did this together."

They have no knowledge of politics, no knowledge of history and no understanding of Bangladesh's evolution and development.

period by one hour, from 7:30am to 4:30pm, as each voter will need to cast two votes - one for an MP candidate and another for the referendum. On October 27, the EC released the list of 42,761 polling stations across the country for the 13th parliamentary election, increasing the number by around 611 compared to the 2024 national election.

4 civilians

FROM PAGE 12

attacked with "light and heavy artillery" and that mortar fire had struck civilian homes.

Residents on the Afghan side of the border told AFP the exchange of fire broke out around 10:30 pm (1800 GMT) and lasted about two hours.

"Light and weak firing started then the tanks started firing and the mortars hit our houses," said Mahmood Khan, adding that a niece and two cousins were wounded.

SM Ali still unmatched

FROM PAGE 3

aspirations for equality. Through these experiences, Ali emerged as a progressive thinker.

He said Ali was a liberal democrat, respectful of others' opinions, and believed in the growth of different ideas in society. He dreamt of a pluralistic society for Bangladesh and for the world.

Former ambassador Farooq Sobhan said Ali often spoke about the challenges of realising his dream: mobilising resources, maintaining independence and integrity, and building a paper comparable to the best in the region.

Sobhan recalled that when Ali returned to Dhaka to launch The Daily Star, he did so despite health concerns and leaving a secure job. "He was taking a risk, a gamble, because he believed so strongly in this dream," he said.

He said The Daily Star has flourished despite numerous challenges, surviving in the way Ali believed an independent newspaper should, by safeguarding its integrity and serving as a voice for the nation and its people.

"You are fondly remembered and your legacy thrives and will live on," he said of Ali.

Editor of Chaarcha, Sohrab Hassan, said Ali envisioned a progressive, democratic and humane Bangladesh. "If we can build that Bangladesh, only then will our tribute to him be genuine," he said.

He said he had not known Ali personally, but

his book "After the Dark Night: Problems of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" left a deep impression. "This book did not feel like the work of a journalist alone. It felt like the work of a close observer of society," he said.

Hassan said Ali analysed politics, the economy, foreign relations and social instability "not just as a journalist, but as a sociologist".

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said he was proud to have stood beside his mentor in the last and greatest initiative of his life: building an international-standard newspaper in Bangladesh.

He said their conversations about journalistic values, ethics and responsibilities shaped his understanding of how journalism could influence society.

Although Ali passed away only two and a half years after the paper's launch, the lessons and dream he left behind became the groundwork for today's The Daily Star.

Aasha Mehreen Amin, joint editor of The Daily Star, said SM Ali believed journalism was a public service, in which public interest and truth must always come first.

"He valued independent journalism free from influence and insisted that the paper must never take a partisan stance. We must always remain objective, as he was," she said.

The event was moderated by The Daily Star journalist Emran Mahfuz.

Seven of a family burnt

FROM PAGE 3

months, but despite informing the landlord, no action was taken.

In a similar incident, four members of a family were injured in an explosion at a rented house in Patatta village of Sonargaon upazila in Narayanganj.

The injured are Alauddin, 35; his daughters, Shifa Akhter, 14, and Simla Akhter, 4; and

his mother, Jarina Begum, 65. They were taken to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Shaon Bin Rahman, resident surgeon at the institute, said Alauddin suffered 40 percent burns, Shifa 12 percent, Simla 30 percent, and Jarina 20 percent. Alauddin's sister Salma Akhter suspected the blast was caused by a gas stove-related problem.

89% journos fear

FROM PAGE 3

not concerned about investing in journalists' safety. He urged journalists to begin a "self revolution", warning that without action, "we will remain trapped".

Channel One Head of Input Parvez Nadir Reza said journalists face obstacles both in the field and in newsrooms. "We can witness realities, but often cannot broadcast them. Media owners must take this responsibility," he said.

Roksana Anzuman Nicole, assignment editor of Jamuna Television, said risks are even more pronounced for women reporters, who face sexually targeted abuse and online harassment intended to silence or discredit them.

Samakal Executive Editor Zakir Hasan and RTV Chief News Editor Elias Hossain spoke about ensuring that journalists can work independently during the next polls.

Ekattor Television Special Correspondent Shahnaz Sharmeen said political parties often make promises before the media,

but "these will never be implemented at the field level".

She urged media owners and policymakers to sit together to address the issue.

The discussion was also attended by MRDI Chairman Hasibur Rahman; AFP Dhaka Bureau Chief Sheikh Sabiha Alam; M Abul Kalam Azad, editor, special affairs at Times of Bangladesh; Massranga Television Special Correspondent Kawsar Soheli; Mustafizur Rahman, chief reporter of New Age; Jahidul Kabir, chief reporter of BNews24; The Business Standard Senior Correspondent Abbas Uddin Noyon; and Maria Petersson, project coordinator (Asia) of Fojo Media Institute, who joined online.

The space for free speech

FROM PAGE 12

Sara said. Memes, cartoons and satires play a significant role in questioning power, so space for these forms of art is very important, she said.

The cases against them shrink the democratic space and demonstrate the power of the complainants, which can even influence the judiciary.

"We all must resist this process," she said, adding that tolerance of criticism is a hallmark of democracy.

Sara said she learnt that Shadiq consulted the home ministry, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police and the Detective Branch before filing the case, which is very unusual.

"This means authorities are listening to those who are filing the case, but not the ones who are facing it." These people claim they are working to restore democracy, but their actions don't suggest that, Sara added.

The July uprising was possible because some people could question the then regime, but now that freedom of questioning is being restricted again after the fall of that regime,

said noted photographer Shahidul Alam.

"This is unfortunate. If those in power fail to tolerate criticism, they will create their path to fall."

Progress is possible only through questions and criticism.

"Otherwise, the society will walk backwards," he added.

It is an alarming trend that the mystic baul singers and cartoonists, satirists are facing cases, said Din M Sumon Rahman, head of media studies and journalism at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh.

"It is unthinkable these important elements of society will face attacks so soon after the July uprising."

Satires, cartoons and memes are established practices in democracy through which people's anger against the powerful can be ventilated. Otherwise, people can take to the streets to oust the regimes.

"Now, we can see that the new elites are very fragile and get embarrassed by the criticism - those wishing to establish moral supremacy cannot tolerate the free expressions," he added.

The religious majority people often speak of defamation of religion but they do not care about similar events when it comes to the minority communities, said rights activist Prapti Taposhi.

"How can these people restore democracy when they cannot establish the right to publish memes and satires?"

The DUCSU VP's case spoke of defaming its female leaders - they don't have a similar position when that happens to the marginalised women.

The case is very much politically motivated and not to prevent harassment of all women, Prapti added.

Newspapers almost stopped publishing satire magazines and political cartoons over the last decade because of repressive actions by the Awami League regime, said Simu Naser, editor of Earki.

"Such an attitude finally led to the regime's fall," he added.

Cartoonist Ahsan Habib, meme researcher Fayaz Ahmed, writer Firoze Ahmed and Supreme Court lawyer Priya Ahsan Chowdhury spoke among others.

PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 7

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-15	12-45	3-45	5-19	7-00
JAMAAT 5-50	1-15	4-00	5-22	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Making fertility care fairer: WHO issued first global infertility guideline

STAR HEALTH REPORT

The World Health Organisation (WHO) called on countries to make fertility care safer, fairer and more affordable as it released its first-ever global guideline for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of infertility. Affecting an estimated one in six people of reproductive age, infertility remained a major public health and equity issue worldwide. In many countries, access to care was limited, with most tests and treatments funded out-of-pocket. In some settings, a single round of IVF even costs double the average annual household income, pushing many into financial hardship.

The guideline set out 40 recommendations designed to strengthen prevention, diagnosis and treatment, urging countries to integrate fertility care into national health strategies and financing systems. The document promoted people-centred, evidence-based care and highlighted the emotional toll of infertility, which often led to distress, stigma and social isolation.

It recommended early information on fertility, healthier lifestyles, and the prevention of key risk factors such as untreated sexually transmitted infections and tobacco use. The guideline also detailed clinical pathways for diagnosing biological causes of infertility in men and women and advised progressing from simple management strategies to more advanced treatments such as intrauterine insemination or IVF.

Recognising gaps in current evidence, WHO called for continued research, noting that future editions would address fertility preservation, third-party reproduction and the impact of pre-existing medical conditions.

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION



A NEW ERA IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV Innovation amid disruption

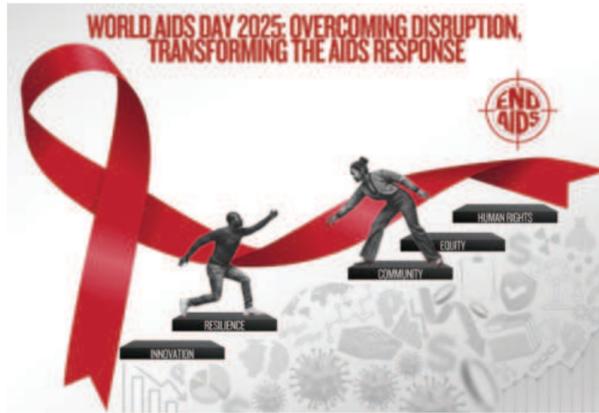
STAR HEALTH DESK

On 1 December, recognised globally as World AIDS Day, the World Health Organisation (WHO) called on governments and global partners to urgently expand access to new WHO-approved tools—most notably lenacapavir (LEN)—to drive down new infections and counter the severe disruption caused by recent foreign aid cuts.

Despite significant financial setbacks, the global HIV response in 2025 had shown remarkable momentum with the introduction and WHO approval of twice-yearly injectable lenacapavir for HIV prevention. LEN, a long-acting and highly effective alternative to daily oral PrEP, had been hailed as a transformative option for people facing stigma, structural barriers, or difficulties with adherence to regular medication. In July, WHO issued new guidelines recommending LEN as an additional PrEP choice, marking a major milestone in prevention efforts.

However, this progress unfolded against a challenging backdrop. Sharp, sudden reductions in international funding had disrupted HIV prevention, testing and treatment programmes worldwide. Community-led services—especially PrEP initiatives and harm reduction programmes for people who inject drugs—were scaled back or shut down entirely in several countries.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, warned that the global HIV response had reached a critical juncture. “We faced significant challenges with cuts to international funding and prevention stalling,” he said. “At the same time, we had significant opportunities, with new tools capable of shifting the trajectory of the epidemic. Ensuring access to these tools must have been the top priority for all governments and partners.”



Under the World AIDS Day theme “Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response”, WHO urged a dual-track approach: renewed solidarity and investment in innovations that protect and empower the communities most affected.

Data from 2024 illustrated the scale of the challenge. Global HIV prevention efforts had stagnated, with 1.3 million new infections, disproportionately affecting key and vulnerable populations. Almost half of all new infections (49%) occurred among sex workers, men who have sex with men, transgender women, people who inject drugs, and their sexual partners. Risk levels remained extremely high: sex workers and transgender women faced a 17-fold increased risk of acquiring HIV, men who have sex with men an 18-fold risk, and people who inject drugs a 34-fold risk. These disparities were fuelled by stigma, discrimination, and legal and social barriers that limited access to essential health care. Globally, 40.8 million people were living with HIV, and 630,000 people died from HIV-related causes.

The consequences of foreign aid

cuts were already evident. The AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition estimated that by October 2025, 2.5 million people who had used PrEP in 2024 had lost access in 2025 due solely to donor funding reductions—threatening hard-won progress toward ending AIDS by 2030.

Yet the year also signalled powerful momentum for innovation. WHO prequalified lenacapavir for prevention on 6 October 2025, leading to regulatory approvals in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia shortly afterwards.

WHO stressed that ending the AIDS epidemic depended on fully integrated, rights-based and community-centred approaches within primary health care systems. Despite funding setbacks, the resilience and leadership of affected communities continued to offer a clear path forward. By strengthening health systems, increasing domestic investment and protecting human rights, countries could safeguard progress and ensure no one was left behind.

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

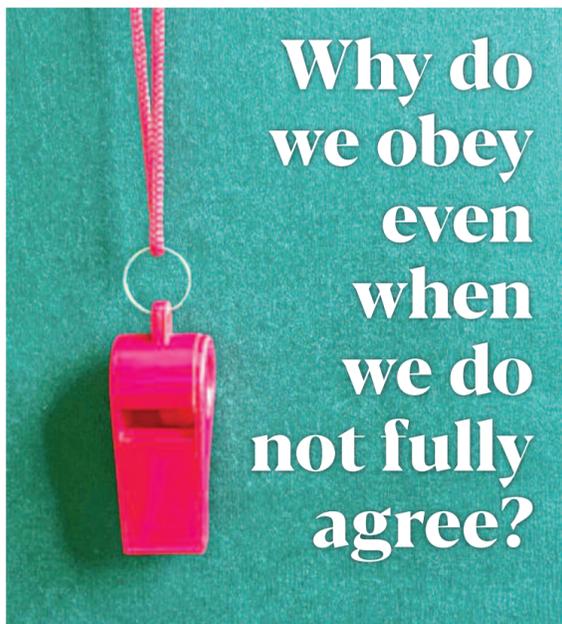
SOFT-STRONG-GLOWING Simple skincare habits that truly work

Healthy skin does not require expensive products or complicated routines—just smart, consistent habits that support your skin’s natural barrier. One of the best places to start is in the shower. Dermatologists advise keeping showers short and warm rather than long and hot. Hot water strips the skin of its natural oils, leaving it dry and tight, so limiting showers to around ten minutes and choosing warm water helps your skin stay hydrated.

Moisturising properly is equally essential. In cooler or drier weather, the skin loses hydration much more quickly, so using a rich cream becomes crucial. Creams are thicker and more effective than lotions at forming a protective barrier. Applying moisturiser immediately after stepping out of the shower, while the skin is still slightly damp, locks in moisture and keeps the skin soft throughout the day.

Choosing gentle cleansing products also makes a significant difference. Harsh soaps containing alcohol, strong fragrances or antibacterial agents can strip the skin and disrupt its balance. Switching to mild, fragrance-free cleansers or those enriched with moisturising ingredients helps maintain the skin’s natural oils instead of removing them. The gentler the product, the more comfortable and nourished your skin feels.

Small daily habits support overall skin health too. Drinking enough water, using sunscreen even on cloudy days, and avoiding excessive exfoliation all help protect the skin and keep it looking its best. Skincare does not need to be complicated; it simply needs to be consistent, gentle and tailored to what your skin truly needs.



SRINJOYA JUNAN

Imagine you are in a queue at an office. A staff member suddenly tells everyone to shift to a different line because ‘this one is closed.’ No explanation. No details. People look around, confused, but everyone quietly moves. You follow too, not because it makes perfect sense, but because the instruction came from someone who seemed to be in charge. No one argues. No one asks if there is a quicker option. Everyone simply obeys.

It seems like a small moment, but it reflects something bigger about human behaviour: we tend to obey authority automatically, even when a part of us hesitates.

This quiet willingness to comply is exactly what the psychologist Stanley Milgram set out to understand in the 1960s. His famous obedience experiment was designed to measure how far participants would go in obeying an authority figure who instructed them to perform acts that conflicted with their personal conscience.

On a psychological level, obedience gives us a sense of structure. It reduces uncertainty. It creates the feeling that someone else is responsible, not us. When a person who appears confident, knowledgeable, or powerful gives direction, our minds instinctively lean toward compliance. It feels safer than challenging or questioning, even when our instincts whisper that something feels off.

This dynamic plays out in everyday life far more often than we realise. Think of the student who stays silent in class even when they know the answer. The employee who agrees to extra work because saying ‘no’ feels risky. The friend who goes along with a group decision even though it makes them uncomfortable.

Understanding this pressure is important for our mental and emotional wellbeing. When people comply against their own values, they often experience guilt, tension, or self-blame later. Milgram’s experiment reminds us that this pattern is not a personal flaw. It is a psychological tendency shared by almost everyone. But awareness changes everything. When we recognise the pull of authority, we can pause, check in with ourselves, and ask: Is this truly aligned with what I believe? By understanding this tendency, we give ourselves the power to choose integrity over automatic obedience.

The writer is a Bangladeshi student of BA Psychology at the University of Pune, India. Email: srinjoyajunan@gmail.com

Is PCOS underdiagnosed in Bangladesh?

MD SAYEEM AL REZA

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is one of the most common hormonal disorders affecting women of reproductive age worldwide. In Bangladesh, small studies suggest that its prevalence ranges from about 6% among general gynaecology patients to over 90% in women with hirsutism.

Despite these numbers, a large proportion of women remain unaware of the condition. Research shows that around 63% of symptomatic women in Bangladesh are undiagnosed. Many only find out they have PCOS when they face difficulties conceiving.

Symptoms of PCOS can include irregular or infrequent periods, excessive facial or body hair, acne, weight gain (especially around the waist), and dark patches on the skin. Early diagnosis is crucial. Identifying PCOS promptly allows



women to manage symptoms, prevent long-term complications such as diabetes and heart disease, and improve fertility outcomes. Early intervention through lifestyle changes, medical treatment, and monitoring can make a significant difference in overall health and quality of life.

Lifestyle changes such as a healthy diet, regular exercise, and weight management are first-line approaches to control PCOS. Medications like metformin, hormonal contraceptives, or ovulation-inducing drugs may be used depending on the woman’s symptoms and fertility goals.

Raising awareness among women and healthcare providers is essential. Early detection and proper management can significantly improve health outcomes and quality of life for women in Bangladesh.

The writer is an MBBS final-year student at the Mugda Medical College. Email Address: mdsarn12012098@gmail.com

When a small crack becomes a crisis: The truth about giant toenail infections

Toenail infections might seem like minor inconveniences, but medical experts warn they can spiral into severe complications if ignored. Known in medical terms as onychomycosis or paronychia, these infections occur when fungi, bacteria, or sometimes even viruses invade the nail structure, particularly the nail bed, nail fold, or nail plate.

Most people dismiss early signs like nail thickening or mild discoloration. But those small changes often mark the beginning of a deeper infection that can affect walking, mobility, and even general health in diabetic patients.

How the infection begins: The infection usually starts when small cracks, cuts, or injuries develop around the nail fold or nail bed. These tiny entry points become gateways for fungi or bacteria, especially when the feet are kept in damp, warm conditions.

Hidden causes beneath the nail: Several key factors that increase vulnerability: prolonged moisture, poor foot hygiene, and tight footwear that compresses the nail fold. Many patients unknowingly damage their nails by cutting them too short or rounding the edges, which leads to ingrown nails and infections.

Underlying health conditions like diabetes, circulatory disorders, or weakened immunity can further

elevate the risk. Shared nail tools or footwear, particularly in gyms and salons, also act as silent carriers of fungal spores.

The infection cycle: What begins as a small injury can rapidly progress. First comes nail fold damage, followed by microbial invasion of the nail bed. The area becomes painful and inflamed, then the nail thickens and discolours, turning yellow, brown, or chalky white. If neglected, secondary infections



involving bacteria or even viruses may develop.

Expert-backed management: Early detection is crucial. If the nail starts thickening or separating from the bed, don’t wait. Start treatment immediately. Basic hygiene is the first line of defence: washing feet daily, drying between toes, and wearing breathable footwear.

For mild cases, topical antifungal creams or medicated nail lacquers

containing terbinafine or ciclopirox can help. For more advanced infections, doctors may prescribe oral antifungal medications.

Some natural remedies, such as tea tree oil and diluted vinegar soaks, have shown mild antifungal effects in research. However, home remedies can complement medical treatment but should never replace it. If the infection causes severe thickening, pain, or discharge, a podiatrist may need to partially or fully remove the affected nail to allow healthy regrowth.

Prevention is easier than cure: Healthy nail care habits are the simplest protection. Keep toenails clean and dry, avoid walking barefoot in communal areas like pools or locker rooms, and disinfect nail tools regularly. Always choose shoes that allow adequate air circulation and toe space.

Toenail infections are not merely cosmetic. They are a reflection of how well we care for our feet, one of the most neglected parts of the body. The takeaway is clear: a toenail infection does not start as a giant problem, but it can quickly become one. With attention, hygiene, and timely medical care, it is entirely preventable and curable.

The article is compiled by Raisa Mehzabeen, founder & CEO of Nutrition For Change. E-mail: raisameh20@gmail.com

Specialist in
ANTI-CANCER
Formulation with

Years of
EXCELLENCE



Amirul shines again as Bangladesh pip Korea

SPORTS REPORTER

Penalty corner specialist Amirul Islam scored yet another hat-trick as Bangladesh came from 2-0 down to beat South Korea 5-3 in a thrilling classification match of the FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup on Saturday.

Amirul, the tournament's leading scorer, extended his tally with his fourth hat-trick of the competition, guiding Bangladesh into the final of the Rising Stars Trophy (17th-place playoff) in their penultimate match at the Madurai International Hockey Stadium. The men in red and green will face Austria on Monday for the title.

The prolific drag flicker has now scored 15 goals in the tournament — 14 from penalty corners — giving him a commanding six-goal lead over his nearest challenger. He had also netted a hat-trick when Bangladesh fought back from three goals down to draw 3-3 against the same opposition in the group stage.

On Saturday, Korea's Lee Minhyeok, who scored twice in that earlier meeting, put his team 2-0 up by the 20th minute. But Amirul responded in spectacular fashion, scoring in the 21st and 24th minutes from penalty corners, before completing his hat-trick from a penalty stroke in the 35th minute to give Bangladesh the lead for the first time.

Obidul Islam Joy extended the advantage with a field goal in the 52nd minute, but Minhyeok completed his own hat-trick a minute later to keep Korea in the contest. However, Rakibul Hasan sealed the victory with a field goal in the final minute, ensuring Bangladesh finished with a two-goal cushion.

'Greatest-ever World Cup' promised

AGENCIES

The path to glory at the 2026 World Cup has now been laid out after the contenders discovered their tournament fate at Friday's draw ceremony in Washington.

Hogging the event's spotlight was

US president Donald Trump, who received FIFA's new peace prize on stage at the Kennedy Center prior to the draw for the first 48-team World Cup.

"It will be the greatest World Cup ever," FIFA president Gianni Infantino claimed. "This is like 104 Super Bowls

in one month — this is the magnitude of what we are organising."

For the first time, the draw was done in such a way as to ensure the four highest-ranked nations were kept apart — Spain, Argentina, France and England cannot meet before the semi-finals, if all top their groups.

"We're going to give it our all and try to do what we did in the last World Cup... not give up on any ball."

Lionel Scaloni, Argentina head coach

"It could have been an easier draw, but we have a clear goal of finishing first in the group."

Carlo Ancelotti, Brazil head coach

"The fact that we are seen as favourites is a recognition of the level of Spanish football... but that praise won't weaken us."

Luis De La Fuente, Spain head coach

"It's a difficult group... Croatia were the top seeds in pot two and Ghana are a regular in the World Cups, and they have some of the best players playing in the Premier League."

Thomas Tuchel, England head coach

"It will be a great duel [between France and Norway]. Both teams have lots of other big names, but of course Kylian [Mbappe] and [Erling] Haaland will be two of the contenders to be the top scorer."

Didier Deschamps, France head coach

"It is a fantastic draw for Curacao. To play the opening match against a major football nation like Germany is of course wonderful."

Dick Advocaat, Curacao head coach



- Megastars Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo could meet as early as the quarterfinals.
- Brazil and England could also clash in the last eight, while a Brazil-Argentina blockbuster could unfold in the semifinals.
- France vs Germany could be one of the hottest fixtures in the round of 16.
- France-Spain or Germany-Spain are also possible matchups in the last four.

GROUPS

Group A: Mexico, South Africa, Korea Republic, Czechia/Denmark/North Macedonia / Ireland

Group B: Canada, Qatar, Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina/Italy/Northern Ireland /Wales

Group C: Brazil, Morocco, Haiti, Scotland

Group D: USA, Paraguay, Australia, Kosovo/Romania/Slovakia/Turkey

Group E: Germany, Curaçao, Cote d'Ivoire, Ecuador

Group F: Netherlands, Japan, Albania/Poland/Sweden/Ukraine, Tunisia

Group G: Belgium, Egypt, Iran, New Zealand

Group H: Spain, Cabo Verde, Saudi Arabia, Uruguay

Group I: France, Senegal, Bolivia/Iraq/Suriname, Norway

Group J: Argentina, Algeria, Austria, Jordan

Group K: Portugal, Congo DR/Jamaica/New Caledonia, Uzbekistan, Colombia

Group L: England, Croatia, Ghana, Panama

** Multiple teams for one spot mean teams would qualify through playoffs

FIFA unveils fixtures for 2026
WORLD CUP



SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ THE FULL STORY

Boateng hat-trick lifts Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER

Last season's top scorer Samuel Boateng's hat-trick helped Mohammedan thrash PWD Sports Club 4-0 to climb to fourth place in the Bangladesh Football League in Cumilla on Friday.

Boateng, who netted 21 goals for Rahmatganj last season, scored all three of his goals in the second half — between the 67th and 82nd minutes — after Muzaffarov had given the defending champions a 32nd-minute lead through penalty.

The win lifted the Black and Whites to fourth position with seven points, six behind runaway leaders Bashundhara Kings.

Meanwhile, Abahani were held to a frustrating goalless draw by Fortis FC at the Bashundhara Kings Arena.

The dull draw left Abahani in seventh place with five points, while Fortis consolidated third position with eight points.

Rahmatganj kept the pressure on Bashundhara Kings with a 3-0 victory over Arambagh in Munshiganj, moving to 10 points, three behind Kings, while Arambagh remained rooted to the bottom with a solitary point.

Elsewhere, Bangladesh Police drew 1-1 with Fakirepool.

SHORT CORNER



Arsenal's 18-match unbeaten run ends

Aston Villa ended Premier League leaders Arsenal's long unbeaten run as Emiliano Buendia scored with virtually the last kick of the game to secure a 2-1 victory that put his side right in the title mix at Villa Park on Saturday.

Kane cameo hat-trick as Bayern blast past Stuttgart

Harry Kane came off the bench to score a hat-trick as Bayern Munich thrashed Stuttgart 5-0 on a day of late drama in the Bundesliga on Saturday.

Jaiswal hits ton as India thrash SA

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal hit his maiden one-day international century as India clinched the three-match series 2-1 with a crushing nine-wicket win over South Africa on Saturday.

Anisur, Marshall shine with tons

Runs flowed in Mirpur as Dhaka Division's Anisur Islam Emon and Marshall Ayub struck centuries, helping their side pile up 356-2 against Chattogram Division on the opening day of the final round match of the National Cricket League (NCL) on Saturday.

Read full stories on The Daily Star website.

A draw that feels 'like a win'

AGENCIES

Justin Greaves carved his name even deeper into West Indies folklore on Saturday, crafting a monumental unbeaten 202 that carried his side to a draw so spirited it felt like a victory.

For a seam bowling allrounder who only debuted a year earlier—one of four new caps on the 2023-24 tour of Australia—this was another chapter in a compelling Test career.

Back then, in Brisbane's day-night Test, he contributed a vital 33 and removed Marnus Labuschagne as West Indies sealed a famous eight-run win, their first Test triumph in Australia since 1997. But this effort in Christchurch was something else entirely.

Set an impossible 531 to win — 113 more than the highest successful chase in Test history — the visitors instead built the second-highest fourth-innings total ever recorded, finishing at 457-6.

Greaves batted for nearly ten hours, faced 388 balls, and refused every invitation to relent. His method was unglamorous but ironclad, the steady

heartbeat of a resistance that grew session by session.

Crucially, he found partners when he needed them most. First came a 196-run stand with Shai Hope, whose stylish 140 revived an innings that had slumped to 72-4.

Greaves, already known in the Caribbean for his composure under pressure thanks to that Brisbane performance, once again embraced the long haul. But the defining alliance was the unbroken 180 he forged with Kemar Roach; Roach battling to a career-best 58, surviving five chances, and shutting down New Zealand's wounded attack one dot ball at a time.

"Kemar, the senior pro, guided me all the way," Greaves said. "To be part of history is exciting, but it's one day at a time for me."

Captain Roston Chase called it "a win in every way but name," praising both men for a rearguard that echoed the spirit of their breakthrough victory in Australia.

New Zealand, by contrast, walked off as if defeated. "When you're so close to winning, it does have that feeling," Tom Latham admitted.

In the end, the final hour brought no miracle chase — only the quiet, defiant triumph of survival.



JUSTIN GREAVES
202* off 388
564 minutes
19 fours



STARAC STEALS THE SHOW

Australia's Mitchell Starc defends with utmost caution during a superb 77 off 141 deliveries — the highest score ever by a No. 9 at the Gabba — on a scorching third day of the second Ashes Test in Brisbane yesterday. Starc's resistance, which included a 75-run stand with No. 10 Scott Boland (21) and featured the second-most balls faced in the match after England's Joe Root's 206-ball 136, lifted the series-leaders to 511 in their first innings before the left-arm pacer struck twice under lights to take eight wickets in the contest so far — 18 for the series — leaving the visitors on 134-6 at stumps, still needing 43 runs to avoid an innings defeat.

PHOTO: AFP



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



SHAH CEMENT
BANGLADESH'S
NO. 1 CEMENT BRAND

EC meets today to set course for polls, referendum

STAR REPORT

The Election Commission, led by CEC AMM Nasir Uddin, will meet today to review overall preparations and finalise the date for announcing the schedule for the upcoming national election and referendum.

EC officials said all necessary preparations to announce the election schedule have been completed, and the date for the announcement will most likely be finalised at today's meeting, reports UNB.

"We've completed 100 percent preparations and the date for the election schedule has not been finalised yet," EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told a training workshop at the Electoral Training Institute in Agargaon.

The secretary said white ballot papers would be used for the general election, while pink ballot papers



SEE PAGE 9 COL 5



HAZARD ALERT... Eight months after this footbridge near Kuril was demolished for the Dhaka Elevated Expressway, exposed iron rods still poke out of the ground dangerously close to the airport road, making the area unsafe for pedestrians and vehicles alike.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CASE AGAINST MEME CREATORS

The space for free speech shrinking again

Rights activists warn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Filing cases against cartoonists, meme creators and satirists is a serious blow to freedom of expression, said rights activists, writers and cartoonists.

"We saw such behaviours by the previous government that led to the jailing and fleeing of cartoonists," said Supreme Court lawyer Sara Hossain yesterday at a discussion titled "Satirical memes and cartoons: expression or defamation" organised by citizens' platform Nagorik Coalition.

The discussion was called in light of Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) Vice President Abu Shadik Kayem's filing a case with Shahbagh Police Station on December 2, against 18 individuals and more than 15 Facebook pages, including the satirical platform "Earki", alleging cyber harassment.

He said the accused circulated "edited, obscene and defamatory content" targeting him, the other Ducusu leaders and female students.

"The meaning of such cases is to create a fearful environment for the artists, writers and meme creators. They can avoid seeing the satires or cartoons if they cannot tolerate them, but why should they file a case?"

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Anisul, Manju to announce new political alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new political alliance, led by a Jatiya Party faction chairman Anisul Islam Mahmud and JP Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju, is set to launch tomorrow ahead of the upcoming national election.

Contacted, Ruhul Amin Hawlader, secretary general of the Anisul-led faction, said the new alliance, which will involve 12-15 parties, will be formally launched at a press conference at Emmanuelle's Party Centre in the capital's Gulshan-1 on Monday.

Anisul said the name and details of the new alliance will be announced at the briefing.

Meanwhile, a party source said that most of the parties that will be included in the alliance are either small or not widely known.

The development came as two factions, one of which is led by GM Quader, brother of the late party founder HM Ershad, each claimed ownership of the party's electoral symbol, the plough.

The symbol is currently registered with the GM Quader-led faction.

Mujibul Haque Channu, an executive chairman of the Anisul-led JP, told this newspaper that Jatiya Party (JP) led by Anwar Hossain, Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar), and other factions that broke off from the JP will join the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

The abuse that leaves no bruise

Violence Against Women survey 2024 shows 68 percent of Intimate Partner Violence survivors face controlling behaviour

NILIMA JAHAN

When 32-year-old Akhi (not her real name) finally left her marriage last year, it was not the beatings that drove her away. It was the slow erasure of her being.

Soon after the wedding, her husband forced her to quit a six-year corporate career. Over the next four years, he dictated what she wore, what she cooked, which friends and relatives she could meet, and even when she had to sleep.

"At first, I thought these were just the 'normal adjustments' of married life," she said.

"But the rules kept expanding. He demanded my phone password, monitored my calls and social media, forced me to remove male friends and former colleagues, and even sent messages to them pretending to be me to check if I was in any relationship. He also insisted I keep my location on whenever I stepped out.

"If I was late replying to his messages, he accused me of infidelity. He never

VICTIMS BY REGION
HIGHEST
Khulna, Barishal (73%)
LOWEST
Dhaka (63%)

VICTIMS BY AGE
HIGHEST
Ages 15-19 (59.1%)
LOWEST
Over 60 (21.5%)



hit me, but he controlled every part of my life. I felt like I was living in a prison."

Akhi's experience is far from unique. Across Bangladesh, controlling behaviour has long existed as psychological abuse that leaves no marks and rarely enters police or medical records.

The Violence Against Women (VAW) Survey 2024, conducted on 27,476 women aged 15 and above nationwide, by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and UNFPA, found that 68 percent of women who faced intimate partner violence (IPV) experienced controlling behaviour. The rate was 71.1 percent among divorced, separated, or widowed women.

Experts warn such coercive control is often the first step toward physical violence, economic deprivation, sexual coercion, and femicide.

The survey measured restrictions on women's autonomy, decision-making, and social interactions.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

Country trapped in Awami-era power deals

Says TIB's Iftekharuzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has no capability to get rid of the deals that were signed by the ousted Awami League government, said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

The companies that benefited from such a deal would remain in operation on one hand, and on the other hand, the people would have to bear the burdens of such deals for years, he said yesterday at the inauguration of Bangladesh Energy Conference 2025.

It is a very important finding from the national committee to review the power sector deals that the then government committed an "organised crime" in signing the deals and used state organs in this regard, Iftekharuzzaman.

"We cannot be overly angry with those who have benefited from this organised crime."

The reason is that these were agreements made between the state and state-level actors.

"The state does not have the capacity to simply withdraw from the agreements that have been made for the future."

It seems that it is not possible for the government to go to the international courts.

As a result, the responsibility will lie with the companies (with whom the deals were signed) and the burden will have to be borne by the people of this country, he said.

The companies, as well as the fossil fuel lobbies, are still active in the power sector.

"The sector's progress is always in strong opposition to those lobbies. We are now aiming for Net Zero Transition, but that lobby is very much strong."

In contrast, the groups who are working on renewable energy would need to build a clear national roadmap

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

4 civilians, soldier killed in Afghan-Pak border clash

Kabul says 5 civilians hurt

AFP, Kandahar

An overnight exchange of gunfire and shelling at a major Pakistan-Afghanistan border crossing killed four civilians and one soldier, Afghan officials said yesterday, the latest flare-up of fighting between the two countries despite a ceasefire since deadly clashes in October.

Five other civilians were wounded, an Afghan government spokesman, Hamdullah Fitrat, said in a video statement.

The local hospital at the Pakistani border town of Chaman said three people suffered minor injuries during the fighting.

Each side accused the other of launching "unprovoked" attacks at the crossing between Chaman and Spin Boldak, in southern Afghanistan.

"Unfortunately, tonight, the Pakistani side started attacking Afghanistan in Kandahar, Spin Boldak district, and the forces of the Islamic Emirate were forced to respond," Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid posted on X late Friday.

Pakistan said Afghan forces fired first. "A short while ago, the Afghan Taliban regime resorted to unprovoked firing" along the border, Mosharruf Zaidi, a spokesman for Pakistan's prime minister, said on X.

Ali Mohammed Haqmal, head of Kandahar's information department, said that Pakistani forces

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



People stand near a building hit in a Russian missile and drone strike in the town of Slobzhanske in Ukraine's Dnipro region yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Ex-Jubo Dal man in police custody dies in Jashore hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A former local leader of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal died in custody after falling ill following his arrest during an operation by the joint forces in Jashore's Keshabpur upazila on Friday night.

The deceased was identified as Ujjal Biswas, 39, a member of the Keshabpur municipality Jubo Dal and the younger brother of former ward councillor Afzal Hossain.

He was declared dead by doctors at Jashore General Hospital around 10:30pm last night after being brought in from Jashore Central Jail, Keshabpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Anwar Hossain confirmed to The Daily Star.

Ujjal was accused in 10 cases, the OC added.

On Thursday night, joint forces conducted a raid and arrested four individuals, including Ujjal, reportedly with firearms, homemade weapons, and drugs.

The OC said Ujjal appeared ill when the joint forces handed him