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Political will key to curbing graft

Speakers tell ACC event on International Anti-Corruption Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at programmes marking International Anti-Corruption Day yesterday stressed that strong political commitment is crucial to reducing corruption in Bangladesh.

At a discussion at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, organised by the Anti-Corruption Commission, Finance Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed said no anti-graft initiative can succeed without the genuine will of political leaders.

He said, "Political will must come first. If politicians act with integrity, society will not decay; instead, corruption will decline. Corrupt individuals, once shunned, are now celebrated."

Salehuddin also called for transparency in the financial sector, noting that "thousands of crores of taka have been looted, causing irreparable damage to the nation."

He said, "Enacting laws is important,

but the bigger challenge lies in their proper enforcement. As seen in developed countries, corruption can be significantly reduced if strict checks and balances, credit-rating mechanisms, and technology-driven monitoring systems are strengthened."

ACC Chairman Dr Mohammad Abdul Momen chaired the discussion and said,

"Over the past 15 years, a huge amount of our money has flowed into various countries, but today we have no effective communication with those places; we cannot even find channels to reach them. Our hard-earned money is lying abroad as 'dirty money,' and we do not have the manpower to recover or manage those funds."

He said, "Previously, money used to come into Bangladesh from the Middle East and the United States. Now the reality is the opposite – money flows out of Bangladesh to the US and other countries,

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Enacting laws is important, but the bigger challenge lies in their proper enforcement.

SALEHUDDIN AHMED
Finance Adviser



Air pollution in Trimohoni of the capital's Khilgaon area became so severe yesterday -- worsened by dust from broken roads and potholes -- that visibility dropped to the point where passing vehicles were barely seen. According to IQAir, Dhaka was the most polluted city in Bangladesh and the third most polluted city in the world yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BANGLADESH-MYANMAR Dialogue vital to easing bilateral tensions: experts

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Civil society-level dialogue between Bangladesh and Myanmar is essential for improving bilateral relations and finding a solution to the Rohingya crisis, said analysts from both countries at a discussion in Dhaka yesterday.

They said the long-standing Rohingya issue has stalled not only diplomatic ties but also people-to-people contact between the two neighbours. The Bangladesh-Myanmar civil society dialogue was organised by DW Academy at The Daily Star Centre.

Rohingya influxes since the 1980s, especially the mass exodus in 2017, have posed major challenges for Bangladesh. The country now hosts around 1.2 million Rohingyas, while more continue to flee Myanmar's Rakhine State due to ongoing fighting between the military and the Arakan Army.

Since the 2021 military coup, Myanmar has been in a state of civil war, with ethnic armed groups

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Dengue deaths reach 401, third-highest in 25 years

HELEMUL ALAM

With three more dengue deaths reported yesterday, the total number of fatalities this year has risen to 401 – the third-highest since Bangladesh began recording dengue deaths in 2000.

And with 421 new cases, the total number of dengue cases has reached 98,705 so far this year. This is the fourth-highest case count in 25 years, with 21 days still left in December.

The highest number of deaths occurred in 2023, when 1,705 people died. That year also saw the highest number of cases: 3,18,749. Other yearly death tolls include 575 in 2024, 281 in 2022, 179 in 2019, 106 in 2021, and 7 in 2020.

In terms of total cases, the second-highest was 1,01,354 in 2019, followed by 1,01,214 in 2024, 98,705 in 2025, 62,382 in 2022, 28,429 in 2021, and 1,405 in 2020.

Experts say mosquito-control efforts by the city corporations have been largely ineffective due to

outdated strategies, weak planning, and the absence of a proper policy.

They stress that without coordinated, science-based action and nationwide monitoring, Aedes control will continue to fail. They also urge authorities to stop repeating ineffective methods every year.

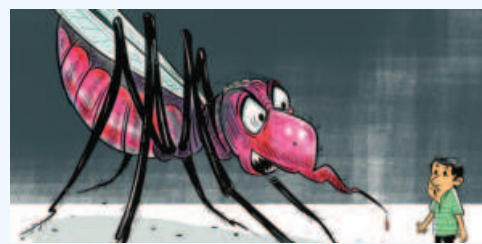
Specialists recommend forming an integrated vector-management department to lead mosquito-control efforts with strong community involvement.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman said clear management failures contributed to this year's outbreak. In previous years, an administrative structure and budget supported mosquito-control activities. This year, that system was disrupted.

He said the situation was worse in peripheral areas with no proper organisational setup. Early rainfall also triggered earlier mosquito breeding.

"But because cases were not recorded properly from the

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Dengue cases this year 98,705, fourth-highest

Experts blame ineffective mosquito control, management failures

Delayed hospitalisation key factor in high death toll

Experts call for improved early detection, decentralised healthcare

Outdated mosquito control strategies fail to curb dengue spread

Azmi was not held in 'Aynaghar'

Defence counsel tells ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brig Gen (ret'd) Abdullahil Amaan Azmi, son of former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer Ghulam Azam, was not held at the Joint Interrogation Centre (JIC) known as "Aynaghar" but in a 21-by-17-foot air-conditioned room, a defence lawyer told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

Azizur Rahman Dulu, counsel for three of the 13 accused charged with illegally detaining and torturing 26 victims between 2015 and last year at the JIC under the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), made the claim while seeking their discharge.

Referring to a Bangladesh Army court of inquiry report on Azmi's abduction and disappearance, he said the room had two doors, five windows, a cot, a reading table, a wardrobe, an almirah, and an AC. "The windows were closed, but there was an AC. This

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'Committed to upholding rights and freedom'

Says Yunus Human Rights Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday reaffirmed Bangladesh's "steadfast commitment to upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms of all", as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter.

"Human Rights Day 2025 is being observed under the theme 'Human Rights: Our Everyday Essentials', and we renew our pledge

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Unite to restore democracy, protect rights

Tarique urges all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday called upon everyone to come forward in the journey to establish true democracy while protecting human rights.

He made the call in a message posted on his verified Facebook page on the eve of Human Rights Day, which will be observed today.

Tarique Rahman said the theme of Human Rights Day 2025 is "Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials."

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10 to compete for one medical seat this year

Admission test on Friday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 10 candidates are expected to compete for each seat at medical and dental colleges this year, with the admission test scheduled for Friday.

The MBBS and BDS admission tests for the 2025-26 session will be held simultaneously at 10:00am across 49 venues nationwide.

Candidates must enter the exam hall between 8:00am and 9:30am. Entry will close at 9:30am, the health ministry said in a press release yesterday.

Applicants must carry a transparent bag containing a colour admit card, a transparent black-ink ballpoint pen, and their HSC/equivalent admit card or registration card.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Low-income people gather around a makeshift roadside fire to stay warm as nighttime temperatures drop. Unable to afford winter clothes or blankets, many rely on such fires to fend off the cold. The photo was taken near Zia Uddin in Dhaka yesterday.