



'Nirbhaya' salutes five for courage

Joint initiative by UNDP Bangladesh, Star marks Int'l Women's Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asma Begum was just one year old when she lost her father, and 13 when she was married off.

Her husband eventually abandoned her -- leaving her to raise two children in extreme poverty. To survive, she took on gruelling manual labour, including cutting soil and chopping wood.

"I've done everything -- collected fallen leaves, caught fish, and even begged for old clothes for my children," recalled Asma, her voice trembling yet resolute.

Today, the once-helpless girl from Pirojpur is a successful entrepreneur and community leader who recently spearheaded the repair of a local road. Villagers now see her as a leader,

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

The five recipients of the 2026 Nirbhaya Award pose with their certificates at IDB Bhaban in Dhaka's Agargaon yesterday.

US-ISRAEL WAR ON IRAN Seven-minister committee to shield shocks

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has formed a high-powered cabinet committee to draw up a crisis management plan, aiming to safeguard economic stability amid the ongoing US-Israel war on Iran, which shows no signs of easing.

Led by Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, the seven-member committee will also analyse the war situations in different countries and assess the potential impact on Bangladesh, according to a gazette notification issued yesterday.

The committee members include the ministers of local government, rural development and cooperatives; home affairs; power, energy, and mineral resources; commerce; expatriates' welfare and overseas employment; and food.

The committee has been asked to submit an assessment report within 15 working days and update the Cabinet Division on the first week of every month on the progress of remedial measures to offset the impacts, Cabinet Division officials told The Daily Star.

The decision to form the committee was made at a cabinet meeting last week with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in the chair.

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JS to deal with 133 ordinances in first session

Says home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 133 ordinances were issued during the tenure of the interim government, and under the constitution they must be placed before parliament at its first session scheduled to start tomorrow, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said yesterday.

Parliament will decide which ordinances will be passed, amended, allowed to lapse, or approved as they are, he said.

The minister made the remarks while speaking at a discussion, prayer, and iftar programme organised by the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum at the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium in Dhaka.

"Not only the July National Charter, we are committed to implementing all the issues on which we received the people's mandate through our election manifesto," he said.

Salahuddin said the government remained fully committed to the July charter and described it as a document of political understanding that his side had signed.

He also criticised those who, he said, signed the charter only after the election despite previously opposing it.

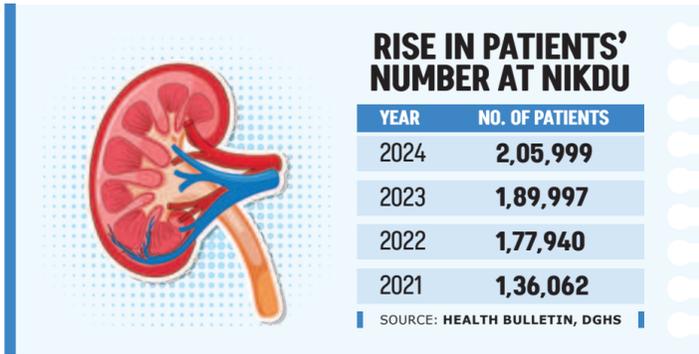
He said those who had criticised the charter the most did not sign it at

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WORLD KIDNEY DAY When dialysis means distress

92% of families with kidney patients face financial struggles; cases rising every year



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Shahabuddin used to drive an autorickshaw to support his three-member family in Faridpur' Boalmari upazila.

The 45-year-old had suffered a stroke four years ago and dengue two years later. Then, in February last year, he developed problems with his eyes.

After receiving treatment at a hospital in Gopalganj for six months, he resumed driving. But within a week, his body suddenly started swelling. He was admitted to Faridpur General Hospital the same day, where tests revealed kidney complications.

Over the past six months, Shahabuddin has spent much of his time in hospitals, receiving dialysis at government and

private facilities in Faridpur and Dhaka. To cover treatment costs, his family had to sell his rickshaw, trees, and his wife's jewellery, and also collected donations from relatives and villagers.

"We've exhausted whatever we had. We don't have land to sell... I don't know how we will continue his treatment..." Shahabuddin's wife, Khadiza Begum, said as worry and despair were evident in her voice.

She spoke to this correspondent in the waiting room at the National Institute of Kidney Diseases and Urology (NIKDU) while her husband underwent dialysis.

Like Shahabuddin's family, many

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Ameer's adviser dropped for seeking foreign ministry post

Claims Jamaat

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader and Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman has relieved his foreign affairs adviser Prof Mahamudul Hasan of his responsibilities for violating the instructions of the leader regarding a letter to the foreign ministry.

He was replaced by Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem (Arman) MP for Dhaka-14 constituency on March 2, claimed a Facebook post of Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar made yesterday following media reports on the matter.

It said about two weeks ago, Prof Mahmudul was tasked with writing a letter to Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman to clarify Jamaat's positions on certain foreign affair issues. However, it did not clarify the party's position on those issues.

"He [Prof Mahamudul] included matters in the letter that were beyond the ameer's instructions, specifically a section regarding the minister's rank," Porwar said in the post.

The letter, signed by Shafiqur and sent to the foreign minister on February 22, said Prof Mahmudul has long been playing the role of his adviser on foreign affairs.

It said Prof Mahmudul, on behalf of the party, has been able to strengthen bilateral relationship with the major partners, including the UN, Commonwealth, Asean Regional Forum, European Union, and the

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Antarctic sea ice improves after 4yrs of extreme lows

AFP, Paris

Antarctic sea ice coverage has likely rebounded this year, coming closer to its annual summer average after four years of extreme lows, US scientists said Monday.



The area covered by Antarctic sea ice likely reached its annual minimum level at 2.58 million square kilometres (996,000 square miles) on February 26, according to scientists at the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Every year Antarctic sea ice reaches a minimum level during the southern hemisphere's summer, so this is the point that scientists measure it for annual readings. This year's level ranks as the 16th smallest since satellite measurements began in 1979.

The 2026 minimum sea ice extent is closer to average than in the past four years, and 730,000 square kilometres above the record low set in February 2023, the scientists said. But it was still 260,000 square kilometres below the 1981-2010 average.

Eleven countries asking Ukraine for drone help

Zelensky says as war escalates

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Monday that 11 countries had tapped Kyiv for help in how to counter Iranian drones being fired by Tehran in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes.

Ukraine has to fend off nightly barrages of Iranian-designed Shahed attack drones launched by Russia, an ally of Tehran. They now being used in strikes across the Middle East.

"As of now, there are 11 requests from countries neighbouring Iran, European states, and the US. There is clear interest in Ukraine's experience in protecting lives, relevant interceptors, electronic warfare systems and training," Zelensky said.

He did not specify which countries.

Some Ukrainian drone experts are already en route to the Middle East and are due there this week, Zelensky said over the weekend.

Ukraine has proposed swapping Kyiv's drone interceptors -- drones designed to intercept incoming attack craft mid-air -- for expensive air defence missiles that Kyiv is in short supply of.

Beyond interceptors, Kyiv has gained a "body of knowledge and skills" that it could share with allies, said Igor Fedirko, CEO at the Ukrainian Council of Defence Industry.

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Amid instability in the fuel market triggered by the ongoing war in the Middle East, hundreds of tanker lorries were lined up outside the fuel depot in Narayanganj's Fatullah yesterday afternoon. Drivers and their assistants said they had been waiting for hours but still could not collect the required fuel due to a government-imposed supply limit.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Taka weakens vs dollar for fifth day

B1

HASANAH ISLAMIC BANKING
البنكية الاسلامي
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 11

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:58	12:45	4:30	6:07	7:30
JAMAAT 5:08	1:15	4:45	6:17	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING			
RAMADAN	MAR	SEHRI	IFTAR
21	11		6:07
22	12	4:55	6:08
23	13	4:54	6:08