

"It is very difficult to communicate with Mojtaba Khamenei at the moment, but in any case, his presence is a great source of strength for us..."

Iran President
Masoud Pezeshkian

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

SECOND EDITION

DHAKA FRIDAY AUGUST 7, 2026

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXVI NO. 192 | SRABAN 23, 1433 BS | www.thedailystar.net | SAFAR 23, 1448 HIJRI | 16 PAGES: TK 15.00





Christmas RMG exports slow on weak demand

B1



Political acumen is fine, but economic expertise is crucial

P8



Ukraine hits two Russian refineries

P10



Mohammedan capitalise on rivals' FIFA woes

P11

GANGES TREATY

Dhaka awaits Delhi's response to talks proposal

Delay raises concerns over already-strained ties

AT A GLANCE

- Bangladesh and India share 54 transboundary rivers
- The Ganges treaty, signed 30 years ago, is their only water-sharing treaty
- The agreement, set to expire on Dec 11, has governed dry-season water sharing since 1996
- About 37% of Bangladesh's land area depends on the Ganges (Padma)
- Experts say a new arrangement crucial for freshwater flow and ecological sustainability



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has been waiting for nearly two months for India to respond to its proposal for talks on the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, which expires in December.

The foreign ministry in June sent a letter proposing the talks, following the government's formation of a 10-member technical committee on the Ganges treaty in April.

"We are waiting for India's response," Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, the prime minister's adviser on economic and planning affairs and head of the new committee, told The Daily Star recently.

No meeting date has been set so far, a foreign ministry official said.

Other members of the committee include Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus at BRAC University; Zahed Ur Rahman, the prime minister's adviser on information; AKM Shahabuddin, water resources secretary; Saimum Parvez, special assistant to the prime minister on environment; and Ataur Rahman, director general of the South Asia desk at the foreign ministry.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman recently met committee members to discuss broader water-sharing issues involving transboundary rivers.

Meanwhile, the government has reconstituted the 12-member Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), which will serve as the channel for the talks, with the water resources minister as chairman, according to a senior official familiar with the development.

What remains unclear, however, is Bangladesh's negotiating position -- whether it intends to renew the existing treaty, negotiate a new one, or seek a partial or full renegotiation of the current terms.

Several officials at the foreign ministry and the water resources ministry, along with water resources experts involved in the process,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

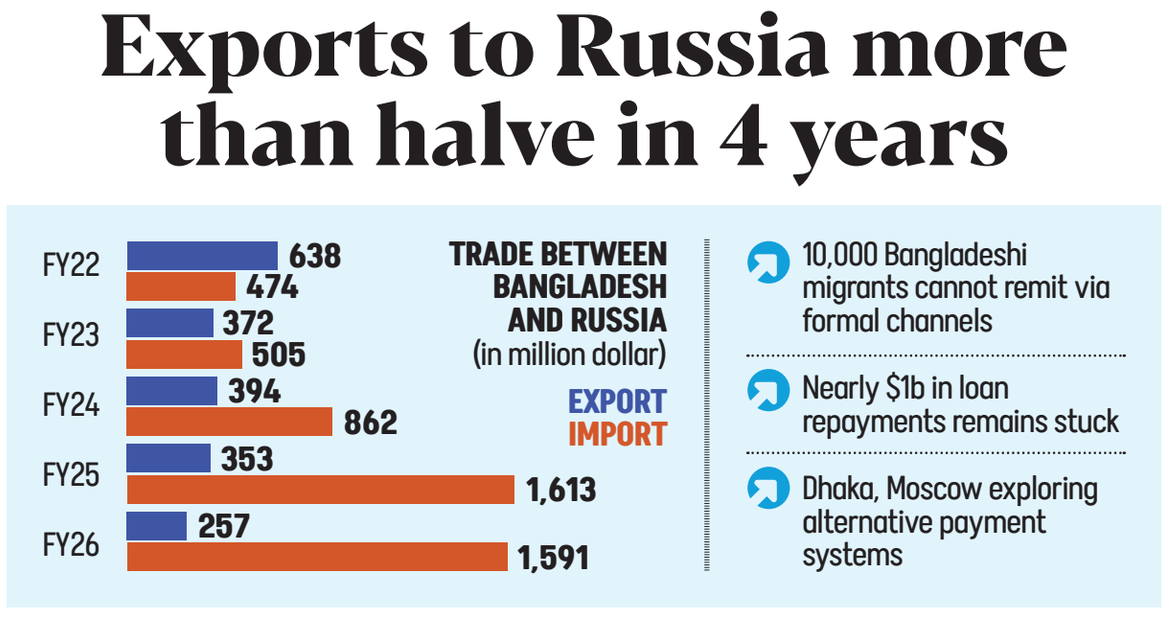
WEAKENED PADMA CHOKING IRRIGATION EFFORT -- PAGE 12



Workers pass the time chatting beside idle machines at Little Star Spinning Mills Ltd in Jamgora, Savar, yesterday, as low gas pressure keeps production curtailed to 30-40 percent of capacity. Officials say the mill receives gas at only 1 to 2.4 PSI against a requirement of 10 PSI. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

FALLOUT FROM US SANCTIONS

Exports to Russia more than halve in 4 years



- 10,000 Bangladeshi migrants cannot remit via formal channels
- Nearly $1b in loan repayments remains stuck
- Dhaka, Moscow exploring alternative payment systems

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh is struggling to sustain exports, labour migration and major development cooperation with Russia as US-led financial sanctions imposed after the Russia-Ukraine war continue to disrupt payment settlements.

The sanctions have sharply reduced Bangladesh's exports to Russia, prevented around 10,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers from sending remittances through formal banking channels and stalled repayments of the Russian loan for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

Officials said Dhaka even approached Washington seeking a waiver for Russia-related financial transactions, but without success.

Against this backdrop, Bangladesh and Russia are discussing alternative payment mechanisms, including opening a branch of Russia's state-owned Sber Bank in Dhaka to facilitate settlements in national currencies, following a model already operating between Russia and India.

Finding a payment solution was one of the key issues discussed during Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman's visit to Moscow in early June, officials said.

Asked about the impact of geopolitical tensions on international trade, Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, told The Daily Star, "Geopolitics is directly affecting

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Presidential election on August 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will elect its 23rd president on August 20, with voting scheduled from 2:00pm to 5:00pm, after the Election Commission announced the poll schedule yesterday.

Nomination papers will be submitted between 10:00am and 4:00pm on August 13. Candidates may withdraw their nominations by 4:00pm on August 18.

Announcing the schedule at the EC's headquarters in Agargaon, its Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said scrutiny of nomination forms will begin at 10:00am on August 16 and continue until completion.

He added that the schedule was announced in accordance with the Presidential Election Act, 1991, following consultations between the chief election commissioner and the Speaker of parliament.

Akhtar said the EC received the 349-member electoral roll from the Parliament Secretariat for the presidential election.

The commission yesterday held a meeting to finalise preparations ahead of the polls, he said, adding that the remaining administrative procedures

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Quader told BCL to beat students in July

Verified audio clip played before ICT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday played before the International Crimes Tribunal-2 a forensic-verified audio recording in which then Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader was heard instructing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leaders to "beat" student protesters during the July uprising.

Presenting arguments on the second day of the prosecution's hearing in a crimes against humanity case against Quader and six others, Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim said the recorded conversation showed Quader directly inciting violence against protesters.

In the audio clip played in court, Quader was heard telling then BCL President

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A rain-soaked girl carries a bucket of kadam flowers for sale near Dhaka University's Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) yesterday. Regarded as a symbol of the monsoon in Bangladesh, the seasonal blooms are sold on city streets, especially at traffic lights. PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

HASINA AT DELHI MEDIA EVENT

An affront to July martyrs, sovereignty

Say BNP, NCP leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Allowing deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina to address a news conference in New Delhi on the anniversary of the July uprising was an attempt to insult the movement's martyrs and undermine Bangladesh's sovereignty, BNP and NCP leaders alleged yesterday.

They accused India of using Hasina as a political tool to destabilise Bangladesh and urged New Delhi to clarify why it was allowing her, who remains in India, to engage in political activities.

Hasina addressed the Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia in New Delhi via audio link on Wednesday, marking two years since the fall of the Awami League government. She also answered questions from journalists.

Ahead of the event, Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir had urged India to prevent Hasina's media appearance, warning that it could affect bilateral relations.

India's Ministry of External Affairs, however, said the government had no involvement, describing it as an event organised by a private media body.

BNP leaders dismissed that explanation.

Prime Minister's Political Adviser and BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said allowing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

North Korea fires short-range ballistic missile

Says South Korea military

REUTERS, *Seoul*

North Korea yesterday fired a short-range ballistic missile toward the sea east of the Korean Peninsula, South Korea's military said, marking the latest in a series of weapons tests this year.

Japan's government said Pyongyang launched what could be a ballistic missile.

The launch followed a series of tests this year, including short-range ballistic missiles, artillery rockets and other tactical weapons designed to bolster the isolated state's military capabilities.

The most recent confirmed weapons test, in late June, involved an upgraded 240-mm multiple-launch rocket system, tactical ballistic missiles and a 155-mm self-propelled howitzer, North Korean state media KCNA said.

The South Korean military said in a statement that it had heightened its alert for further firings, closely sharing information with the United States and Japan.



Opposition leader and Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman and NCP Convener Nahid Islam, along with leaders and activists of the 11-party alliance, march back after holding a sit-in in front of the Secretariat in the capital yesterday. The alliance staged the protest demanding cuts in fuel, gas and electricity prices. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Saifuzzaman Chy owns 33 properties worth Tk 167cr in Vietnam

ACC probe finds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed and people and entities linked to him acquired at least 33 properties in Vietnam worth $13.5 million (Tk 164 crore), according to a public circular by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

According to the August 3 circular published in a national daily, a Dhaka court ordered the authorities to seize the properties located in Ho Chi Minh City. The bulk of the properties consists of 30 apartments in the Glory Heights tower at the Vinhomes Grand Park complex. Three additional one- and two-bedroom units in the Vista Verde project on Lotus Tower were bought between November and December 2015.

The circular identifies the holdings as part of a broader list of properties "acquired by Saifuzzaman and his related persons and entities" in countries under review in the ACC probe.

The findings are part of a wider investigation by the ACC, which has spent more than a year tracing the former land minister's assets across multiple continents.

On January 13 this year, a Dhaka court ordered the seizure of 330 houses, flats and apartments owned by Javed in eight countries over allegations that he acquired the assets through bribery and corruption. The seized assets were estimated at Tk 2,320.92 crore. The countries are the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the Philippines,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Quader told BCL to beat students

FROM PAGE 1

Saddam Hussain: "Why aren't you beating them? Why aren't you hitting them? Why are you letting them grow?"

According to the prosecution, the conversation took place after Saddam informed Quader that protesters were set to announce their next programme on the night of July 11, 2024, following the successful completion of that day's demonstrations.

Tamim told the tribunal that the audio had been forensically verified and that Quader's directive was followed by attacks carried out by armed Chhatra League activists on Dhaka University campus on July 15.

More than 300 unarmed protesters were injured after being beaten, hacked and shot, he said.

"When the injured students went to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment, they were attacked again inside the hospital," Tamim told the tribunal.

He argued that Quader's instruction constituted criminal incitement under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.

The prosecution further submitted that then prime minister Sheikh Hasina had, on July 14, referred to the protesters as the "grandchildren of Razakars".

Quader, then road transport and bridges minister, later publicly declared that the Chhatra League alone was "enough" to suppress the movement and that the student wing would respond to those chanting the "Razakar" slogan.

Besides Quader, the other accused are Awami League Joint General Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim; former state minister for information and broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat; Jubo League Chairman Sheikh Fazle Shams Parash and its General Secretary Mainul Hossain Khan Nikhil; and BCL President Saddam Hussain and General Secretary Sheikh Wali Asif Enan.

During the hearing, Tamim also told the tribunal that the UN had declined to disclose the identities of eyewitnesses cited in its fact-finding report on the July 2024 uprising because Bangladesh's International Crimes (Tribunals) Act still allows the death penalty.

So the prosecution produced its own eyewitnesses.

According to Tamim, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights indicated that it would share the information only if the death penalty provision was removed from the ICT law.

Speaking to The Daily Star after the proceedings, Tamim said the UN generally does not disclose witnesses' identities for security reasons, but that the prosecution assumed the death penalty provision was the reason in this case.

At one stage of the hearing, the tribunal asked why former Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor ASM Maksud Kamal, who had spoken with then prime minister Sheikh Hasina during the uprising, had not been made an accused in the case.

In response, Tamim said formal charges were being prepared against Kamal, eminent educationist Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and several other teachers in a separate case for crimes against humanity.

After the hearing, he told journalists that the investigation against the teachers was in its final stage.

Dhaka awaits Delhi's response to talks proposal

FROM PAGE 1

declined to comment when approached.

Bangladesh and India share 54 transboundary rivers but have signed only one water-sharing treaty -- the Ganges Water Treaty, which expires on December 11, 30 years after it was signed.

As the treaty contains no automatic renewal clause, the upcoming negotiations carry added significance, especially given that relations between the two countries have become more strained since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government in August 2024.

Even so, the JRC's regular protocol meetings have continued as scheduled in 2025 and 2026.

At a JRC meeting in New Delhi in September 2025, Bangladesh expressed its preference for a longer-term treaty to ensure a more predictable flow of water after the current agreement expires, according to a previous The Daily Star report.

After the current government took office in February, a joint JRC technical team held meetings and inspected the Hardinge Bridge point in Bangladesh and the Farakka point in India, with the process continuing through May.

With upstream flow in the Ganges declining over the years, Bangladesh has been considering a barrage to store monsoon water and release it into tributaries during the dry season. The government has since taken up the Tk 34,497 crore Padma Barrage (1st Phase) project to restore major river systems.

Experts say the barrage would help curb salinity intrusion and strengthen irrigation and ecological sustainability across large parts of the country.

Sharif Jamil, coordinator of Waterkeepers Bangladesh, a nongovernmental organisation working to safeguard water bodies, said the government should make serious, coordinated efforts to renew the Ganges Treaty -- not only by focusing on the volume of water at Farakka but also by pushing for equitable sharing across the shared river system.

"I don't see any sign of in-depth analysis or coordinated government efforts to ensure the necessary flow of fresh water to the Ganges downstream," he added.

The Ganges is critical to Bangladesh. About 37 percent of the country's land area -- spanning 26 districts and 163 upazilas across four divisions -- depends on the river, known in Bangladesh as the Padma.

Dhaka and New Delhi will now need to hold fresh talks to shape a new arrangement for the decades ahead.

The Daily Star failed to get comments from Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee yesterday despite repeated attempts.

> **"Failure to reach a new arrangement before the [Ganges] treaty expires could erode mutual confidence and further complicate bilateral ties."**
>
> India's Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, 15th Action Taken Report

However, speaking to the newspaper in June, he said technical teams from both countries were working to renew the treaty and remained in constant communication, while expert teams were incorporating new conditions, including additional guarantee clauses.

A separate water-sharing arrangement for the Teesta River was finalised by Bangladesh and India in 2011 but was never signed after then West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee opposed it.

India's Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs has also flagged concerns over the absence of formal negotiations with Bangladesh, warning that further delay could strain bilateral ties.

The parliamentary committee, chaired by senior Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, said in its 15th Action Taken Report, tabled in parliament on July 30, that time is running out to renew or renegotiate one of the most consequential agreements governing transboundary river management between the two countries, according to several Indian media reports.

The panel noted that the Ganges treaty is more than a technical water-sharing arrangement: it affects the livelihoods, irrigation, agriculture and drinking water needs of millions on both sides of the border, while also carrying significant political sensitivity in Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal and Bihar.

The committee cautioned that failing to reach a new arrangement before the treaty expires could erode mutual confidence as both countries seek to reinvigorate their strategic partnership under Bangladesh's new government and further complicate broader diplomatic ties if the uncertainty persists.

The 30-year treaty, signed by then prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart, HD Deve Gowda, on December 12, 1996, established a framework for sharing Ganges water during the January-May dry season, when river flow drops sharply.

Under its terms, Bangladesh receives a share of the water during the dry season each year, based on a formula linked to available flow and an average distribution plan calculated over 10-day periods.

If the flow is 70,000 cusecs or less, the treaty divides it equally between the two countries. Between 70,000 and 75,000, Bangladesh receives 35,000, with the remainder going to India. At 75,000 cusecs or above, India receives 40,000, and any surplus goes to Bangladesh.

The treaty contains no minimum guarantee clause. Instead, it relies on diplomatic negotiations to address any shortfall.

Exports to Russia more than halve in 4 years

FROM PAGE 1

international trade nowadays as multilateral organisations and rules have become largely ineffective.

"It is mostly developing countries that are bearing the consequences through higher fuel prices, disruptions in commodity imports and financial restrictions."

EXPORTS TAKE A HIT

Bangladesh's exports to Russia have plunged from $638 million in 2021-22 fiscal year to $257 million in 2025-26, while imports have risen from $474 million to $1.59 billion over the same period, according to Export Promotion Bureau data.

"Bangladesh imports mostly wheat and fertiliser from Russia. Even there we face payment problems. We also cannot import military equipment, while our garment exporters are struggling to receive payments," a foreign ministry official said.

Businesses say the biggest obstacle is no longer demand for Bangladeshi products but the inability to receive export proceeds.

Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said at least eight garment exporters have been unable to recover payments for shipments made since early 2024.

"More than $4.6 million remains unpaid," he told The Daily Star, adding that garment exports to Russia have virtually come to a standstill.

After sanctions were imposed in 2022, Russian buyers initially paid exporters in Chinese yuan through Chinese banks. About two years ago, however, those banks stopped processing the transactions following US warnings and returned the funds to Russia.

Exporters later used a Thai bank to settle some payments in US dollars, but more than $4 million still remains outstanding, Hatem said.

The industry also lost a $10 million export order after a Polish retailer cancelled a plan under which Bangladeshi garments would be shipped to Poland before being transported overland to Russia.

A commerce ministry official said Bangladesh is trying to boost exports and create jobs at a time when the economy has already been strained by global conflicts, higher energy prices and recent political changes.

"Russia remains a market with huge potential, but payment settlement has become the biggest obstacle," he said.

REMITTANCES BLOCKED

Officials estimate that around 10,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers in Russia are unable to send their earnings home through formal banking channels because of the sanctions.

During Khalilur's Moscow visit, the two countries also discussed a proposal to recruit up to 1 lakh Bangladeshi workers over the next year. Officials said such an initiative would require a bilateral agreement, but the payment issue must be settled first.

"Unless migrant workers can send remittances through official channels, the foreign currency does not enter Bangladesh Bank's reserves," said a Bangladeshi diplomat in Moscow.

ROOPPUR REPAYMENTS STALLED

The sanctions have also complicated Bangladesh's repayment of the Russian loan for the $12.65 billion Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, of which Russia financed $11.38 billion.

> **"Bangladesh is having to pay the price of a Western sanctions regime that doesn't take the economic needs of the developing world into consideration,"**
>
> **MICHAEL KUGELMAN,** resident senior fellow for South Asia at the Atlantic Council

The original agreement required repayments in US dollars, but that became impossible after major Russian banks were removed from the SWIFT international payment system following the Ukraine war.

Diplomatic sources said Russia has repeatedly sought repayments, including proposals to accept rouble-denominated payments. Bangladesh also explored routing payments through Chinese banks, but those efforts were unsuccessful.

Before 2022, Bangladesh had paid about $1 billion in interest and advance repayments. Since then, nearly another $1 billion has accumulated in an escrow account at Bangladesh Bank because it cannot legally be transferred to Russia.

Russia has also proposed settling the loan in Indian rupees, but the proposal remains at a preliminary stage, Bangladesh Bank spokesperson Arief Hossain Khan said.

"This is primarily a diplomatic issue, not a financial one. Bangladesh is regularly depositing the due repayments into the escrow account."

Payments to Russian personnel working on the Rooppur project have not been affected since their salaries and allowances are paid through a local bank account, he said.

SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES

Since 2022, the two countries have explored several payment mechanisms, but none has proved fully effective. Officials now see the proposed opening of a Sber Bank branch in Bangladesh as a possible long-term solution.

During his Moscow visit, Khalilur met Sber Bank First Deputy Chairman Alexander Vedyakhin to discuss mechanisms for facilitating trade, investment and financial settlements.

Sber Bank already operates in India. According to Russia's TASS news agency, its Indian branch now handles most India-Russia transactions in national currencies, has expanded rupee lending to Russian exporters and significantly reduced payment processing times.

Bangladeshi officials believe a similar arrangement could help restore bilateral trade and financial transactions.

Asked how vulnerable Bangladesh is to the current geopolitical uncertainties, Michael Kugelman, resident senior fellow for South Asia at the Atlantic Council, said Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable because Russia remains an important partner in the energy sector at a time when global market shocks have heightened the country's energy security concerns.

"This makes Dhaka's commercial ties with Moscow all the more high-stakes."

He also said Bangladesh faces the same dilemma as many Global South countries that have maintained neutrality over the Ukraine war.

"They are having to pay the price of a Western sanctions regime that doesn't take the economic needs of the developing world into consideration," he told The Daily Star from Washington.

Kugelman suggested Bangladesh could use its currently stable relationship with Washington to seek either a sanctions waiver or greater flexibility so that legitimate commercial transactions with Russia do not trigger punitive measures.

An affront to July martyrs, sovereignty

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina to speak on the anniversary of the uprising was a "calculated move orchestrated by Indian policymakers".

"Sheikh Hasina was given the chance to speak in a highly planned and deliberate way. This was completely planned by Indian policymakers," he said.

Speaking after paying tribute at the graves of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman and former prime minister Khaleda Zia, Rizvi alleged that the event was intended to insult those killed during the uprising and reflected India's disregard for Bangladesh.

He also questioned why India had not responded to Bangladesh's request to extradite Hasina under the 2013 extradition treaty.

Allowing her to continue political activities instead of returning her amounted to an affront to Bangladesh's sovereignty, he said.

Speaking at another programme later in the day, Rizvi again accused India of using Hasina as a "tool" to influence Bangladesh, saying the country that claims to be the world's largest democracy had patronised the move.

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed also questioned India's decision to allow Hasina to address the media from its territory.

In an interview with BBC Bangla, he said Bangladesh wanted to know why India was permitting Hasina -- who has been sentenced to death in Bangladesh in a crimes against humanity case -- to continue political activities.

Hasina has remained in India since being ousted on August 5, 2024.

Salahuddin said proceedings over alleged crimes against humanity involving the Awami League were continuing before the International Crimes Tribunal.

"BNP does not want to ban any political party through executive order. But the matter concerning Awami League's activities is for the court to decide," he said.

He added that the public would also judge the party over allegations of repression, enforced disappearances and killings during its years in power.

State Minister for LGRD Mir Shahe Alam, during an inspection of a secondary waste transfer station in Sylhet, said Hasina had no realistic prospect of returning to Bangladesh and would be arrested immediately if she did.

Prime Minister's Adviser Mahdi Amin, in a Facebook post, said one of the aspirations of the July mass uprising was to establish an independent and sovereign Bangladesh free from a submissive foreign policy. He said the foreign ministry's strong protest over Hasina's appearance in New Delhi reflected that aspiration.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam urged India to clarify whether it would continue allowing Hasina and other Awami League leaders to carry out what she described as conspiratorial political activities from Indian soil.

Speaking at the foreign ministry, she warned that such activities could deepen public concern in Bangladesh and affect bilateral relations.

Shama said Bangladesh wanted relations with India based on equality, mutual respect and dignity. She also rejected allegations linking Bangladesh to militancy, accusing the Awami League of reviving an old political narrative to attract international attention.

Despite the dispute, she said Dhaka remained committed to dialogue with New Delhi on key bilateral issues, including water sharing, energy cooperation and border management.

Meanwhile, the National Citizen Party (NCP) accused India of using Hasina as a "pawn" to undermine Bangladesh's democratic environment.

At an emergency press conference, Joint Member Secretary Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain said the party viewed Hasina's media appearance not merely as an Awami League event but as a threat to Bangladesh's sovereignty.

"We see that the Indian government is using Sheikh Hasina as a pawn and a tool to destroy the existing order and democratic environment in Bangladesh."

He alleged that despite diplomatic efforts before the event, the government had failed to stop Hasina from making political remarks from Indian soil.

Calling it a diplomatic failure, Asif urged the government to intensify efforts to stop Hasina's political activities from India, secure her extradition under the bilateral treaty, summon the Indian high commissioner in Dhaka and lodge a formal protest.

He warned that continued political activities by Hasina could harden the NCP's position against any future reconciliation with the Awami League.

Asif also criticised former Bangladesh cricket captain and Awami League MP Shakib Al Hasan for attending the event, saying it clarified his political position.

The NCP further accused some Bangladeshi media outlets of broadcasting Hasina's remarks despite restrictions on promoting the activities of the banned Awami League, and criticised the information ministry for failing to enforce those restrictions.

In a written statement, the party again urged India to return Hasina under the extradition treaty and criticised the Bangladesh government for what it described as inadequate efforts to enforce court decisions against the former prime minister.



Visitors queue outside the July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum yesterday morning.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A walk thru the memories of July

July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum opens to the public

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Hundreds of people gathered outside the July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum from morning as the former Gono Bhaban opened to the public for the first time yesterday.

Some had travelled from distant districts to enter the building that once served as the prime minister's official residence and now preserves memories of the July uprising.

Many visitors arrived as early as 9:00am. After the gates opened at 11:00am, they entered in batches following long waits in queues.

The museum was inaugurated on Wednesday, marking the second anniversary of the uprising.

Tickets cost Tk 50 for visitors above 12 years and Tk 20 for children aged between three and 12 years. Children below three years were allowed free entry. Tickets can also be purchased online through july36.gov.bd.

During a visit from noon to 5:00pm, this correspondent found madrasa and university students, professionals and families among the visitors.

They said the photographs, videos, personal belongings and other artefacts on display would help future generations understand the events of 2024.

Rafiqul Islam, 33, a pharmaceutical company employee from Moghbazar's Madhubagh, spent about four hours inside with his family.

He said footage showing protesters being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, grieving families and injured demonstrators was painful to watch.

"After so much sacrifice, preserving these memories was necessary," he said.

Nazmul Islam, 32, who works at a madrasa, travelled from Roumari in Kurigram with his younger brother, a second-year Bangla student at Dhaka University.

He said exhibits featuring clothes, personal belongings, photographs and video footage of July protesters left a deep impression on him.

The museum also features exhibits on the Shapla Chattar incident involving Hefazat-e-Islam, the BDR mutiny, the "Aynaghar" detention facility and repression during the Awami League government.

Abdul Gaffar and Abdur Rahim, madrasa students from Cumilla's Barura, came with three others. They said they had wanted to visit the former Gono Bhaban after August 5, 2024, but could not as it was not open to the public.

They praised the displays but said more photographs and video footage of the movement's leaders could have been added.

Mohammad Selim, 35, from Chittagong Road in Narayanganj, said the museum would prevent memories of the uprising from fading.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Visitors explore exhibits inside the museum.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



PHOTO: STAR

Speakers at a roundtable on "Meaningful Participation and Political Leadership of Plainland Indigenous Women in Local Governance" at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The event was jointly organised by IFES Bangladesh and PUMDO with support from the Embassy of Sweden.

PLAINLAND INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Still denied meaningful role in local governance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite growing participation of plainland indigenous women in Bangladesh's local governance -- particularly union parishads -- structural budgetary discrimination, political marginalisation and deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes continue to prevent them from exercising meaningful leadership, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

They urged the government to ensure women elected to reserved seats receive equitable funds and allowances for the three wards they represent, guarantee their meaningful inclusion in standing committees and Gram Adalats, and strengthen protection of their land rights.

The speakers also called for structured administrative capacity-building for grassroots women leaders and urged indigenous communities to address internal divisions, social stigma and substance abuse while holding the authorities accountable.

The roundtable, titled "Meaningful Participation and Political Leadership of Plainland Indigenous Women in Local Governance", was jointly organised by IFES Bangladesh and PUMDO with support from the Embassy of Sweden at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

In her welcome address, Rumana Amin Archi, deputy country director of IFES Bangladesh, said inclusive democracy requires addressing the distinct socio-political and structural barriers faced by marginalised communities.

She stressed the need to bring the struggles and leadership potential of plainland indigenous women into mainstream governance discussions.

Presenting the keynote, researcher and activist Pavel Partha highlighted the lack of disaggregated data on plainland indigenous communities in national statistics.

He said the national voter registration form contains no field identifying ethnic identity, leaving the exact number of indigenous voters and elected women representatives unknown.

He also noted that research on plainland indigenous women remains far more limited than that on women in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Although Gram Adalats handle land disputes, domestic conflicts and violence against women at the UP level, indigenous women's participation in village courts and the 13 standing committees remains largely symbolic, excluding them from key decision-making, he said.

KEY ISSUES

- Representation rising, but decision-making power remains limited
- Reserved-seat members receive smaller budget allocations
- Role in standing committees and Gram Adalats largely symbolic
- Patriarchy and land insecurity hinder women's leadership

Partha urged policymakers to use existing frameworks, including the National Cultural Policy 2006 and the National Women Development Policy, to strengthen indigenous women's participation in local governance, political parties and the media.

Haimanti Sarkar, chief executive officer of PUMDO, said indigenous women who seek economic independence, enter politics or take on leadership roles routinely face patriarchal resistance, with character assassination often used to silence them.

She said women leaders face social stigma, defamation, baseless allegations and hostility simply for exercising their rights and serving their communities.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

416 killed in road crashes in July

Says Road Safety Foundation report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 416 people were killed and 629 others injured in 458 road accidents across Bangladesh in July, according to a report released yesterday by the Road Safety Foundation (RSF).

Those killed included 57 women and 48 children, the report said.

Motorcycle crashes claimed 138 lives in 159 accidents, accounting for around one-third of all road deaths recorded during the month. One hundred and six pedestrians were killed, while 51 drivers and their assistants also lost their lives.

Dhaka division recorded the highest number of road crashes and deaths, with 133 accidents killing 125 people. Barishal division recorded the lowest toll, with 24 deaths in 28 crashes.



- Motorcycle accidents claimed 138 lives
- Dhaka division recorded the highest death toll 125
- 18 killed in 34 crashes in Dhaka city
- Railway, waterway accidents killed 33 more

In Dhaka city, 34 road crashes left 18 people dead and 47 others injured.

According to the report, 169 crashes occurred on national highways, 155 on regional roads, 61 on rural roads and 66 on city roads. It said 164 crashes occurred after drivers lost control of their vehicles.

The RSF attributed the crashes to unfit vehicles, poor road conditions, speeding, reckless and unskilled driving, excessive working hours for drivers, weak traffic management and reckless motorcycle riding.

Apart from road crashes, nine people were killed and 11 injured in 13 waterway accidents in July, while 24 people were killed and 18 injured in 29 railway accidents, the report said.

The RSF recommended removing unfit vehicles from the roads, making modern vehicle safety technology mandatory, introducing route-rationalised company-based bus services in Dhaka and constructing service roads for slow-moving vehicles along highways.

Partial FSRU restart eases gas shortages

Full restoration may take two to three days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gas supply to the national grid improved after one of the two boilers at the damaged floating LNG terminal in Maheshkhali was brought back into operation, easing shortages that had disrupted power generation, industries, CNG stations and households.

The repaired boiler at the Excelerate Energy-operated floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) began operating around 3:00am yesterday, allowing the terminal to supply about 115 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd) of gas to the national grid, according to Petrobangla.

The other FSRU at Maheshkhali is supplying around 550 mmcfd, taking the combined supply from the two terminals to about 665 mmcfd.

The partial restart also improved gas pressure in Chattogram.

"Yesterday, we received 183 mmcfd [in Chattogram]. Today, we are getting more gas and the pressure in the pipeline has also increased.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Appoint capable, impartial info commissioners

Urges RTI Forum



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The RTI Forum has called for competence, impartiality and commitment to public interest to be the top priorities in appointing the chief information commissioner and information commissioners.

The forum made the call in a letter to Justice Farah Mahbub of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, who chairs the recently reconstituted five-member Selection Committee tasked with recommending candidates for the posts of chief information commissioner and two information commissioners, according to a press release issued yesterday.

Constituted under Section 14(1) of the Right to

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Govt to install anti-drone systems at airports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will install an anti-drone system to prevent unauthorised drone operations at the country's airports.

The decision was announced at the 13th meeting of the National Civil Aviation Security Committee, held at the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh headquarters yesterday.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Afroza Khanam said the country's upcoming audit by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) makes it essential to address any compliance gaps.

"Our ICAO audit is scheduled to take place very soon, and the nation's image is tied to its observations. Therefore, necessary measures must be taken to ensure compliance in areas where ICAO may have observations," she said.

Remembering a classical music icon

Students, teachers pay tribute to Pandit Amiya Ranjan Bandyopadhyay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Government Music College in Dhaka held a memorial programme titled "Sur Sarathir Mohaproyan" yesterday to honour the life and legacy of classical music icon Pandit Amiya Ranjan Bandyopadhyay, who died in Kolkata on July 29 at the age of 99.

The event brought together faculty members, alumni and students for an afternoon of reflection, learning and tribute.

The programme began with a welcome speech by lecturer Saiful Taankar, followed by a one-minute silence. A documentary on Bandyopadhyay's life was also screened.

Archival footage and interviews traced his career as a performer, academic and torchbearer of Bengal's classical music heritage.

Born on February 21, 1927, into a family with over 150 years of musical lineage, Bandyopadhyay was trained by his father, Sangeetacharya Satya Kinkar Bandyopadhyay.

He became one of the foremost exponents of the Bishnupur gharana, Bengal's only native classical music style.

Besides performing across India, Europe and the US for All India Radio and Doordarshan, Bandyopadhyay also made significant contributions to academia.

He served as the founding head of the Vocal Music Department at Rabindra Bharati University and earned



Dr Fakir Shohedul Islam Suman, assistant professor and head of the Classical Music Department at Government Music College, speaks at the event.

PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Prof Abdur Rahman Khan passes away

CITY DESK



Maj Gen (retd) Prof Abdur Rahman Khan, a former adviser to a caretaker government, passed away at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka on August 5, according to a press release.

Prof Khan served as adviser to the ministries of health and family welfare, and religious affairs in 1996.

He played a significant role in the fields of metabolic disorders and diabetes research, helping advance medical science and healthcare in Bangladesh.

He also served as the chief consultant at BIRDEM. His friends, relatives, and well-wishers have been requested to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Youth held over rape of 9-yr-old girl in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

Police arrested a 22-year-old man yesterday in connection with the alleged rape of a nine-year-old schoolgirl in Jashore Sadar upazila.

Jalil Khan, son of Abul Karim, was held in an early-morning raid from a relative's house.

According to police and the victim's family, the incident took place on Wednesday morning when Jalil allegedly lured the child into his room while she was playing near her home and raped her.

The girl fell ill after returning home and later told her family about the incident.

Victim's father later filed a case with Jashore Kotwali Police Station on Wednesday night.

Sub-Inspector Kabir Hossain Mollah, the investigating officer, said police traced the accused based on information about his whereabouts and arrested him.

Jalil was produced before a Jashore court yesterday, which sent him to jail, he added.



A rickshaw-puller pushes his passenger-laden rickshaw through a waterlogged street in Dhaka's New Market area yesterday. Heavy rainfall caused waterlogging in parts of the capital, disrupting traffic and daily commutes.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

PATUAKHALI MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

Driver shortage halts ambulance service

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*



PHOTO: STAR

Families are being forced to rely on private ambulance services to transport patients to and from the hospital, often paying more than double the fare.

Patients and their families have been suffering due to the unavailability of ambulance services at Patuakhali Medical College Hospital.

Although the hospital has five government-allocated ambulances, three have been out of service for nearly three years, while the other two are lying idle due to a shortage of drivers.

As a result, families are being forced to rely on private ambulance services to transport patients to and from the hospital, often paying more than double the fare. Private ambulance operators have allegedly formed a syndicate and are charging significantly higher rates.

A trip from Patuakhali to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal, a distance of about 40 kilometres, used to cost Tk 2,000 in a government ambulance, while transporting a patient from Patuakhali to Dhaka cost around Tk 10,000.

Private ambulance operators are now charging Tk 3,000-3,500 and Tk 14,000-15,000 for the same trips respectively.

Sajal Kumar, a private ambulance driver, said their operating costs were higher as they did not receive salaries or benefits like government-employed drivers.

Abdul Jabbar, a resident of Telikhali village in Patuakhali Sadar upazila, said he recently had to pay Tk 3,500 for a private ambulance to take a patient to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

"Earlier, I paid Tk 2,000 to take my ailing daughter to the same hospital in a government ambulance," he said.

Confirming the matter, Dr Dilruba Yasmin Liza, superintendent of the hospital, said only one driver, Abdus Salam, had been operating the two functional ambulances for nearly two years.

However, after his retirement on June 30 this year, the hospital's government ambulance service came to a complete halt.

"We have informed the higher authorities about the situation and requested immediate measures to repair the out-of-service ambulances and appoint new drivers," she added.

Six more die with measles-like symptoms

UNB, *Dhaka*

Six more patients died with measles-like symptoms in the last 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday, bringing the country's combined tally of confirmed and suspected measles-related deaths to 860 this year.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), all the latest fatalities were suspected measles deaths.

With the latest update, the number of suspected measles deaths has risen to 764, while the number of laboratory-confirmed measles deaths remained unchanged at 96.

A total of 733 new suspected measles cases were reported during the 24-hour period, bringing the cumulative number of suspected cases nationwide to 1,33,638.

Meanwhile, 85 new confirmed measles cases were recorded, bringing the total number of laboratory-confirmed infections to 16,740.

4 univs to probe teachers over pro-AL activities

STAR REPORT

Authorities of at least four public universities have formed probe bodies over the last couple of days to investigate the allegations against some teachers over their involvement in "anti-state activities and attempts to facilitate the return of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina".

The measures were taken following recent media reports alleging that 404 teachers from 22 universities were involved in activities in support of Awami League, whose activities remain banned.

Chittagong University formed a three-member committee yesterday to identify teachers allegedly involved in activities "against the state and public order", said a notice signed by Deputy Registrar Khandaker Moazzem Hossain.

Jagannath University formed a four-member committee to probe allegations against 68 teachers accused of engaging in "anti-state activities", said an office order issued by the Registrar's Office.

The authorities of Patuakhali Science and Technology University also formed a five-member committee on Wednesday to investigate allegations against some of its teachers.

In Kushtia, Islamic University authorities formed a five-member committee on Wednesday to investigate allegations of anti-state activities against 44 teachers.

No entry test for class 1 from 2027

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will not hold admission tests for class 1 from the 2027 academic year, the education ministry said yesterday.

"Students will be admitted to class 1 through lottery," said a press release signed by Abdullah Shibli Sadiq, senior information officer of the ministry.

Admission tests, however, will continue for other classes in primary and secondary schools, it added.

The decision came amid concerns among parents after ministry officials earlier indicated that admission tests could be introduced for classes 1 to 9 from 2027. Many parents subsequently began sending their children to coaching centres in preparation.

Four ministries, divisions get new secretaries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appointed new secretaries to four ministries and divisions, said a public administration ministry notification.

It said Sakhawat Hossain, secretary to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, has been attached to the Ministry of Public Administration.

Obaydur Rahman, secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, has also been attached to the Ministry of Public Administration. Jasmin Nahar, additional secretary to the home ministry, has been promoted to secretary and appointed secretary to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

Mohammad Saiful Islam, secretary to the Energy and Mineral Resources Division, has been transferred to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. Ziaul Hoque, additional secretary to the Energy and Mineral Resources Division, has been appointed secretary to the division.

PRAYER TIMING
AUGUST 7

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-20	12-30	5-00	6-47	8-15
JAMAAT	4-55	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

A walk thru

FROM PAGE 3

Mohammad Hemayet Uddin from Shibpur in Narsingdi, who visited with his family, said they spent around two hours inside but needed more time to see everything.

He suggested adding more photographs, videos and details about the movement, the sacrifices of those killed, and the contributions of key figures.

Outside the museum, a large memorial area resembling a cemetery has been created, with the names of those killed during the July uprising inscribed on marble and steel structures.

Inside, the galleries depict the July 2024 mass uprising, the role of students and ordinary people, Bangladesh's political developments, and the 16-year rule of the ousted prime minister.

Remembering

FROM PAGE 3

a PhD from Visva-Bharati on music aesthetics. His research was later published as Sangeeter Shilpadarshan.

Keynote speaker Dr Fakir Shohedul Islam Suman, a disciple of Bandyopadhyay, emphasised his dedication to preserving the Bishnupur gharana and combining musical practice with intellectual inquiry.

Other speakers, including Prof Aleya Parveen, former teacher Ustad Syed Sajid Hossain, and Vice Principal Prof Aniqa Raisa Chowdhury, urged students to study Bandyopadhyay's works, embrace rigorous discipline and uphold the traditional guru-shishya lineage.

The memorial concluded with discussions and shared memories, reaffirming Bandyopadhyay's enduring influence on future generations of musicians.

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
বসুন্ধরা আবাসিকে কে ব্লকে দক্ষিণমুখী সেমি ফেয়ারফেইস নির্মাণাধীন সুইমিং পুল, জিমনেসিয়াম সহ অত্যাধুনিক লাক্সারিয়াস ২৩০০ বর্গ ফুটের ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়। ড্রীম লাইন বিল্ডার্স লিঃ
যোগাযোগ করুন ঃ ০১৩১০৯৯৭৭২২

Apartment for rent in Banani

A 2450 sft living area with 3-bed, 3 bath, big living/drawing, kitchen, dinning, servant's room with attached bath and 2 covered garage/car space is available for rent. Monthly Rent=BTK 85,000, Service/Maintenance fee= BTK 12,000, Electricity and Gas= As per use to be paid by the tenant. Water= Covered under service fee.

For further details and showing, please contact
Farida/Ismet at Cell/WhatsApp: NY numbers
+1-347-233-0373 or +1-718-570-9758.

LAND & BUILDING FOR SALE OR LONG-TERM LEASE
SUITABLE FOR INDUSTRIAL/ COMMERCIAL PROJECT

- **TOTAL LAND AREA: 1.58 ACRES (68,744 SFT)**

Existing 3 Buildings: 163,352 sft total space
(89,600 sft + 70,752 sft + 3,000 sft)
Proposed 1 Building: 81,000 sft total space
Utility Facilities: Electricity, Gas & Water Facilities Available
Approvals: Approved by RSC/DIFE (ISU)
LOCATION
Dhaka Road, Vogra,
Chandona Chowrasta, Gazipur-1702, Bangladesh

CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES
CELL: +880 1711525563, **E-MAIL:** dilan@capital-bd.com

শেয়ার বিক্রয়
ঢাকা হেমায়েতপুর সন্নিকটে মাত্র ৯৯৯৯টাকা কিস্তিতেই ১ শতক রিসোর্ট শেয়ার ও হাফ শতক আবাসিক প্লটের মালিক। প্রতিমাসে ১০০০টাকা পাবেন এখন থেকেই। পরিশোধ হওয়ার পর অন্যান্য সুবিধার সাথে মাসে ১২০০০টাকা পাবেন আজীবন। আলোকিত শিশু/আলোকিত জহির
01706035233

HOUSE RENT
Gulshan-2. (North), Road no: 73. Newly constructed 10 storied Building. 2nd floor to 8 floor total 7 floors will be rent. UNO organizations. Foreign Embassy office, Reputed NGO. Multinational companies & other reputed organizations preferred.
Please contact : 01715-103940

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
National Head Quarter (NHQ)
684-686, Red Crescent Sarak, Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka 1217.
PABX: +88-02-48310188-9, Ext: 222, 258, Direct: +88-02-8333430, web: www.bdrcs.org

CORRIGENDUM

RFP No. 39/2026 | Ref. Pro. (Log.) 256/2026, issued on 28 July 2026 and published on 29 July 2026 for the **"Appointment of an Independent Audit Firm to Conduct a Special Audit and Compliance Review",** is hereby amended as follows:
The **Proposal Submission Deadline** is revised to **16 August 2026 at 2:30 PM (BST),** and the **Technical Proposal Opening** is revised to **16 August 2026 at 3:00 PM (BST).** The **revised Terms of Reference (TOR),** incorporating the clarifications and amendments arising from the Pre-Bid Meeting, will be published on the BDRCS website (www.bdrcs.org) under the Tender section.
All other information and conditions contained in the Request for Proposal (RFP) shall remain unchanged.
Dr. Kabir M. Ashraf Alam, ndc
Secretary General

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH (IUB)
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
School of Engineering, Technology and Sciences
Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- **Lecturer B**

Application Deadline
Tuesday, August 18, 2026
For detailed information and to apply, please visit: **http://iub.ac.bd/news-and-events/jobs-at-iub** or **scan the QR code**

Request for Proposals (RFP):
Selection of Sub-Recipient (SR) for "Prioritized HIV Prevention and Treatment Services for Key Populations in Bangladesh Supported by the Global Fund GC8 Grant"

Tender Ref. icddr,b/SCM/ OTM/2026/751 **Date: August 06, 2026**

Proposals are being solicited by icddr,b from bonafide Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) legally registered under the laws of Bangladesh, having a minimum of three (3) years of demonstrated experience in HIV prevention and treatment services for Key Populations, and who can meet the eligibility and selection criteria outlined in the RFP document. Interested organizations must form a joint venture consortium comprising a lead Sub-Recipient (SR) and two associate organizations engaged as Sub-Sub-Recipients (SSRs). All essential information for interested bidders is included in the RFP document.

Prospective bidders may download the complete RFP document from the following link:
https://www.icddrb.org/work-with-us/tender-notices

Pre-bid meeting: August 13, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM BST.
(The pre-bid meeting will be conducted online via Microsoft Teams. The link is provided in the tender document.

Submission deadline: September 07, 2026 by 2:00 PM BST.
Proposals must be submitted as one (1) hardcopy document, together with a signed scanned copy shared via a Google Drive link to **rfp@icddrb.org**, and dropped in the designated box at the Supply Chain Management, icddr,b, Chiller Building, Ground Floor (through Hospital Gate Entry), Mohakhali; Dhaka-1212, addressed to the Director, Supply Chain Management. Any submission received after the prescribed date and time will not be accepted.

icddr,b reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, in part or in full, without assigning any reason, and shall not be liable for any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals.

icddr,b
Senior Manager
Supply Chain Management
Tel: 88 02 222277001-10, Ext.# 4401/3777



Protesters march during a demonstration calling for the removal of undocumented immigrants in Alexandra township in the Gauteng province of South Africa yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

SC stays Hafizur's bail

FROM PAGE 12

the case, from his house in Dhaka's Keraniganj on April 22, more than a decade after the killing.

The High Court on August 2 granted him six months' ad-interim bail and issued a rule asking the state to explain why he should not be granted permanent bail.

Hafizur, the only accused arrested in the case, was released from Cumilla Central Jail on August 4.

According to the investigating officer, DNA samples were collected from Hafizur following his arrest, and the test report has since been submitted to the court.

Tonu, a history student at Cumilla Victoria Government College and a theatre activist, was raped and murdered inside Cumilla Cantonment on March 20, 2016.

Although two autopsies were conducted at Cumilla Medical College Hospital, the cause of her death could not be determined. However, officials of the Criminal Investigation Department later confirmed through DNA testing that she had been raped before being murdered.

Saifuzzaman Chy owns 33 properties

FROM PAGE 2

Malaysia, Cambodia, India, Thailand and Vietnam.

The commission has also moved against Javed's assets in Britain. In February, a court ordered the seizure of 518 flats and apartments in his name valued at £271,852,872.

In March last year, the same court froze 39 bank accounts and ordered the seizure of shares in 23 companies linked to him, according to media reports.

Javed left Bangladesh for London in August, 2024, shortly before the fall of the Awami League government.

The ACC has since accused him of laundering money abroad to purchase hundreds of overseas properties and has filed multiple corruption and money-laundering cases against him, his wife Rukhmila Zaman, and associates.

Weakened Padma obstructs irrigation

FROM PAGE 12

and Chuadanga and adjoining districts in the southwest region.

Uninterrupted water supply to the GK Project area depends on the Padma's water flow, which has dropped steadily since the Farakka Barrage came into operation in 1975.

After a water-sharing treaty between Bangladesh and India in 1996, the project area started receiving some water. However, the quantity often goes down as India withdraws Ganges water upstream, said an official of the Water Development Board (WDB).

Because of the depleted river levels, the massive GK intake pumps were forced into complete shutdowns to avoid mechanical disaster many times in the past, said Md Mizanur Rahman, executive engineer of the GK Project Pump Station.

A minimum water level of 4.20 metres in the Padma is needed to run the pumps. When the river level drops below this level, particularly during the dry season, it is not possible to run the pumps, he added.

The GK Project was designed with a network of 193km of main canals, 467km of secondary canals, and 995km of tertiary canals.

Although all the main canals are still operational, around half of the secondary and tertiary canals have already become unusable due to the water crisis, said locals.

The project officials said they carry out routine dredging work in the canals, but it requires a comprehensive and large-scale dredging project to make all the canals operational again.

The ecological decline of the Padma began in 1975 following the commissioning of the 2,304m-long Farakka Barrage across the Ganges River in West Bengal, India.

Situated upstream, the barrage drastically reduced the volume of water entering downstream Bangladesh during the critical dry season.

To mitigate the escalating crisis, Bangladesh and India signed a historic 30-year Ganges Water-Sharing Treaty in 1996 that is going to end this year.

Under the agreement, India is supposed to discharge a specific amount of water depending on water flow in the upstream during the dry season from January to May every year.

A joint team of officials from both countries monitors the quantities of water discharge at the Farakka point in India and Hardinge Bridge point in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh got the highest volume of water in January 1998 when India discharged more than 2 lakh cusecs of water at Farakka point and Bangladesh got about 1.82 lakh cusecs at Hardinge Bridge point.

And the lowest was in March 1997 when India discharged only 48,487 cusecs of water and Bangladesh got 13,823 cusecs, according to the data of Joint River Commission (JRC).

JRC data shows that the quantities varied from year to year.

As per the treaty conditions, the water-sharing formula becomes ineffective if the discharge at the Farakka point falls below 50,000 cusecs, said Md Shibber Hossain, executive engineer of the North Bengal Hydrological Division of WDB in Pabna.

It requires a minimum flow of 30,000 cusecs of water at the Hardinge Bridge point to keep the Padma alive, he added.

"The flow of water in the Padma river depends on the amount of water discharged at the Farakka point. If the upstream flow is low, Bangladesh automatically receives a reduced share."

The diversion of water upstream through several canals in India caused the long-term depletion of water in the Padma, he added.

The landmark 1996 Ganges Water Treaty is set to expire in December this year.

While Dhaka has initiated renewal talks with New Delhi, water experts and local officials are urging policymakers to negotiate stronger legal guarantees to safeguard water flow into Bangladesh.

The existing framework is outdated and fails to account for today's environmental realities, Najmul Islam, dean of the faculty of life and earth science at Pabna University of Science and Technology, told The Daily Star.

The treaty prioritises only the water-sharing issue instead of protecting the entire ecosystem.

The existing treaty permits the distribution of the total volume of water. But around 35 to 40 percent of a river's natural flow must be guaranteed to sustain its existence, and the remaining water should be distributed, he added.

11-party goes for long marches

FROM PAGE 12

October 10.

A rail march from Dhaka to Sylhet is scheduled for October 24, followed by a grand rally in the capital on November 14.

The movement would continue until their demands are met, Shafiqur said.

"The newly announced long marches are aimed at realising the people's demands -- they should not be obstructed as in the past. If obstacles are created, the marches will reach their destinations with twice the momentum," he said.

Among those present at the programme were Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leader Oli Ahmad and National Citizen Party (NCP) Convener Nahid Islam, who also serves as the opposition chief whip.

At the rally, Shafiqur read out the alliance's 11-point charter of demands.

"We are here today to place these 11 demands in the hands of the people. These demands do not belong to any party, individual or group -- they are meant to protect the rights of 18 crore people."

In an apparent reference to the Awami League, the opposition leader said: "Those who silenced dissent with bullets, killings, enforced disappearances, repression, forced displacement and the destruction of businesses will never again be allowed to assert themselves in this country while we are alive."

Addressing the gathering, NCP Convener Nahid Islam said the Monsoon Revolution took place in 2024 and if necessary, it will happen again in 2026.

"That depends on the government's behaviour. If the BNP government, if Tarique Rahman's government, cannot ensure people's basic rights -- gas, electricity, employment and affordable commodities -- then it should not dream of remaining in power."

Nahid also accused the government of failing to fulfil its election pledge of creating employment.

The activists of the ruling party's student wing are attacking opposition student organisations and attempting to establish control over university campuses, he said.

"Those who participated in the July uprising are still active on campuses, and no new form of domination will be allowed," he added.

The sit-in, held on the last working day of the week, drew thousands of activists from Jamaat and other alliance partners. Heavy traffic congestion in surrounding areas caused severe disruption and suffering for commuters.

At the end of the programme, Shafiqur announced that alliance leaders and activists would march on foot towards the Secretariat.

"This Secretariat does not belong to any political party. Every brick, stone, rod and bag of cement belongs to the people of this country. Those sitting there -- ministers and MPs alike -- must listen to the people and heed their demands. Our demands today are simple: we want gas in our kitchens. Stop making our mothers cry. We want electricity in every home. Stop making false statements in parliament. We want safe drinking water and adequate gas supplies for transportation."

Alleging that the government was deliberately creating a crisis to justify price hikes, Shafiqur said: "You have already increased LPG prices -- withdraw that decision. If you do not, we will be forced to lay siege to the relevant offices. We understand the manoeuvre to increase gas prices. Creating shortages is the first step, followed by price hikes. We will not allow that to happen, God willing."

After the sit-in, leaders and activists of the alliance headed towards the Secretariat to press their demands, but police stopped them near Gate No. 1 and shut the other entrances.

A brief scuffle broke out between police and protesters.

Alliance leaders, including Shafiqur, then addressed supporters from outside the Secretariat.

Initially, the Jamaat chief gave the government 10 minutes to send a representative, assuring that no one would be disrespected.

When no representative arrived within the deadline, he expressed disappointment and said: "We are leaving for today."

Time to deliver on 'rainbow nation' pledge

FROM PAGE 12

She also recommended taking immediate steps to adopt a government policy to ensure that tourism development in indigenous areas does not disrupt their way of life and respects their culture and traditions.

Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum General Secretary Sanjeeb Drong said the government's vision of an inclusive and humane society has brought new hope, but implementation was now crucial.

"The present government speaks of building a 'rainbow nation' -- an inclusive and humane society that offers indigenous peoples new hope and inspiration. But unless those promises are translated into reality, we will once again fall behind. Discrimination cannot be eliminated if they are left behind," he said.

Echoing the call, ALRD Executive Director Shamsul Huda urged the government to officially observe the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

He said Bangladesh officially participates every year in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), but does not officially observe the international day at home.

Special guest lawmaker Anna Minz said that while the deprivation faced by indigenous peoples is widely acknowledged, the progress made should also be recognised.

Describing the inclusion of indigenous rights in the ruling party's election manifesto and other policy documents as significant progress, she urged all stakeholders to focus on advancing indigenous communities further in the years ahead.

"The government's initiatives, from the national budget to other development programmes, are positive and will play an important role in improving the lives of indigenous peoples," she said.

Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said indigenous peoples should be granted constitutional recognition "without any debate".

He called for constitutional amendments to protect the rights of indigenous and ethnic minority communities, alleging that vested interests had exploited divisions within the communities to weaken their position.

He also said the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord had remained only partially implemented because of the influence of a powerful quarter.

Calling for effective measures to protect indigenous peoples' constitutional rights, land security and cultural identity, he said safeguarding their rights was essential to building an inclusive, discrimination-free state.

Lawmaker Madhabi Marma pledged to work towards ensuring mother-tongue education for indigenous children and said relevant ministries were working to expand and strengthen indigenous cultural institutes.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fauzia Moslem called for recognition of indigenous midwives' traditional knowledge and contributions to healthcare. She also urged the government to ensure maternal, newborn and general healthcare services for indigenous communities, saying their culture and society are deeply connected to their land.

Other speakers demanded greater representation of indigenous communities in development activities, including eco-tourism projects in their areas. They also urged the government to ensure implementation of Section 97 of the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950, with additional deputy commissioners (revenue) taking proactive steps to protect indigenous land rights.

Partial FSRU

FROM PAGE 3

The situation has improved," said Mohammad Rafiq Khan, deputy general manager of Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Ltd.

Chattogram's normal daily gas demand is around 350 mmcfd, but supply had fallen to around 190-200 mmcfd in recent days following the July 21 incident at the Maheshkhali terminal.

The improvement was visible at CNG stations in the city yesterday, where queues were significantly shorter than in previous days.

The disruption began on July 21 when a fire at the Excelerate-operated FSRU damaged systems linked to its boiler operations, cutting around 450 mmcfd of gas supply to the national grid. The terminal has remained largely out of operation since then.

Petrobangla officials said the partial restart was the first step towards restoring the terminal's full capacity. Engineers are continuing repair work, with replacement equipment being brought in from overseas.

Power and Energy Minister Iqbal Hasan Mahmood Tuku yesterday said gas supply could take another two to three days to return to normal.

He also said Bangladesh had asked India to increase diesel supplies through the existing cross-border pipeline.

"We have a pipeline with India through which diesel comes. We have asked them to provide more," the minister told reporters at the Secretariat.

The Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline connects Numaligarh Refinery in Assam with Parbatipur in Dinajpur and has an annual supply arrangement of up to 180,000 tonnes of diesel.

Bangladesh's gas demand is currently around 3,800 mmcfd, while supply to the national grid has typically remained around 2,600 mmcfd.

Appoint capable, impartial

FROM PAGE 3

Information (RTI) Act, 2009, the committee recently invited applications from qualified and interested candidates for the three posts.

Welcoming the move, the forum said the selection process presents an opportunity to fulfil the long-standing public expectation of an independent and effective Information Commission.

The forum said effective implementation of the Right to Information Act depends on a competent, impartial and citizen-oriented commission.

It urged the selection committee to assess candidates not only on their ability to discharge the responsibilities prescribed under the law but also on their competence, objectivity and impartiality to perform their duties independently, free from all forms of influence.

The letter was signed by Shaheen Anam, convener of RTI Forum and executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, on behalf of the forum's core group members. They are: Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shujan; Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB; Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, executive director of COAST Trust; Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, executive director of BILS; AHM Bazlur Rahman, chief executive officer of Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication; Zakir Hossain, chief executive of Nagorik Uddyog; Ananya Raihan, chairperson of iSocial; Barrister Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of BLAST; Rafiqul Islam Khokon, executive director of Rupantar; Hasibur Rahman, executive director of MRDI; Ruhi Naz, deputy director of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh; and Hamidul Islam Hillol, project manager of the Tobacco Tax Project at the Bureau of Economic Research, Dhaka University.

Still denied meaningful role

FROM PAGE 3

Describing indigenous society as "a society of heroes", Sarkar said the struggle to protect ancestral land, culture and fundamental rights is not donor-driven or event-based but a fight for survival.

Rights activist Shanjida Khan Ripa said patriarchal social structures lie at the heart of women's marginalisation.

She said women elected to reserved seats represent three wards but receive significantly smaller budget allocations than male members representing a single ward.

The denial of property rights further weakens women's economic position and limits their influence in local decision-making, she added.

Semonty Monjari, strategic coordinator at NETZ, said meaningful empowerment requires sustained investment in girls' education and leadership from an early age.

Without genuine institutional reforms, she said, increasing the number of women representatives would remain largely symbolic.

Advocate John Gomes, a member of Bangladesh Indigenous Committee, said indigenous women face the dual challenge of ethnic marginalisation and gender discrimination.

He described the election of 11 indigenous women representatives as an encouraging precedent and said expanding their representation in union parishads, municipalities and district councils would strengthen transparency and accountability in local governance.

Speaking as chief guest, Anna Minj, MP, praised grassroots women representatives for overcoming systemic barriers to serve their communities.

While highlighting government initiatives for the socio-economic development of plainland indigenous people, she urged indigenous communities to take greater responsibility by addressing internal social issues, resolving organisational feuds and tackling challenges such as substance abuse.

The discussion, moderated by Tanjim Ferdous, head of strategic partnerships at The Daily Star, also featured elected indigenous and Bengali women representatives from Joypurhat.

Presidential election on August 20

FROM PAGE 1

would be completed in line with the announced schedule.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin resigned on July 24. Following his resignation, Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad has been discharging duties as acting president.

As per the constitution and the President Election Act 1991, the EC is required to hold the presidential election within 90 days of the vacancy. The chief election commissioner will be the returning officer of the polls.

On July 28, election commissioners, led by CEC AMM Nasir Uddin, held preliminary discussions with acting speaker Kayser Kamal.

Following the meeting, the CEC said, "If there are multiple candidates, voting will take place openly in the parliament. If there is only one valid candidate, he or she will be declared elected unopposed."

By law, the nomination paper must have a proposer and a seconder who are MPs. When submitting the nomination form, the candidate must also be accompanied by an MP.

On election day, the CEC presides over the session. No other parliamentary business may take place that day, and voting can begin only after noon.

MPs must cast their votes in the parliament chamber before the election officer using prescribed ballot papers. They must mark the name of their preferred candidate and sign the ballot paper.

To collect a ballot paper, MPs must sign the counterfoil. Each member of parliament has only one vote. The Speaker, as a member of parliament, is also entitled to vote.

After voting ends, the CEC counts the votes publicly. In case of a tie, the result is determined by lottery among the candidates.

According to article 48(4) of the constitution, a Bangladeshi citizen aged 35 or above can collect the signatures of two members of parliament and apply for the presidential election. No nomination fee is required to apply for the post of head of state in Bangladesh.

THE ENDURING LEGACY OF THE 2ND BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR COURSE



The members of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course with the President, Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, at Bangabhaban following their commissioning on 5 August 1972.

EDITOR'S NOTE

It was my good fortune to be part of this supremely patriotic group, who had already demonstrated extraordinary skill and courage in fighting the brutal Pakistani army. When I joined the training of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course in Murtee, I discovered this treasure trove of friends who, should tragedy suddenly strike, would be my comrades-in-arms in my final moments. This profound realisation made every one of them extremely dear to me, a feeling that still lasts after 55 years. I cherished every kindness, sensitivity and personal gesture they showed as a blessing. As we trained, struggled, endured, overcame fear and grew in confidence, we became closer, more appreciative of one another, more mutually respectful and prouder—not as individuals, but as a collective ready to lay down our lives for the freedom and dignity of our land and our people.

Today's supplement is The Daily Star's tribute to these brave souls, many of whom are no longer with us.

MAHFUZ ANAM
Editor & Publisher
The Daily Star

MEMBERS OF THE 2ND BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR COURSE

The War of Liberation comes but once in the history of a nation. Our beloved motherland, Bangladesh, also bathed in the blood of millions of martyrs in its struggle for freedom from the Pakistani oppressors.

On 25 March 1971, when the marauding Pakistan Army suddenly swooped upon the innocent and unarmed people of the country under the cover of darkness, especially at key locations in Dhaka city—Dhaka University, the Rajarbagh Police Lines, and the EPR Headquarters at Peelkhana—killing thousands of people, it effectively ignited the fire of the War of Liberation across the country.

Disoriented and dismayed for a day or two by the extent of the cruelty and mayhem, the Bangali members of the armed forces, the police, the Ansars, and the common people of the country, inspired by the radio announcement of Major Ziaur Rahman (later Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman), regained their bearings and began to confront the enemy with whatever they could lay their hands on.

The War of Liberation had begun in full swing. It was the time for a litmus test; it was time to discover where one's heart lay; it was a time to display one's patriotism by fighting for the country's liberation or by looking the other way. It was an article of faith, of loyalty, and a supreme display of patriotism. Our War of Liberation, while producing some cowards, collaborators, and mere spectators, also produced a group of brilliant sons and daughters of the soil who not only fought the enemy but also laid down their lives for the cause of the nation.

As the War of Liberation gathered momentum, the paucity of officers in the Mukti Bahini was felt acutely, and the Provisional Government decided to expand the officers' corps by recruiting competent and capable candidates from among the freedom fighters who had already gained some battlefield experience by that time. There were two batches of officer cadets: the 1st Bangladesh Liberation War Course (BLWC) and the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course (formerly known as the 1st SS and the 2nd SS).

At the beginning of June 1971, a selection process was held to identify officer cadets from across the various battlefronts and sectors. Sixty-one candidates were chosen to join the temporary military academy established at Murtee in Jalpaiguri, India. Training for the 1st War Course began in the final week of June 1971.

The search for new cadets continued in the field, and a further 70 cadets had been selected by August 1971. By then, all of them were actively engaged in combat on different battlefronts, having received local training at various sector and sub-sector headquarters and other training camps. However, when the decision was taken to send them to Murtee, the First War Course was already midway through its training. It was, therefore, decided that they would undergo training as the 2nd War Course after the passing-out of the 1st War Course. Until then, the selected cadets remained deployed in their respective operational areas.

The 1st BLWC received their commissions on 09 October 1971 and, after reporting to their respective sector headquarters, joined the battlefronts during the third and fourth weeks of October. Cadets selected for the Second War Course were withdrawn from the battlefields and sent to the Murtee Academy during the first week of November 1971.

Murtee is a plain in the Dooars forest at the foothills of the Himalayas, with tea gardens on three sides and the River Jaldhaka on the other. It is a 2 km-long and 1 km-wide strip of rocky plain. It is situated in the northern part of Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal, India, about 15 km from the Darjeeling and Bhutan borders. Murtee served as an airstrip for the Allied Forces in the Second World War and as a military training camp for the Indian Army in the 1962–63 Sino-Indian War. During the Liberation War of Bangladesh, a training camp named Mujib Camp, with two wings—the Mujib Wing for training freedom fighters and the Bhasani Wing for training officer cadets—was established at Murtee.

In the final seven to eight weeks of the Liberation War, as the Mukti Bahini gradually shifted from guerrilla warfare to conventional military operations, the officers of the First Bangladesh Liberation War Course assumed crucial responsibilities as company commanders and subsector commanders, helping to steer the war towards its inevitable conclusion.

When the war broke out on 3 December 1971, these officers fought with exceptional courage on the eastern front alongside, or under the command of, other Bengali freedom fighter officers who had revolted from the Pakistan Army. Fighting in coordination with the Allied Forces, they achieved remarkable success. The fact that the Pakistani forces were defeated and compelled to surrender after only thirteen days of fighting against the Allied Forces stands as testimony to how effectively the freedom fighters had worn them down through relentless guerrilla attacks over the preceding eight months.

When fighting alongside the Joint Forces, two officers from the 1st BLWC embraced martyrdom: Second Lieutenant Ashfaqus Samad, Bir Uttam, and Second Lieutenant Khandakar Azizul Islam, Bir Bikram. Twenty officers of the 1st BLWC and seven officers of the 2nd BLWC received gallantry awards (BP-21, BB-5 and BU-1).

Although the officers of the 2nd BLWC remained actively engaged on the battlefront until the first week of November 1971, they were unable to participate in the final phase of the war because they were undergoing training at the Academy. This is a matter that continues to pain most of them to this day.

Upon completing their training, the 70 officer cadets of the 2nd BLWC returned to the country on 5 February 1972. After a few days of leave, 59 of them reported back and were attached to infantry battalions for On-the-Job Training (OJT). The remaining 11 returned to their respective colleges, universities, or previous professions.

As the need arose to maintain political stability and law and order, the Bangladesh Army was deployed in various parts of the country. Various ultra-left revolutionary organisations became involved in violent activities, including political assassinations, the seizure of police outposts and police stations, and the looting of armouries. To combat these activities, 10 East Bengal Regiment from Saidpur Cantonment was deployed in the Rajshahi and Natore region. They fought with exceptional courage until the insurgents surrendered and peace was restored in the Rajshahi region. Five officer cadets of the 2nd BLWC—namely Aminul Islam, Ferozur Rahman, Syed Abul Bashar, Motahar Hossain, and Ashraf Ud Doula—participated in the operation as members of the battalion. During a direct engagement, Officer Cadet Ashraf Ud Doula (who later served as an Ambassador, Secretary to the Government, and Major) lost one of his legs, while two soldiers embraced martyrdom.

About one and a half months after the surrender of the Pakistani forces in Dhaka, Second Lieutenant Selim of the 1st BLWC, along with several soldiers of the 2nd East Bengal Regiment, embraced martyrdom on 30 January 1972 during the operation to liberate Mirpur. Around the same time, filmmaker Zahir Raihan disappeared there while searching for his missing brother, journalist Shahidullah Kaiser. Under the leadership of freedom fighter officers of the 2nd East Bengal Regiment, Mirpur was eventually cleared of hostile forces.

The officer cadets of the 2nd BLWC were brought to the Battle School, which had been temporarily established in Dhaka Cantonment, during the first week of June 1972.

The Commander of 46 Infantry Brigade, Lt Col M Ziauddin Ahmed, Bir Uttam, served as the ex officio Commandant of the Battle School. The instructors were Maj Moinul Hussain Chowdhury, Bir Bikram, Commanding Officer of 2 East Bengal Regiment; Maj Syed Faruqur Rahman of 1st Bengal Lancers; Maj Nazrul Haque, Bir Protik; and Capt Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, Bir Bikram. The Adjutant was Capt SHMB Noor Chowdhury.

SEE PAGE 7

Message from the HON'BLE ACTING PRESIDENT



A war of liberation comes but once in the life of a nation. We are indeed blessed to have been part of that defining chapter in the history of our beloved Bangladesh.

On the auspicious occasion of the 54th Anniversary of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course, it gives me immense pleasure to extend my warm felicitations and heartfelt congratulations to all members of the Course and their spouses.

When a nation is born through the crucible of a war of liberation, it not only secures its independence but also provides the ultimate litmus test of patriotism. The men and women who rise to that historic challenge earn a place of honour in the nation's collective memory.

As our War of Liberation gathered momentum amidst uncertainty and immense sacrifice, it became imperative to strengthen the officer corps for the effective conduct of military operations. Responding to that national call, 131 battle-hardened freedom fighters, inspired solely by their unwavering patriotism, volunteered to undergo military training as officer cadets.

They were organised into two batches—the 1st Bangladesh Liberation War Course and the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course. Upon completing an intensive fourteen-week training programme at Murtee in India, the officers of the 1st Course proceeded directly to the battlefront to join the war. The members of the 2nd Course were still undergoing training when Bangladesh achieved its cherished independence.

Upon their return to Dhaka in early February, 1972, they underwent a further eight weeks of advanced military training before being commissioned.

It was my distinct privilege to serve as one of the instructors entrusted with their training. I vividly recall the exceptional spirit, discipline and patriotic fervour that characterised every member of the Course. They represented a remarkable group of young men, chosen from among hundreds of thousands of freedom fighters, to become the first generation of officers of an army born alongside a newly independent nation. Many generations of officers would follow, but none could ever replicate the unique historical significance of this pioneering group.

The members of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course were commissioned on 5 August 1972—a landmark occasion in the history of our Armed Forces and our Republic. By a remarkable coincidence, the date of 5 August has, in later years, acquired another profound significance in the nation's historical journey, further enhancing its place in our national consciousness.

Those youthful patriots of fifty-four years ago are today enriched by age and wisdom, yet their devotion to Bangladesh remains undiminished. Throughout their distinguished careers and beyond, they have continued to serve the nation with honour, integrity and dedication. Many shed their blood during the Liberation War, while some made the supreme sacrifice in defence of the motherland. Their contributions have become an enduring part of our national heritage, and the nation owes them a debt of profound gratitude.

As we celebrate this memorable anniversary, let us reaffirm our commitment to the ideals for which they fought—freedom, justice, democracy and the dignity of our people. May their legacy continue to inspire future generations to serve Bangladesh with the same courage, patriotism and selfless devotion.

I wish all members of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course and their families good health, happiness, peace and prosperity.

HAFIZ UDDIN AHMAD
Bir Bikram

THOSE WE LOST

Members of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course who have passed away

- Brigadier General Md Akbar Yousuf
- Brigadier General Md Jalal Uddin Siddiqui
- Brigadier General Md Khurshid Alam Basunia
- Brigadier General Md Zillur Rahman
- Brigadier General Mohammad Abdur Rab
- Lt Col Chowdhury Mohammad Ali
- Major Md Muqtadir Ali
- Major Md Latiful Alam Chowdhury
- Major Md Shah Alam Talukder
- Major Md Liaquat Ali Khan
- Major ABM Shamsul Alam
- Major Kazi Mominul Haque
- Major Md Bazlur Rashid
- Major Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, BB
- Major Rowshan Yazdani Bhuiyan, BP
- Major M Asadul Haque
- Major Md. Fazlul Haque
- Captain Jahangir Osman Bhuiyan, BP
- Captain Anowarul Haque Bhuiyan
- Captain Md Sarwar Jahan
- Captain Md Ali
- Golam Noor
- Md Issa Gazi
- Rezaul Ahmed
- Zulfiqur Ali Selim
- Munshi Atiqur Rahman
- Anisur Rahman
- Abdul Jalil
- Kazi Kamal Uddin Ahmed, BB



Brigadier General Md Akbar Yousuf



Brigadier General Md Jalal Uddin Siddiqui



Brigadier General Md Khurshid Alam Basunia



Brigadier General Zillur Rahman



Brigadier General Mohammad Abdur Rab



Lt Col Chowdhury Mohammad Ali



Major Md Muqtadir Ali



Major Md Latiful Alam Chowdhury



Major Md Shah Alam Talukder



Major Md Liaquat Ali Khan



Major ABM Shamsul Alam



Major Kazi Mominul Haque



Major Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, BB



Major M Asadul Haque



Captain Jahangir Osman Bhuiyan, BP



Captain Anowarul Haque Bhuiyan



Captain Md Sarwar Jahan



Captain Md Ali

Despite our best efforts, photographs of all members who have passed away could not be obtained.

Message from the
First Chief of Army Staff of the Bangladesh Army

On the night of 25–26 March 1971, the Pakistan Army unleashed hell on the people of this land. That army—of which we too were a part—also attacked Bengali service personnel and all paramilitary forces. This included the border guards (EPR), Police, Ansars, Mujahids, etc., and they did so with great savagery. Resistance to these cowardly attacks was spontaneous everywhere. Although outnumbered and outgunned, our forces fought back valiantly and exacted a heavy toll on the Pakistan Army. Finally, they crossed the border to regroup before returning to liberate their occupied motherland.

In our temporary sanctuary in India, we reorganised and began inducting thousands of able-bodied men eager to strike back at the Pakistan Army. The Mukti Bahini was born. However, we, the senior Army officers of the Mujibnagar Government in exile, together with our allies—the Indians—soon realised the need to recruit and train potential officers to mount a long-term campaign and lead the highly motivated liberation forces.

These officer cadets came from among the educated young men who had crossed the border to fight the Pakistanis. The first batch—the 1st Bangladesh War Course, as it was later named—began training in June. Sixty-one of them were commissioned in October. We were then able to place one officer in each company in the sectors as well as in the regular infantry units. Before that, many companies had been commanded by JCOs, but now officers led the sub-units, playing a key role in the Liberation War. The next batch, the 2nd Bangladesh War Course, was still undergoing training when the Pakistanis surrendered on 16 December, bringing the war to an end. But it is not as though they missed the war. After all, they earned eight gallantry awards—three Bir Bikrams and five Bir



Protiks. In fact, many of them had been fighting the Pakistan Army from the very beginning. Several led platoons and even companies, while others served as urban guerrillas in the cities, especially Dhaka.

After the war, a new challenge faced us: we had to build the Army. I assumed charge as Chief of Army Staff in early April 1972. Many of these young officers had come from different walks of life, and it was only natural that many of them would wish to return to the professions they had pursued before the war. However, although some did leave, most remained in the Army out of a sense of duty to help build the new country and its new Army.

At that time, I had just over 200 officers, and more than half of them were graduates of the two War Courses. We had very little experience and even fewer resources. We literally had to start from scratch. There were no training institutions, and we had no idea when the Bengali military personnel of the Pakistan Army, who were imprisoned in Pakistan, would return. Yet these new officers, imbued with an abiding love for their motherland, enthusiasm for work, and intelligence, never allowed our severe shortcomings to be felt. Many of them had to shoulder more than one responsibility and performed exceptionally well without complaint. Indeed, many were eager to undertake whatever additional responsibilities were assigned to them. They discharged their duties with distinction and were duly commended by me on many occasions. Their contribution during the formative years of the Bangladesh Army was nothing short of exemplary. What stood out above all was their indomitable spirit. They worked day and night—in their own units, in peacetime soldiering, in operations, in support of the civil administration, in relief operations, against miscreants in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in arms recovery, in disaster management—whatever they were called upon to do.

In a battalion, apart from two or three senior officers, the remainder were War Commissioned officers. Their contribution during the Liberation War and in the years that followed was immensely significant.

MAJ GEN K M SAFIULLAH, Bir Uttom

The enduring legacy of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course

FROM PAGE 6

The Battle School successfully carried out its immediate mission. The officers, men, and all support staff deserved appreciation for this accomplishment under very trying conditions. It also provided ample food for thought for the Army leadership as to how and when to organise and establish the required training institutions in the Bangladesh Army. The Battle School stood as a model of a successful initiative and the precursor of the military academy that was to come.

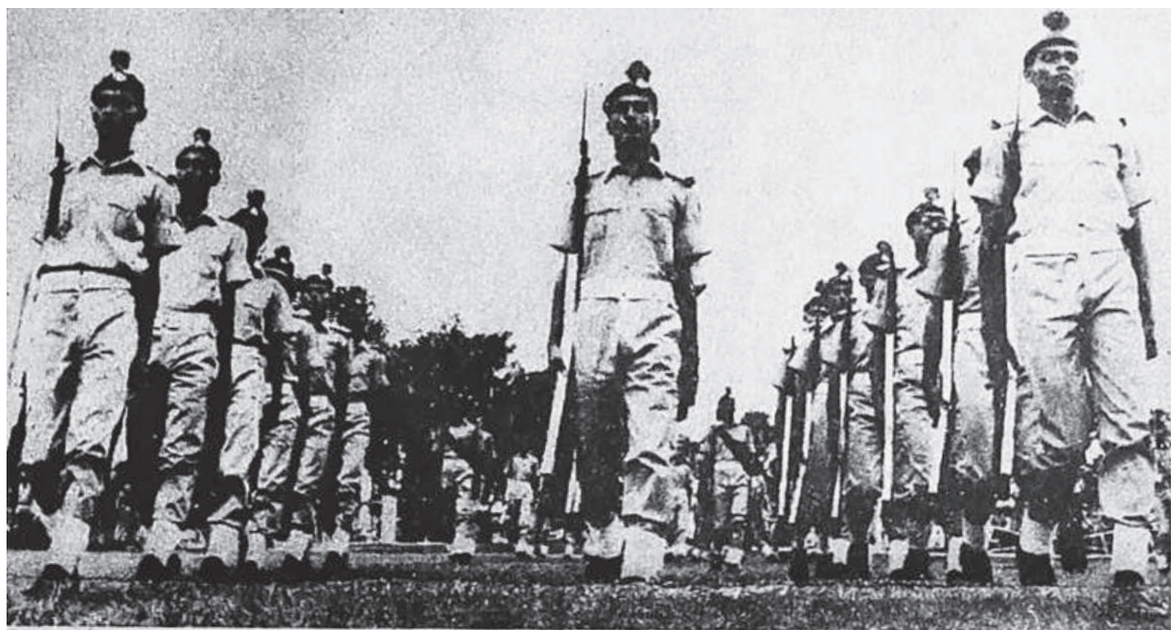
A total of 64 officer cadets, including six cadets who had escaped from the Pakistan Military Academy and participated in the Liberation War, joined the training at the Battle School. After eight weeks of rigorous training, 47 cadets took part in the passing-out parade and were granted commissions on 05 August 1972. Cadet Muddassir Hussain Khan was the Senior Under Officer (SUO) who received the Sword of Honour.

After being commissioned, the officers were posted to their respective battalions, which were then in a deplorable condition. The soldiers lacked proper uniforms and had no boots. During the bitter winter, they had to perform night duty wrapped in blue blankets supplied by the Red Cross. Apart from their personal weapons carried over from the battlefield, the battalions possessed no heavy weapons or ammunition. There was virtually no furniture and no transport except for one or two old Jeeps dating back to the Second World War, one Dodge pick-up truck, and one or two three-ton trucks. Whenever the battalions had to be deployed outside the cantonments in aid of the civil power, the Army had to rely on civilian trucks for transportation. This was, by and large, the situation prevailing in almost all the battalions at that time. Each officer had to shoulder two or three responsibilities simultaneously, such as those of Adjutant, Quartermaster, Company Commander, and others.

To deal with the fragile circumstances following independence, the Bangladesh Army was deployed nationwide. The first operation involved anti-smuggling duties. Large quantities of jute were being smuggled from Bangladesh into neighbouring countries. Working alongside the then Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), the Army succeeded in bringing the smuggling situation under control.

This was followed by Food Movement Duty. The Army was deployed at Chattogram and Mongla ports, as well as along damaged roads, bridges, and ferry crossings throughout the country, to ensure that food supplies were transported swiftly and without disruption on a priority basis. This operation continued for approximately two months.

The most challenging assignment, however, was the campaign to recover illegal arms, known as Operation Devil's Due. It was launched, most likely, in December 1973. For this operation, the Police and the Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini were placed under the operational command of the Army. One infantry battalion was deployed in two or three districts. A maximum of six or seven officers, comprising PMA-commissioned freedom fighter officers and officers from the 1st and 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Courses, served in each infantry battalion. Despite these limitations, a large number of illegal weapons were recovered during the operation. As a result, the activities of various insurgent groups were substantially reduced and brought under control. Several thousand illegal firearms, along with a large quantity of ammunition, were recovered.



Officer cadets march in the passing-out parade marking their commissioning into the Bangladesh Army on 5 August 1972. PHOTO: THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER

In short, the members of the 1st and 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Courses devoted themselves wholeheartedly to building both the Bangladesh Army and the country. They devoted their labour, intellect, and unwavering dedication to overcoming countless hardships in the service of the nation.

It is important to remember that, unlike today, there was no modern equipment, no mobile phones, no wireless communication sets, and no proper road network. The officers themselves had yet to receive adequate professional training. Nevertheless, even before 1975, these 110 officers from the two Bangladesh Liberation War Courses, together with a handful of freedom fighter officers who had revolted from the Pakistan Army, played a pivotal role in safeguarding the country's independence and sovereignty. They laid down their lives, suffered permanent injuries, and worked tirelessly to protect the nation through some of its most difficult and uncertain years.

During the period from 1976 to 1981, officers from the First and Second Bangladesh Liberation War Courses undertook the demanding responsibilities of Grade-2 Staff Officers at various brigades, divisions, and Army Headquarters. At that time, Bangladesh did not yet have a Staff College. Consequently, most of these officers performed such important staff duties without having completed a Staff Course.

The officers of these two courses who had left the Army voluntarily, been denied commissions, or lost their jobs prematurely came together to establish a social platform to maintain close contact and camaraderie among themselves, while also providing financial support to fellow foundation members and the families of deceased members in need. With this objective in mind, they established an organisation, the Bangladesh Liberation War Courses Foundation (BLWCF), in the mid-1980s. The foundation has an executive committee elected every two years, and the posts of President and General Secretary rotate between the two courses.

Since its inception, the foundation's members have gathered regularly four times a year: on Foundation Day on 9 October, commemorating the commissioning of the 1st BLWC; on Fellowship Day on 5 August, celebrating the commissioning of the 2nd BLWC; on Victory Day; and at the Independence Day dinner, where members of the foundation and Liberation War veterans attend with their families.

The Bangladesh Army, which today enjoys immense respect and has earned an outstanding reputation at home and abroad through its service in United Nations peacekeeping missions, stands on foundations laid in the 1970s through the courage, hard work, and sacrifice of the officers of the two Bangladesh Liberation War Courses. Despite immense odds and limited resources, they helped build the Army from its earliest days and defended the sovereignty of the nation against subversive and separatist forces. Their contribution deserves due recognition.

The article is written by members of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course.

MEMBERS OF THE 2ND BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR COURSE

- Major General A.L.M. Fazlur Rahman ndc, psc
- Major General Jiban Kanai Das ndc, psc
- Brigadier General Md. Akbar Yousuf
- Brigadier General Mohammad Abdur Rab
- Brigadier General Md. Jalal Uddin Siddiqui
- Brigadier General Mohammad Khurshid Alam Basunia
- Brigadier General Miran Hamidur Rahman
- Brigadier General Md. Zillur Rahman, psc
- Colonel Mohammad. Aminul Islam
- Lieutenant Colonel Mudassir Hossain Khan, BP
- Lieutenant Colonel M. Zainul Abedin, psc
- Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Quader
- Lieutenant Colonel Chowdhury Mohammad Ali
- Lietenant Colonel Chandra Kanta Das
- Lietenant Colonel Harun or Rashid
- Major Khairul Alam
- Major Dost Mohammad Sikder
- Major A S M Shamsul Arefin
- Major Muhammad Abdus Salam
- Major Md. Quamrul Islam
- Major S.M. Habibullah
- Major Md. Muqtadir Ali
- Major S M Shahiduzzaman
- Major Md. Latiful Alam Chowdhury
- Major Md. Atiqur Rahman
- Major Syed Ekramul Haque Khandaker, BP
- Major Md. Shah Alam Talukder, psc
- Major Mofizur Rahman
- Major Md. Sulaiman
- Major Md. Fazlul Haque
- Major Mahmudul Masud
- Major Md. Liaquat Ali Khan
- Major M. Asadul Haque
- Major Mohd. Akhtaruzzaman
- Major Sk. Jamshed Hossain
- Major Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, BB
- Major Md. Ashrafuddoula
- Major Dr. Md. Rezaul Haque
- Major A B M Shamsul Alam
- Major Rowshan Yazdani Bhiuyan, BP
- Major Kazi Mominul Haque
- Major Md. Bazlur Rashid
- Captain Md. Humayun Kabir Chowdhury,BP
- Captain Mohd. Hafizullah
- Captain A B Tajul Islam
- Captain Mohammad Ali
- Captain Anowarul Haque Bhuiyan
- Captain Mohammad Sarwar Jahan
- Captain Jahangir Osman Bhuiyan, BP
- Abdul Halim Khan
- Adv. Abu Taher Basunia
- Abu Taher Sarker
- Abdul Hamid Chowdhury
- Dewan Gous Ali Sultan
- Firozur Rahman
- Golam Noor
- Md. Issa Gazi
- Dr. Jhulan Kanti Paul, PhD
- Kaiser M. Hussain
- Md. Motahar Hossain
- Mahfuz Anam
- Mosharraf Hossain
- Mustaque Uddin Ahmed
- Rezaul Ahmed
- Sheikh Ataur Rahman
- Siraj Uddin Ahmed
- Syed Abul Bashar
- Zulfikar Ali Selim
- Dr. Hasan Imam
- Prof. Md. Abdul Muktadir
- Kamrul Haque Sapan BB
- Md Akhtaruzzaman
- Anisur Rahman
- Munshi Atiqur Rahman
- Kazi Kamal Uddin Ahmed, BB
- Abdul Jalil

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Teacher shortage must be addressed

Students should not suffer because of bureaucratic issues

We often complain about "learning poverty" among the majority of students in public schools, but ignore the fact that, over the years, we have failed to ensure adequate staffing in many of the primary and secondary schools. Recent reports on two schools from two very different parts of the country have revealed the sorry state of the prevailing teacher shortage.

The Jessore Education Board Model School and College, established in 2007, does not lack school buildings or teachers' quarters; what it lacks is enough subject-specific teachers to teach classes from grade 3 to 12. For the institution's 1,411 students, there are only 26 teachers—a teacher-student ratio of 1:54, starkly contrasting the standard of 1:15 ratio in a well-performing system. However, the ratio becomes even less acceptable when one considers that this "model" school has no subject teacher for Bangla, English or science for any of its 850 school-level students. These subjects are being taught by teachers of philosophy, social science and statistics, respectively. Imagine how such substitutions affect students' learning and preparation for the SSC examination, for example. What's worse is that, at the college level, there is no teacher for higher mathematics. There are not enough teachers for ICT, science and commerce subjects either.

The situation at Lalmonirhat Dahagram Government High School is even worse. For its 550 students, there is only one teacher, who himself is scheduled to retire in two years. The situation at this institution—the only one in the union surrounded on all sides by India—has become so dire that students have begun boycotting classes demanding the recruitment of the required number of teachers.

Perhaps the saddest part is that these schools did have more teachers at some point. Seven teachers were appointed to the Dahagram school when it was nationalised in 2013. Since then, six teachers have retired. This raises the question: why were no new teachers appointed to fill the vacancies over the past 13 years? The acting headmaster and the only serving teacher claimed that he had sent requisitions for teachers 15 times over the last 10 years. What happened to those requisitions? The same question can be raised about the model school in Jashore. Before it was nationalised in 2018, it had 57 teachers. But during nationalisation, only 26 were listed as government teachers. What is more puzzling is that, at the time of nationalisation and over the last eight years, the authorities did not feel the need to create new posts for teachers. Consequently, students' learning has continued to suffer.

Our children want to learn and have the capacity to grow. But the authorities responsible for ensuring a smooth learning process are failing in their duties. We urge the government to find out why these gaps exist and take appropriate measures. Introducing new curricula or ambitious policies will achieve little if we cannot ensure this basic requirement of having adequate qualified teachers in our schools.

Migration slowdown is a warning

We cannot rely solely on Middle East for our remittance economy

For four decades, Bangladesh has run a simple but effective economic bargain: export labour to the Gulf and import the earnings home. That bargain now seems to be fraying, and the government has been slow to notice.

Fresh government data show that just under 9.69 lakh Bangladeshis left for overseas jobs in the fiscal year that ended in June, a five-year low and a fall of 5 percent from the previous year. The decline follows an even steeper drop the year before, meaning outbound migration has now fallen for two consecutive years from the record of almost 12 lakh set in FY2024. What's more, the US-Israel war on Iran has rattled confidence across the Gulf, disrupted flight schedules to the region, and left employers in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE more cautious about hiring. Monthly outflows, which had run at roughly 1 lakh for years, slowed sharply from March onward.

The scale of Bangladesh's exposure to this one region is risky enough. Three-quarters of the more than 86 lakh Bangladeshis who went abroad for work between FY2015 and FY2025 went to the Middle East. Between 60 and 70 lakh Bangladeshi nationals are currently employed there, many in informal or precarious roles without permanent contracts. That concentration has become dangerous the moment the region lost stability. Migration analysts now warn that returning workers, not just fewer departures, may become the more telling indicator.

For now, the remittance numbers offer some comfort. Bangladesh took in a record $35 billion-plus in the previous fiscal year, and July inflows were up 15 percent year-on-year. But remittances could be a lagging indicator in the future. Given that remittances have been one of the few reliable buffers for a fragile economy, this is an issue the government cannot afford to shrug off.

There are, encouragingly, some doors opening elsewhere. Malaysia's labour market looks set to reopen following a recent government visit, with recruiters citing demand for 200,000-300,000 workers and hiring potentially starting in September. That would help, but it is a fraction of what the Gulf alone used to absorb.

The lesson from this episode should be obvious. A labour-export model overly dependent on a single region cannot be a reliable strategy in the days to come. The government must diversify destination markets, cut visa and recruitment friction, and critically invest in skills training that would let Bangladeshi workers compete for higher-wage, more secure roles rather than the most precarious jobs on offer.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

The Swadeshi Movement launched

On this day in 1905, the Swadeshi Movement was formally launched in Calcutta (now Kolkata). An anti-colonial agitation in British India, it was the first organised mass collective action in the Indian Independence Movement.

Political acumen is fine, but economic expertise is crucial

Without it, our politicians cannot run Bangladesh in the present world



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

In Bangladesh, we love democracy, cherish it and fight for it, but we have repeatedly failed to make it durable. The July uprising, whose second anniversary we have just observed, was unique in many ways. It was far more all-encompassing, grassroots-based and youth-centric than our previous democratic movements. Students and young people in our country have had a long and glorious tradition of rising against oppressive regimes. It was the youth in the 1950s who secured Bangla the status of one of the two state languages in Pakistan; they were a crucial force that brought down the Ayub Khan regime and formed the Mukti Bahini that helped defeat the Pakistan Army in our Liberation War. After the birth of Bangladesh, they brought down Gen HM Ershad's regime and, more recently, Sheikh Hasina's government. The energy, vision and patriotism exhibited in all these movements show the never-ending zeal of the younger generation in dismantling oppressive regimes.

But two years after the July uprising, our political leaders have again resorted to such infighting and mutual demonising that people are becoming increasingly concerned about what kind of future we can expect when politics slides so quickly back into the old ways. The question is, why are our political leaders creating this disenchantment among us? What was supposed to be a celebration of the July uprising has instead turned into an exchange of dangerous rhetoric from both sides of the political aisle, creating a sense of unease among people. At this moment, we should have been congratulating ourselves for moving towards building a democratic order. Instead, we are saying or suggesting things that are creating unnecessary and self-defeating doubt.

The tendency to resort to clashes without giving discussion or peaceful means a chance reveals a predisposition towards violence that will inevitably lead to less mutual respect and tolerance, and more towards what we have seen in the past: patronisation of muscle power by the major political parties. As a result, student politics will not move towards the constructive and nation-building role that we once witnessed and now desperately need.

On August 5, 2026, after inaugurating the July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum, the prime minister said, "Some are trying to create unnecessary issues and destabilise the country. We need to consider whether, knowingly or unknowingly, such actions are facilitating the return of the defeated, deposed and fugitive authoritarian forces." Are we moving towards destabilisation? Is there any chance of the defeated authoritarian forces returning? In our view, we are more than ready to resist such an eventuality, which is far from likely to occur in the near future. But for the PM to speculate along these lines only weakens his position.

On the other hand, the opposition leader, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami chief, referring to the delay in implementing the July National Charter and the reforms pledged in it, said, "We will not sit idly by while the country falls apart." He added: "Everything suggests that another inevitable revolution is approaching. I call upon all of you to prepare for that revolution."

What are we to think when the elected leader of the opposition says the country is falling apart? This is most unacceptable. Why would anybody invest in a country that is falling apart? How can we expect to earn the confidence of our own and of foreign investors? Don't such utterances make our enemies smile and strengthen their position that we are on the wrong track?

If the opposition leader's prediction is anywhere near the truth, would South Korea have signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with us on Tuesday? Would Japan have signed a similar agreement earlier?

These are sad but real examples of how we hurt our own prospects for advancement simply to gain some populist mileage.

In my last column, published on July 24, I expressed my concern about the growing distance between the ruling party and the opposition. Regrettably, that trend has now become more violent. The student wings of BNP and Jamaat are becoming directly involved in violence. On Tuesday, more than 90 people were injured in clashes between Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir on four campuses in various districts.

What's concerning is that the issues at hand were avoidable and could definitely have been resolved through dialogue. This tendency to resort to clashes without giving discussion or peaceful means a chance reveals a predisposition towards violence that will inevitably lead to less mutual respect and tolerance, and more towards what we have seen in the past: patronisation of muscle power by the major political parties. As a result, student politics will not move towards the constructive and nation-building role that we once witnessed and now desperately need.

The general students who don't belong to any student party already feel intimidated or unsafe attending classes or being on campus. This should not be the scene in our educational institutions in the post-July era. But it is increasingly becoming so. What we are seeing is a continuation of the same dynamics witnessed between ruling party and opposition student wings in the past.

According to the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), political violence increased significantly from January to June this year. There were 830 incidents that caused the deaths of 56 individuals and left 5,246 injured. Of them, 273 clashes were linked to BNP's internal conflicts, 290 between BNP and Jamaat, and 33 between BNP and NCP. This is most undesirable.

The point we want to make here is that, instead of violence, there must be more mature and fact-based discussions between the ruling and opposition parties. The need of the time is that our politicians should address the economic issues far more seriously than they do at present. Yes, members of the ruling party who hold ministerial positions do point out economic challenges from time to time, but we don't see any serious effort on their part to engage their political counterparts, either through parliamentary committees or informal gatherings, to deeply examine the serious economic challenges facing the country.

A serious sense of responsibility is also expected from our opposition politicians. How could the leader of the opposition, Dr Shafiqur Rahman, say that "the government is creating artificial gas shortages to justify price hikes"? The 11-party alliance yesterday announced nationwide protests over gas and electricity crises. This is nothing but "populist politics."

In the present world, our politicians must have some knowledge of how the economy grows, how an industry is run, and what challenges our exporters face. Agriculture, which remains neglected in our planning priorities, is one of the most scientifically advanced areas of progress in today's world. Biotechnology and chemical engineering are essential parts of agricultural growth. Meanwhile, banking is one of the most advanced and complex sectors of a modern economy. Therefore, it is imperative that our politicians take into account how project financing works and how accountability has to be ensured.

We appoint ministers without regard to their expertise. If, for political reasons, such appointments have to be made sometimes, then immediate steps should be taken to properly train the appointee in the portfolio they are entrusted with. Please remember that running a government today is a science. It is knowledge-based and driven by practical experience, not rhetoric. Our long experience of failures in implementing good policies should teach us that.

Bangladesh is currently facing one of the most severe economic challenges in its existence. Some of the basic preconditions of a healthy economy were destroyed by the Hasina regime, especially the banking sector. The 18 months of the interim regime brought indiscipline and mob rule at the grassroots level, which significantly reduced our industrial productivity. Then came the US-Israel attack on Iran, which caused chaos in the global energy market, disrupted international supply chains, and damaged the global economy, severely hurting smaller economies. Bangladesh, for example, shouldered nearly $3 billion in additional foreign exchange spending on surging energy and fertiliser imports between March and June, due to the Iran war.

Today, we face severe uncertainties in the supply of raw materials, prices of industrial inputs, and stability of our export markets. But, above all, it's the supply of energy that is threatening our GDP growth, which the IMF forecasts at 3.5 percent for the current fiscal year, with a similar prediction from the ADB.

The gas crisis, weak private sector investment, and slowing exports are hurting the economy. Industrial production has contracted for the first time since Covid-19. Hundreds of factories have shut down, leading to significant job losses. According to the Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF), more than 700 factories have closed or fallen into financial distress since August 2024, leaving thousands of people jobless.

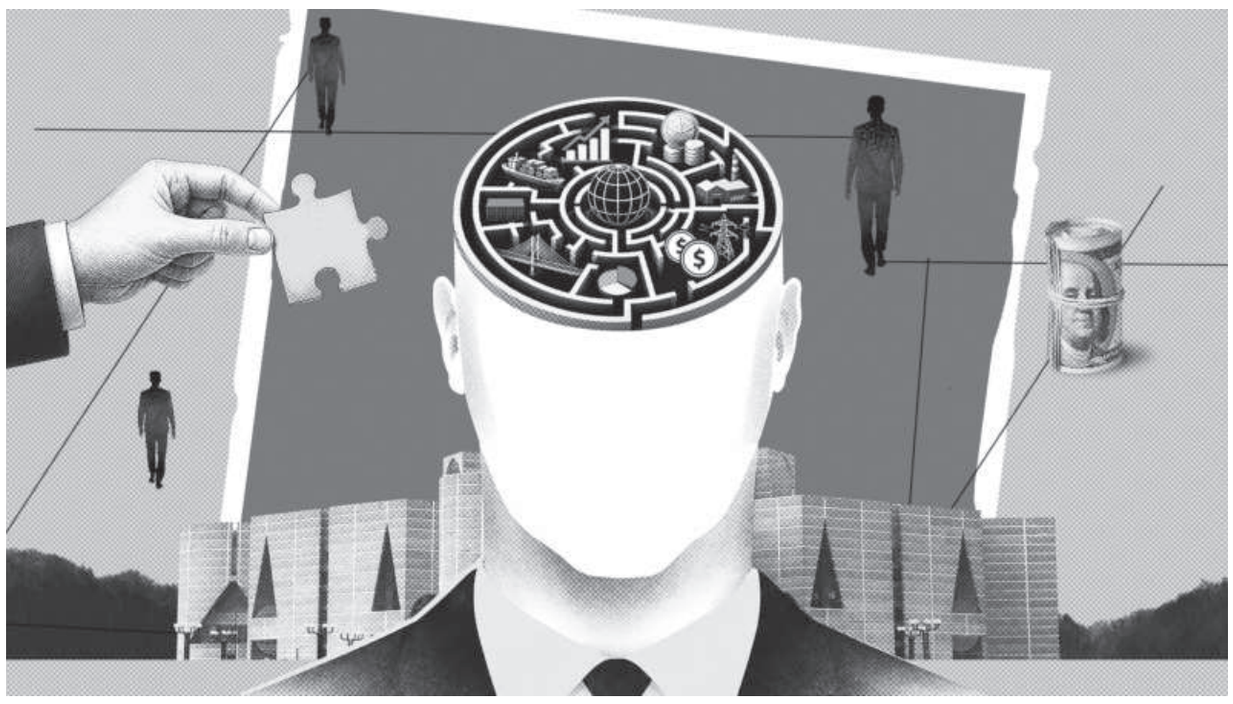
The crisis in the banking sector has worsened, with the current non-performing loan ratio rising to 32.26 percent, amounting to Tk 588,704 crore at the end of March this year.

Inflation remains a major challenge, eroding the purchasing power of low- and middle-income consumers. The country has been experiencing an average inflation rate of 8.5 percent for four consecutive fiscal years since 2022-23.

So, our political leaders must recognise the serious economic challenges that Bangladesh is facing, temper their rhetoric, and take positions that are more realistic. We advocate for giving opposition parties more power and freedom to play their role more effectively. However, the more freedom they receive, the more responsible they need to become. Their stance needs to be more practical, scientific, and reality-based.

Every country's economy, especially those of smaller countries like ours, is inextricably linked with global trade and geopolitical realities. This calls for far more mature political dialogue between our ruling and opposition parties concerning the country's economic future. The current populist rhetoric, therefore, must be checked.

We appoint ministers without regard to their expertise. If, for political reasons, such appointments have to be made sometimes, then immediate steps should be taken to properly train the appointee in the portfolio they are entrusted with. Please remember that running a government today is a science. It is knowledge-based and driven by practical experience, not rhetoric. Our long experience of failures in implementing good policies should teach us that.



VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

Two years after the July uprising, our political leaders have again resorted to such infighting and mutual demonising that people are becoming increasingly concerned about what kind of future we can expect when politics slides so quickly back into the old ways. The question is, why are our political leaders creating this disenchantment among us? What was supposed to be a celebration of the July uprising has instead turned into an exchange of dangerous rhetoric from both sides of the political aisle, creating a sense of unease among people. At this moment, we should have been congratulating ourselves for moving towards building a democratic order. Instead, we are saying or suggesting things that are creating unnecessary and self-defeating doubt.

The Daily Star Reg. No. DA 781 | **EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam** Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net | **Registered & Head Offices:** The Daily Star Centre 64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215 Phone: 09610222222 | **Newsroom:** Fax- 58156306 reporting@thedailystar.net | **Advertisement:** 01711623910 advertisement@thedailystar.net GPO Box: 3257 | **Subscription:** 01711623906 | thedailystar.net bangla.thedailystar.net/

Dhaka University and the enduring cycle of partisan control



Nafisa Nipun Tanjeem
is an educator, researcher, writer, and activist. She is associate professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Worcester State University in Massachusetts, US.

NAFISA NIPUN TANJEEM

As Bangladesh approached the second anniversary of the July uprising, Dhaka University (DU) authorities suspended three teachers and relieved four others of their academic and administrative responsibilities over various allegations. Moreover, under the banner of "Anti-Fascist Teachers of Dhaka University," more than 100 teachers submitted a memorandum to the vice-chancellor that included a list of 231 teachers accused of being affiliated with the Awami League (AL) and various left-leaning groups, of opposing the uprising, and of siding with "fascist forces." The memorandum demanded action against the accused teachers and a ban on the Blue Panel's activities—the AL-leaning platform of teachers at DU. The university authorities responded by forming a committee to investigate the allegations.

This dispute reminded me of something a trusted comrade posted on social media a few weeks after the uprising. She wrote that the vision of July could not be achieved unless we underwent a process of de-Awamisation. De-Awamisation means dismantling the harmful practices that the AL regime normalised during its 15 years in power. In institutions of higher education, these practices included partisan appointments, targeted disciplinary proceedings, ideological loyalty tests, the repression of criticism, mob pressure, weaponisation of law, and, most importantly, the conversion of universities into instruments and extensions of the state and the governing political party.

The latest controversy therefore raises a question much larger than the fate of the individual faculty members affected. It pushes us to consider how institutions of higher learning in Bangladesh have historically collaborated with powerful state and non-state actors and remained complicit in repressing political opponents and dissident voices. The mechanisms of repression include influencing funding allocation, curtailing academic freedom, obstructing educational content, imposing punitive legal and administrative sanctions for criticising the government or addressing particular topics, stigmatising and demonising dissenters, repressing student activism, and securitising campuses.

Let us take a quick tour through recent history.

Professor Morshed Hasan Khan of the Department of Marketing at DU published an opinion piece in a national daily on March 25, 2018, in which he described Ziaur Rahman as the "announcer of independence" and claimed that most AL leaders, including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had left the country during the 1971 Liberation War. Later, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) protested on campus, declared him persona non grata, and submitted a memorandum urging authorities to take immediate action against him. Eventually, the authorities terminated Professor Khan over allegations that he had distorted the history of the Liberation War and defamed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Of course, institutional repression carried out in conjunction with the state was not limited to DU. Maidul Islam, a professor at the University of Chittagong (CU), faced a massive online smear campaign because of his critical social media posts led by BCL activists and colleagues who supported the AL government. On August 20, 2023, the CU Teachers' Association held an emergency meeting and urged the VC to take legal action against Professor Islam for criticising the government. The professor received a show-cause notice and was arrested and imprisoned for 37 days.

In 2020, Sirajum Munira, a lecturer in the Department of Bangla at Begum Rokeya University, faced a complaint filed by university authorities over a Facebook post that allegedly mocked Mohammad Nasim, the then health minister. She was eventually arrested under the infamous Digital Security Act. A few days later, Zahidur Rahman, an assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Rajshahi University, was suspended and later arrested under the same Digital Security Act for criticising Mohammad Nasim on social media. The list goes on.

Just as academics were arrested, suspended, or dismissed for criticising powerful political actors and institutions during the AL regime, under the current BNP government too, affiliation with the former regime or an insufficiently enthusiastic interpretation of the July uprising may become grounds for professional exclusion, repercussions, and punishment. Since winning the 2026 election, the BNP government seems to have restored partisan control over top-level administrative appointments at public universities. Following the February 12 election, the government appointed new VCs to seven public universities, all of whom had direct connections to the ruling political party. As a columnist later pointed out, there has been a sweeping "cleanse" of university leadership, followed by reported "counter-purges" against academics considered insufficiently loyal to the new political order.



VISUAL: **ALIZA RAHMAN**

Against this backdrop, let us examine the recent DU move. Notable among the suspended teachers is Professor Sadeka Halim of the Department of Sociology. Halim, a former VC of Jagannath University, was suspended over allegations of conduct "unbecoming of a teacher both inside and outside the classroom," as well as offenses involving "moral turpitude." It is beyond the scope of this article to assess the specific allegations or the procedural questions and concerns surrounding the case. What seems particularly problematic, however, is that public responses to her suspension—both in mainstream and social media—have split into two opposing camps. One group has focused on establishing that Halim possesses superior moral character and has been an exceptional mentor, educator, and administrator. The other has devoted its energy to depicting her as an awful person and professional, often through a broader smear campaign.

I would argue that two crucial issues are lost within this binary debate. First, there is a need to recognise that institutions of higher education demonstrate a recurring pattern of selectively targeting political opponents and acting as extensions of the state. Second, we must distinguish between accountability and partisan punishment.

Accountability identifies specific conduct, examines evidence, allows the accused to respond, and imposes proportionate consequences. Partisan punishment begins with a person's political identity and then works backwards to construct guilt. The University Teachers' Network articulated this distinction clearly: "Accountability must be ensured through established legal processes and natural justice, not through vengeance or an ideological purge." The network emphasised that political beliefs, identities, or support for a particular political organisation cannot, by themselves, constitute professional misconduct. It also warned that blanket investigations could produce a university-wide "witch-hunt."

Sadeka Halim's political background is no secret. She served on the AL advisory council and was appointed VC of Jagannath University during the party's rule. However, political affiliation cannot substitute for evidence. Terms such as "moral turpitude" and "conduct unbecoming of a teacher" are broad and vague categories that can conceal political decisions beneath the language of institutional discipline. At the same syndicate meeting, faculty members were also relieved of their responsibilities over alleged activities "contrary to the spirit of the July uprising," for spreading "propaganda" against the university administration and the government, and for supporting a banned organisation. What exactly constitutes the "spirit of July"? Can criticising the incumbent government or holding an oppositional political view violate that spirit, or be classified as propaganda?

For 15 years, the AL regime encouraged people to view the party, government, state, and nation as interchangeable. True de-Awamisation means dismantling this political architecture. It requires ending the appointment of active party officials and leaders of partisan teachers' organisations as VCs. It requires restoring meaningful Senate elections and limiting executive control over university leadership. It requires transparent faculty recruitment, independent review bodies, protection from intimidation, and disciplinary procedures grounded in clearly defined professional standards. It also requires separating political expression from professional misconduct. A university teacher should be free to criticise the BNP government, the AL, university administrators, religious organisations and practices, nationalist orthodoxies, and even dominant interpretations of the July uprising—provided that the teacher does not incite violence, discriminate against students, or abuse institutional authority.

De-Awamisation also means rejecting collective guilt. Not every AL supporter participated in repression. Not every teacher appointed between 2009 and 2024 was unqualified. Not every administrator who remained in office endorsed every action of the repressive government. Individual responsibility must be established through individualised evidence. The "spirit of July" should not become what the "spirit of the Liberation War" became under AL rule: a morally powerful historical ideal appropriated by the state and the government and converted into an instrument for policing political speech.

De-Awamisation is, in fact, the most important precondition for realising July's vision because AL's deepest legacy is not a particular group of people. Its deepest legacy is a political culture. It is the culture of appointing loyalists and calling it governance. It is the culture of silencing critics and calling it discipline. It is the culture of mobilising mobs and calling it popular demand. It is the culture of treating political opposition as moral failure. It is the culture of using universities to reproduce state ideology rather than challenge power.

The test for DU—and for every other institution of higher learning—is therefore not how many AL-affiliated professors it can suspend, dismiss, or investigate. The test is whether it can create and implement procedures that remain fair regardless of which party governs Bangladesh and regardless of the political identity of the accused. The test is whether it can achieve the radical and transformative goal of genuine de-Awamisation by freeing Bangladesh from its authoritarian political traditions.

Where is that change people shed their blood for?



Emran Mahfuz
is a poet and convener of Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad.

EMRAN MAHFUZ

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, the minister of local government, rural development and co-operatives, recently expressed his frustration at the prevailing state of governance, saying, "In my four-five months of experience as a minister, I have realised that nothing has changed. Those who used to take bribes are still devising ways to do so, and those who used to obstruct good initiatives are continuing to obstruct them." This frank admission captures a painful truth about how the post-July uprising era is playing out.

Let us take a step back here. From 1952 to 1971, from 1990 to 2024—every turning point in our history has been marked by the sacrifice of countless people. Why do people shed blood? What compels them to endure unimaginable suffering and even embrace death? Surely it is in the hope for a fair and just society, where people's rights will be protected, the state and its institutions will be accountable, and hard-earned change will not be limited to only power changing hands.

But what are witnessing today transcends economic and governance concerns. The very people who had stood shoulder to shoulder in July-August 2024, responding to the call of protesting students and refusing to compromise on their demands for rights and reform, now stand divided. The unity that once was their driving force is beginning to fracture, forcing us to ask whether, after so many sacrifices made, so much blood shed, and so many dreams nurtured, we have been able to prepare the foundations for the change we so longed for.

I remember reading a story by Principal Ibrahim Khan, where, during a devastating flood, when people were forced to abandon their homes in search of safety, the character of Boro Mia was carefully loading his belongings onto a boat. Then, facing the same reality, rats, snakes, and other creatures also quietly climbed aboard, none attacking each other until they reached safety. In the face of disaster, they all recognised a singular goal: surviving. We witnessed something similar in real life during the devastating floods of 2024, when reports emerged of people sharing a shelter with snakes and other animals. In times of catastrophe, nature imparts on us a profound lesson—that in the face of a common threat, our differences become secondary, and survival becomes the only priority.

The July mass uprising reflected that same spirit. Men and women, those in burqas and those without, individuals from different political beliefs, social backgrounds, and identities all took to the streets together. Two years ago, no one questioned another person's attire, identity, or ideology because we were all united towards a common goal. But the moment we felt that the danger had passed, we drifted back into our old divisions. Debates erupted about who had belonged to which camp before, who shouted out the loudest slogans, who posted what on social media, or whose contribution measured higher. The tallying of achievements has become the most important thing. As if we have become free of every crisis. As if there is nothing left to achieve together.



'Men and women, those in burqas and those without, individuals from different political beliefs, social backgrounds, and identities all took to the streets together.'

FILE PHOTO: **REUTERS**

What we fail to realise is that it is this very competition for recognition that is weakening us. History demonstrates how great achievements are often destroyed not by external enemies, but by internal divisions. That is why preserving the unity that once transformed us into a powerful collective matters far more today than placing garlands of glory around our own necks.

To me, the spirit of 1971 and 2024 represents the ideas of social dignity, justice, and freedom from discrimination. That is why I oppose attempts to stop Mohan Raihan from reciting his poetry. For the same reason, I condemn the unlawful intrusion into the private life of former Jamaat leader and MP Gazi Nazrul. I also oppose the public humiliation of anyone simply because they privately support Awami League. Likewise, I condemn the harassment of AB Party leader Asaduzzaman Fuad in Babuganj, Barishal.

An act of injustice must be named as such, no matter who commits it. It is precisely in pursuit of the right and courage to speak this truth that people have made supreme sacrifices from 1971 to 2024. We rejected Hasina's rule because people were forcibly disappeared, violence was unleashed indiscriminately, false cases were routinely filed, and inequalities widened across society. Yet, sadly, that culture of repression and discrimination has not disappeared afterwards. Once, people used to be branded as "Jamaat-Shibir." Today, they are labelled "Awami/fascist collaborators." This tendency of tagging is detrimental to our unity. A democratic state cannot allow people to be shamed or punished outside the law by assigning them a political label.

The question is: why are the cases against the principal July perpetrators not moving forward more decisively through the legal process? If there are specific allegations against anyone, legal action must follow without delay. Punishment should be proportional to the crime committed. Justice must rely on evidence, and not be guided by the political identity of the accused. Let there be thorough investigations, and let justice be done. That said, is it unreasonable to expect a democratic society to remain humane and tolerant in its political and social spheres? Have we forgotten that the martyrs did not lay down their lives so that we could replace one cycle of hatred and revenge with another? They sacrificed so that we could move towards a peaceful, dignified, and just society. How much longer will we continue to nurture these needless divisions and this culture of vengeance? We must seek freedom from every form of oppression and injustice.

It is true, however, that over the past years, a section of poets, writers, journalists and academics openly aligned themselves with and flattered the Awami League in ways that were deeply unacceptable. Their intellectual surrender to political power and willingness to legitimise injustice harmed society. If anyone once again uses their professional identity as a shield while acting as an unquestioning servant of a new political order, discerning sections of the public will surely recognise them for what they really are.

But in resisting one form of injustice, we must not become defenders of another. In opposing authoritarianism, we must not normalise authoritarian behaviour ourselves. At this moment, what we need most is a shared sense of responsibility. Not revenge, but justice. Not divisions based on political identity, but rather equal application of the law. The unity that once gave us the strength to stand together must not be weakened by our own actions. We still have a long way to go. There is much to be done. Let's bring back our unity to finish the task of rebuilding our society.

DEADLY HEATWAVE

Italy on red alert, Hungary turns off lights to save energy

REUTERS, *Rome*

Italy took the unprecedented step of placing all its major cities on the highest level of health alert due to high temperatures yesterday while Hungary turned off the lights at some of its best-known buildings to save energy as a heatwave maintained its grip on large parts of Europe.

Europe, the world's fastest-warming continent, has been ravaged by record-breaking heat and destructive wildfires this summer, with France and Spain particularly hard hit in recent weeks.

The focus of the heatwave has since moved further east, with temperatures in Austria hitting successive national records this week, peaking at 41.2 degrees Celsius (106.2 degrees Fahrenheit) on Wednesday.



Italy is accustomed to hot summers, but the red alert issued by the Health Ministry stretches from Palermo on the southern island of Sicily to Bolzano in the mountainous north. Such a warning indicates a potential health emergency with prolonged high temperatures posing a serious health risk to the entire population.

In the northwestern city of Genoa, people aged 65 and over can escape the heat by visiting museums and libraries free of charge during the hottest hours of the day this month.



Officials from the East Java Provincial Disaster Management Agency fill a drone's water tank to battle a wildfire, *inset*, in the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park near Mount Bromo in Probolinggo, East Java province, Indonesia yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Ukraine hits Russian refineries

Moscow downs 605 Ukrainian drones, strikes train station, ship; six killed; Sweden court clears seized ship transfer to Kyiv

AGENCIES

Ukraine struck two Russian oil refineries hundreds of kilometres from the border in an overnight attack, President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday, as Russia hit a train station and commercial ship in Ukraine.

Both sides have been intensifying their long-range attacks in recent months, leading to a jump in civilian deaths. Kyiv has been firing record numbers of drones at Russia, while Moscow has been launching all-time high missile attacks.

Zelensky said Ukraine had hit oil refineries in the Bashkortostan and Yaroslavl regions -- about 1,300 (800 miles) and 700 kilometres from the front. The attacks were "strengthening the prospects for diplomacy", Zelensky said.

"Russia must choose peace," he added, posting a video from Russian social media of black smoke rising above an oil facility.



Russia's defence ministry said earlier it had downed 605 Ukrainian drones in the night, reports AFP.

The governor of the Yaroslavl region -- north of Moscow, where Zelensky said a refinery had been hit -- said 92 drones had been downed there in what he called the "most massive" attack on the region of the war.

In the Tver region, also north of Moscow, a drone hit a logistics centre belonging to Wildberries -- the Russian e-commerce giant that has been heavily targeted over the past month. Fresh Russian attacks overnight killed three people at the Lozova train station in the northeastern Kharkiv region of Ukraine.

Three people were also killed overnight and at least 19 wounded in Russian attacks on settlements in the northern region of Sumy.

A commercial vessel carrying Ukrainian wheat was also hit in the Black Sea by Russia, killing one person, the Odesa region governor said.

Meanwhile, Sweden's top court said yesterday it has upheld a ruling that a cargo vessel seized in the Baltic Sea this year can be handed over to Ukraine, where it is suspected of illegally transporting grain from Russian-occupied territory, reports Reuters.

MICHIGAN UPSET

AIPAC looks to back Republican against El-Sayed

AGENCIES



After spending more than $30m on a candidate who lost the Michigan Democratic Senate primary on Wednesday, the leading pro-Israel lobbying group in the US has now indicated it will pivot to the Republican in that race come November.

The move highlights how the one-issue behemoth does not see itself as ideologically bound to one party or the other. "Our members remain determined to ensure that voters reject Dr El-Sayed and his radical anti-Israel agenda," the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (Aipac) said in a statement. "Our community is proud to support pro-Israel Democrats and Republicans who stand for our values."

The race between pro-Israel Congresswoman Haley Stevens and former Detroit public health official Abdul El-Sayed quickly became the most expensive Democratic primary race of all time, reports Middle East Eye. Sayed won the tight race by one percentage point, in what was a stunning upset for establishment Democrats.

38 Yemeni troops killed in Houthi attacks: sources

AFP, *Al Mukalla*

Houthi missile and drone attacks in Yemen yesterday killed at least 38 government troops and injured 29, two medical sources told AFP, in one of the deadliest days between the two sides in years.

A military official told AFP that a military camp in the al-Ruwaik area of Marib province, in central Yemen, had been attacked, as well as camps in the Al-Abr and Al-Wadiah areas of Hadramawt, near the border with Saudi Arabia.

One of the missile attacks hit troops during their morning formation at the camp in Marib province, "killing and wounding at least 45 personnel", said another military source, who declined to be named for security reasons.

Yemen, which has been embroiled in more than a decade of war, last month became the latest front to be sucked into the US-Iran war, as the Tehran-backed Houthi rebels upended a 2022 truce with the Saudi-backed government.



Israeli forces check the motorcycle of a Palestinian during a raid in Qalandia refugee camp, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tell Trump to desist or we hit you hard

Iran warns Gulf states

REUTERS

Iran has launched a diplomatic offensive across the Gulf, warning regional governments that Tehran will strike their oil, power and water facilities unless they persuade Donald Trump to halt US attacks and seek a negotiated end to the war.

A senior Iranian official said the warning covered energy plants, refineries, electricity grids, water systems, transport networks and other strategic assets of Washington's closest Arab allies. The message, aimed at deterring further US military action by raising the specter of economic disruption, followed Trump's July 28 threat to hit Iran's energy infrastructure.

- **Energy plants, refineries, grids, water, transport among Gulf targets**
- **Qatar, Oman, KSA have all pressed Washington to resume negotiations**

Two Iranian officials, Gulf sources and a regional diplomat said Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi conveyed the warning in calls with Saudi, Turkish and Qatari counterparts, as well as Pakistan's army chief. Araqchi urged them to use their influence with Trump to dissuade renewed strikes, stressing that retaliation would target US assets and Gulf infrastructure.

"We're ready to retaliate, but finding a diplomatic solution is the best way to avoid wider escalation," one diplomat quoted Araqchi as saying. A Gulf source added: "If America targeted Iran's infrastructure, they would retaliate by striking Gulf energy facilities and other regional targets."

The campaign highlights how Iran is leveraging Gulf vulnerability, confronting governments with the risk that any US-Iran clash could place their economies in the firing line.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman later spoke with Trump, urging him to delay military action, secure a ceasefire and pursue talks, Gulf sources said. The warning was intended for all Gulf states but was conveyed mainly through Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Qatar, Oman and Saudi Arabia have all pressed Washington to resume negotiations, echoing Iranian warnings that another round of US strikes could "turn the region into a fireball."

UK sees record radicalisation referrals

AFP, *London*

A record number of people were reported last year to the UK's anti-radicalisation Prevent programme, the interior ministry said yesterday, with "extreme right-wing" concerns accounting for the most referrals related to an ideology.

The Prevent programme is part of the country's counter-terrorism strategy and aims to identify and stop people in the early stages on the path towards becoming radicalised as extremists.

In the year ending September 2025, people made 10,293 referrals, the highest number for a single year since reporting began in 2015, the Home Office said, calling it a "significant increase".

The UK in April raised its terror threat level to "severe" -- the second-highest, meaning an attack is "highly likely" -- with security officials citing the "broader and extreme right-wing terrorist threat".

The largest number of referrals due to concerns about a specific ideology related to "extreme right wing" views, accounting for 20 percent of all referrals.

There were 2,103 such referrals -- a sharp rise of 42 percent on the previous year. The anti-immigrant party Reform UK has enjoyed electoral success recently, while far-right, anti-Muslim campaigners such as Stephen Yaxley-Lennon have bolstered support online.

RAPE CASE

India court jails ex-top editor for 10 years

AFP, *Mumbai*

An Indian court yesterday sentenced former news magazine editor Tarun Tejpal to 10 years in prison after convicting him of raping a junior colleague, in a case that drew nationwide attention.

Tejpal, co-founder of magazine Tehelka, was accused of raping the journalist in the lift of a hotel in Goa during an event in November 2013.

In 2021, a trial court acquitted Tejpal of the charges of rape.

The acquittal was challenged by Goa government before the Bombay High Court, which sentenced him to 10 years in jail yesterday.

বাংলাদেশ অভ্যন্তরীণ নৌ-পরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষ
BANGLADESH INLAND WATER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
Website: www.biwta.gov.bd
Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/biwta1958
বিআইডব্লিউটিএ ভবন, ১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, পোস্ট বক্স ৭৬, ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ
BIWTA BHABAN, 141-143, MOTIJHEEL C/A, POST BOX 76, DHAKA-1000, BANGLADESH
Fax: 880-2-223385833
Grams: AUTHORITY
Phones: 223350262-3
223350266
223350268

ক্রয় ও সংরক্ষণ বিভাগ

নথি নং-১৮.১১.০০০০.১৬৩.৯৯.০৫৯.২৫/১২ তারিখঃ ০৪/০৮/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ।

নিলামে বিক্রয়ের পুনঃটেন্ডার (২য় দফা) বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ অভ্যন্তরীণ নৌ-পরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষের নারায়ণগঞ্জস্থ খানপুরের ৭নং গুদামের (পশ্চিমাংশে) অভ্যন্তরে ও বাইরে খোলা জায়গায় রক্ষিত ৪৪ (চুয়াল্লিশ) টি আইটেমের ওটিআর/অপ্রচলিত/অকেজো মালামাল (যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে সে ভিত্তিতে) বিক্রয়ের লক্ষ্যে সীলমোহরকৃত নিলাম পুনঃটেন্ডার (২য় দফা) আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। ওটিআর মালামালসমূহ যেমনঃ-পিষ্টন (বিভিন্ন আকারের), লাইনার (বিভিন্ন আকারের), হাইড্রোলিক অয়েল (পানি মিশ্রিত), এম এস প্লেট/ফ্লোটার, কানেকটিং রড (বিভিন্ন আকারের), নাট-বোল্ট, প্রপেলার (পিতল), প্রপেলার (অ্যালুমিনিয়াম), পোড়া মবিল/গিয়ার অয়েল (পানি মিশ্রিত/ব্যবহৃত), এফ এস তার (ছিড়া/টুকরা), ব্যাটারী (বিভিন্ন আকারের), প্লাস্টিক পাইপ (ছোট/বড়), এম এস পাইপ স্টীল (১৮"/২০" সাইজ), এক্সাভেটর বাকেট, এম এস চেইন, রাবার হোস পাইপ, কম্প্রেসার (বিভিন্ন আকারের), ক্র্যাংক শ্যাফট (বিভিন্ন আকারের), টার্বোচার্জার (বিভিন্ন আকারের), ব্যান্ড পাইপ, খুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ (বিভিন্ন-পিস্টন রিং, বিয়ারিং, থ্রাস্ট বিয়ারিং, বুশ/কাটলেস বুশ/গান মেটাল বুশ, সার্কিট ব্রেকার/কন্ট্রোল সার্কিট, অটো টাইমার ইত্যাদি), স্টাফা মটর, লুব অয়েল কুলার (বিভিন্ন আকারের), টেলিভিশন, ইঞ্জিনসহ বিভিন্ন প্রকার মালামাল (নির্ধারিত তালিকা অনুযায়ী)। উল্লেখ্য যে, বর্ণিত মালামালসমূহ ১৬/০৮/২০২৬ তারিখ পর্যন্ত নারায়ণগঞ্জস্থ খানপুর গুদামে অফিস চলাকালীন বিকাল ৩:০০ ঘটিকা সময়ের মধ্যে সরেজমিনে পরিদর্শন করা যাবে।

২। আগ্রহী দরদাতা প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক দরপত্র ফরমের মূল্য বাবদ ২০০০/-(দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) বিআইডব্লিউটিএ'র হিসাব বিভাগ (৯ম তলা), ১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা অথবা উপ-পরিচালক (হিসাব), বিআইডব্লিউটিএ, টার্মিনাল ভবন, নারায়ণগঞ্জ এর নিকট জমা প্রদান পূর্বক ১৭/০৮/২০২৬ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন ১১:০০ ঘটিকা সময়ের মধ্যে দরপত্র সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

৩। সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র পরিচালক (ক্রয় ও সংরক্ষণ), বিআইডব্লিউটিএ, ১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা (৫ম তলা), ঢাকা এর দপ্তরে অথবা ক্রয় ও সংরক্ষণ বিভাগ, খানপুর স্টোর, বিআইডব্লিউটিএ, নারায়ণগঞ্জ দপ্তরে রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাক্সে ১৭/০৮/২০২৬ তারিখ সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা হতে দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে দাখিল করতে হবে এবং একই দিন দুপুর ১২:০৫ ঘটিকায় পরিচালক (ক্রয় ও সংরক্ষণ), বিআইডব্লিউটিএ, ১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বা/এ (৫ম তলা), ঢাকা এর দপ্তর এবং নারায়ণগঞ্জস্থ খানপুর দপ্তরে একযোগে উপস্থিত দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) টেন্ডার বাক্স খোলা হবে। নির্ধারিত সময়ের পর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

৪। দরপত্রে বর্ণিত সকল শর্তাবলী যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ ও প্রতিপালন করতে হবে, অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল/ইনফরমাল বলে গণ্য হবে।

৫। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল কিংবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

পরিচালক
ক্রয় ও সংরক্ষণ বিভাগ
বিআইডব্লিউটিএ, ঢাকা।
টেলিফোন নম্বর-০২-২২৩৩৫০৮৪০

GD-1909

Star
DHAKA FRIDAY AUGUST 7, 2026, SRABAN 23, 1433 BS

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Lanka Premier League
Qualifier 2
Colombo vs Galle
Live from 8:00 pm

TEN CRICKET
The Hundred (Men's)
Birmingham vs Leeds
Live from 11:30 pm

TIGERS could find familiar conditions in Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's upcoming Test series against Australia may hold a few surprises. While Australia is synonymous with pace, bounce and carry, the conditions in Darwin and Mackay remain unfamiliar even to Australia's own Test players.

"I last played there in 2007 but, from what I've heard from players who have been there recently, Darwin is very warm and dry. There's more bounce than we're used to in Bangladesh, but there's movement as well," former Bangladesh Test opener Imrul Kayes, now batting consultant of the BCB High Performance unit for the Top End T20 tournament in the Northern Territory, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I wouldn't describe it as spin-friendly, yet it won't be like Sydney or Melbourne, where there's very little for the spinners. It's probably the closest to Bangladesh conditions, albeit with a bit more bounce."

"(Conditions in Darwin) is probably the closest to Bangladesh conditions, albeit with a bit more bounce."
Imrul Kayes, former Bangladesh batter

Bangladesh's top order struggled on the opening day of the three-day tour match against Cricket Australia XI before Mehidy Hasan Miraz's unbeaten 109 lifted the Tigers to 263 at DXC Arena, next to the venue for the first Test. However, Cricket Australia XI off-spinner Corey Rocchiccioli caused the most damage, claiming six for 83.

The first Test will be played on a drop-in pitch at TIO Stadium, with reports suggesting the wicket was transported there around five weeks ago.

Jake Pavlich, head of grounds and facilities at Northern Territory Cricket, told ESPNcricinfo that lessons from last year's Australia A versus Sri Lanka A match in Darwin, where pace and spin shared the wickets, would shape preparations.

"We had good reports early on in the A game, so we'll be trying for a little more movement later on [in the game]," he said.

More grass could aid Australia's quicks early, but the dry conditions may also bring Nathan Lyon, Taijul Islam and Mehidy Hasan Miraz into the contest as the match wears on.

"There's a lot of unknowns going in," Australia paceman Josh Hazlewood said on the Unplayable podcast.

As both camps try to decode the surfaces, adaptability could prove as valuable as skill over the two-Test series.



"The pitch was a bit challenging early on. I just tried to play according to the merit of the ball. They bowled in very good areas, so it was a little difficult for me, especially since it was my first time batting in these conditions. I tried to adapt to the conditions and build partnerships."
-- **Mehidy Hasan Miraz**

Bangladesh vice-captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz celebrates after scoring a fighting unbeaten century against Cricket Australia XI on the opening day of a three-day practice match in Darwin yesterday. Walking in with the visitors struggling after an early collapse, Miraz anchored the innings with a composed knock of 109 not out, helping Bangladesh recover to 63. The hosts ended the end at 51 for two.
PHOTO: CRICKET AUSTRALIA

Mohammedan capitalise on rivals' FIFA woes

SPORTS REPORTER

With reigning champions Bashundhara Kings and runners-up Abahani struggling to lift their FIFA transfer bans, traditional powerhouse Mohammedan Sporting Club are set to unveil their squad on Wednesday after assembling a strong side for the upcoming Bangladesh Football League season.

Mohammedan, who ended a 22-year wait to win the top-flight title in 2024-25, endured a difficult previous campaign, finishing near the bottom of the 10-team table amid financial problems that even led players to boycott training.

The Motijheel-based club, however, turned things around after the new board of directors took charge. They have already signed several national team players from Kings, including defenders Saad Uddin and Rimon Hossain, midfielders Sohel Rana Jr and Mojibur Rahman Jonny, and wingers Faisal Ahmed Fahim and Shahriar Emon, taking advantage of the uncertainty surrounding Kings and Abahani.

With the two heavyweights unable to complete player formalities until their FIFA bans are lifted, Mohammedan are also trying to attract more players, as footballers risk being left without clubs if either Kings or Abahani fail to resolve their issues.

Mohammedan director-in-charge Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan said the club raised funds after the new board of directors took charge, initially collecting Tk 2 crore before increasing it to Tk 5.8 crore. The money was used to clear last season's dues and provide token money for new contracts. He also revealed that Mohammedan lifted their own FIFA ban by paying USD 75,000 soon after the new management took charge.



The Black and Whites have retained 18 players, including national players Sujan Hossain, Zahid Hasan Shanto, Shakil Ahad Topu and Rahmat Mia, as well as experienced campaigners Arif Hossain, Sourav Dewan, Mohammad Jewel, Mohammad Rakib, Ananta, Hafizur Babu, Shafi and Raju. They have also recruited Mehedi Hasan Royal, Saiful Islam and goalkeeper Dipu from Rahmatganj MFS and Bangladesh Police FC.

They are also relying on four foreign players -- Soleymane Diabate, Emmanuel Sunday, Emmanuel Tony and Muzaffarov Muzaffar -- who had played key roles in ending Mohammedan's league title drought. Sunday and Tony will join from Kings, while Diabate returns from Abahani.

"We will introduce our squad before the media on Wednesday to create a buzz among our valued supporters because we have formed a strong squad to fight for the title," Bhuiyan told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Mohammedan director-in-charge further informed that they have confirmed 32 players, including four foreigners, but will not use the SAARC quota.

"We think Muzaffar, Diabate, Sunday and Tony have good understanding and combination on the pitch, which they have already shown for Mohammedan SC, so we are going to rope in all four," he said.

"However, we are not going to fill the SAARC quota because I believe our local players are better than the SAARC players."

Bhuiyan added that Mohammedan had initially planned to appoint former Australian coach Shane Lane, but he would not be available for six months.

"We are mulling to appoint an Uzbekistan coach and then a few local coaches who are yet to be finalised," said Bhuiyan, adding that Mohammedan will begin their pre-season preparation at the Dhanmondi Club ground after Wednesday's squad unveiling.

Bangladesh drawn with Sri Lanka, UAE in Women's Asia Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have been drawn in Group B alongside reigning champions Sri Lanka, hosts the UAE and Indonesia for the 2026 Women's Asia Cup, scheduled to be held in Dubai from August 28 to September 13.

The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) on Thursday announced the fixtures and itinerary for the 10th edition of the tournament, which will be played in the T20 format.

Group A comprises seven-time champions India, Pakistan, Thailand and Hong Kong, China.

Bangladesh, champions of the 2018 edition, will begin their campaign against Indonesia on August 31 before taking on defending champions Sri Lanka on September 6. They will wrap up their group-stage fixtures against hosts the UAE on September 8.

One of the marquee clashes of the group stage will see India take on Pakistan on September 5.

The top two teams from each group will progress to the semi-finals, scheduled for September 10 and 11, before the final on September 13.

All matches will be played under lights at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

India series prospect 'now 50-50'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) remains hopeful of hosting India in the white-ball series in September, but recent developments have added uncertainty over the tour.

Sources informed that during BCB president Tamim Iqbal's recent visit to India, discussions were held over the series, which was scheduled for August 2025 before being postponed in the aftermath of the change in government in 2024.

"We are still hopeful of the series being played. We can't say that it's confirmed, but we are still trying and working positively towards it," BCB media committee chairman Asif Rabbani told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, a strongly worded Foreign Ministry statement over former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's live interaction with the media in New Delhi on Wednesday has cast further uncertainty over the series.

BCB sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they were very hopeful about the series before Wednesday's developments but now believe the chances have fallen to "fifty-fifty".

"We are still not completely disappointed, but the situation has taken a different turn after yesterday [Wednesday]. The meetings with BCCI had been positive beforehand," a BCB official said.

"Cricket plays a big role in diplomacy, and we felt the series would have a positive role in that regard. But after yesterday's situation, the series is now fifty-fifty in my opinion," the official added.

BCB's itinerary at the start of the year showed that India were scheduled to arrive on August 28 for an ODI series from September 1 to 6, followed by T20Is from September 9 to 12. BCCI, for their part, has kept the window open for the Bangladesh series following the conclusion of their Test series in Sri Lanka on August 27.

Real right in business

AGENCIES

Real Madrid have already completed the bulk of their summer business during the World Cup, but the Spanish giants are far from finished, with more arrivals and departures on the cards before the transfer window closes.



RECORD FEE AGREED FOR DIOMANDE

Real Madrid have reached an agreement with RB Leipzig to sign Ivory Coast winger Yan Diomande for a club-record fee, Spanish media reported on Thursday.

The transfer could be worth up to €125 million, with a further 10-15 million euros in add-ons, according to MARCA.

If the deal is completed on those terms, it would eclipse the fee Real paid for England midfielder Jude Bellingham in 2023, reported to be €103 million plus add-ons.

Diomande, 19, enjoyed a breakthrough season with Leipzig, scoring 12 Bundesliga goals and providing nine assists to help the German side finish third in the Bundesliga and qualify for next season's Champions League.

He joined Leipzig from Spanish club Leganes last year and played for Ivory Coast at the recent World Cup where they reached the last 32.

IMPROVED CONTRACT OFFERED TO VINICIUS

Real Madrid have made Vinicius Jr an improved contract offer in a bid to keep the Brazil winger at the Bernabeu amid growing interest from Arsenal.



The 26-year-old has entered the final 12 months of his current deal and has attracted interest from the Premier League champions in recent weeks.

Negotiations over a contract extension had reached an impasse, but Real have now tabled an improved offer, which Vinicius is understood to appreciate.

The Spanish giants are now awaiting the Brazilian's decision, with senior figures at the club, including returning head coach Jose Mourinho, hopeful he will commit his future.

BARCELONA JOIN REAL IN RACE FOR RODRI

According to a BBC Sport report, Manchester City midfielder Rodri faces a major decision over his future, with Spanish giants Real Madrid and Barcelona both interested in signing him.

The 30-year-old has entered the final year of his City contract and is yet to agree fresh terms.

Real have long admired the Spain international, but Barcelona have now joined the race for the 2024 Ballon d'Or winner, according to the report.

Rodri endured an injury-hit spell after suffering a serious knee injury during the 2024-25 season, while a hamstring problem also disrupted parts of the following campaign. However, he returned to his best at this summer's World Cup, inspiring Spain to a second title and winning the tournament's Best Player award.

Having previously said his future would be decided after the World Cup, Rodri is currently recovering from back surgery and has yet to join City's pre-season tour in Asia ahead of next Sunday's Community Shield against Arsenal.



Since arriving at City in 2019, Rodri has won four Premier League titles, the Champions League and two FA Cups, establishing himself as one of the world's finest midfielders.

City are also in talks to sign 18-year-old Lille midfielder Ayyoub Bouaddi.



PHOTO: STAR

Rangpur target hexa

DILIP ROY

Fresh from lifting the Notun Kuri Sports title, Rangpur's young female footballers have set their sights on another milestone as they chase a record sixth crown in the JFA Under-14 Youth Development Programme.

A 20-member squad, led by coach Ruma Akter and captained by Anannya Khanam, left Palichhara Stadium in Rangpur on Thursday for Tangail, where one of Bangladesh's premier age-group women's football tournaments begins on Friday.

Jointly organised by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) and the Japan Football Association (JFA), the competition has long served as a key platform for developing the country's future female footballers, with several national team players emerging through the tournament.

Five-time champions Rangpur will open their Group A campaign against Jhenaidah on Friday before taking on Chapainawabganj on August 9 and hosts Tangail on August 11. Group B consists of Gaibandha, Rangamati, Magura and Rajbari. The top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals on August 14, with the final scheduled for August 16.

Coach Ruma Akter, who has guided Rangpur to titles in 2014, 2016, 2019, 2021 and 2025, believes her side is ready for another successful campaign.

"Our target is a sixth title," she said in a programme on Wednesday. "The girls have prepared well, and we are confident of producing our best football."

Captain Anannya echoed that confidence after the team's recent success.

"Winning the Notun Kuri Sports title has given us even more belief," she said. "Everyone is in good form, and we want to continue our winning run by bringing another trophy home."

With a rich tradition of producing talented footballers, Palichhara has established itself as one of Bangladesh's leading nurseries for women's football. Now, Rangpur's rising stars are hoping to add another chapter to that legacy by becoming the first team to win the JFA Under-14 title six times.





PM to launch Family Card on August 16

Says social welfare minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman will officially launch the Family Card programme for the current fiscal year on August 16 at Ward 8 of Latifabad Union in Kishoreganj Sadar upazila, Social Welfare Minister Prof Dr AZM Zahid Hossain said yesterday.

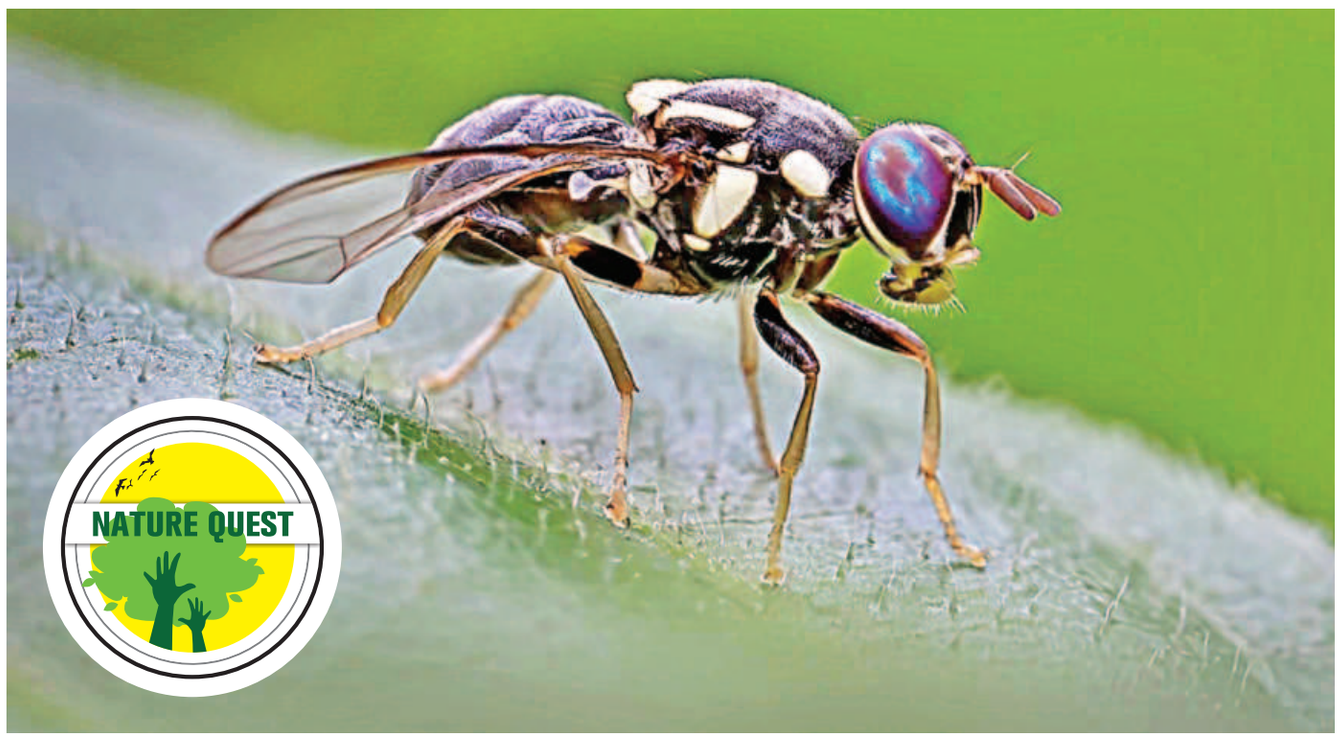
He made the announcement at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Family Cards, chaired by Finance Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury at the Secretariat.

The government has introduced a system of regular data updates and reviews to ensure no eligible person is left out and no ineligible person is included in the programme, Zahid said.

Describing it as a dynamic social registry, he said beneficiaries' information would be updated continuously to reflect changes in their socioeconomic conditions, while verification at the union level would help eliminate flaws in the distribution process.

The budget for the current fiscal year covers 41 lakh beneficiaries. Subject to ongoing evaluations, the government plans to expand the programme to nearly 1.6 crore families over the next four years.

Senior officials from relevant ministries and divisions attended the meeting, which discussed implementation strategies, beneficiary selection, data verification, database management and field-level monitoring.



BEHIND BLUE EYES

Perched on a leaf in the Kaptai forest, this fruit fly is far more than a tiny forest resident. Most fruit flies feed on ripening or decaying fruit, while their larvae develop inside fruit or other plant tissues, and adults often shelter among dense foliage. True fruit flies (family Tephritidae) are native to tropical and temperate regions worldwide, with thousands of species known. Their colourful bodies, iridescent eyes and intricate wing patterns make many species surprisingly beautiful. While some are notorious agricultural pests, others help recycle organic matter and serve as food for birds, spiders and other insects, supporting healthy forest ecosystems. Conservation status varies by species, with many yet to be assessed by the IUCN.

PHOTO: RAIHAN BABLU

11-party goes for long marches, Dhaka rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jamaat-e-Islami-led 11-party alliance yesterday announced a series of divisional long marches and a grand rally in Dhaka, demanding the implementation of the July National Charter and the referendum verdict, as well as cuts in fuel, gas and electricity prices.

The programmes were announced by opposition leader and alliance chief Shafiqur Rahman, ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, during a sit-in at Muktangan in Paltan, organised over what the alliance described as a fuel and gas crisis, "ghost bills" for electricity, deteriorating law and order and spiralling prices of essential commodities.

The movement would also seek the immediate trial of those responsible for mass killings, improvements in public security and an end to what he termed narrow partisan control of state institutions, Shafiqur said.

According to the announcement, the alliance will organise road marches from Dhaka to Chattogram on September 5, to Rangpur on September 19, and to Khulna on

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

GANGES-KOBADAK PROJECT

Weakened Padma obstructs irrigation

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *back from Kushtia*

Farmer Abdul Hannan has given up IRRI-Boro cultivation due to the irrigation water crisis, even though he lives just a stone's throw from the country's largest surface-water irrigation network, the Ganges-Kobadak (GK) Project.

"But the water supply canal connected to the irrigation project remains bone-dry during the peak time for cultivation," said Hannan, of Moslempur village under Kushtia's Bheramara upazila.

"We have to depend on shallow pumps that draw groundwater to irrigate our paddy fields. It's too expensive for us to afford," he added.

So, Hannan has moved away from IRRI-Boro cultivation between January and March and switched to wheat and other crops that require less water during this period.

Hannan's predicament echoes those of hundreds of farmers in the country's southwest who are facing an irrigation water crisis, though the region hosts the country's most extensive surface-water irrigation grid.

This is the result of the gradual decline in Padma's water level, which is the main source of water for the Ganges-Kobadak (GK) project, over the past three decades, said local farmers and water resources experts.

"Around 25 to 30 years ago, we used to get sufficient water from the water supply canal to irrigate our fields that produce huge amounts of crops -- that canal has almost taken the look of a desert now," said Hasan Ali Mondol, an elderly farmer from Bahirchar village under the same upazila.





PHOTOS: STAR

A canal, *top*, connected to the main irrigation canal of the GK Project lies dry during the Boro season in Kushtia's Bheramara. A dry paddy field, *bottom*, due to lack of water in Bheramara.

It costs Tk 2,500 to Tk 3,000 to irrigate per bigha of land using shallow pumps.

"It is not viable for us," he added.

Even the shallow pumps have become useless in some areas as the level of groundwater has plummeted.

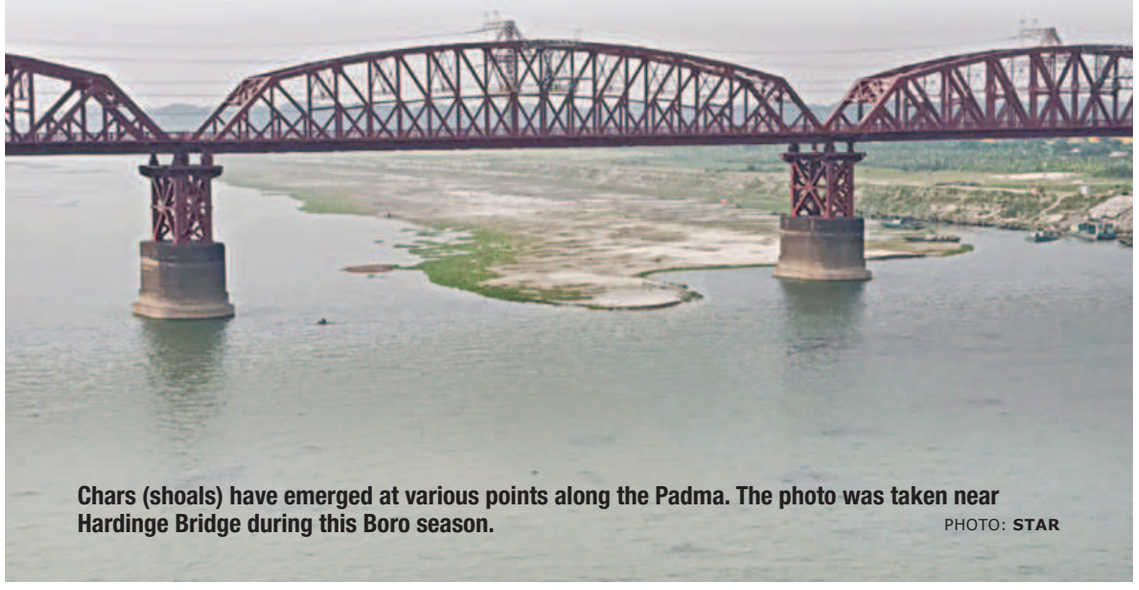
Nawa Khara village in Kushthia's Mirpur upazila is one such place where the regular shallow pumps can no longer draw groundwater.

As the government has its largest surface-water irrigation network in this region, there is no state-sponsored groundwater irrigation system here.

"Now some wealthy people have set up deep tubewells in this area with their own money, and we have to buy irrigation water from them -- it is very costly," said Sagor Biswas of Nawa Khara.

The GK Project began in the 1960s with the aim to irrigate around 197,000 hectares of arable land in Kushtia, Jhenaidah, Magura,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4



Chars (shoals) have emerged at various points along the Padma. The photo was taken near Hardinge Bridge during this Boro season.

PHOTO: STAR

TONU MURDER

SC stays bail of Hafizur, orders him to surrender

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday stayed a High Court order that granted bail to former army warrant officer Hafizur Rahman in the murder case of Sohagi Jahan Tonu in Cumilla.

Justice Md Rezaul Haque also ordered Hafizur to surrender before the trial court within 24 hours.

If he fails to do so, the lower court must direct law enforcers to arrest him, Attorney General Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal said.

The chamber judge passed the order on a state petition seeking a stay on the HC bail.

The judge also fixed next Sunday for further hearing and passing an order on the state's petition, the attorney general said.

Hafizur had been arrested by the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI), which is probing

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Time to deliver on 'rainbow nation' pledge

Speakers urge govt to protect indigenous land and culture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's pledge to build a "rainbow nation" has raised hopes among indigenous communities, but those commitments must now be translated into action, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

The present government speaks of building a 'rainbow nation' -- an inclusive and humane society that offers indigenous peoples new hope and inspiration... Discrimination cannot be eliminated if they are left behind.

SANJEEB DRONG
General secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum

Speaking at the seminar titled "Indigenous Peoples: Respect for Life, Land Rights and Culture" at the CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka, they said indigenous peoples should receive constitutional recognition, and their land, culture and fundamental rights should be protected through effective legal and institutional measures.

They also called for the Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission to be made fully functional, the formation of a separate land commission for indigenous communities in the plains, and greater participation of indigenous peoples in development projects affecting their areas.

The seminar was jointly organised by the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), the Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum and 15 other national rights-based organisations.

Presenting the keynote paper, rights activist Ilira Dewan made several recommendations, including replacing the terms "tribes" and "minor races" in Article 23A of the constitution with an appropriate Bangla term for "Indigenous Peoples" that is acceptable to the communities.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

MIT unveils robot that flies and swims



CNN ONLINE

A lab at MIT has engineered a $300 flapping robot that can fly and swim underwater. Its creator believes the lightweight robot could one day be used to monitor and ultimately help protect the ocean.

The team of aero-aquatic roboticists looked at petrels, puffins and other diving birds, that use their wings to propel them through air and water. It also examined the complex dynamics that allow them to transition between the two.

Raphael Zufferey, lead author of the study and an assistant professor of mechanical engineering at MIT, said that while previous research existed on diving birds' wings and how they both swim and fly, "no one had ever figured out how to transform that into a fully moving robot."

The team studied "the entire literature on (diving) birds," he said, mapping the flap frequency of different birds' wings in air and water, and how they varied by wingspan (the larger the bird, the lower the flap frequency).

US has 'massive amounts' of arms

Trump denies munitions shortage; Israel strikes south Lebanon

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump said yesterday the United States has a vast supply of munitions and threatened those who suggested otherwise with jail terms as his frustration with the Iran war boiled over.

The Republican leader lashed out on his Truth Social platform at media reports about the dwindling weapons stockpile, saying that the United States has "massive amounts of 'munitions' especially of certain types," without giving further detail.

"Additionally, large amounts are being manufactured and shipped to the US as needed. Defense companies are building the largest number of plants and factories in our country's history," he said.

Pakistan sees Hormuz deal as path to Iran-US talks | Gulf shipping traffic down after Houthis attack Saudi tanker | US to navigate Iran's divided views on war: VP Vance

The Washington Post reported that Trump demanded answers about the munitions shortages from Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth last Friday, when they attended a cabinet meeting at the Camp David presidential retreat.

Trump told Hegseth that he thought the munitions issue "had been fixed," the Post reported, citing two unidentified sources familiar with the exchange. Trump railed against the media reports, threatening yesterday that "the 'leakers' of these treasonous statements are being hunted down" and "Long term jail sentences will be sought!"

The US president's comments came as Israel said two of its soldiers were killed in southern Lebanon on Wednesday.