



EC all set for polls, referendum in Feb

Chief election commissioner tells Yunus

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission has wrapped up the bulk of its preparations to conduct the national polls and the referendum, a rare twin political exercise slated for February.

At a meeting yesterday, the EC cleared its final checklist. The election schedule will be announced within this week, voting hours will be extended by one hour, additional secret booths will be arranged where possible, presiding and polling officials will be finalised, and the timeline for dispatching ballot papers to centres has been set.

In keeping with tradition, the commission met head of the government Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at Jamuna yesterday and has sought an appointment with President Mohammed Shahabuddin before publishing the schedule. The Bangabhaban later

confirmed the appointment for Wednesday noon.

During the meeting with Yunus, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin said, "All preparations for holding the elections are progressing properly and smoothly. The commission is fully ready to organise both the national election and the referendum in the first half of February."

The Chief Adviser's Press Wing added that the commissioners expressed gratitude for the government's cooperation, and noted that election activities were already visible across the country.

Expressing satisfaction, Yunus said, "In the interest of free and fair elections, the government will continue to provide all necessary support to the Election Commission. In this long-awaited election, you [the EC] are in the driver's seat. We must reach the desired goal. We are moving forward to present

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- Schedule to be announced this week
- Voting hours extended by one hour
- Additional secret booths will be arranged
- EC to meet president on Wednesday



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Rasheda Begum's son Sohel Rana left home to join the mass protests in Shyampur on July 18 last year and never returned. She was later told he was buried as an identified victim. Holding a photo of his lifeless body, she stood teary-eyed and hopeful to finally find her son's grave at the Rayerbazar graveyard, where the CID yesterday began exhuming the bodies of 114 unidentified martyrs of the July uprising for identification. Story on page 12.

300 companies ask BB for Tk 2 lakh crore loan rescheduling

Tk 26,114cr debt rescheduled as central bank disposes of 900 out of 1,516 applications

MD MEHEDI HASAN

About 300 companies, including top defaulter conglomerates, have applied to the Bangladesh Bank for loan rescheduling or restructuring facilities totalling around Tk 2 lakh crore in the first nine months of the year.

Applicants include S Alam Group, Beximco Group, Nassa Group, Orion Group, Deshbandhu Group, Bashundhara Group, Abdul Monem Group, Tanaka Group, Dandy Dyeing, Bengal Group, Ambient Steel BD, GPH Ispat, Prime Group, Anwar Group, Silkway Group, Shadab Fashion, and Apex Weaving, according to a BB report.

Sikder Group, Diamond Spinning Mills, Mim Group (Alem Textile), SMA Group (AA Knit Spin), BUC Agro, Rising Steel, Bling Leather Products, Ankur Specialised Cold Storage, Sourav Aluminium Works, Intensity Limited and Global Asset have also applied.

The businesses are seeking repayment periods ranging from five to 15 years, with down payments as low as 1 percent to 2 percent and grace periods of up to three years, officials familiar with the matter told The Daily Star.

Against applications seeking the rescheduling of Tk 196,047 crore in loans, banks rescheduled Tk 26,114 crore debts, including Tk 13,747 crore defaulted

- Defaulted loans stood at Tk 6.44 lakh crore or 36% of total loans
- Tk 4 lakh crore default loans stuck in lawsuits
- Defaulted loans concentrated among top 50 borrowers
- BB asks banks to reduce bad loans through rescheduling policy
- Wilful defaulters also applied for the facility

loans, according to the BB report.

In January, the central bank formed a five-member committee, led by the executive director of the Department of Offsite Supervision, to provide necessary policy support for restructuring or rescheduling corporate borrowers that defaulted due to factors beyond their control.

The committee's process of holding tripartite meetings with borrowing institutions or groups and financing institutions concluded on September 30.

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'People saw what they did in 1971'

Tarique takes jab at Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a dig at Jamaat-e-Islami, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said the nation saw how the party killed hundreds of thousands and violated countless mothers and sisters during the Liberation War.

He made the remark in response to what he said were some quarters spreading on social media that "they had seen this party and that party and that it was time to see a different party now".

"But the people of this country had already seen that party in 1971... how they killed hundreds of thousands to shield their own interests. They not only killed people, but their cohorts also violated countless mothers and sisters. We must remember this."

The BNP leader was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the party's six-day "Plan to Build the Country" programme at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh auditorium in the capital's Farmgate.

Tarique alleged that a certain party is peddling promises or guarantees - understood by many as tickets to heaven - for political gains. He then stressed that making claims over matters reserved for the Almighty amounts to a violation of faith.

Tarique urged Chhatra Dal leaders and activists to go door to door and tell people that those who preach such notions commit "shirk" - and those who accept them risk falling into it as well.

Again, without directly naming Jamaat leaders, Tarique said they are spreading propaganda against BNP, much like the previous government did.

"We recently noticed a few individuals or parties making those same baseless claims. But here is the question: two of their senior leaders were in our government at that time. Both have passed away. They



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Khaleda undergoes several tests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's condition remains unchanged, with her medical board keeping her under close observation at the capital's Evercare Hospital.

BNP media cell said this last night, quoting the former prime minister's personal physician, AZM Zahid Hossain.

Contacted, BNP Health Affairs Secretary Rafiqul Islam said, "Dr Zubaida Rahman is closely monitoring Madam Khaleda's treatment. She has talked with the doctors on the medical board formed for her treatment."

Sources said several tests were done, and doctors reviewed the results and discussed the next steps for her treatment.

Zubaida yesterday visited her mother-in-law and spoke with the doctors.

On Saturday, Zahid, 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, Zahid said an air ambulance is on standby for the BNP chief.

"But even though it is

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NCP, AB Party, Rastro Songskar Andolan forge new alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After months of talks, National Citizen Party, Amar Bangladesh Party (AB Party) and Bangladesh Rastro Songskar Andolan have formed a new alliance ahead of February's national polls.

NCP convener Nahid Islam yesterday formally announced the launch of the alliance, named Gonotantrik Songskar Jote, at a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital.

Nahid, also the spokesperson for the alliance, made the announcement flanked by AB Party Chairman Mojibur Rahman Monju, Rastro Songskar Andolan President Hasnat Kayum, and others.

The parties' leaders said they are working to expand the combine, with talks underway with Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD Rob) and Nagorik Oikya.

Although expected to join the coalition, the Gono Odhikar Parishad eventually chose to opt out, according to a UNB report.

"Any party aligned with the spirit of the July uprising or interested in state reform is welcome to join [the alliance]," Nahid told reporters, adding that the alliance was forged to ensure state reforms and economic independence.

"Instead of pursuing reforms, the major parties are consumed by greed for seats in alliance with others... We have long been fighting for a sovereign Bangladesh. We, the allied parties, will stand together. This is not just an electoral alliance; it is a political alliance.

"We hope this alliance will stay united and contest the polls under one symbol... This election is not about the mere exchange of power; our goal is reform."

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This is not just an electoral alliance; it is a political alliance. Nahid Islam, NCP convener

Fifty-three years after independence, many stories of the Liberation War remain untold. Part 4 of this 12-part series turns to Shibpur in Narsingdi, where leftist youths gathered under Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan's leadership and carved a fierce chapter of the war.

Shibpur: A leftist fortress built by the Mannan Bhuiyan Bahini

AHMAD ISTIAK

Across the villages in and around Shibpur in Narsingdi, a fierce guerrilla force rose during the Liberation War. Formed at the initiative of the Purbo Bangla Somonnoy Committee of communist revolutionaries and led by leftist student leader Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, it came to be known simply as the Mannan Bhuiyan Bahini.

More than 1,200 fighters took up arms under its banner; in its camps, over 4,000 young men and women drawn by conviction took training. Though rooted in Shibpur, the force's reach stretched from Arahajar in Narayanganj to Katiadi in Kishoreganj.

Their exploits echo through books, such as Haider Anwar Khan's "Ekattorer Ronangon: Shibpur", Haider Akbar Khan Rono's "Shatabdi Periy", and Mannan Bhuiyan's own "Jiban o Sangram".

This correspondent travelled through Shibpur in August and September, speaking with 30-35 freedom fighters who once moved through that landscape like

shadows.

Their story begins before the war. On February 22, 1970, at a rally of the Purbo Bangla Somonnoy Committee at Paltan Maidan in Dhaka, young leaders called for an independent, democratic East Bengal.

Mustafa Jamal Haider, 83, recalled to The Daily Star, "We were hounded for giving speeches. Later, the military court sentenced Kazi Jafar and Rashed Khan Menon to seven years, and me and Mahub Ullah to one."

Even so, the preparations for an armed struggle continued.

Years earlier, from 1965-67, on Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani's instruction, Mannan Bhuiyan, then Chhatra Union (Menon) general secretary, had formed farmers' associations in the villages of Shibpur. When 1971 dawned, he began organising students, youth, and farmers.

On the afternoon of March 25, Mannan Bhuiyan hoisted the flag of independent Bangladesh at a rally in

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TALES OF FREEDOM

বিশিষ্ট শিল্পপতি, লীরা গ্রুপ অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ -এর
ম্যানেজিং ডিরেক্টর

কে. এম. আলমগীর ইকবাল

অল কমিউনিটি ক্লাব লিমিটেড (ACCL) -এর
প্রেসিডেন্ট

২০২৫-২০২৬ হিসাবে পুনরায় নির্বাচিত হওয়ায়

শ্রদ্ধেয়া ও অভিনন্দন

আপনার সুস্বাস্থ্য, দীর্ঘায়ু ও মানব সেবায় আপনার অবদান
অব্যাহত থাকুক -
এই প্রত্যশা ও দোয়া আমাদের সবার পক্ষ থেকে।

লীরা গ্রুপ অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ -এর সকল কর্মকর্তা ও
কর্মচারিবৃন্দ

LIRA
WITH PLASTIC SINCE 1965
আমরাই প্রথম, আমরাই সেরা

ROKEYA PADAK Ruvana, Kalpana, Nabila, Ritu Porna to get it this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to award four women the Rokeya Padak in recognition of their significant contributions in their respective fields.

Ruvana Rakib has been selected in the category of women's education (research), Kalpana Akter in women's rights (labour rights), Nabila Idris in human rights, and Ritu Porna Chakma in women's awakening (sports), the Cabinet Division confirmed yesterday.

The award-giving ceremony will be held at the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium tomorrow. The laureates will be honoured at the event, which will be chaired by Sharmin Murshid, the women and children affairs adviser.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will attend as the chief guest.

The Rokeya Padak is named after Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, a pioneer of Bengali women's education and a social reformer for ensuring equal rights for women and men.



Election commissioners, led by their chief AMM Nasir Uddin, meet Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at Jamuna yesterday to brief him about preparations for the upcoming election and referendum.

PHOTO: PTD

DIG faces inquiry over obscene messages to junior colleague

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry has launched a departmental inquiry against Deputy Inspector General Mohammad Abu Sufian over allegations of sending an obscene video clip and disturbing messages to a junior female colleague through his Facebook Messenger.



Abu Sufian

Signed by the ministry's senior secretary, a show-cause notice was issued to the DIG on November 24, asking him to submit a written explanation in 10 working days as to why he should not be dismissed from service and handed down a penalty for the alleged misconduct. It added that he could provide his answer within the stipulated time or opt for a personal hearing for self-defence.

Contacted by The Daily Star yesterday, Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam confirmed that the allegations were currently being investigated by the home ministry.

Following the initiation of the inquiry, Sufian was transferred from his post as commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police to the Police Headquarters.

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'People saw what they did in 1971'

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were respected political figures, and we should not speak ill of those who are no longer alive.

"What we can say is that they stayed in the BNP government until the very last day, showing their full confidence in Begum Khaleda Zia's fight against corruption."

He said the allegations of corruption during the BNP rule were raised, but now, with a more independent judiciary, no charges against them have been proven.

"All those were only propaganda. So, the conclusion remains - only BNP has been able to pull Bangladesh away from corruption in the past, and only BNP will be able to do it again."

Tarique pointed out that he has been saying since August 5 last year that the days ahead would not be easy.

"More difficult times are awaiting us. Different conspiracies are being hatched from different directions. Only the people can stop these plots, and BNP, together with the people, can resist them."

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir inaugurated

the programme in the morning with BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi in the chair.

FOCUS ON 8 SECTORS

BNP yesterday outlined an eight-sector plan it says it will implement if voted to power, covering family welfare, agriculture, health, education, sports, environment, religious affairs, and employment.

The pledges were highlighted at a six-hour training session where more than 1,000 Chhatra Dal leaders and activists were briefed on how to present the commitments to voters.

Under its Family Card, BNP plans to provide Tk 2,000 2,500 monthly assistance or essential food items to 50 lakh women.

For farmers, the proposed Farmer Card would ensure fair prices for fertiliser, seeds, and pesticides, along with incentives, easy-term loans, and insurance.

BNP's health sector plan promises one lakh new health workers - 80 percent of them women - for door-to-door screening of common diseases.

It pledges round-the-clock free medicine through primary health centres, affordable treatment for

major illnesses, expanded maternal care at upazila hospitals, and year-round mosquito-control initiatives.

In education, the party plans to provide tablet computers to teachers, set up multimedia classrooms, introduce a "Learning with Happiness" curriculum at Class Six, and make technical education compulsory.

Arabic, Japanese, and Korean would be offered as third languages, alongside mid-day meals and improved toilet facilities.

The party also pledges compulsory technical education from Class Four and sports villages in all 64 districts.

Its environment plan includes re-excavating 20,000km of canals and rivers and planting 25 crore trees.

BNP also promises monthly honorariums and festival allowances for imams, khatibs, and muezzins, along with support for other religious institutions.

On employment, the party plans to provide free internet at educational institutions and short-term training for foreign languages and skills development.

EC all set for polls, referendum in Feb

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the nation with the finest election in its history."

SCHEDULE THIS WEEK

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret) Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah told reporters after the meeting at the EC, "We will announce the schedule [for national polls and referendum] this week."

Asked whether BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's illness could delay the announcement, he said, "Political parties have expressed both support and opposition to such views. These are political statements. The EC is proceeding according to its own judgment, in line with its earlier commitment and the government's plan."

EC officials noted that election day is typically before or after a weekend, either Sunday or Thursday.

February 13 and 14 are weekends, and the last three national elections were all held on Sundays.

EXTENDED VOTING HOURS

With two ballots to be cast, time management has become a key concern. Voting will now run from 7:30am to 4:30pm, extending polling by an hour, with half an hour added to morning and afternoon sessions. Election day will be a public holiday.

Where space allows, additional booths will be set up.

A mock vote on November 29 showed that casting two ballots took a voter 3 minutes 52 seconds on average, about two minutes for those who did not read the ballot, and 7-8 minutes for those who did.

The EC has finalised plans for 42,761 polling centres and 2,44,739 booths. Each centre will serve about 3,000 voters, with one booth for every 600 male or 500 female voters.

With eight hours of polling, each voter will have 48-58 seconds inside the booth.

BALLOT PAPERS

The EC decided that all election materials, including ballot papers, will reach polling stations the day before voting.

Asked whether this could revive

allegations of overnight ballot-stuffing, Sanaullah said, "The EC is confident that such events will not occur this time. The commission aims to restore public confidence and will remain vigilant to ensure the process is free from disruption."

During the January 7, 2024 polls, ballots were delivered to 93 percent of centres on election morning, except remote areas. Traditionally, ballots were dispatched the previous day, a practice questioned after 2018 when opposition parties alleged ballot box stuffing before dawn.

Ballot printing for expatriate voters begins today, with dispatch starting tomorrow. These overseas ballots will not feature candidate names, only party and independent symbols, allowing voters to select their choice once nominations are finalised.

For the referendum campaign, the EC will support the government's programmes. To make the referendum question easily visible, a large-size sample ballot will be displayed before the voter queue at every polling centre, Sanaullah added.

PRESIDING, RETURNING OFFICERS

The EC has prepared lists of presiding, assistant presiding, and polling officers, drawing from government, semi-government, autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies, and state-owned banks.

"Private bank officials will remain on reserve and engaged only if necessary," Sanaullah said.

On returning officers, he said the meeting did not finalise appointments. Traditionally, deputy commissioners serve as ROs in the 64 districts and divisional commissioners in Dhaka and Chattogram. BNP has proposed appointing EC officials instead, and some EC staff have echoed the call.

"Usually, deputy commissioners serve as returning officers. Other proposals are under consideration. The EC is reviewing these, and a decision will be announced in due course," Sanaullah said.

Asked about demands to bar the Jatiya Party and 14-party alliance partners from contesting, he replied, "The commission's stance is that those permitted by law will be able to take part in the polls. The law specifies who can and cannot contest."

On whether an adviser in the interim government may run, he said, "You will see in due time. It is probably not possible."

The commission has already published the final voter list, completed delimitation of the 300 constituencies, approved registration for two new political parties with two more pending, and launched a mobile app for expatriate voter registration.

Meanwhile, the government has amended the Representation of the People Order, updated the electoral code of conduct, and nearly completed major reshuffles in field administration and the police.

NCP, AB Party

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He added, "However, the legal process regarding the issue of contesting the election under a single symbol will be further reviewed, and more details will be provided after that analysis."

According to a recent amendment to the Representation of the People Order 1972, candidates in an alliance must use their own electoral symbols instead of the coalition leader's symbol.

Nahid also said that the three parties should have come together earlier but could not due to unfortunate circumstances, adding that they tried to reach an understanding with older parties for reforms, "but it was a mistake."

AB Party Chairman Monju said the alliance aims to serve as a platform for political reforms, while Bangladesh Rastro Songskar Andolan President Hasnat Kayum said that Bangladesh "will no longer return to its old ways."

"We came together today [yesterday] to work towards a reformed and new Bangladesh," he said.

Shibpur: A leftist fortress

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Shibpur Pilot High School. After the horror of the night that followed, central Chhatra Union leaders fled Dhaka for Shibpur, with Kazi Jafar, Menon, Rono among them.

Filmmaker Zahir Raihan also took shelter in Shibpur on his way to India. His car was used by the freedom fighters before he crossed the border through Joshar Bazar.

On March 27, on Mannan Bhuiyan's orders and under the leadership of Mannan Khan, students and youth began weapons training on the high school grounds with rifles.

"The training was led by Majnu Mridha and Haris Mollah of the Bengal Regiment," Mannan Khan, now 81, told this newspaper. "Towards the end of April, I went to India with 30-35 freedom fighters to collect weapons and for higher training."

In the first week of May, Pakistani forces struck Shibpur, raiding the homes of farmer leaders Rob Khan and Rafiq Dakat in Chakradha. Freedom fighters led by Majnu Mridha ambushed them near Bandhaidhya Bridge.

Freedom fighter Abdul Latif, 78, remembered, "As soon as the military reached the bridge, we attacked together. Some soldiers were injured. Even after we pulled back, they kept firing until morning."

After the clash, the force set up headquarters at Abdul Khalek's house in Bilsharan and opened a training camp at Ashrafpur School. Weapons came in through many channels. After the Demra Panchdona battle, Bangalee soldiers retreated, leaving a cache behind.

Freedom fighter Totazzal Hossain, 75, recalled, "Naval Siraj collected the weapons, which reached us through Majnu Mridha and Mannan Khan." New camps sprang up across Shibpur.

Shibpur's name travelled far. Students from across the country arrived for training while Joshar Bazar and the nearby Arial Khan river became a lifeline for refugees and freedom fighters heading to India, hence it earned the name "Second Agartala".

"We set up a camp at Damodar Doctor's house near Joshar Bazar to ease their journey," said freedom fighter Chan Mia, 72.

In late May, early June, and mid-June, three groups of fighters went to India for training. Leftist leaders from both sides of the border formed a committee in Kolkata. Through close contact with the Communist Party of India, the Shibpur fighters gathered

public opinion and funds for the war.

By the last week of June, the force had opened 14 camps mostly for training. These included Ashrafpur School, Ningaon High School, Bilsharan Khalek's house, Kamrab High School and Joshar Damu Doctor's house.

Shibpur fighters fought at least 20 battles. To halt Pakistani troops on August 11, fighters and villagers led by Majnu Mridha destroyed the Putia Bridge. Expecting retaliation, they lay in ambush.



Putia Bridge

Freedom fighter Nurul Alam Molla said, "Around 11:00am, six trucks approached. From the riverbank, the guerrillas opened fire. Thirty Pakistani soldiers, including a captain, were killed; young freedom fighter Fazlu embraced martyrdom."

The Pakistanis then erected a permanent camp at Putia, aided by some local peace committee members.

In September, the guerrillas executed some local robbers for collaboration. "Later that month, several Pakistani soldiers died in a mine explosion at Ghasirdia," Mannan Khan said.

As Pakistani numbers swelled, the force prepared a two-pronged ambush. One group led by Mannan Khan took position at Shaspur intersection. Another under Majnu Mridha near Chandardia bridge. But information given by Razakars to the Pakistani forces turned the tide.

Pakistanis attacked Majnu's group from behind. A firefight followed. "A Pakistani truck overturned after its driver was shot, killing four soldiers. The battle raged for two hours as reinforcements arrived. Freedom fighters Abdul Motalib Manik and Idris were martyred," said freedom fighter Noim Uddin, 70.

When ammunition dwindled, the fighters retreated. Freedom fighter

Nazrul was captured and then released on November 19, the eve of Eid.

One of the force's most striking operations was the Bharaterkandi Bridge battle. The Pakistanis had dug bunkers on both sides of the vital bridge.

One mid-November day, 12 fighters under Majnu Mridha split into two units and struck from both flanks.

Freedom fighter Nurul Alam Molla, 78, recalled, "Four Pakistani soldiers fell instantly. As the Pakistanis retaliated, a fierce battle ensued for



Mannan Bhuiyan

Mannan Khan

half an hour. The Pakistanis finally couldn't keep up the resistance. They fled, leaving six dead. Then we blew up the bridge."

By late November, the Pakistanis began thinning out of Shibpur. Sensing the shift, the guerrillas adopted a psychological tactic.

"We fired two rounds of blank shots at 9:00pm and again at dawn," said Mannan Khan. "It terrified them through the night."

At month's end, fighters led by Majnu Mridha and Mannan Khan liberated Shibpur.

On December 6, they marched to reclaim Narsingdi. The final battle unfolded at the T&T camp on December 11.

After one and a half days of combat, the Pakistanis fled toward Dhaka before dawn on December 13.

Narsingdi was free!

Mannan Bhuiyan died on July 28, 2010 at the age of 67.

300 companies ask BB

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Through a total of 43 meetings, the committee took initiatives to dispose of approximately 900 applications out of 1,516 from 300 groups, according to the BB report.

On September 16, the BB also issued a unified special loan rescheduling policy to maintain economic growth and for borrowers who had defaulted due to circumstances beyond their control.

The special rescheduling policy was issued to ensure equal opportunities for all affected borrowers, particularly those who generate investment and employment, and to provide policy support to genuinely distressed borrowers to maintain balanced and inclusive economic activities, said a

senior official of the central bank.

The central bank yesterday held an emergency meeting with the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh (ABB) aiming to reduce the high amount of bad loans.

As of September, defaulted loans in the banking sector hit a record Tk 6.44 lakh crore, or nearly 36 percent of total disbursed loans - the highest bad loan ratio since 2000.

At the meeting, the central bank governor instructed banks to reduce the high volume of bad loans by using the BB's special loan rescheduling policy by December this year, said a chief executive of a private commercial bank seeking anonymity.

Bankers, however, fear this approach might encourage a culture of non-payment and weaken

banking discipline, especially as it includes long-term defaulters linked to political patronage.

According to them, the scale of relief highlights the depth of the banking sector's troubles.

As of June, more than Tk 4.07 lakh crore in bad loans are stuck in 222,341 cases filed by banks to recover those loans, according to the BB report.

The backlog of cases persists mainly because the pace of disposing of old cases has slowed while the number of new cases continues to rise.

Between April and June, 11,944 cases were disposed of, from which banks recovered only Tk 2,910 crore. During the quarter, 14,652 new cases involving Tk 96,904 crore were filed.

Khaleda undergoes several tests

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General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir expressed hope that the party chief would recover with "divine blessings".

"People all over the country are praying for her, regardless of their political affiliation. We have faith in Allah, and we believe that with the prayers of so many people for her recovery, Allah will surely respond to them," he said this while speaking at a programme in the capital yesterday.

He added that highly reputed national and international doctors are providing Khaleda with treatment.

"None of us can feel happy at this moment. We are heavy-hearted because our great leader,

the guardian of Bangladesh, now called the guardian of democracy of Bangladesh, is critically ill and receiving treatment."

Fakhrul said all necessary measures are being taken for her treatment, and BNP acting chairman and her eldest son Tarique Rahman is monitoring.

Yesterday, special prayers were offered for her swift recovery in different parts of the country.

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.

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489 new posts approved for SC Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court's Post Creation Committee, at its first meeting yesterday afternoon, decided to create 489 new posts to run the SC Secretariat.

Among the total posts, 107 for officers and 382 for supporting staff members.

Out of 107 officers' posts, 105 will be appointed for administrative positions from judicial service, one post for chief accounting officer, and one post for system analyst, according to the decision.

The meeting was chaired by Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, senior judge of the Appellate Division of the SC and head of the committee.

The Post Creation Committee was formed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed on December 1, under Section 17 of the Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025.

The committee is

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Speakers at a roundtable, titled 'Violence Against Women and Children in Bangladesh: A Call for Strategic Action', jointly organised by Unicef, Plan International, and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Country failing to shield children from violence

Speakers tell discussion; warn of weak protection at family, community levels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh still lacks an effective protective shield for children at the family and community levels, leaving them highly vulnerable to violence and abuse, speakers warned at a roundtable yesterday.

They said despite multiple laws, enforcement remains weak. Social services often fail to function properly, and many children cannot access justice due to systemic inequalities. These gaps continue to put countless children at risk.

The event, titled "Violence Against Women and Children in Bangladesh: A Call for Strategic Action", was organised jointly by Unicef, Plan International and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre. Shabnaaz Zahreen, child protection specialist at Unicef Bangladesh, said 5,600 cases of

sexual violence against children were reported from 2013 to 2024, but only 2 percent resulted in convictions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶▶ Proper functioning of child protection committees
- ▶▶ Train social workers, especially at union level
- ▶▶ Coordination among police, admin, social services
- ▶▶ Specialised tribunals for child sexual abuse cases
- ▶▶ Speed up DNA, forensic, medical report processes

In 2024 alone, 1,151 incidents of violence against women and children were recorded.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

Democracy, growth and justice must advance together

Wahiduddin Mahmud outlines 3 priorities for a democratic future

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following the July political transition, Planning Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud has outlined three priorities for Bangladesh -- establishing representative democracy, ensuring economic growth, and promoting development that reduces inequality and supports social justice.

Speaking at the opening session of the Annual Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies conference yesterday at Parjatan Bhaban in Agargaon, Mahmud

The problem isn't just corruption in the traditional sense. Over time, vested interests become deeply embedded in institutions, influencing not only outcomes but policies themselves.



described the theme "Democracy and Development" as timely and essential to the country's future.

"At this moment, three questions seem most relevant," he said. "First, how do we ensure a transition to an effective, representative democracy?"

Democracy should not be measured merely by the presence of elections, he noted, but by how well institutions ensure accountability through a functioning

SEE PAGE 8 COL 7

Energy crisis a 'failure of governance'

Says study of Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite legal indemnities, digital censorship and corporate pressure, the media in Bangladesh have gradually built a counter-narrative that exposed the fragility of the energy sector's development model, according to a study by the Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network.

Analysing 16,278 news contents published in newspapers and online platforms on power and energy issues over the last decade, the study said the media have established that the energy crisis was not an accident of nature but a failure of governance.

"The past decade of energy journalism in Bangladesh is a story of resilience," reads the study titled "Narrative Arc of Energy: A Decade of Media Discourse in Bangladesh (2015-2025)", which was presented yesterday at a session of the ongoing Bangladesh Energy Conference at Bangladesh Military Museum.

The three-day conference ends today, with leaders of different political parties, government

stakeholders, energy experts and non-government organisations expected at the closing ceremony.

The study said media coverage of energy issues was dominated by state-driven "announcement

journalism" between 2015 and 2019. The global energy crisis of 2022, however, marked a turning point, shifting narratives from technical supply issues to political debates

on affordability, accountability and corruption.

Presenting the findings, CLEAN Communications Coordinator Kaniz Rabeya said the volume of news on energy issues increased by 484 percent in 2025 compared to 2015.

The organisation also compiled energy stories from 2024 in various outlets under the title "Energy Sector in Bangladesh: In the View of Journalists", which was unveiled at the session.

Kamal Ahmed, consulting editor of The Daily Star, said the findings reflected only a partial picture as they did not include television coverage, where energy issues received minimal attention.

"Until the vested interest groups' presence in media ownership is dismantled, the situation will not improve," he said.

Kamal Ahmed, also former chief of the Media Reform Commission, said the commission submitted recommendations with "immediate action plans" in March, but no major initiatives have been taken by the government.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 7

Thalassaemia takes heavy mental toll on mothers: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mothers of children with thalassaemia experience depression at twice the rate of the urban Bangladeshi adult population, along with significantly higher levels of anxiety and stress, according to a cross-sectional study.

The study found that 22 percent of these mothers reported an unpleasant relationship with their husbands, while 47 percent said their social life had been affected.

The findings were presented by Fahrin Islam, research associate at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development 2025 held at Parjatan Bhaban in Agargaon yesterday.

The Biomedical Research Foundation, in collaboration with BIDS, conducted the study on 156 mothers of children with thalassaemia between December 2021 and April 2022.

Fahrin said thalassaemia, a preventable hereditary disorder that disrupts normal haemoglobin production, is becoming a major public health concern in Bangladesh, which lies within the Global Thalassaemia Belt.

She said studies estimate the prevalence of

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Among the 156 mothers surveyed, 63% experienced depression, compared to 32% of urban adults. Meanwhile, 62% experienced stress and 58% anxiety.

Coalition formed to push women, children's rights in poll manifestos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven national and international organisations have formed a coalition to advance equality and justice, creating a countrywide platform aimed at ensuring that the rights, protection and well-being of women and children feature prominently in election manifestos of political parties.

The coalition includes Breaking the Silence, JAAGO Foundation, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Oxfam in Bangladesh, Plan International Bangladesh, Save the Children in Bangladesh and WaterAid Bangladesh.

It is currently conducting regional consultations, evidence reviews and community-level listening sessions to understand the needs and priorities of women and children across urban, rural and climate-vulnerable areas, said a press release yesterday.

Findings from these consultations, along with insights from the coalition's initial position paper, will inform a set of concrete demands to be presented at a dialogue with political parties on December 14 in Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 7



A group of students from the seven government colleges in Dhaka holds a sit-in in front of Shikha Bhaban, demanding prompt implementation of the Dhaka Central University Ordinance. Police set up barricades and suspended vehicular movement towards the Secretariat due to the protest, causing traffic congestion and suffering to commuters. The photo was taken yesterday noon.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Frame charges against Hasina and 12 others

Prosecution urges ICT-1 in enforced disappearance case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday urged the International Crimes Tribunal 1 to frame charges against 13 accused, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, over their alleged involvement in a series of enforced disappearances carried out between 2015 and last year.

The accused also include Hasina's former defence and security adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and 11 army officers who served at the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence during the period.

Five charges have been brought against them for allegedly detaining 26 victims in the DGFI's secret facility "Aynaghar", torturing them, and segregating victims based on the duration of confinement and the roles of DGFI officials.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam told the tribunal that 26 individuals were abducted from their homes and workplaces, blindfolded, and taken to Aynaghar, where

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NOMINATION ROW

8 hurt as BNP factions clash in Gazipur

10 motorcycles set on fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

At least eight people were injured and ten motorcycles were set on fire after a clash broke out between rival BNP factions in the Rakhaliachala area of Gazipur's Kaliakoir upazila yesterday evening.

Police and locals said supporters of BNP nominated candidate for the Gazipur-1 constituency, Mujibur Rahman, had gathered for a public meeting where followers of Gazipur district BNP member secretary Chowdhury Ishraq Ahmed Siddique, who was denied nomination, were also present.

Witnesses said the two groups engaged in an argument, which escalated into a clash.

Inspector Mohammad Shamim, in charge of Mouchak Police Station, told The Daily Star, "During the clash between two BNP factions, some motorcycles

were set on fire. At least seven to eight people were injured and sent to hospitals."

Mujibur alleged that his supporters were attacked while campaigning. "One group attacked my supporters, and some of the motorcycles they used were set on fire," he said.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ishraq, however, said anger among local leaders and activists over the nomination led to protests. "The supporters were there just to protest. But Mujibur Rahman's followers attacked them," he claimed.

Cucusu hosts medical camp for students

CU CORRESPONDENT

A daylong free medical camp, organised by the Chittagong University Central Students' Union with support from Chattogram Metropolitan Hospital, was held on the campus yesterday.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Yeahia Akhter inaugurated the event at Buddhijibi Chattar at 9:30am. The event continued till 3:00pm.

Around 1,700 students received consultations from 18 specialist physicians at the medical camp.

Medicines were distributed free of cost as per the doctors' prescriptions.

3 killed in road crash in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Three people were killed after an unidentified vehicle hit their motorcycle in Faridpur's Bhanga yesterday. The accident occurred near Madhabpur bridge around 1:30am, said Bhanga Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Helaluddin.

The deceased are Sumon Mondal, 25, his brother Rimon Mondal, 22, and their friend Asif Alam, 22 - all from Kushtia.

Quoting witnesses, the OC said the three were travelling towards Faridpur town on a motorcycle. When they reached the Madhabpur bridge area, an unidentified vehicle hit the motorcycle, killing all three on the spot.

Earlier on Friday, four people, including three of a family, died when a bus hit a battery-run e-cyber on the same highway in Bhanga.

FATEMA BEGUM BLOOD BANK

A lifeline for safe, voluntary blood transfusions

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

In Chattogram city, medical emergencies often force families into desperate searches for blood for life-saving transfusions.

Shahedul Azam, whose wife recently underwent a C-section at a private hospital, shared this harrowing reality.

"Doctors urgently requested two units of blood for immediate transfusion. We only managed to secure one unit," he said.

A friend then informed him about the Fatema Begum Red Crescent Blood Bank in



PHOTO: STAR

year-round donation drives.

This strong foundation of volunteerism ensures that the blood is distributed to patients free of charge, he said.

However, to guarantee absolute patient safety, a nominal fee is collected from recipients, covering essential screening processes for diseases like Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, malaria, syphilis, and HIV.

"We orchestrate year-round voluntary blood donation programmes, collecting between 40-50 units of blood from each drive and around 13,000 units of blood annually," said Shyamoli Baidya, a medical technologist at the blood bank.

Sadia Hasan, the organisation's finance officer, said, "We offer a special concession in screening charges for our thalassaemia patients. For extremely poor patients, we provide blood completely free of charge."

However, the Red Crescent

faces a significant, yet avoidable, challenge: over 10 percent of their collected blood is wasted annually due to a lack of awareness among patients' families.

"According to standard guidelines, whole blood can be safely transfused within 30 days after collection, and fresh frozen plasma can be stored and used for up to one year. Yet, many patients' families insist on receiving only 'fresh' blood - ideally collected on the very same day, or at best, two to three days earlier," Shyamoli said.

"That's why over 10 percent of the blood we collect every year is wasted due to expiry of shelf life," she added.

There is an urgent need for raising public awareness against misconceptions about blood storage and transfusion standards to ensure every precious unit serves its intended purpose in saving lives, said Dr Mezbah.



Anderkilla. "I approached the officials, describing my situation, and they confirmed having blood of the same group in stock. It was a moment of profound relief," Shahedul added.

Shahedul's predicament is not unique. In Chattogram city, only a few blood banks facilitate voluntary blood donation, with Fatema Begum Red Crescent Blood Bank, managed by the Red Crescent Society, playing a vital role among them.

Dr Mezbah Uddin, in charge of the blood bank, said the blood supply primarily comes from their dedicated members and students through regular,

Red Crescent Society gets new managing board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health ministry yesterday reconstituted the managing board of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, appointing global health expert Dr Halida Halum Akhter as the new chairman.

According to a circular issued by the Health Services Division, the tenure of the ad hoc board will be three months, during which it must arrange an election to form a full managing board.

Dr Tasnim Azim, associate professor at BRAC University and vice chairman of the immediate past board, will continue in the same role.

Former additional secretary Karim has been appointed treasurer, while former additional secretary Afzalur Rahman, Brig Gen Nasir Uddin Ahmed, Birdem General Hospital's director (hospital administration), Barrister Tanim Hussain Shawon, and public health expert Arefin Amal Islam have been named members.

Shawon also served on the previous board.

The reconstitution comes after the humanitarian organisation drew attention when four members of the previous board, including the vice chairman, reportedly resigned, alleging irregularities against the immediate past chairman, Maj Gen Prof Dr Md Azizul Islam.

Two more die of dengue, 516 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



At least two dengue patients died while 516 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the deaths were reported from the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) areas.

With the new deaths and cases, the death toll rose to 396, while total number of cases rose to 97,829 this year. Currently, 1,689 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country.

Experts attribute the surge in cases to inadequate mosquito control, low public awareness, and the presence of multiple dengue serotypes.

NCC Bank NATIONAL CREDIT AND COMMERCE BANK PLC. COMMON SERVICES DIVISION

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE OF INVITATION QUOTATION

This is to inform all concerned that the following corrections has been made in the notice for "Invitation Quotation" which was published in "The Daily Star" at Page - 04 dated December 06, 2025.

| Item Description | As mentioned in the published notice | To be replaced as corrected | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Item 1, Item 2 & Item 3 | Start date | November 07, 2025 | December 07, 2025 |
| | End date | November 17, 2025 | December 17, 2025 |
| | Submission Date | November 15, 2025 | December 18, 2025 |

All other terms and conditions of the "Notice of Inviting Quotation" will remain unchanged.

Vice President & Head of Common Services Division

Frame charges

FROM PAGE 3 they were kept in dark, windowless, suffocating cells without proper food, clothing, sanitation or lighting.

Many were detained for months or years, he said. Their eyes and hands remained tied during interrogations in which they were subjected to severe physical and psychological torture.

"These crimes were structural, widespread, systematic and target-based," Tajul said, adding that they constitute crimes against humanity under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.

After the prosecution's submissions, the three-member tribunal led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder fixed tomorrow to hear discharge petitions filed by three state-appointed defence counsel for 10 absconding accused and by the lawyer representing three officers in custody.

Three accused - Maj Gen Sheikh Md Sarwar Hossen, Brig Gen Md Mahubb Rahman Siddique, and Brig Gen Ahmed Tanvir Majahar Siddique - appeared in the dock. The remaining ten are on the run.

Earlier in the morning, the three officers were brought to the tribunal in a green air-conditioned

prison bus amid tight security. Personnel of the Bangladesh Army, Border Guard Bangladesh, Rapid Action Battalion and Armed Police Battalion were deployed around the premises.

In the cases, Hasina, Tarique, five former DGFI chiefs, five former directors of its Counter Terrorism and Intelligence Bureau, and another former DGFI official stand accused over enforced disappearances and torture at the DGFI's Joint Interrogation Cell.

The prosecution alleges that the crimes centred on the DGFI-run joint interrogation cell, where 26 victims were held from October 22, 2015 to August 6, 2024.

Hasina, as executive head of government, allegedly used the DGFI to consolidate power and suppress political opposition, acting through Tarique and senior DGFI officials. Field-level operatives reportedly abducted victims based on recommendations from local Awami League leaders.

DGFI and CTIB directors who served during this period allegedly maintained custody of detainees, making them liable under superior command responsibility and joint criminal enterprise.

Tajul singled out Lt Col (ret'd) Mokhsurul Haque, saying he directly identified and abducted victims under Tarique's supervision, continued these activities even after retirement, and operated as a "freelancer".

Advocate Azizur Rahman Dulu, representing three accused officials in custody, told the tribunal he submitted two petitions stating that under the Army Act 1952, a Court of Inquiry had cleared his clients over detention of a victim. The application was kept on record.

The tribunal also allowed the Investigation Agency three more months to submit probe reports in several cases.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH HIGH COURT DIVISION (ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION) COMPANY MATTER NO. 1973 OF 2025 RSPJ HEALTH BD LIMITED

Notice is hereby given that an application under section 12 read with section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994 for alteration of object clause of the Memorandum of Association of the RSPJ HEALTH BD LIMITED was moved before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the petitioner and upon preliminary hearing on 03.11.2025 Mr. Justice Ahmed Sobel was pleased to admit the said application. Any one desirous of opposing the matter may appear before the Hon'ble court either personally or through his advocate. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of necessary costs.

M.A. Hannan Senior Advocate Supreme Court of Bangladesh Apartment No. 6-B, Level-6, Unique Heights 117, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1000.

NOTICE OF CANCELLATION Vendor Enlistment Process Bangladesh Cricket Board

Ref: BCB/Admin/T&P/Vendor Enlistment/2025/886 Date: 08th December 2025

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) hereby notifies all concerned that the Vendor Enlistment Process initiated pursuant to newspaper advertisements dated 13 September 2024 and 08 October 2024 is hereby cancelled in its entirety. Consequently, all actions undertaken under the said process including, without limitation, evaluations, assessments and any Notifications of Award (NoA) issued, stand withdrawn with immediate effect.

This cancellation is made at the discretion of the BCB, without assigning any further cause and without prejudice to any rights, remedies, or future actions that the Board may undertake. Vendors who deposited the Earnest Money of BDT 15,000 (Fifteen Thousand Taka) by Pay Order may obtain a refund upon submitting a written application to the Finance & Accounts Department, located on the 2nd Floor of the BCB Management Office, SBNCs, Mirpur-2, Dhaka, supported by a photocopy of the Pay Order and a valid proof of deposit. Refunds will be processed as per BCB's financial rules & procedures.

The BCB will undertake a new vendor enlistment initiative in due course, based on updated operational requirements and revised qualification criteria. A fresh public invitation will be issued through national newspapers at the appropriate time. The Bangladesh Cricket Board expresses its appreciation to all vendors for their cooperation and continued interest in working with the organization.

Chief Executive Officer Bangladesh Cricket Board Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur, Dhaka 1216

Bank Asia Bank Asia Tower, 32 & 34, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215

TENDER NOTICE

Invitation for Tender: Supply, Installation, Commissioning and integration of Network HSM for Bangladesh Bank's BACH & BEFTN, Network devices (Router, Firewall, Switch) for DC & DR, Managed VPN Connectivity for Central Monitoring System and NAC Compatible Managed Switch for Bank Asia PLC.

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from reputed Company/Supplier/Firm to procure following products towards enrichment of Enterprise environment of Bank Asia PLC.

- Network HSM for Bangladesh Bank's BACH & BEFTN Project at Bank Asia's Disaster Recovery (DR) Site.
- DC & DR (BACH and RTGS) Network devices (Router, Firewall, Switch).
- Managed VPN Connectivity for Central Monitoring System.
- NAC Compatible Managed Switch for Branch, Sub-Branch and Department

Tender schedule in detail will be available at the Logistics & Support Services Division (LSSD), Corporate Office, Bank Asia Tower (4th Floor), 32 & 34, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka from 08/12/2025 to 11/12/2025 during office hour upon payment of Tk. 5,000 (Five Thousand) only (non-refundable) for each item in the form of Payment Order of any schedule Bank favoring Bank Asia PLC. Tender should be submitted in a tender box kept at the LSSD of the Bank on or before 22/12/2025 within 2:30 PM and the same will be opened at 3:00 PM on the same day in presence of the representatives (if any) of the bidders. Only well-reputed firms who have long business track record will be qualified for this bidding. Bidders may submit for all 4 mentioned above items or for any particular item.

Vendor eligibility:

- Tender bidder should be an Authorized Partner of above product/solution.
- Tender Should have valid Registration/Ownership documents, updated VAT & TIN certificate, up-to-date Trade License, and up-to-date Bank Solvency Certificate.
- The bank shall not be bound to or under any obligation to accept the lowest quotation.
- Bank Asia reserves the right to accept, modify or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Senior Vice President Logistics & Support Services Division (LSSD) Corporate Office Tel: 09617001100 (Ext. 690) www.bankasia-bd.com

প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর

প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়

ঢাকা সেনানিবাস

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সদর দপ্তর প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তরের জন্য অন্যান্য মনিহারি (স্টেশনারী) দ্রব্য সামগ্রী ক্রয় করার নিমিত্তে নিম্নলিখিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে স্থানীয় মুদ্রায় সরবরাহ করার জন্য সীল মোহরকৃত বামে প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারীর নিকট হতে The Public Procurement বিধিমালা ২০০৮ মোতাবেক দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে:

| ক্র.সং. | মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ | প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--|
| ১। | সংস্থা | প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর। |
| ২। | দরপত্র ক্রয় কর্তৃপক্ষ | প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর। |
| ৪। | দরপত্র আইটেমের নাম | অন্যান্য মনিহারি (স্টেশনারী) দ্রব্যসামগ্রী (প্রয়োজন মোতাবেক সিডিউল অনুযায়ী)। |
| ৫। | দরপত্র আহবানের নম্বর | ০৩/২০২৫-২৬ |
| ৬। | দরপত্র আহবানের তারিখ | ০৯ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫ |
| ৭। | টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি | টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি হিসাবে ১,১২,৫০০.০০ (এক লক্ষ বার হাজার পাঁচশত মাত্র) টাকা বাংলাদেশ সরকার কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত যে কোন ব্যাংক হতে পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এর মাধ্যমে প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সাথে সংকুল করে দাখিল করতে হবে। |
| ৮। | দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য | দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য ৭৫০/- (সেভেরত বোপা)। |
| ৯। | দরপত্র পদ্ধতি | উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র (জাতীয়)। |
| ১০। | দরপত্রের অর্ধের উৎস | জিওবি (রাজস্ব) (অর্থ বরাদ্দ সাপেক্ষে)। |
| ১১। | দরপত্র দাখিল বিরুদ্ধের তারিখ ও সময় | ০৯, ১০ এবং ১১ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ নিজস্ব প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাভে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র দাখিল সশ্রদ্ধ করা যাবে। |
| ১২। | দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময় | ১৫ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ ০৯০০-১২০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। |
| ১৩। | দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময় | ১৫ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ ১২১০ ঘটিকা। |
| ১৪। | দরপত্র সংগ্রহ এবং জমা দেওয়ার ঠিকানা | প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস। |
| ১৫। | দরপত্র খোলার স্থান | প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস এর কার্যালয়। দরপত্র দাখিলের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র খোলা হবে। |
| ১৬। | দরপত্র আহবান কর্তৃপক্ষের নাম | প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর। |
| ১৭। | দরপত্র আহবানকারীর পদবী | মেজর (সভাপতি ক্রয় কমিটি)। |
| ১৮। | দরপত্র আহবানকারীর ঠিকানা | প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর। |
| ১৯। | দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা | সিডিউল গ্রহণ এবং আবেদনের সময় নিম্নলিখিত কাগজপত্রের মূলকপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে এবং দরপত্রের সহিত সকল কাগজপত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি জমা প্রদান করতে হবে: ক। নবায়নকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স। খ। হালসন পর্যন্ত আয়কর পরিশোধের সার্টিফিকেট। গ। ডাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট। ঘ। ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট/ব্যাংক স্টেটমেন্ট ও অভিজ্ঞতা সনদ ইত্যাদি। ঙ। দরপত্র দাতা কর্তৃক উদ্ধৃত একক মুদ্রার হিসেবে সংশ্লিষ্ট আইটেমের মোট সজ্জা মূল্যের ১০% Liquid Asset (Working Capital) সংক্রান্ত ব্যাংকের সনদপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। |

কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/প্রত্যাহান করার ক্ষমতা অত্র সংস্থা সংরক্ষণ করে।

আই এল পি আর/বিবি/৪৯৮- সভাপতি বাজার কমিটি প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর

GD-2680

INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine peace deal is close
Says US envoy; Moscow wants radical changes

REUTERS

US President Donald Trump's outgoing Ukraine envoy said a deal to end the Ukraine war was "really close" and depended on resolving just two major issues but the Kremlin said there had to be radical changes to some of the US proposals.

Trump, who says he wants to be remembered as a "peacemaker" president, says that ending Europe's deadliest conflict since World War Two has so far been the most elusive foreign policy aim of his presidency.

US Special Envoy for Ukraine Keith Kellogg, who is due to step down in January, told the Reagan National Defense Forum that efforts to resolve the conflict were in "the last 10 metres" which he said was always the hardest.

The two main outstanding issues, Kellogg said, were on territory - primarily the future of the Donbas - and the future



Civil defence personnel and relatives exhume graves at Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital to transfer the remains to official burial sites in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Second phase of Gaza plan 'close': Israeli PM

Two Palestinians killed in Israeli fire in West Bank

AGENCIES

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that he will meet President Donald Trump later this month, saying a second phase of the US president's Gaza plan was close.

The meeting will discuss possible opportunities for peace and an end to the Palestinian group Hamas's rule in the enclave, he said during a joint press conference with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

Negotiations on the next stages of Trump's plan to end the two-year war in the Palestinian enclave have been continuing. The plan also included the release of Israeli hostages and the establishment of an interim technocratic Palestinian government in Gaza, overseen by an

international "board of peace" and backed by an international security force.

"I will be having very important conversations at the end of the month on how to ensure the second phase will be achieved," Netanyahu added.

He also said that the first phase of Trump's plan was about to be finished.

Israel's military said yesterday that its forces killed two men in the occupied West Bank after what it described as an attempted ramming attack, with the Palestinian Authority identifying the deceased as a 17- and 55-year-old.

The Ramallah-based health ministry named the two victims as Ahmad Khalil Al-Rajabi, 17, and Ziad Jabara Abu Dawoud, 55, after the incident on Saturday night in the Bab al Zawiya area in the city of Hebron.



of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, which is under Russian control.

"If we get those two issues settled, I think the rest of the things will work out fairly well," Kellogg said on Saturday at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California. "We're almost there."

"We're really, really close," said Kellogg. Zelensky said on Saturday that he had had a long and "substantive" phone call with Witkoff and Kushner. The Kremlin has said it expects Kushner to be doing the main work on drafting a possible deal.

Meanwhile, Russia's air defences destroyed 77 Ukrainian drones launched overnight, Russia's defence ministry said yesterday.

US MILITARY BUILDUP

Insomnia, anxiety stalk Venezuelans

Army swears in 5,600 more soldiers

AGENCIES

The streets of Caracas are decorated with Christmas lights. The sound of traditional Venezuelan Christmas music can be heard everywhere. Daily routines seem undisturbed: children attending school, adults going to work, vendors opening their businesses.

Beneath this facade lurks anxiety, fear, and frustration, with some even taking preventative measures against a possible attack amid the tension between the United States and Venezuela.

The Venezuelan army swore in 5,600 soldiers on Saturday. President Nicolas Maduro has called for stepped-up military recruitment after the United States deployed a fleet of warships and the world's largest aircraft carrier to the Caribbean under the pretext of



combating drug trafficking.

American forces have carried out deadly strikes on more than 20 vessels, killing at least 87, reports AFP.

A woman who asked to be identified as Victoria for fear of reprisals has lived alone in western Caracas since her two children left the country and currently works in commerce. She describes her routine in recent months as marked by uncertainty, with each day bringing

unsettling developments that rob her of peace of mind.

Although she hasn't stopped doing her daily tasks, Victoria confesses that this state of alert, with the constant question of what might happen next, has disrupted her sleep, reports CNN online.

Sometimes, she says, she gets up in the middle of the night and starts checking the news on her phone, even though she acknowledges that doing so makes it harder to fall back to sleep.

"There's a confrontation in which we, ordinary citizens, have nothing to do," she says, referring to the potential conflict between her country and the Trump administration. "We try to carry on with our daily lives, we try to carry on with our daily activities, but that's always interrupted by the whole situation we're experiencing, which undoubtedly affects us."



People walk past damaged houses after landslides triggered by Cyclone Ditwah in Ulapane village near Nawalapitiya in Kandy, Sri Lanka, yesterday. Sri Lankan authorities issued fresh landslide warnings as rains continued to lash areas already devastated by the powerful cyclone, with the death toll rising to 627.

PHOTO: AFP

DIG faces inquiry

FROM PAGE 2

According to the show-cause, Sufian used his official social media account to send objectionable messages to the victim, a female additional superintendent of police from the 35th batch.

On September 18, he allegedly sent an obscene video clip as well.

Though the DIG allegedly deleted the content from his Messenger, the evidence provided has been validated in a forensic report conducted by the Criminal Investigation Department.

The notice further stated that by sending such a video to a junior female colleague while holding an important post, "DIG Abu Sufian demonstrated extreme unprofessionalism".

His conduct was deemed unbecoming of an officer and devoid of morality and has severely tarnished the image of the police force, it

added. The ministry further stressed that such behaviour is considered a punishable offence under the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 2018.

Responding to the allegations, Sufian told The Daily Star that he received the show-cause notice yesterday.

He claimed he was "a victim of fraud", saying that he was sent this video from another ID. "I then forwarded it to her [the female officer] asking why it was sent."

However, the female officer yesterday told journalists that she was frequently sent such messages, images, and video content on several occasions. She added that only when the situation became "completely unacceptable" did she inform the authorities through established departmental rules.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Health Services Division
Directorate General of Health Services
Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD)
30, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sharani, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208
www.cmsd.gov.bd

Invitation for Tenders (Goods)
e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods. Details are given below:

| Tender ID No. | Package No., Name & IFT No. | Tender documents last selling (date & time) | Closing date & opening date & time |
|---------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 1190903 | GR-2515 Anti-Retroviral Drugs' CMSD/GR-2515/ICT(e-GP)/2025- 26/Proc.D-5/29 date: 07-12-2025 | 21 January 2026 10:00am | 21 January 2026 11:00am |

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

Md. Huzar Ali
Director (Additional Secretary)
Central Medical Stores Depot
Directorate General of Health Services
30, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sharani, Tejgaon
Dhaka-1208

GD-2679



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Export Promotion Bureau
TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
www.epb.gov.bd

No: 26.02.0000.055.53.056.24.44

Date: 07.12.2025

Re-Tender Notice

The 30th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2026 will be held throughout the month of January 2026, starting from 01 January 2026. Applications/Tenders are hereby invited from interested Persons/Institutions for the allocation of a limited number of unallocated Stall/Pavilion/Restaurant and Foreign Stall spaces by 04:00 PM on 18 December 2025.

| Pavilion / Stall / Restaurant Categories, Processing Fees, and Floor Rent (for local participants): | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------|---|---|---|
| Sl. | Category/Type/Name | Size (ft) | Application Processing Fee (Including VAT & Tax) Non Refundable | Floor Rate (Lowest Price of Rent/Royalty) (excluding VAT & Tax) | Unallocated Numbers |
| 1 | Premier Pavilion Platinum (PPP) | (50'x50') | Tk.20,000/- | Tk. 22,00,000/- | 05 |
| 2 | General Pavilion (GP) | (36'x36') | Tk. 20,000/- | Tk. 15,000,000/- | 01, 02, 09, 10, 16, 17 |
| 3 | Mini Pavilion (MP) | (36'x17') | Tk. 14,000.00 | Tk. 11,00,000/- | 04, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23 & 24 |
| 4 | Restaurant (R) | (50'x50') | Tk. 16,000.00 | Tk. 17,00,000/- | 02, 03, 06 & 07 |
| 5 | Mini Restaurant (MR) | (20'x20') | Tk. 12,000.00 | Tk. 6,50,000/- | 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07 & 08 |
| 6 | Premier Stall (PS) | (20'x20') | Tk. 7,000.00 | Tk. 4,50,000/- | 01, 02, 13, 14, 15, 17, 34, 35, 36, 37 |
| 7 | Premier Mini Stall (PMS) | (20'x10') | Tk. 7,000.00 | Tk. 3,30,000/- | 01, 13, 17, 19, 25, 26, 28, 30, 35 & 36 |
| 8 | Foreign Premier Stall (FPS) | (20'x20') | US\$ 135.00 | US\$ 7,000.00 | 01, 02, 03, 06 & 07 |

Application Submission Procedure:

02. Online Application:

- Application Submission Link: <http://services.mincom.gov.bd/portal/ditf>
- All Foreign applications shall be submitted through (e-mail: ditf@epb.gov.bd) concerned Bangladesh Missions abroad or through Missions of their own countries in Dhaka along with scanned copies of deposit slip of Application processing fee and security money.
- Application Submission Start Date: 07.12.2025 & Closing Date & Time: 18.12.2025, 04:00 p.m. (local time)

03. All received applications/Tenders will be opened on the same day at 04:30 PM, in the presence of the applicants or their representatives.

04. All other terms and conditions published in the previous notice (dated 30 October 2025) shall remain unchanged.

[Signature]
07-12-2025

Secretary (Deputy Secretary), Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)
and

Director, 30th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2026 Secretariat
TCB Building (5th Floor), 1 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215

Tel: +88-02-55013420 Fax: +88-02-55014024

Email: secy@epb.gov.bd, Website: www.epb.gov.bd, Facebook: [facebook.com/epb.gov.bd](https://www.facebook.com/epb.gov.bd)

GD-2677

Time for urgent, climate-smart reform in agriculture

Home-grown science offers a roadmap to avert a future food crisis

One of the biggest challenges Bangladesh is facing now—and one that is likely to intensify in the coming years due to climate change—is its food production capacity. Rising salinity in coastal areas, the depletion of groundwater, and increasing temperatures are likely to pose some of the most serious threats to our agriculture in general, and rice production in particular. We must, therefore, urgently address this issue if we are to avert a future food crisis.

In Bangladesh, the average temperature has risen by 0.24 degrees Celsius per decade since 1981, and is estimated to climb another 1.5-2 degrees by 2050, according to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department and the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report. Agro-scientist Mohammad Kamruzzaman Milon, in a recent article published by this daily, predicts that rice yields may dip by 15-20 percent "unless irrigation, fertiliser, and varietal strategies are re-engineered" for future resilience. The author also pointed out some significant innovations already achieved by our scientists, the timely implementation of which could help significantly mitigate those critical problems.

Through field research in Gazipur, Rajshahi, and Satkhira, a set of low-carbon agronomic practices has been developed that can simultaneously raise yields, conserve resources, and cut greenhouse gas emissions. The findings suggest that Bangladesh can pioneer climate-smart measures that produce more rice with less water, less energy, and a lower carbon footprint. The author identified several innovations that are already in place and can contribute significantly to combating the impact of climate change on our food production system. These are scientifically proven and have been recognised internationally as acceptable options.

What we urgently need now is the required funding as well as changes in our policy direction. The author makes five suggestions that we find worthy of consideration: making all climate and satellite datasets publicly available to enable research by universities and other competent bodies, including those interested in funding such initiatives; integrating verified efficiency and mitigation indicators into the agricultural credit scoring framework of Bangladesh Bank; introducing performance-based incentives that reward farmers for reducing carbon emissions; expanding concessional credit and capacity-building programmes for women- and youth-led agritech ventures; and building a unified monitoring, reporting and verification framework that links agronomic data with financial data.

We seldom write editorials on views expressed in our op-ed columns. However, we find the suggestions made by Mohammad Kamruzzaman to be of sufficient merit and practical value to urge the government and relevant authorities to take immediate note and attach the highest priority to their implementation. We often desperately search for solutions to the myriad problems we face. But this is a case where solutions may already be in our hands. All we need to do is focus on them, coordinate the various bodies that need to be engaged, provide the necessary funding, and expedite implementation. After all, climate challenges must be addressed urgently. We urge immediate action in this area.

Close the health gap for the vulnerable

Stark inequalities in child survival, maternal care remain

The latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2025 lays bare an unsettling truth: poverty and low education are shaping life-and-death outcomes in Bangladesh. Children from the poorest households are almost twice as likely to die before their fifth birthday compared to those from the richest homes. Among mothers with little or no schooling, the under-five mortality rate rises to 48 per 1,000 live births—more than double that among women with higher education. This is not just a health issue; it reflects deep-rooted social and economic inequities. Development over recent decades has not been inclusive enough, leaving poorer families on the margins of essential services.

Maternal care remains one of the biggest fault lines. While 99 percent of pregnant women in wealthier households receive at least one antenatal care (ANC) visit, this drops to 84 percent among the poorest. The gap widens further for proper, repeated care as only 23 percent of pregnant women in the poorest quintile receive the recommended four or more ANC visits, compared to 68 percent in the richest group. With limited public investment in health and nutrition, low-income families are often forced to rely on private facilities they can hardly afford. The economic strain has only intensified since the pandemic, as rising inflation and food prices have compromised both nutrition and healthcare access. These pressures are reflected in child stunting and wasting rates, which are far higher among poorer households. Moreover, only 21 percent of children from low-income families complete upper secondary schooling, compared with 66 percent among those from wealthier families.

Other indicators reinforce the extent of these disparities. After decades of decline, the total fertility rate has climbed to 2.4, with significantly higher rates among poorer and less-educated women. Adolescent births are also far more common among low-income households—120 per 1,000 women, compared with 61 per 1,000 in the richest group. These trends are linked closely to widespread child marriage, with 65 percent of women in the poorest households married off before 18, while the rate drops to 13 percent among the richest. Education once again emerges as a decisive factor, as adolescent fertility is sharply lower among women with higher levels of schooling.

The survey's findings demand urgent, targeted action. Improving maternal healthcare, expanding nutrition programmes, and ensuring access to quality education for girls—particularly in low-income and low-literacy regions—must be treated as national priorities. Free or subsidised ANC, stronger community health services, and safer delivery options are essential steps. Unless the state confronts these inequalities head-on, the poorest mothers and children will continue to bear the heaviest burden.

Dhaka's fresh fruit economy can't survive on 19th-century logistics



Ahamedul Karim Chowdhury is adjunct faculty at Bangladesh Maritime University and former head of the Kamalapur Inland Container Depot (ICD) and the Pangaon Inland Container Terminal under Chittagong Port Authority.

AHAMEDUL KARIM CHOWDHURY

Dhaka's fruit economy moves through the narrow arteries of Badamtoli, where, before dawn each day, trucks laden with imported Apples from China, Oranges from Egypt, Grapes from South Africa, and dozens of other fruits push through streets never designed for heavy cargo vehicles. By sunrise, several hundred crores of taka in fresh fruit have exchanged hands. This hub, the capital's largest fresh-fruit market, still depends on logistics practices resembling a 19th-century model rather than a modern, temperature-controlled supply chain. The bustling commerce scene at Badamtoli masks a fragile ecosystem overwhelmed by congestion, infrastructural neglect, and a near-total absence of cold-chain facilities. Despite the rapid expansion of both fruit imports and domestic production, the operational methods and the physical environment of Badamtoli have barely changed.

The market grew organically in Old Dhaka, characterised by narrow roads and limited public space. While the location once served modest trade volumes, it is incompatible with the demands of today's import volumes from more than 30 countries and the rise in domestic fruit cultivation. Trucks entering Badamtoli must arrive before 8am or face hours of gridlock. The result is higher transportation and rental costs, frequent failure to meet delivery windows, prolonged queuing under severe heat, and congestion spilling into residential and commuter routes. Without proper warehouses, traders often rely on trucks themselves as makeshift storage, selling fruit directly from non-refrigerated covered vans. Soft citrus, grapes, and berries regularly arrive spoiled, and these losses ultimately cascade down to consumers in the form of higher prices.

Recent increases in storage charges at Chittagong Port Authority have worsened pressure on importers, who already operate under tight margins and strict time constraints. They are now compelled to remove consignments more quickly or face steep penalties. Yet once containers are released, the system offers them nowhere appropriate to go—no temperature-controlled warehouses, no reefer-capable distribution yards, almost no refrigerated vehicles, and continued dependence on informal, non-refrigerated trucks. As a result,



FILE PHOTO: STAR

Badamtoli masks a fragile ecosystem overwhelmed by congestion, infrastructural neglect, and a near-total absence of cold-chain facilities.

importers are forced to push perishable goods into the most congested and least prepared market in the country. Post-harvest losses in Bangladesh's fruit and vegetable sector amount to several crores of taka annually, and the lack of cold-chain infrastructure significantly contributes to this waste.

Bangladesh's problem lies not in a shortage of infrastructure but in its chronic underutilisation. A striking example is the Gabtoli central wholesale market for flowers, constructed with Asian Development Bank financing and recently upgraded by the Department of Agricultural Marketing. Despite featuring modern cold rooms, processing equipment, and six refrigerated vans, the facility has remained largely unused since its inauguration in September 2023. Its gates often stay locked, the vans remain parked for months, and the equipment idle. Political turnover, bureaucratic friction, and disputes among trader groups over stall allocations have rendered this almost 50 crore facility dormant at a time when Dhaka badly needs such a place for its fruit market. Fruit traders—despite facing intense space and storage constraints—have not been strategically integrated into Gabtoli's operations, even though its cold-chain capabilities could immediately relieve Badamtoli's chronic overload.

In efforts to understand why traders

hesitate to adopt improved logistics practices, I engaged multiple times with Serzaul Islam, president of the Bangladesh Fresh Fruit Importers Association (BFFIA). Although our discussions primarily focused on specific operational issues, particularly reefer container use at Pangaon Inland Container Terminal (ICT) and did not encompass a deeper conversation

about systemic needs, they reaffirmed a core truth: at ports, importers face rising cost pressures; outside, they are chronically being underserved by the cold chain infrastructure. My own tenure as head of Pangaon ICT underscored both the potential and limitations of the facility. We actively promoted reefer-container handling, highlighted the availability of 48 reefer plugs (expandable to more than 200), held consultations with importers, including BFFIA, and encouraged ship operators to adopt realistic riverine freight rates. Yet, structural challenges persisted. Ship operators maintained high reefer freight rates for movement between Chattogram and Pangaon, and Mainline Operators imposed steep inland haulage premiums. Despite adequate technical readiness and available capacity, reefer movement to Pangaon never materialised. But the potential was strong then and remains strong today.

A new opportunity has emerged with the awarding of a 22-year concession for Pangaon ICT to Medlog SA, a global logistics operator. This transition introduces professional management, investment commitments, and dedicated barge services, creating renewed possibilities for Pangaon's revival. If shipping lines cooperate and shipowners rationalise inland reefer freight structures, Pangaon can finally fulfill its intended role. The benefits

rising import volumes, and higher domestic production, Badamtoli cannot continue as Dhaka's de facto national fruit gateway, while Gabtoli remains idle despite substantial public investment. Similarly, Pangaon cannot remain underutilised while congestion paralyzes Old Dhaka. The country possesses the essential components; what it needs now is the collective will to assemble them into a modern, efficient, cold-chain-driven logistics system that reflects the needs and scale of a 21st-century fresh-fruit economy.

It is time to legally recognise climate refugees



Musfiq Rahman Ridoy is a student of law at Bangladesh University of Professionals.

MUSFIQ RAHMAN RIDOY

Every year in Bangladesh, many people are being displaced as rising seas, shifting rivers, and extreme weather conditions steadily consume the land beneath their feet. With every flood, cyclone and erosion event, thousands of people lose both their shelter and legal identity tied to their land, which turns them into refugees in their own country—a new class of citizens who are displaced not by conflict but by climate.

Though river erosion is one of the most visible causes of climate displacement, it is only a part of a larger nationwide emergency. According to a United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) report, approximately sixty lakh people in Bangladesh have already been displaced by climate-related hazards, including cyclones, storm surges, coastal flooding and salinity intrusion. From the draught-prone fields of Rajshahi, Naogaon to the salinity-hit coasts of Khulna, Satkhira, along with the cyclone-devastated shores of Barguna and Bagerhat, the impacts of climate change are uprooting families across the country.

Rising sea levels have turned fertile

lands into saline wastelands due to global warming. Cyclones and floods regularly jeopardise habitats, while droughts decimate productivity in agricultural lands. Climate-driven migrants in Bangladesh come from all kinds of landscapes. Their backgrounds may vary, but they share one reality—Bangladesh's legal framework still lacks formal rights and protective mechanisms for them.

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal protection under law and the right to life, livelihood, and property for every citizen. But these guarantees lose their true meaning when climate disasters obliterate the only land a person owns.

Existing land laws, especially the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950, and the Land Management Manual, 1990, were designed for a stable geography. But these particular laws do not account for land that disappears permanently due to climate change. As a result, millions of displaced families have no formal right to rehabilitation, reallocation, or recognition, having their records valid on paper but meaningless in reality.

Some people may argue that

Bangladesh's existing land laws already address river-based land loss through the doctrines of *alluvion* and *diluvium* (natural processes where rivers gradually add or wash away land). However, these statutes are only applied when land reappears and can be reallocated to the original owner. They were crafted for slow and reversible changes but not for

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal protection under law and the right to life, livelihood, and property for every citizen. But these guarantees lose their true meaning when climate disasters obliterate the only land a person owns.

permanent, large-scale losses caused by climate change.

The rules offer no legal solution when land sinks under the sea or becomes uninhabitable. The law focuses on the movement of rivers but not on the movement of people.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of Bangladeshi people already displaced could reach 1.3 crores by 2050. Yet, none of them are recognised in any national law or international treaty. Bangladesh's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)

2009 acknowledges the problem, but it remains only a policy document, not a binding legal instrument.

Bangladesh can be a leading example by creating a climate displacement law or amending existing land legislation for the betterment of the climate-displaced people. Legal scholars and experts suggest several reforms to strengthen Bangladesh's response to climate-driven displacement, including (i) legal recognition of climate refugees in national law, ensuring that they will not be treated as invisible victims of climate change; (ii) creation of a national climate rehabilitation board under the Ministry of Land to oversee identification, relocation and long-term rehabilitation of affected populations; (iii) rightful and fair allocation of khas-lands for resettlement so that displaced families receive secure tenure and a sustainable livelihood; (iv) providing gender responsive property protection, particularly for widowed, abandoned or landless women, who face severe vulnerability during displacement; and (v) creation of a climate justice fund for providing financial support to the displaced people.

The promise of constitutional rights fades when the ground beneath citizens' feet quietly disappears. Ensuring recognition, rehabilitation, and effective land rights for the climate-displaced people is not just a policy reform but a constitutional and moral obligation. By adopting proper measures, Bangladesh can stand as a global voice for climate justice.

The unanswered questions about women's role in religion-based politics



Nabila Tasneem Anonnya is a fellow and PhD student in sociocultural anthropology at Arizona State University, US.

NABILA TASNEEM ANONNYA

In 2022, many in Bangladesh were stunned when Shila, a woman in her sixties, assaulted a young girl for wearing jeans and a crop top at the Narsingdi Railway Station. How could a woman publicly assault another woman over her choice of clothing? At the time, it seemed like a shocking aberration. But since then, such incidents have multiplied, suggesting an apparent normalisation of moral policing of women's choices.

But what raised more concern is the role played by a section of women in these dynamics. Since the July uprising, mobs of men have regularly harassed women in public spaces for not wearing the orna (scarf) or for wearing it in ways they considered "insufficiently" modest. In many of these incidents that later gained attention on social media, a group of women was present, either openly supporting the attackers or, at times, actively participating themselves.

The role of these women in Bangladesh, however, has expanded beyond policing public morality. Many now seem active across the right-wing political spectrum, campaigning for Islamist parties, mobilising grassroots women, and challenging feminist organisations and their proposed recommendations. This recent mobilisation demands a critical public discussion to understand its implications for women in post-uprising Bangladesh. While their political participation may seem slightly new in Bangladesh, historically, women supporting religion-based politics in Muslim-

majority countries have played a critical role, though whether that has improved women's situation remains an open question.

Women on the political right in Muslim-majority countries generally operate within the confines of conservative cultural codes and use an Islamic discourse on gender "complementarity"—according to which men and women are created with different natures or fitrat (innate characteristics) in order to fulfil different functions on earth—rather than gender equality to participate in party politics. We have already seen this ideological reflection in Bangladesh as well: when they have been asked about their positionality regarding gender equality in talk shows or interviews, they have either openly stated that they do not believe in gender equality or have tried hard to avoid answering the question. Within this particular Islamic political ideology, women activists do not organise and participate in cultural or political activities to compete with men on the basis of individualistic concerns, but rather because they believe it is their religious duty to support men in both public and private life. The question remains: if leaders from such parties are elected—parties that do not believe in gender equality—what does that mean for a Bangladesh where three out of four women still face gender-based violence?

Female members of most religion-based politics in the country commonly claim that they

represent the silent majority of the female population who dutifully perform their social roles as devoted housewives and mothers, as well as their traditional religious duties. They usually define themselves against two figures: the secular modern woman—unveiled, public-facing, distant from religion—and the traditional Muslim woman—passive,

underrepresented in politics, and there are concerns that patriarchal moral codes within religion-based parties further restrict their participation as independent political actors. Although they are expected to mobilise extensively at the grassroots—organising voters, running community campaigns, and securing support for the

patriarchal gender norms. It would be incorrect to assume that religion-based parties never use secular codes. For political gains, they often appropriate secular gender codes, albeit selectively. Women's rights to education, economic independence, choosing a spouse, and initiating divorce are among the most notable. These rights are

but what sets them apart is the trust they generate: their work is framed as aligned with religion, which allows them to appear as acting for divine purposes and guiding others along the "true path" in the political arena. This faith dimension not only legitimises religion-based politics but also makes participation and support for these parties a form of service rooted in religious responsibility, a highly legitimate cause that others cannot easily compete with. Religion-based politics across the globe have long relied on this dynamic.

Scholars have often discussed the factors that lead women to join right-wing movements. One key reason is gender conditioning, which is tied to what being a woman means in their social and cultural context. Many are attracted by promises of social stability or respect. Some women see joining these movements as a way to access public or organisational leadership roles that might otherwise be denied to them, even if it means upholding patriarchal norms. Fear or resistance to progressive social changes that challenge their way of life pushes many women to support these movements, as they seek to preserve a society that reflects and validates their identity and responsibilities.

In the current political arena of Bangladesh, representatives of religion-based parties must clarify to the nation whether this newly gained visibility of women in their party politics is merely temporary, aimed at creating a facade of a gender-inclusive public image, or whether it can become the norm. The critical question is the extent to which they will actively address the "women's question" in their political agenda, rather than assuming that women's progress will naturally follow from the establishment of a just Islamic social order. These questions cannot be bypassed if they are to demonstrate their true potential as political actors for women in Bangladesh.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

domestically confined, with limited religious knowledge. Instead, they present themselves as "enlightened Muslim women": religious, modern, socially active, able to move in public, however, without violating Islamic principles. This framing neatly fits into Muslim societies' long-standing desire to appear "modern" while preserving an "authentic" Islamic essence.

A long-standing feminist scholarly concern has been women's exclusion from decision-making. Across the world, women are highly

party—despite carrying the bulk of public work, they are systematically excluded from decision-making positions. This dynamic is already visible in Bangladesh, where religion-based party meetings and leadership gatherings remain overwhelmingly male, and women appear only as symbolic figures. Through this pattern, these parties rely on women's labour for mobilisation while keeping actual political power in male hands, using "symbolic feminisation" to project a gender-inclusive image without challenging the underlying

accepted only insofar as they do not conflict with Islamic gender rules although ultimate authority remains with men, a longstanding concern for feminist scholars. For instance, a recent remark by a leader of a party in Bangladesh proposing to reduce women's working hours sparked strong criticism, highlighting the tension over who holds the authority to decide women's participation in public and economic life.

The strategies women supporting religion-based politics adopt are not unlike those of other political parties,

Reimagining education as the practice of freedom



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SV ANWAR AHMED

The absence of "quality" formal schooling is a major root of many of our problems. I vividly remember that I never experienced a joyful school life, neither in primary nor in secondary school. It was largely mechanical, passive, unpleasant, and lacking good teachers, adequate resources, proper infrastructure, and meaningful engagement. Coming from a family that was neither economically nor socially upper class, my parents could not afford to enrol me in elite institutions that offered a different type of education. I believe this was not only my experience; many students in Bangladesh have faced, and continue to face, similar schooling.

Yet, I was fortunate to encounter a few remarkable individuals, especially in secondary school, who nurtured my reading and writing and taught me to question and doubt the world around me. They became my early mentors, helping me develop what I now call epistemic courage—the courage to see beyond dominant narratives. But such experiences are rare. School life is a critical period for forming a child's thought-world. If structural gaps or rigid ideological frameworks dominate this stage, the child will suffer throughout life, since school and family are key sites for reproducing state and social hegemony.

We need a model of schooling based on common cores, along with diversity. This educational philosophy acknowledges that while children require shared foundations, they also deserve the opportunity to grow in diverse ways. In such schools, students from primary to class ten would learn basic science, literature, music, art, physical education, history, comparative religious studies and more. Some subjects would be mandatory, others optional. The current curriculum does not address the deep socio-economic inequalities that divide students into isolated educational categories. These divisions weaken our sense of collective social unity grounded in shared ethical and cultural

foundations. Schools should not produce "ideological robots" of grand state projects. They should give children the opportunity to form their own identities through the practice of freedom. Education as freedom means cultivating the habit of thinking, questioning, and reflecting on oneself and one's surroundings—not merely obeying what is given.

We need a model of schooling based on common cores, along with diversity. This educational philosophy acknowledges that while children require shared foundations, they also deserve the opportunity to grow in diverse ways. In such schools, students from primary to class ten would learn basic science, literature, music, art, physical education, history, comparative religious studies and more.

Herbert Marcuse's warning about the emergence of the one-dimensional self is relevant here. We must nurture multi-dimensional selves who can hold multiple perspectives, evaluate issues critically, and take time to think, doubt, and understand. According to John Dewey, school should be a microcosm of democratic life, where students learn to negotiate differences through reasoned communication. Drawing on Walter Feinberg, Humayun Kabir, and Rabindranath Tagore, we may say that true education is fundamentally the nurturing of humanity. Schools should be spaces of communion—where children bring diverse socio-

cultural experiences into dialogue, cultivating unity with difference.

How can we imagine a human being without curiosity? Yet genuine curiosity rarely reflects in school-going faces today. Many students appear as though their lives have already lost vitality—no expectation, no spark. We must recognise the long-term socio-cultural costs of producing a generation of vulnerable selves—or worse, human robots. These may serve the needs of a dominating state or powerful social forces, but are destructive for any society committed to collective flourishing.

Freire's distinction between problem-posing education and the banking model is crucial here. Problem-posing education cultivates ethical reasoning, collective problem-solving, and social imagination; banking education turns students into passive containers of information.

Without a significant number of reflective, balanced, and thoughtful individuals—products of good schooling—it becomes impossible to sustain a healthy, independent, and responsible society. Vulnerable selves often cannot recognise their own vulnerability. They struggle with critical ethical grounding and lack the capacity for self-critique, often believing their truths to be unquestionable. In contrast, intellectually mature individuals remain ever-curious, reflective, and socially responsible.

Schools, I believe, should help children become individuals who can observe, think, write, and understand themselves and others with ethical awareness. Even at a basic level, such anthropological practice nurtures tolerance and reflex. Students must also be allowed to make mistakes. As Humayun Kabir, an educator, wrote: "one cannot discover truth without making mistakes, and if these truths are learned only later in political or social life, society pays the cost. Therefore, students should encounter diverse experiences—including mistakes—during their formative years."

We need a generation that loves diversity and life itself; that values music, poetry, nature, and human dignity; that remains sceptical of the known and curious about the unknown; that seeks truth—not absolute truth, but evolving and partial truth. Such a generation must learn to imagine its future,

to understand the consequences of present actions. Without knowing history objectively—from social to subaltern histories—how can one envision the future? And without envisioning the future, how can one understand the present?

For Tim Ingold, an anthropologist, education is about maturation, not

matriculation. Teachers and students walk together as fellow travellers in the pursuit of truth. The teacher's role is not to make learning easy, but to exemplify generosity, companionship in inquiry, and honest critique.

Freedom, then, is not merely a constitutional or social right; it is a practicable act—something that can

be cultivated and nurtured in schools. No education system is perfect. But acknowledging imperfection should not lead to silence. We must engage in the continuous research of education itself, searching again and again for more responsible ways of pursuing truth for the common good.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Director
Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control & Research (IEDCR), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212
Tel: 8802-222280376, 8802-2222986691 Fax: 02222280440

Memo no. IEDCR/Rev/e-tender/2025-26/1134 Date: 07.12.2025

Outsourcing e-Tender Notice (OTM) 2025-26

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for procurement of the following Outsourcing services according to Outsourcing Policy 2025:

| Sl. No. | Package No. | Name of the Item | Tender ID No. |
|---------|-----------------------------------|---|---------------|
| 01. | IEDCR/Rev/outsourcing/2025-26/P28 | Selection of Outsourcing Manpower Supply Firm for Engagement of Generator Operator (1), Laboratory Attendant (4), Assistant Gardener (1), Liftman (3), Animal Caretaker (1), Electric Helper (1), Pump Helper (1), Sanitary Helper (1), Hostel Attendant (2), Cleaner (13), AC Mechanic Helper (1), unskilled Labor (1). Total 30 person. at IEDCR, Mohakhali Dhaka. Duration: Six Months (January 2026 to June 2026), May be extended depend on performance and fund availability. | 1190894 |

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches up to 4.00 PM, on 21/12/2025.

The Closing & Opening Time of Tenders are Shown Below: -

| Description | Tender/ Proposal Publication Date & Time on e-GP Portal | Tender/ Proposal Last Selling Date & Time | Tender/ Proposal Closing/Opening Date & Time |
|---|---|---|--|
| 01. IEDCR/Rev/outsourcing/2025-26/P28 Tender ID: 1190894 | 07/12/2025 17:00 | 21/12/2025 16:00 | 22/12/2025 15:00 |

Further Information and Guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://eprocure.gov.bd>) and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

N.B: NOA will be issued as per funding availability.

অধ্যাপক ডাঃ তাহমিনা শিরীন পিএইচডি
 পরিচালক
 টেলিফোন: ৮৮০২-২২২২৬২২৭০

GD-2676

Death anniversary of Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid

STAR REPORT

Today is the 13th death anniversary of eminent educationalist, diplomat, and intellectual Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid.



On the occasion, wreaths will be placed at his grave at the capital's Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at 10:30am. Besides, prayers will be offered and food will be distributed among the destitute, said a press release.

Born in 1924, Murshid was at the forefront of the Language Movement of 1952, the Mass Uprising of 1969, the Six-Point Movement, and the Liberation War of 1971.

During the Liberation War, he was a member of the planning commission of the Mujibnagar government in exile.

In his illustrious diplomatic career, Murshid served as the Bangladesh high commissioner to Poland and Hungary. Murshid was the first chairman of Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) and a former vice chancellor of Rajshahi University.



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

A farmer struggles to harvest Aman paddy as stagnant water remains in his field. Even a month after the last heavy rainfall, farmers across Rajshahi are still struggling to fully harvest their Aman crops. The photo was taken near the Nawhata-Borgachi road in Paba upazila of Rajshahi yesterday.

Thalassaemia takes

FROM PAGE 3
thalassaemia carriers in Bangladesh at 10.9-13.3 percent, or roughly 17-22 million people. After Thailand, Bangladesh has the second highest carrier rate in the world.

Among the 156 mothers surveyed, 63 percent experienced some level of depression, compared to 32 percent of urban adults. Meanwhile, 62 percent experienced stress and 58 percent experienced anxiety, higher than the urban adult rates of 42.5 percent and 47 percent respectively.

The study also found that 90 percent of mothers were worried about their child's future and 42 percent said their long-term career goals were affected.

Mothers spending more than Tk 30,000 per month on treatment faced significantly higher stress, anxiety and depression, she added.

Fahrin said policymakers

must recognise the mental health needs of mothers caring for children with thalassaemia and ensure accessible support services, including counselling and financial assistance or subsidised treatment.

"Thalassaemia is spreading like a silent epidemic due to lack of awareness, but there is still no proper policy or action plan to prevent this 100 percent preventable disease," she said.

The study recommended integrating a comprehensive national prevention strategy into government policy.

At the session, BIDS senior research fellow Abdur Razzaque Sarker and research fellow Jinnat Ara presented findings on the burden of diabetes, hypertension, and old-age security.

The session was moderated by M Asaduzzaman, former research director of BIDS.

ACC launches probe

FROM PAGE 12
belonging to Hamid stands on Plot 6 on Lake Drive Road in Dhaka's Nikunja area. After completing his tenure as president, he moved into the house with his family in April 2023.

According to the

allegations, the state suffered huge financial losses due to the construction of walk-in barriers on both sides of the house, decks and hanging bridges, and lamp posts along the canal adjacent to the property.

Corruption persists

FROM PAGE 12
manifestos of political parties for the 13th national parliamentary election.

The programme titled "The promise of a well-governed, discrimination-free and corruption-free Bangladesh" was held at its office in the capital's Dhanmondi yesterday afternoon.

On Bangladesh's relations with neighbouring India, Iteharuzzaman said it is not a direct part of TIB's mandate, so they do not make policy proposals in that area. However, he said India faced its most embarrassing diplomatic and political setback in recent history due to its support for the previous authoritarian regime.

"India has not yet admitted this. It is unrealistic to expect they will accept it openly. But it does not mean relations between Bangladesh and India cannot improve. Both countries have strong stakes in cooperation in business, investment, diplomacy, and socio-economic areas. Mutual dependence is real," he said.

He added that India could have taken a more principled position by distancing itself from authoritarianism. "If India shifted from that position, it would make cooperation easier for Bangladesh."

Before the session, TIB, the Bangladesh chapter of Berlin-based global anti-graft watchdog, presented 52 recommendations in 14 sectors.

The organisation suggested that all political parties should respect the

spirit of the July uprising and the people's desire for state reforms.

Parties should promise to implement a time-bound and accountable process for reform proposals included in the July National Charter 2025; constitutional reforms and recommendations of six reform commissions (Constitution, Election System, Anti-Corruption Commission, Public Administration, Police, and Judiciary); recommendations of other reform commissions (Local Government, Media, Women, Health, and Labour); those from reports, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights fact-finding report, the committee preparing Bangladesh's Economic White Paper, and other committees and task forces.

They should continue and enforce ordinances and measures taken based on the July charter, other reform commissions, and amend the ordinances that failed to meet people's expectations. On justice for human rights violations and on recognition and support for those killed or injured in the July uprising, TIB proposed that the parties should work above political interests. All killings, crimes, and human rights violations during the uprising and under the authoritarian government should be properly investigated and prosecuted.

TIB said no reform will be effective or sustainable without successfully preventing corruption.

Country failing to shield children

FROM PAGE 3
"According to MICS 2025, 86 percent of children aged 1-14 experience violent discipline, and 47.2 percent of girls are married before 18," she said.

The child helpline 1098 received 425,651 calls from January to November this year. Of these, 3,54,435 calls, including 1,45,384 from girls, were related to abuse, exploitation or psychosocial support. Among them, 33,072 children were rescued from extreme violence, homelessness, child marriage or exploitation.

Shabnaaz said families are failing to ensure basic safety and community-based protection bodies rarely function. National, district and union-level committees formed under the Child Marriage Restraint Act and Children Act remain mostly inactive, she said. Police and administrative systems also fall short, with influential individuals often swaying outcomes.

Prof Tania Haque of Dhaka University's Women and Gender Studies department said women are treated as private property at home and public property outside. She called for accurate data, a national family policy and education reforms to teach ethics, emotional growth, human behaviour and gender equality.

Shamima Pervin, head of UNFPA Bangladesh's sexual harassment committees are

mostly inactive due to poor training, unclear reporting systems and low awareness among parents, teachers and students.

She said comprehensive sexuality education covers less than 20 percent of essential topics.

Rekha Saha, legal aid secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said most complaints come from girls and women facing abuse within the family, including restrictions on education and mobility, forced marriage and domestic violence.

She stressed the need for counselling, medical support, legal aid and shelters, along with enforcement of High Court directives.

Kamrun Nahar of Naripokkho said despite multiple laws and action plans, implementation is weak and accountability is largely absent. She said society normalises violence and authorities often ignore court directives.

Natalie McCauly, chief of Child Protection at Unicef Bangladesh, said investing in child protection is both a moral and economic imperative, with each dollar invested yielding up to USD 15.

Besides, violence against women and children costs Bangladesh up to 5 percent of GDP, she said. She called for scaling up effective programmes, strengthening social services and pushing legal reforms to reduce impunity and prevent

child marriage and online exploitation.

Farhana Yeasmin, deputy commissioner of DMP's Women Support and Investigation Division, said more female officers are handling cases, but investigations are delayed by slow DNA, medical and forensic reports.

She warned that violence is increasingly shifting online, with intimate partners misusing images to blackmail victims. She stressed the need for advanced tools, coordination and specialised police training from recruitment.

Sharmin Akter, superintendent of police at Police Headquarters, said their division is active in handling cyber harassment cases through hotlines and trained officers, reaching over a million beneficiaries since 2021.

She said social awareness is as important as law enforcement.

Channel 24 Senior Reporter Jenia Kabir Shuchona highlighted the media's role, urging gender-sensitive reporting that focuses on the crime, not the victim.

Mostafa Mostakur Rahim Khan, director of programmes at the Department of Social Services, said District and Upazila Child Welfare Boards struggle with administrative loads, but Unicef supported projects are improving coordination.

Dr Abul Hasanat, joint

secretary and district judge at the Law and Justice Division, emphasised the need to strengthen the justice system through specialised tribunals for child sexual abuse cases and stronger law enforcement to reduce power imbalances.

Maheen Newaz Chowdhury, director of programmes at Plan International, stressed youth engagement, digital registration and community-based approaches for long-term prevention.

The discussion was moderated by Tanjim Ferdous, in charge of NGOs and Foreign Missions, at The Daily Star.

Couple found

FROM PAGE 12
double murder took place late last night.

The OC said, "Primary investigation suggests that both were killed by blows to the head. The police and detective branch have jointly begun investigations to identify those involved."

"The bodies have been sent to Rangpur Medical College morgue for autopsy," he added.

According to locals, Jogesh was a schoolteacher and retired in 2017. The couple lived in their village home.

Following the incident, Taraganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Monabber Hossain, and upazila Freedom Fighters' Council unit commander Ali Hossain visited the site.

Families await closure

FROM PAGE 12
Rafiqul, owner of a computer training centre, never returned.

"Since that day, we searched for him everywhere, including the Dhaka Medical College morgue. We couldn't find him anywhere... We later learned that several unidentified bodies had been buried in Rayerbazar."

"Now that CID has begun exhuming the bodies for DNA identification, we came here with the hope that at least we could finally know if he was buried here," Raiyan said.

Speaking to this correspondent later in the afternoon, Soheli's younger brother, Alvi Nabil Hossain, said, "After 1:00pm, a CID team took us to their headquarters in Malibagh and collected blood samples from my mother and father for DNA matching to help find my brother. Like us,

family members of several of the missing victims were taken there for samples."

CID officials said the identification will take time.

CID Chief Md Sibgat Ullah, also an additional inspector general of police, told reporters that the entire process is being carried out following international protocol. "After exhumation is completed, DNA tests will be conducted. Once identified, if the families wish, the bodies will be handed over to them for burial. Otherwise, they'll be reburied here [Rayerbazar] with proper religious rites."

He also noted that forensic expert Luis Fondibridar, who has conducted similar operations in 65 countries over the past 40 years, is supervising the work.

"All steps, from exhumation to reburial, will be carried out in phases. Initially, 114 graves have been identified,

though the final number may vary. After exhumation, post-mortem examinations and tissue sampling will be done, DNA profiles prepared, and identities confirmed before reburial."

Sibgat added, "So far, 10 relatives have applied to provide their DNA samples. Others may contact CID, and their DNA samples will also be collected."

According to sources, two bodies were exhumed for DNA testing yesterday.

Since the burial of over 100 July uprising victims, the Rayerbazar graveyard has been enclosed with marble and tiles by the city corporation.

During a visit to the graveyard on August 2, the Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury announced the government's initiative to identify the victims who had been marked unidentified.

Energy crisis a failure

FROM PAGE 3

Reflecting on the past decade, he said the atmosphere was marked by fear. "Shutting down outlets, ownership transfers, sacking journalists, and cutting advertisements were very common. Sometimes businesses influence the media more than the government. As a result, many major incidents went unreported."

He added, "Sometimes there was news, but there was no editor willing to dare to publish it."

Dhaka Tribune Editor Reaz Ahmed said achieving

100 percent electrification was a success, but it came at a huge cost, with corruption remaining largely unexposed.

"The time has not ended," he said, adding that journalists would continue to expose malpractice based on lessons learned, not out of vindictiveness.

The session was chaired by Monowar Mostafa, executive member of the Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development.

Shahidul Islam Chowdhury, executive editor of Daily Desh Rupantor, also spoke.

Coalition formed

FROM PAGE 3

The release said the coalition has been formed to ensure that the voices, struggles and aspirations of women and children, who make up the majority of the population, are not sidelined in political commitments.

Women constitute 50.8 percent of Bangladesh's population (World Bank, 2023) and children 33 percent (Unicef, 2023), yet their needs remain weakly reflected in national agendas, the release added.

It said persistent vulnerabilities -- including gender-based violence,

early marriage, learning poverty, malnutrition, unsafe migration and climate risks -- continue across the country.

"Political leaders must recognise that the wellbeing of women and children is not a peripheral agenda, it is the foundation of a just, resilient and future-ready nation," the coalition said.

It urged all political parties to demonstrate leadership by committing to evidence-based, adequately financed and inclusive policies that reflect the lived realities of women and children.

489 new posts

FROM PAGE 3
also responsible for creating, abolishing, and restructuring officer and staff positions.

Alongside the committee chair, Justice Md Ashfaul Islam, the committee includes Appellate Division's Justice AKM Asaduzzaman;

High Court Division's Justices Md Atabullah and Md Bazlur Rahman;

senior secretary of the SC secretariat; senior secretaries of law and justice division, ministry of public administration, and finance division; and SC registrar general.

The approval of these new posts marks an important step towards strengthening the administrative capacity and efficiency of the SC secretariat, said an SC press release.

Democracy, growth

FROM PAGE 3
parliament, rule of law and civic engagement.

"Second," he asked, "can that democratic system deliver real economic development?" Without meaningful progress, democracy risks losing legitimacy, he cautioned. He stressed the need for policies that promote inclusive growth and broaden opportunities for all, not just the privileged few.

"And third," he said, "what will be the quality of that development?" Development must reduce both economic and social disparities if it is to be truly meaningful. "GDP growth alone cannot be our benchmark," he said, urging a broader focus on justice, equity and shared prosperity.

"These are three separate, complex issues," he said. "Yet public discourse often remains limited to the first -- the structure of democratic governance -- while the deeper questions surrounding development go largely unaddressed."

Mahmud also drew attention to what he termed a "long-standing culture of informal and unethical dealings" between segments of the bureaucracy and private businesses, which he said continues to undermine development efforts. Reducing bureaucratic delays and simplifying licensing alone, he argued, will not solve systemic problems when rooted collusion between public officials and private actors persists.

This "unholy alliance", he said, enables certain businesses to gain unfair advantages through backdoor dealings, distorting both markets and governance. "When such a culture takes hold -- especially in regulatory or financial institutions -- it becomes a system that excludes transparency and accountability."

He acknowledged that

some recent reforms, such as mandatory online income tax filing, have reduced petty corruption and harassment of ordinary taxpayers. But he cautioned that digital solutions are unlikely to stop large-scale tax evasion or elite influence without broader institutional and political reforms.

Mahmud pointed to Bangladesh's persistently low rankings on global indicators related to business climate and governance, saying these reflect not only regulatory gaps but a deeper culture that tolerates, and at times incentivises, rent-seeking behaviour. A particularly dangerous outcome, he warned, is the rise of crony capitalism, where a handful of politically connected firms dominate sectors like infrastructure and public procurement.

"The problem isn't just corruption in the traditional sense. Over time, vested interests become deeply embedded in institutions, influencing not only outcomes but policies themselves," he said.

Mahmud stressed the importance of rebuilding social capital -- mutual trust and responsibility -- which he said once held rural economies together in the absence of formal systems.

He concluded by urging policymakers to go beyond rhetoric and short-term fixes. "A functioning democracy isn't just about holding elections," he said. "It's about the kind of institutions we build, the behaviour we encourage, and the values we pass on to future generations."



| | | | | |
|-------------|-------|------|---------|------|
| Fazr | 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

BEGUM ROKEYA

Education, class, and her memory

NADINE SHAANTA MURSHID

Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain wrote a short story "Souro Jagat" (The Solar System) in the early 1900s in which Gauhar, an enlightened father of nine daughters, was determined to send his girls to the renowned Dow Hill School in Kurseong. His brother-in-law Jafar opposed the decision, fearing that convent education would turn his nieces into Christians. But Gauhar and his wife remained confident this could never happen as they had acquainted their daughters with Islamic ideals and texts from early childhood.

This short story offers the message that individuals grounded firmly in their faith can navigate the modern world without losing themselves. But Begum Rokeya must have had an epiphany that made her change her mind. A few years later, in 1911,

to study. This is an achievement that would have seemed impossible just decades earlier. The school offered a modern curriculum: English, mathematics, science, geography, history, public administration, alongside "home economics" skills like embroidery. Students participated in inter-school sports competitions and cultural activities. In other words, girls were offered what boys had been getting all along.

However, as I mentioned at the outset, her work primarily addressed the educational needs of upper- and middle-class Muslim girls. Part of the reason was perhaps that school attendance required resources that low-resource families simply could not afford: fees, time away from necessary labour, the ability to maintain purdah observance. However, the critique remains: her class-specific focus seemingly



An illustration inspired by Sultana's Dream, Begum Rokeya's visionary feminist utopia where women rebuild the world through knowledge, science, and collective freedom.



Begum Rokeya (1880-1932)

Begum Rokeya established the Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School for Muslim girls. This was the first school for Muslim girls in colonial India. The school started with just eight students in a rented room on Walliullah Lane in Calcutta. By the time she passed away in 1932, the school had grown to 149 students.

These numbers spark the question: why was change so incremental? The answer perhaps lies in the population she chose to focus on: middle- and upper-class Muslim girls. The number of bonded Muslim families that could be convinced to send their daughters to school was limited in pre-Partition India. But it also raises the question: Did Begum Rokeya want to limit education to middle-class women, as that question might imply?

In this essay, I tackle this question to say: it's probably a bit more complicated than that.

The respectable middle class

Begum Rokeya went door-to-door to persuade middle-class, educated Muslim families to send their daughters to school and place them in the public domain. However, she made a promise to them: purdah norms would not be violated. She kept that promise. The school buses that transported the girls were curtained (and mockingly called "moving black holes" by non-Muslim communities). The school had a separate namaaz room with facilities for ablutions. Their curriculum included daily Quran readings. Begum Rokeya herself, despite privately critiquing the practice, maintained strict purdah throughout her life. She understood that without such compliance, her school could not exist. This was a strategic decision that allowed her to do the work she wanted to do. That practice persists today: it is exactly the same strategy that the female labour force in Bangladesh maintains to navigate public space.

By 1927, the school had become a high school, inclusive of boarding facilities for girls from district towns across Bengal. Middle-class Muslim girls were at the helm of breaking the prohibition against leaving home

neglected the compounded economic and labour constraints faced by lower-class women in colonial Bengal, women who needed both education and economic mobility. Her writings, including the famous Sultana's Dream, often prioritised intellectual empowerment over material inequalities that precipitate women's subjugation.

One reading of her decision to focus on the middle and upper classes is her own class position. As Farida Akhter observes, "in considering Rokeya's writings and works, we see that the Begum prefix has become a symbol of femininity and helps Rokeya stand as a feminist figure, [but] the honorific 'Begum' itself denotes class status." Begum Rokeya's work, then, remains, at least partly, tethered to the middle-class respectability she both challenged and embodied. Indeed, it cannot be denied that it is her class position that allowed her entry into the homes of middle- and upper-class women. Someone from a lower stratum would not have had that kind of access and subsequent success in setting up a school for Muslim girls.

But, as I said, it is more complicated than that.

Perhaps a more plausible reading is that Begum Rokeya had the foresight to think that if "respectable" families sent their daughters to school, others would follow. It was strategic for her to start her intervention with the middle classes, given the disproportionate power they have in configuring social life and social norms.

But as we can glean from the fairly small increase in the number of students over 20 years, her approach only enabled incremental gains during her own lifetime. The cultural and ideological change regarding Muslim women's education was slow. In fact, one might argue, the ideological rationale for girls' education is still contested if we stop to listen to what our Islamic leaders in Bangladesh have to say about women's place in society. But if we take school enrolment into account, we see that girls have made huge

leaps, particularly in completing primary education in Bangladesh. We no longer have to worry about putting girls in school (I hope), our concern is now about the quality of education that students receive.

But during Begum Rokeya's lifetime, she did not see much of these gains, which came much, much later. During her lifetime, she was held back by inadequate grants from the colonial government and, more painfully, by the "colossal indifference" of her own community (Gupta, 2013). Some members went further than indifference; they called Begum Rokeya a "whore and an embezzler of funds" (Gupta, 2013), reminiscent of the vandalised portrait of Begum Rokeya with the word magi inscribed on it that I witnessed during the 2024 uprising in Dhaka.

This was the price of her audacity: a woman who dared to educate girls, who moved through the city managing a school, who handled money and dealt with men in official capacities, became a target for the most vicious accusations her community could level. Indeed, to use the word whore to disparage a woman means to dismiss her, discredit her, render her insignificant.

While the betrayal was a location of psychological pain, the colonial state's neglect led to material harm for the school. Intermittent funds meant she could not maintain enough purdah buses. The school struggled to enrol day scholars at the pace Begum Rokeya had hoped for.

worship, she would have badgered a goddess for a building so the school could grow and prosper, gently pointing out the disparity between resources available to Muslim and Hindu girls (Gupta, 2013).

Four years after her death, in 1936, Sakhawat Memorial finally became a fully government-aided institution. In 1937, it moved into a spacious colonial building with extensive grounds on Lord Sinha Road. After Partition, the school opened its doors to girls of all communities. By the end of 1948, the curtained buses that had been essential to its founding were gone. The world had changed, in part because of what Begum Rokeya had done by putting Muslim girls in the public domain.

Indeed, Begum Rokeya helped bring about structural change through the expansion of education to Muslim girls, but her work also demonstrates that working within existing social structures (e.g., by maintaining purdah, observing religious practices) is necessary for survival and success. This "change-from-within-the-system" ideology prevails to this day. But as we now know, change from within can only go so far.

Begum Rokeya, however, made this strategy work. Her strategy extended to making change in intellectual spaces. Her secondary battle was fought in the domain of language, where she challenged entrenched cultural and religious biases that favoured the Urdu language to assert

until she had only three students. By 1919, she had to discontinue Bangla as a subject (Gupta, 2013).

She, however, did not forget her project. In the mid-1920s, as Bengali Muslim intellectuals increasingly asserted their ethnolinguistic identity, Begum Rokeya successfully resumed a Bengali section parallel to the Urdu section in her school. This seemingly technical curricular decision had deep positive implications. When students learned to read and write in their mother tongue, they gained the ethnolinguistic identity, Gupta (2013) suggests, in line with the interests of Bengali Muslim intellectuals. Furthermore, they could access the Quran in a language they actually understood, rather than parroting Arabic or struggling with imperfect Urdu (Gupta, 2013).

The "fruits of this labour" became visible in 1952, Gupta (2013) argues, when middle-class Bengali Muslim women poured into the streets of Dhaka to protest the Pakistani government's attempt to impose Urdu as the sole state language. To Gupta, this was astounding, as only a decade earlier Muslim women were sequestered at home at the behest of the ulemas of the 1940s in pre-Partition India. The sari-clad women marching in protest in 1952 represented a break from the idea of the severely secluded woman. Gupta (2013) wants us to consider that it was education that instilled in women a sense of self-respect that was linked to taking pride in the language they considered their own.

Indeed, Begum Rokeya recognised the problem of working in silos. She reckoned educational and linguistic reform are important only if they translate to greater freedom for women. Further, she recognised that true freedom could not be reduced to symbolic gestures like discarding the purdah. Indeed, liberation is not about what one wears or does not wear but about the values they live by. As such, for women to be free would mean for them to be independent, which perhaps underscores her critique of token freedoms one lives by.

Beyond token freedom

Begum Rokeya understood women's oppression and male privilege as intrinsically related. In her 1904 essay, "Amader Abanati," she wrote: "Whenever a woman has tried to raise her head, she has been crushed with the excuse of religion or the holy texts... I have to say that ultimately 'religion' has strengthened the bonds of our enslavement; men are lording over women under the pretext of religion" (cited in Mahua Sarkar, 2013, 13). Religion remains a tool of control wielded by men in positions of real or perceived power. And, because Bangladeshis do not learn the Arabic language, only the notation, it is impossible to know whether it is religion or certain men's reading of the religion that is seemingly against women's emancipation, or whether it is an excuse, as Begum Rokeya suggests, to judge and punish women.

Suffice to say, Begum Rokeya's critique drew fierce criticism from liberals and conservatives alike, as it does even today. By the time Begum Rokeya's essay was republished in 1905, five provocative paragraphs had been removed. Begum Rokeya, however, maintained that women's liberation requires more than men's benevolence (Sarkar, 2013). Indeed, women's liberation requires that people get out of their way.

What is striking is that Begum Rokeya did not simply denounce men; she critiqued women and their complicity in their own subordination, pointing to what we might recognise

as internalised misogyny today. For instance, her critique of women's love of jewellery, when she says "prisoners wear iron shackles... we lovingly wear chains made of gold and silver" to imply that women are willful prisoners, is an indictment that is still relevant (cited in Sarkar, 2013, 15). She was keenly aware that women internalised and celebrated the symbols of their dependence on men in the name of love and devotion. She challenged the notion of femininity as being dependent on men, which she saw as antithetical to the idea of freedom. She distinguished between the token freedoms granted to elite Hindu/Brahmo or Parsi women, such as being allowed to discard purdah, while they were still dependent on men: "When men kept them in the antahpur (inner quarters) they stayed there. And when men forced them to come out they came out of purdah. What is women's achievement in this? Such token opposition to purdah is never praiseworthy" (cited in Sarkar, 2013, 17).

Most radically, particularly for that time, Rokeya insisted that equality required economic independence. "To achieve equality with men we will do whatever is needed of us," she wrote. "If we have to earn our own livelihood, we will do that" (cited in Sarkar, 2013, 16). Although that can be read as wanting women to be like men, as some do, the focus is on women's employment as a path towards gender equality.

This vision of women's autonomy, grounded in self-sufficiency and psychological wellbeing, as well as economic independence, put her in debate and conversation with male reformers and contemporaneous women writers, who, Sarkar (2013) rightly points out, are part of the zeitgeist that made Begum Rokeya. Although Begum Rokeya is singled out as a lone figure in early Bengali feminism, possibly because we like hero narratives, she worked alongside others such as Khaerunnissa Khatun and Masuda Rahman, and inspired a generation of women—Sufia Kamal, Fazlunnessa, even my own grandmother Noorjehan Murshid—who pushed boundaries in their own ways (Sarkar, 2013).

Memory

Begum Rokeya's enduring influence has been institutionalised over time. Her name has been used (and abused) to claim or distance from feminist politics. For instance, a women's residential hall at Dhaka University bore her name. Bangladesh observes Rokeya Day every December 9. Her school stands tall on Lord Sinha Road and has been open to girls of all communities since Partition.

Indeed, Begum Rokeya's legacy is monumental. But it is also instructive. Her work demonstrates that structural change often begins with compromises such as working within the system to create change from within. But, as this essay has argued, such strategies have limits. In Bangladesh, for instance, progress in educational spaces allowed the inclusion of girls, but the quality of education is constrained by a three-tier class-based system that deepens class-based inequity. By focusing on middle-class respectability, Begum Rokeya initiated a cultural shift that expanded the boundaries of what counts as respectable, but the focus on respectability has also become a way to control women's personal lives.

I go back to the initial question: does any of this mean that Begum Rokeya wanted to limit education to middle-class girls/women? The answer is no—she wanted their buy-in, and that of their families, because they set the standard for what is acceptable. That she critiques wealthy women's token freedom is indicative of her desire for actual freedom for all women. Finally, her take on economic independence, ostensibly a way to advocate for women from low-resource households to be able to work without judgement and morality policing, makes clear that the kind of freedom she envisioned is grounded in material equality, which she thought could be bridged through education.

That her work remains in progress is an indictment of us as a society and as a people, not her ideas.

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Sakhawat Memorial Government Girls' High School—established by Begum Rokeya in 1911—remains a testament to her pioneering struggle for Muslim girls' education.

Girls from other parts of Bengal who wanted to attend had to be rejected because there were not resources to run a proper boarding facility until the late 1920s (Gupta, 2013). Even the government-appointed school inspectors acknowledged that Muslim girls' schools were being short-changed in funding allocations. Hridaybala Bose, Inspector of Schools for the Presidency and Burdwan Divisions, testified in 1934 that Muslim girls were not receiving their fair share of the grants available for female education.

As such, the school never had a building of its own during Begum Rokeya's lifetime, a reminder that she did not chase accolades; she did what she believed in until she died. Her last years, between 1927 and 1932, she exhausted herself trying to secure government approval for a plot of land and funding for a permanent structure. She lobbied relentlessly, facing the government's delays and the indifference of Muslim ministers in the Bengal government. In March 1931, just a year before her death, she addressed the school's managing committee with frustration. She shared that many people considered her a nuisance because she was always begging for her school, and then added that if she had believed in idol

the importance of Bengali for Muslim girls.

The battle for mother tongue

Within the constraints of having to work within the system, Begum Rokeya achieved something revolutionary in her battle over language, perhaps a natural offshoot of her pursuit in the domain of education. In 1917, she introduced Bengali as a subject in her school, defying opposition from families who considered Bengali a "Hindu language" unsuitable for respectable Muslim girls. At the 1927 Bengal Women's Education Conference, Begum Rokeya lamented that "the Muslims of Bengal miss their mother because they don't have a mother tongue," arguing that the Quran must be translated into regional Indian languages (cited in Gupta, 2013). This political intervention created a ruckus, as one can imagine. Respectable Muslim families in Bengal were caught between choosing "Islamic Urdu" and "Hindu Bengali," an odd dilemma given most upper-class Bengali Muslim families spoke what Begum Rokeya called "bad Urdu."

Her intervention did not float well. As soon as Begum Rokeya introduced Bengali in 1917, enrolment dwindled



Ashes hopes fading away for England

England are now staring down the barrel in the Ashes, having suffered another comprehensive eight-wicket defeat against Australia on Day 4 of the Day-Night second Test in Brisbane on Sunday. History suggests Ben Stokes' men must now overcome overwhelming odds to regain the urn, as they trail the five-match series 2-0.

- ▶ England became the first team to lose a Day-Night Test after scoring 300+ when batting first.
- ▶ Only once in the previous 22 attempts have England lost the Gabba Test and went on to win the Ashes -- a 3-1 win in 1954/55.
- ▶ This is the 15th instance of England being 0-2 down after the first two Tests of an Ashes series in Australia. They went on to lose all previous 14 such occasions.
- ▶ Australia's Steve Smith is yet to lose a Test as a stand-in skipper, having led the side to eight wins and three draws in 11 matches.
- ▶ Playing on his home ground, 35-year-old pacer Michael Neser registered his maiden five-wicket haul in Tests (5/42) to help the hosts bundle out England for just 241 in the second innings, needing just 65 to win.

PHOTO: AFP

"They say Australia isn't the place for weak men. We're definitely not weak, but we need to find something."

England captain Ben Stokes

"Great day. First two days were pretty even, game turned when we were able to extend to get the new ball under lights, that was crucial for us."

Australia's stand-in skipper Steve Smith

Norris crowned F1 world champion

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Lando Norris claimed his maiden Formula One world drivers' title in Abu Dhabi on Sunday, ending Max Verstappen's four-year reign.

The Briton finished third in the season closer behind race winner Verstappen and the other title challenger, McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri, to claim the crown by two points.

Norris, in tears on the team radio, said: "Thanks so much. I love you mum, I love you dad."

"That was exciting, a little too exciting, awesome," said McLaren team principal Zak Brown.

Norris becomes Britain's first world champion since Lewis Hamilton in 2020 with this 13th drivers' crown for McLaren.

The 26-year-old's success comes over half a century after Emerson Fittipaldi claimed the British marque's first drivers' title in 1974.

A galaxy of F1 greats followed -- James Hunt (1976), Niki Lauda (1984), Alain Prost (1985, 1986, 1989), Ayrton Senna (1988, 1990, 1991), Mikka Hakkinen (1998, 1999) and Hamilton in 2008.

McLaren, headed by team principal Andrea Stella and CEO Brown, secured back-to-back constructors' titles in Singapore last month.

Sunday's season-closer was the first time the title was decided by a contest involving more than two drivers since a four-way scrap at the final race in Abu Dhabi in 2010.



Zakir ton keeps Sylhet alive in NCL

SPORTS REPORTER

Sylhet recovered from a shaky start against Barishal thanks to Zakir Hasan's unbeaten century on Day Two of the final NCL round at the Rajshahi Divisional Cricket Ground on Sunday.

Barishal were dismissed for 312 after Sohag Gazi's brisk 68, before Sylhet slumped to 47 for four. Zakir then rebuilt with a 113-run stand with Ashraful Hasan, reaching his ton off 151 balls and ending the day on 130 not out as Sylhet closed at 214 for 5, trailing by 98.

Second-placed Mymensingh fared poorly, collapsing from 73 for 2 to 137 all out at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, with Rajshahi's Sunzamul Islam taking five for 18. Rajshahi reached 210 for 6, extending their lead to 292.

At the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura, Rangpur kept their title hopes alive after being bowled out for 174 in reply to Khulna's 308. They hit back strongly, reducing Khulna to 41 for 5 at stumps.

At Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Dhaka dented Chattogram's chances by declaring on 541 for 6 before leaving them reeling at 94 for 6, still 447 behind.

Tigers seek right mix in opener-heavy top order

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh T20I side right now is strewn with openers and figuring out how they can be incorporated in different roles is a question the management is trying to answer before the ICC T20 World Cup comes around in February next year.

In the recently concluded three-match Ireland series, the Tigers rotated their openers. Parvez Hossain Emon and Tanzid Hasan Tamim opened the innings in the first two matches while in the final T20I, Saif Hassan replaced Parvez at the top.

Skipper Litton Das is also an opener in the white ball scheme, having opened in 69 out of his 118 T20I innings. But he has opened in only two of the 25 T20Is he has played in 2025 and has settled into the No.3 slot.

With not many alternatives available in a shallow pipeline of players, the management has to find a way to utilise the openers in other roles in the top order and hopefully churn the best out of them.

The national team batters, including Emon, Tanzid and Saif, are undergoing a skill camp at the Academy Ground in Mirpur under the watchful supervision of head coach Phil Simmons, senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin and specialised batting coach Mohammad Ashraf.

"Personally, I think it's better for



batters' to have a settled place. However, right now, we have four [openers] in the top order. All four players have been very successful last year," said Ashraf.

"They are scoring a big fifty every second or third match in T20Is... Saif, Parvez, and Tanzid possess the ability to hit sixes standing in their position, not all batters can do that," he added.

Saif has batted at No. 3 and 4 in franchise T20 tournaments like the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) and the Global Super League (GSL).

Even though he made his mark for the national side while opening in this year's Asia Cup, he is the likeliest candidate to come down to No.4 in the T20 World Cup set to take place in India and Sri Lanka.

"If we look at Saif's domestic career, he has about 10 centuries in List-A cricket and eight centuries in first-class cricket. When Saif scores, he scores big and he is used to batting as an opener or at No. 3 or 4," Ashraf said.

The former Bangladesh captain also shared that to solve the problem of batting collapses, the coaches are working with the openers in the camp to hone their shot selection and improve execution of low-risk scoring shots.

"Specifically, this training is about ensuring we play more grounded shots. We have the ability to play aerial shots, but we are trying to work on playing more cricketing shots along the ground," he said on the work done with openers.

Salah signals Liverpool exit

AGENCIES

Mohamed Salah has cast serious doubt over his Liverpool future after unleashing a blistering attack on the club and manager Arne Slot, saying he has been "thrown under the bus" during the team's turbulent run. The 33-year-old has been benched for three consecutive matches, including Saturday's 3-3 draw at Leeds, where he was not used at all.

Salah told reporters he felt scapegoated for Liverpool's poor form. "I have done so much for this club down the years and especially last season. Now I'm sitting on the bench and I don't know why. It seems like the club has thrown me under the bus," he said, adding: "I think it is very clear that someone wanted me to get all of the blame."

He also suggested his relationship with Slot had broken down. "I said many times before that I had a good relationship with the manager and all of a sudden, we don't have any relationship. I don't know why, but it seems to me someone doesn't want me in the club," Salah said. He noted he had been given "a lot of promises in the summer" that he feels have not been kept.

With the Africa Cup of Nations approaching, Salah hinted that Liverpool's upcoming home match against Brighton could be his farewell. "I will be at Anfield to say goodbye to the fans... I don't know what is going to happen now," he said, having already invited his parents to attend.

Slot defended his benching decisions, saying the team "needed something different" tactically.



BAF's nationwide drive puts 25,000 schoolkids on track

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BAF) is set to launch a nationwide initiative called Athletics Compass under the World Athletics 'Grant for Growth' project.

The programme aims to involve school-going children in sports to promote better health and support social development.

Around 25,000 children, aged four to 14, from 64 schools are expected to take part in separate events in Jashore, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Rangamati, Mymensingh and Dhaka. Students from both primary and secondary schools will learn basic athletic skills, including running, jumping, throwing and safeguarding.

In addition, 96 physical education teachers will receive foundational athletics training so they can continue guiding students in sports activities throughout the year.

World Athletics has provided a grant of USD 30,000 (Tk 36.5 lakh) after BAF submitted a proposal to strengthen athletics at the grassroots. The federation has also allocated Tk 15



lakh to support the project.

"Our aim is not simply to produce national-level athletes, but to encourage families to embrace a sporting culture that promotes good health, reduces disease and supports social development," said BAF general

secretary Shah Alam at a press briefing.

He cited a World Health Organisation survey indicating that 81 percent of children lack opportunities to engage in an hour of daily physical activity.

"We believe every child is born to move, to play and to explore," added the former athlete.

Project manager and BAF joint secretary Kitab Ali said the initiative prioritises children's health rather than elite talent identification.

"If even five out of 25,000 students eventually enter mainstream athletics, we will consider that a success," he said.

Kitab, a former national coach, also noted that the project is expected to run until 2027, depending on funding from World Athletics and the federation.

The programme will start in Jashore on December 10, followed by events in Sunamganj from December 20-24, Jamalganj upazila from December 27-31, Rangamati from January 5-9, Jhenaighati from January 21-25 and Dhaka from January 26-30.



'THE MOMENT MESSI, MIAMI HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR'

Lionel Messi inspired Inter Miami to their first-ever MLS Cup title on Saturday, playing a starring role in a 3-1 victory over the Vancouver Whitecaps in Florida. Argentina superstar Messi provided assists for two goals and helped create another to spark wild celebrations before a rapturous home crowd at the Chase Stadium in Fort Lauderdale. "This is the moment that I've been waiting for, and that we as a team have been waiting for," Messi, who has now won record 47 major trophies, said afterwards.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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Couple found dead in their home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Police yesterday recovered the bloodied bodies of a freedom fighter and his wife in Rangpur's Taraganj upazila.

The victims were identified as Jogesh Chandra Roy, 75, and Suvarna Roy, 65, said police.

Taraganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Faiyum Talukdar said their bodies were found at their house in Uttar Rahimapur village under Kursha union.

Locals said, this morning, as repeated calls went unanswered, neighbours climbed into the house using a ladder and discovered Jogesh's body in the dining room and his wife's body in the kitchen. The main door of the house was locked from the inside.

Police suspect that the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



Severe tailbacks formed on one side of Mirpur Road yesterday after mobile phone traders and employees blocked the Shyamoli-Agargaon Link Road to press home their six-point demand, causing immense suffering to commuters. The photo was taken near Shishu Hospital.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Corruption persists despite the end of authoritarian rule

Says TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite the fall of the authoritarian government on August 5, people expected corruption to come down, but it continues in different forms, said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

Regarding whether graft levels have increased or declined, he said TIB is still analysing comparative data. "We cannot conclude now. But we can say corruption is continuing."

"We saw signs of corruption from the afternoon of August 5. Those who misuse political and governance space for personal benefit are still active. We have also noticed corruption inside different sections of the government. It is worrying. The interim government had the chance to take a stronger stand against graft, but they have failed. There is no way to deny it."

Iftekharuzzaman made the remarks during a question-and-answer session following TIB's recommendations for preparing election

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



"The interim government had the chance to take a stronger stand against graft, but they have failed. There is no way to deny it."

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN
executive director of
Transparency International
Bangladesh

JULY UPRISING VICTIMS Families await closure as CID exhumes bodies DNA matching to follow before handover or reburial

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

For the past year and a half, 60-year-old Rasheda Begum visited the Rayerbazar graveyard every Thursday. As she stood near the rows of unnamed graves, she prayed for the souls of the 114 unidentified victims of the July uprising.

One of those graves, she believes, holds the body of her son.

Yesterday, Rasheda returned with a flicker of hope that her son's grave might finally be found, as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) began the exhumation of the 114 bodies to collect DNA samples for identification.

CID officials, their forensic team, and specialists from the Dhaka Medical College forensic unit reached the graveyard around 9:00am to oversee the exhumation work, as family members of missing victims watched silently.

Argentine forensic anthropologist Luis Fondibridier was also present during the process, and a temporary forensic lab was set up on the grounds.

Amid the crowd of hopeful victim families, Rasheda was seen clinging to a photo of her son Sohel Rana, 35.

"My son Sohel went to Shyampur on July 18 last year to join the protests. He never came back. After 34 days, I visited Dhaka Medical College Hospital and learned that he had been buried here [Rayerbazar] as an unidentified body," she told this correspondent as tears streamed down her face.

"Today [yesterday], the CID is exhuming the bodies for DNA testing. I hope my son's grave will finally be identified."

Standing next to Rasheda was 19-year-old Raiyan Hossain, silently weeping, but with the hope to find his father Rafiqul Islam's body. "My father left our Gopibagh residence for Isha prayers around 8:00pm on July 19. He said he would be back soon...."

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



ACC launches probe into Abdul Hamid Allegations include causing 'loss of Tk 24cr to state'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has launched an investigation against former president Abdul Hamid over allegations that he caused a loss of Tk 24 crore to the state through spending on decoration and beautification in Dhaka's Nikunja-1 area.

He is also accused of acquiring illegal assets.

Md Akhter Hossain, director (Prevention) of the anti-graft watchdog, confirmed the development to the media yesterday.

He said the ACC never considers a person's identity when opening an inquiry. "The main issue is the objectivity of the allegations," he added.

A three-storey house

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

River erosion now a major cause of migration

BIDS study finds it caused over 27% families to completely relocate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Slow-onset shocks like river erosion are now a major driver of full household migration in coastal areas, with 27.41 percent of complete relocations linked to erosion, according to new research by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

Erosion and drought are now influencing mobility in ways sudden disasters often do not, said Azreen Karim, senior research fellow of BIDS, while presenting the study titled "How do farm and non-farm occupational experiences influence responses to climate events?" at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development 2025.

The research drew on 403 coastal households and seven focus group discussions under a broader project on climate-induced migration and gender.

It identified three types of movement: full migration, when entire households relocate; partial migration, when some members move; and mixed migration, where both patterns occur.

While floods and cyclones commonly trigger temporary or partial movement, river erosion alone accounted for 74 full migrations and 77 partial migrations.

Floods, by contrast, accounted for 40.8 percent of partial migrations.

The study showed some families chose to remain at destination sites due to NGO support or loss of housing at origin, while others preferred to return because of high living costs or the need to stay close to extended family.

Another study presented at the conference examined why the haor region remains among the country's most climate-vulnerable areas.

In his paper titled "Living with floods: Livelihood vulnerability and adaptation in wetlands of Bangladesh", BIDS Research Director Mohammad Yunus said households continue to face repeated climatic and economic shocks despite higher income and increased asset ownership.

The researchers constructed a vulnerability index from 32 hours across seven districts based on exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity.

Households inside the haor recorded higher exposure and sensitivity and lower adaptive capacity than households in adjacent areas, Yunus said.

While the overall gap was not large, it reflected how structural exposure to flash floods and monsoon flooding continues to undermine resilience.

The per-capita income, fertiliser use, crop-market participation and income from open-

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Erosion and drought are now influencing mobility in ways sudden disasters often do not.



With winter setting in, the water level of the Kirtankhola has dropped significantly, leaving the adjoining canal in Barishal city's Rasulpur area dried out and reduced to a narrow, sludge-filled strip. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Shaukat Mahmood held in anti-terror case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested Shaukat Mahmood, a senior journalist and secretary general of Janata Party Bangladesh, in Dhaka's Malibagh yesterday in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Enayet Karim Chowdhury, a US citizen of Bangladeshi origin, is also accused in the case with Ramna Police Station, said Shafiqul Islam, additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch.

"Investigators found Shaukat Mahmood's involvement during the investigation," Shafiqul told The Daily Star.

Shaukat, a former president of Jatiya Press Club, had previously served as vice-chairman of BNP, which expelled him in March 2023 for alleged involvement in anti-party activities.

Janata Party Bangladesh (People's Party Bangladesh) was launched under the leadership of noted actor and road safety activist Ilias Kanchan in April this year with Shaukat as its secretary general.

Enayet was arrested on September 13 under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure from Dhaka's Minto Road.

On September 14, Sub-Inspector Azizul Hakim of Ramna Police Station filed the case against the 55-year-old Enayet.

According to the case statement, "During primary interrogation, Enayet confessed that he came to Bangladesh as an agent of a foreign intelligence agency to overthrow the present interim government. This claim was initially supported by data found in the seized mobile phones in his possession."



'Imran Khan not a security threat' PTI deplors 'ridiculous' allegations

DAWN ONLINE

The PTI emphatically deplored "ridiculous" remarks by the Pakistan military spokesperson against ex-premier Imran Khan, saying he was "not a security threat", and lamented the weakening of democracy in the country following the passage of recent constitutional amendments.

In a press conference on Friday, ISPR Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry assailed Imran for creating and spreading an "anti-army" rhetoric, stating that such narratives were now out of the realm of politics and had become a "national security threat".

Responding to the DG ISPR's accusations in a press conference on Saturday evening at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House, PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja said: "Do not drive away the people of Pakistan, they stand with Imran Khan and the PTI. Imran Khan is not a national security threat. He has kept the people united."



Nightclub fire kills 25 in Goa Six hurt; authorities order probe

REUTERS, Bengaluru

Indian authorities ordered an investigation and offered compensation to victims yesterday after a fire ripped through a nightclub in the western state of Goa, killing 25.

"I have ordered a magisterial inquiry into the entire incident to identify the cause and fix responsibility" for the fire in the village of Arpora, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant posted on X, saying six injured people were in stable condition and receiving medical care.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he had spoken to Sawant and offered condolences to the bereaved families. Modi posted on X that his office would offer compensation of up to 200,000 rupees (\$2,200) to each family of the victims and 50,000 rupees to the injured.

Police were alerted to the blaze at the Birch by Romeo Lane club at 12:04 am on Saturday, Goa's police chief told the ANI news agency.

The authorities worked through the night to bring the fire under control, and all the bodies have been recovered, ANI reported.