



I play only for fun: Rani Hamid

P11



What does banning campus politics mean?

P9



Quad group expands maritime security co-op

P7



Dengue Spike: Hospitals struggling to treat children

P3

Govt employees, families must file wealth info

BAHARAM KHAN

Public servants will have to present the wealth statements of themselves, their spouses, children, and dependents every year, according to a new amendment to the rules.

The move is aimed at ensuring transparency and preventing corruption, said Mokhles Ur Rahman, senior secretary of the public administration ministry, announcing the amendment to Government Servants (conduct) Rules, 1979, yesterday.

This year, the statements must be disclosed by the end of November, and from next year, the deadline will be December 31, he said.

"Those who will fail to comply will face disciplinary action," he told a press briefing at the Secretariat.

Iftekhazzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, commended the step, saying, "If duly enforced, it promises to be an effective measure to prevent corruption consistent with the international best practice."

He also hoped that there would be no loopholes in the rules and the initiative would not end up being "just another unenforced regulation".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Those who will fail to comply will face disciplinary action.

Mokhles Ur Rahman, senior secretary, public administration ministry



The Dhaka University campus once again abuzz with students yesterday as classes resumed following over a three-month closure. The photo was taken in front of the Arts Building.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DU comes back to life

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

The Dhaka University campus was full of energy and life yesterday as students returned to classes after over three months.

Students from every department arrived on campus early in the morning, rushing to classrooms, libraries, seminars, and cafeterias.

From the arts building to the science faculty in Curzon Hall, as well as Ducusu building, TSC, Modhur Canteen, and Mall Chattar, students filled these spaces, engaging in lively chitchats as well as serious discussions during breaks between classes.

The campus was first closed for nearly a month for summer vacation starting June 2. Although the university reopened on July 1, classes were not held because of the teachers' strike. On that same day, students initiated a quota reform movement that

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Beximco seeks extension of loan tenure by 10 years

AM JAHID

Beximco has sought support from the government to extend the repayment period of its liabilities to Janata Bank over the next 10 years, including a two-year moratorium.

On September 19, the sprawling conglomerate, led by Salman F Rahman, a close collaborator of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, wrote to the finance adviser, central bank governor, the managing director of Janata Bank and other authorities concerned on this.

It also requested the authorities concerned to transfer all past dues to the interest-free block account. Transferring dues to an interest-free block account means the company will not have to pay any interest for its dues.

At the end of June, Janata's total exposure to Beximco stood at Tk 25,000 crore, which is about 950 percent of the lender's paid-up capital.

After the ouster of the Awami League government on August 5 in the face of a mass uprising, Beximco's export-oriented goods, factories and all related infrastructure were extensively looted

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Gas crisis shuttered four urea factories

Imports ramped up amid forex crisis to meet demand

MD. NAZRUL ISLAM

Four out of five government-owned urea factories have stopped production due to an acute gas crisis, raising concerns over the availability of enough fertiliser during the ongoing Aman paddy cultivation season and the upcoming Boro paddy season.

About 14 lakh metric tons of urea is typically needed for the Aman and Boro season. But the current stock of urea is around 5 lakh tonnes, enough to meet the farmers' demand for two months, said a top official of the Department of Agricultural Extension preferring anonymity.

"If the stock is not replenished, we might face a urea crisis in December," he said.

Domestic urea production suffered a big blow after one of the two floating LNG terminals in the Bay of Bengal was damaged due to the aftershock of cyclone Remal in May. The terminal, which injects around 500

million cubic feet of gas a day into the national grid, is yet to be operational.

Due to a lack of LNG, 50 million cubic feet of gas has been allocated from Petrobangla for fertiliser factories in Chattogram, said Shafiul Azam, general manager (engineering services) of Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company.

Of this, 44 million cubic feet of gas is being given to Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company (Kalco), a Japan-Bangladesh joint venture factory located in Chattogram.

Only Ghorashal Palash Fertiliser is getting the required gas supply from the national grid among the five government-owned factories after Shahjalal Fertiliser Company stopped production on September 11 for want of gas.

Production at Ashuganj Fertiliser and Chemical Company has been suspended since January and Chittagong Urea Fertiliser (CUFL) and Jamuna Fertiliser Company

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



AL man lynched in Laxmipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A local Awami League leader was lynched in Laxmipur yesterday evening.

Nur Alam, 60, was the general secretary of a ward-level unit of AL, and a resident of Pachpara village.

His son Arif Hossain said, "Someone called my father over phone and told him that they are coming to attack him. He tried to escape but just at that moment, a group of 10-12 people armed with rods stormed the house. They beat my father and chased him towards the pond. He fell into the water but they dragged him out and beat him again. When my father was taken to a local hospital, the doctors declared him dead on arrival."

The police recovered the body from the clinic, said officer-in-charge of Chandraganj Police Station Emdadul Haque.

"He was killed over

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

HARASSMENT CASES Govt committees to suggest their withdrawals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has formed a ministry-level committee and one committee each for every district for recommending the withdrawal of cases filed with the intent to harass political leaders, activists, and innocent persons.

The government will receive applications for withdrawing political cases until December 31 this year, said a circular signed by Mohammad Abdul Momen, the senior secretary of the public security division of the home ministry.

The district-level committees will be led by a magistrate of a district, while the ministry-level committee will be headed by the adviser of law, justice, and parliamentary affairs as its president.

The superintendent of police (a deputy commissioner of police for metropolitan areas), and the public prosecutor (metropolitan public prosecutors for metropolitan areas) will be members of the district-level committee.

The additional district magistrate will be the member secretary of the district committee.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A RIVER ON ITS DEATHBED... The once mighty Shoilmar river in Khulna's Batiaghata upazila is now a mere shadow of its former self. The dire state of the river is attributed to factors like lack of upstream flow and poor silt management. At least 100 villages in its basin have not only lost their main natural source of water, but, ironically, also are frequently flooded.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Section 144 withdrawn in hills Blockade, transport strike still on; 2 murder cases filed

STAR REPORT

Section 144 imposed in Khagrachhari and Rangamati was withdrawn yesterday as the law-and-order situation improved in the two districts following violence.

There were no reports of violence in the districts over the last two days and the first 48 hours of the 72-hour blockade, enforced by indigenous protesters under the banner of Jummo Chhatra-Janata Parishad, was peaceful.

The blockade began on Friday evening. Vehicles were plying inside Khagrachhari town but inter-district bus services between Chattogram-Khagrachhari and Khagrachhari-Rangamati remained suspended. Apart from that, the transport strike in Rangamati continued protesting the recent vandalism and arson attacks on vehicles during Friday's violence.

Khagrachhari Deputy Commissioner Md Shahiduzzaman yesterday said, "Section 144 was lifted at noon as the situation improved."

Though the situation is relatively calm, locals are still in fear. Most of the shops and other business establishments remained closed in Rangamati town.

Meanwhile, two cases have been filed in Khagrachhari and Rangamati over the killings of two people.

A case was lodged against three named persons, including two Awami League leaders, and 12 unnamed indigenous and Bangalee people in connection with the killing of Md Mamun, 35, in Khagrachhari that sparked violence in the two hill districts.

Mamun's wife Mukta Akter filed the case with Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station on Thursday, said Abdul Baten Mriddha, officer-in-charge of the police station.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

স্বাধীন উন্নয়নমূলক ব্যাংকিং
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MONEY LAUNDERING

Provide probe update on S Alam by Sept 29: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought to know updated information about the probe into money laundering allegations against S Alam Group.

The court asked the Anti-Corruption Commission lawyer Shaheen Ahmed to place the information before it on September 29.

The HC bench of Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah and Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque passed the order during the hearing of a writ petition.

The writ petition sought HC's order on the authorities concerned to attach all immovable properties owned by S Alam Group, its shareholder directors, and their family members -- and to impose restrictions on the transfer or sale of those properties.



PHOTO: PID

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his office in Dhaka yesterday.

Nagorik Oikya President

Manna hospitalised

STAR REPORT

Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna was admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) after suffering a heart attack on Saturday night.

He was under observation at the hospital's coronary care unit.

His personal physician Dr Shoaeb Muhammad on Saturday said, "The next 72 hours are critical for him."

However, as of yesterday afternoon, Manna's health condition had improved, and he was in a "stable condition", according to a text message sent from his party to the media.

No ring installation was required for his heart, the message said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BAITUL MUKARRAM

Ruhul Amin removed from Khatib post

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Religious Affairs Ministry has removed Multi Md Ruhul Amin from the post of Khatib of Baitul Mukarram.

"Ruhul Amin has been dismissed following due process," said a ministry press release yesterday.

Islamic Foundation sources said Ruhul Amin had been absent from the national mosque since the fall of Awami League government on August 5. He went to the mosque last Friday to lead the Juma prayers.

A section of people refused to offer prayers led by him, resulting in a clash between two groups. More than 50 people were injured after the clash broke out.

A three-member probe committee was formed, according to the ministry.

One Hafez Mawlana Mohammad Ziaur Rahman filed a case with Paltan Police Station Saturday, accusing 54 individuals and 500-600 unnamed persons.

SURGE IN DENGUE CASES

Hospitals grapple with child patients

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Saidul Islam, father of four-year-old Ayman Sikdar, was anxiously waiting in front of the ICU of Bangladesh Shishu Hospital yesterday. Inside, his son was fighting for his life after catching dengue fever.

Ayman, who was first admitted to a hospital in Mirpur on Saturday, was transferred to Shishu hospital as his condition worsened.

"Upon arriving at the hospital, the doctor immediately sent him to the ICU as his condition was critical," said Saidul, a resident of Berek Mollar Mor, Sait Feet Road.

Four-year-old Aliza Rahman was also admitted to the hospital. Her condition deteriorated yesterday afternoon as her blood pressure continued to fall.

"We brought her to Shishu Hospital from a Farmgate hospital



At least 3,339 children aged between 0 and 10 years were hospitalised with dengue across the country as of yesterday.

yesterday for better treatment, but her condition kept worsening," said Saidur Rahman, Aliza's father. Saidul and Saidur are not alone. The number of dengue patients at Shishu Hospital has surged in

recent days, prompting hospital authorities to open a dedicated dengue ward on Sunday.

"We opened a dengue cell on Sunday to cope with the rising number of patients," said Abdul Hakim, Public Relations Officer of Bangladesh Shishu Hospital.

As of yesterday, 154 dengue patients were hospitalised at Shishu Hospital, including 27 new cases in September alone.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services at least 3,339 children aged between 0 and 10 years were hospitalised with dengue across the country as of yesterday, with 1,340 cases recorded in the first 22 days of September.

Afroza Azad, mother of seven-year-old Azmi Binte Azad, blamed the negligence of the owner of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Six die of dengue in a day

Highest single day fatality this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

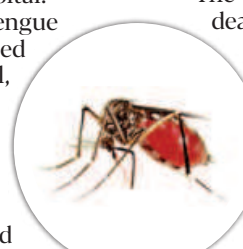
Bangladesh reported six dengue deaths yesterday, the highest single-day toll from the virus this year.

The previous highest death toll was five, recorded twice on September 10 and 17.

Meanwhile, during the same 24-hour period till yesterday morning, 986 dengue patients were hospitalised -- also the highest in a single day this year.

Previously, the highest number of dengue hospitalisation in a single day was 887.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



UN to support election and police reforms

UN resident coordinator tells chief adviser

STAR REPORT

The United Nations will support Bangladesh in a wide range of areas, including police and election reforms, as the interim government rolls out major restructuring of the country's institutions, the UN's resident coordinator said yesterday.

The chief of UN in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

WORLD RIVERS DAY

River water is about diplomacy, not just politics

Says Rizwana

UNB, Feni



Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, and the Ministry of Water Resources, yesterday called for immediate action on river water management between Bangladesh and its upstream neighbour.

Speaking during a visit to the flood-damaged Ballamukha embankment in Parshuram upazila of Feni, she emphasised that the time for government inaction on such critical issues is over.

"River water is not just about politics; it's about diplomacy and economics," she said during her visit.

"We are here to understand the suffering

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

BCL demands safe campuses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League has demanded an end to "extrajudicial killings" and to ensure "safe campuses" across the country.

A press release signed by President of BCL central unit Saddam Hussain and General Secretary Sheikh Wali Asif Enan was issued in this regard and sent to the media yesterday.

BCL, pro-Awami League's student organisation, has expressed concern over the recent "extra-judicial killings" of Tofazzal Hossain at Dhaka University, Shamim Molla at Jahangirnagar University, and Abdullah Al Masood at Rajshahi University.

Chhatra League has urged the administration and law enforcement agencies to take appropriate action against those involved in the incidents following an impartial investigation. This is the first official press release issued by the BCL after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina led government on August 5.

VIOLENCE IN CHT

'Form independent body, implement CHT accord'

Speakers demand at Shahbagh human chain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a human chain in Dhaka yesterday called for the formation of an independent investigation commission to ensure a fair probe into recent attacks in Rangamati and Khagrachhari.

The proposed commission would include indigenous people and rights activists, with the aim of bringing the perpetrators to justice.

The protest, organised by the "Parbatya Chattogram Shanti Chukti Bastobayon Andolon," took place in front of the National Museum in Shahbagh.

It included indigenous people, students, teachers, and activists, who presented an eight-point demand focusing on the safety and security of the Jumma people across the three hill districts, particularly those affected in Khagrachhari Sadar, Dighinala, and Rangamati.

Mohammad Shah Alam, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said unrest in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) has persisted due to the government's failure to fully implement the CHT Peace Accord and resolve land disputes.

He emphasised the need for unity among indigenous communities, urging them to abandon internal divisions and join the movement for the peace accord's implementation.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



People from all walks of life held a human chain in front of the National Museum in Shahbagh yesterday, demanding an end to the ongoing violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. They also demanded full implementation of the CHT Peace Accord.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Israel forces raid Al Jazeera TV in West Bank Order 45-day closure

AFP, Ramallah
Global news channel Al Jazeera said armed and masked Israeli forces raided its office in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank yesterday and issued a 45-day closure order.
It was the latest salvo in a long-running feud between the broadcaster and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government which has worsened during the war in Gaza.
The broadcaster said the soldiers did not provide a reason for the closure order yesterday.
"There is a court ruling for closing down Al Jazeera for 45 days," an Israeli soldier told Al Jazeera's West Bank bureau chief Walid al-Omari in a conversation broadcast live on the network.
"I ask you to take all the cameras and leave the office at this moment," the soldier said, according to the footage.
Omari said the order accused the network of "incitement to and support of terrorism", according to Al Jazeera.



Firefighters search through debris for missing people washed up after heavy rains caused flooding, in the city of Wajima, Ishikawa prefecture in Japan yesterday. Floods and landslides killed one person and left at least 11 missing in central Japan.

51 dead in Iran coal mine blast 20 more injured

REUTERS, Dubai
A gas explosion in a coal mine in Iran's South Khorasan Province killed at least 51 people and injured 20, Iran's state media said yesterday.
The accident was caused by a methane gas explosion in two blocks, B and C, of the mine run by the Madanjoo company, state media said.
"76 percent of the country's coal is provided from this region and around 8 to 10 big companies are working in the region including Madanjoo company," the governor of South Khorasan Province Ali Akbar Rahimi told state TV.
The rescue operation in block B has been completed. Of the 47 workers who were in the block 30 died and 17 were injured, Rahimi said earlier.

Quad group expands maritime security co-op

REUTERS, Claymont
Leaders of Australia, India, Japan and the United States expanded joint security steps in Asia's trade-rich waters as outgoing US President Joe Biden hosted counterparts from the Quad grouping established due to shared concerns about China.
Biden, meeting Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese near his Delaware hometown on Saturday evening, stressed the importance of maintaining the Quad, which he sees as a signature foreign policy achievement. He will leave office after the November 5 US presidential election.
The leaders announced joint coast

guard operations next year that will include Australian, Japanese and Indian personnel spending time on a US coast guard vessel. The countries

Plans include joint coast guard operations, maritime monitoring

plan increased military logistics cooperation, officials said. They did not comment on where the coast guard activity would take place.
The leaders also planned to expand

an Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness launched two years ago.
While the White House said the Quad summit was directed at no other country and that Beijing should find no issue with the initiative, Biden started the summit's group session with a briefing on China. In a joint statement that did not name the Chinese government by name, the leaders condemned "coercive and intimidating maneuvers in the South China Sea."
Analysts said new maritime security initiatives would send a message to Beijing and represent a further shift of emphasis of the Quad's activities to security issues, reflecting growing concerns about China's intentions.

France unveils a more right-wing government

REUTERS, Paris
France unveiled a new government on Saturday evening that aims to strike a fine balance between right-wingers and centrists, as Prime Minister Michel Barnier hopes to break political deadlock following snap elections that delivered a hung parliament.
After 2 1/2 months of political uncertainty since centrist President Emmanuel Macron's surprise decision to call early elections, Barnier has put together a cabinet he hopes will find cross-party support in the fragmented parliament.
With few political heavyweights, his team includes one of the leaders of the conservative party of former President Nicolas Sarkozy, Bruno Retailleau, who negotiated the coveted interior ministry as the price for support in parliament.
However, showing the government's fragility, the prestigious job of finance minister was given to a little-known 33-year-old, Antoine Armand of Macron's party, having been turned down by more senior politicians.
The public finances portfolios, shared with new budget minister Laurent Saint-Martin, will have the unenviable task of putting together a budget bill before January, at a time France is struggling to contain a spiralling budget deficit.

4 killed, dozens hurt in US mass shooting

AFP, Washington
A mass shooting involving several assailants has left at least four people dead and dozens wounded in the US state of Alabama, police said on Saturday night.
"We believe that multiple shooters fired multiple shots on a group of people" in the Five Points South district of Birmingham just after 11:00 pm, police officer Truman Fitzgerald said.
Officers found two adult males and one adult female who was unresponsive on the sidewalk suffering from a gunshot wound, Fitzgerald said. All three were pronounced dead at the scene.
A fourth victim died at a local hospital, he added. Dozens of people were wounded in the shooting with at least four sustaining life-threatening injuries, Fitzgerald said. The others had "various injuries", he added.



Residents stand in the courtyard of a damaged residential building following a Russian missile attack in Kharkiv, Ukraine early yesterday. At least 21 people, including three minors, were injured in the missile strike, the regional governor said.

UN adopts 'Pact for the Future' to tackle global crises

AFP, United Nations
The United Nations yesterday adopted a "Pact for the Future" aimed at addressing sprawling 21st-century challenges ranging from conflict to climate change and human rights, despite last-minute objections from a group of countries led by Russia.
Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who organized the "Summit of the Future," had billed it as a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" to reshape human history by rekindling international cooperation.
As an opening act for the annual high-level week of the UN General Assembly, which begins tomorrow, dozens of heads of state and government gathered for the signing of the text.
In the adopted version, leaders pledged to bolster the multilateral system to "keep pace with a

changing world" and to "protect the needs and interests of current and future generations" facing "persistent crisis."
"We believe there is a path to a brighter future for all of humanity," the document says.
The pact outlines 56 "actions," including commitments to multilateralism, upholding the UN Charter and peacekeeping.
It also calls for reforms to international financial institutions and the UN Security Council, along with renewed efforts to combat climate change, promote disarmament, and guide the development of artificial intelligence.
The adoption of the text faced a brief delay when Russia's deputy minister of foreign affairs, Sergey Vershinin, introduced an amendment emphasizing the "principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states" and




urging the UN to avoid duplicating efforts.
Russia's objections were backed by allies Belarus, North Korea, Iran, Nicaragua and Syria, but its amendment was overwhelmingly dismissed in a motion to take no action.
During the negotiations phase, Guterres had urged nations to show "vision" and "courage," calling for "maximum ambition" to strengthen international institutions that struggle to respond effectively to today's threats.
But while there are some "good ideas," the text "is not the sort of revolutionary document reforming the whole of multilateralism that Antonio Guterres had originally called for," Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group told AFP.
That sentiment was widely shared among diplomats, many of whom expressed frustration when discussing the ambition and impact of the text, describing it as "lukewarm," "the lowest common denominator," and "disappointing."

Trump rejects Harris call for Oct debate

AFP, Wilmington
Donald Trump on Saturday rejected a second debate against Kamala Harris before the November 5 election, saying it was "too late" with early voting underway in some states.
Earlier in the day, Harris's campaign said she had accepted an invitation from broadcaster CNN to participate in a debate on October 23. It would have been the candidates' second debate, after a September 10 encounter that most pundits said she had won.
"The American people deserve another opportunity to see Vice President Kamala Harris and Donald Trump debate before they cast their ballots," her campaign chair O'Malley Dillon said.

Pak cop killed in attack on diplomats' convoy

REUTERS, Peshawar
A roadside bomb hit a convoy of foreign diplomats visiting the northwest Pakistan yesterday, killing a police officer in their security detail, police said.
Swat district police officer Zahidullah Khan said the diplomats were visiting the Swat valley area on the invitation of the local chamber of commerce to showcase it as a potential tourist destination.
"The squad that was leading the convoy was hit by a roadside bomb," he said.
Another four police officers were wounded, Khan said. No one has so far claimed responsibility for the attack.
The bomb exploded as the convoy was en route to a hill station and ski resort called Malam Jabba, police and government officials said.



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তারিখঃ ২১/০৯/২০২৪ইং

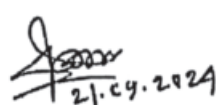
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SL. No.	Tender ID	Tender/proposal description	Tender/proposal publication date and time	Tender/proposal document last selling date and time	Tender/proposal opening date and time
1	1017326	Transportation works of Pole, PC Pole/transformer/Cable with all other goods from Divisional Store that allocated by Electrical Equipment Office under the office of Sales & Distribution Division-BPDB, Chatak	22-Sep-2024 15:27	06-Oct-2024 15:00	07-Oct-2024 12:00
2	1017325	Repair and Maintenance works of flood affected damaged and Straightening of tilted 11 kv & 0.4 kv lines of 11kv Rail Feeder at Gonokhal, Brammongaon, Shampara, Andharigaon, Labourpara, Bashkhola with surroundings area under the office of Sales & Distribution Division-BPDB, Chatak	22-Sep-2024 15:25	06-Oct-2024 15:00	07-Oct-2024 11:45
3	1017324	Repair and Maintenance works of flood affected damaged and Straightening of tilted 11 kv / 0.4 kv lines of 11kv Chowka/Chechan Feeder at Dharon, Seolorpara, Shouthpura Chechan Jatuya Soudergaon Nadampure with surroundings area under the office of Sales & Distribution Division-BPDB, Chatak	22-Sep-2024 15:20	06-Oct-2024 14:15	07-Oct-2024 11:30
4	1016380	Deposit works for 2 kilometer line Shifting and Re-installation From Sultanpura to Uzanigaon of Sylhet- Sunamoanj highway under the office of Sales & Distribution Division-BPDB, Chatak	22-Sep-2024 15:20	14-Oct-2024 14:14	15-Oct-2024 11:15

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Engr. Md. Abdul Majid
 ID No. 01-01903
 Executive Engineer
 Sales & Distribution Division
 Chatak, BPDB, Sunamganj

GD-488

What does banning campus politics mean?



Dr Manzoor Ahmed
is professor emeritus at BRAC University, chair of Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN), and adviser to the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE). Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

MANZOOR AHMED

As of September 21, political activities by students and/or teachers and staff have been declared to be "banned" in at least 33 higher education institutions in Bangladesh—19 public universities, four government colleges, and 10 government medical colleges. It is reported that many students themselves have demanded this ban, though others think the ban is ill-judged and participation in "healthy politics" by students is essential.

How not to fall back into the pattern of partisan control of campuses by agents of political parties that have destroyed the academic culture for years, and how to usher in a peaceful environment for intellectual and academic pursuits and practising democratic values are the critical questions today. A ban on campus politics seems to be an easy answer. But what does it mean and how will it work?

A survey carried out by the Dhaka University Research Society (DURS), a voluntary body of student and faculty researchers, revealed that 83.8 percent of the students who participated in the survey opted for a total ban on campus politics. Another 16 percent wanted "reformed" student politics on campus, allowing activities with control. The survey was conducted between September 3 and 11 on 2,237 currently enrolled students.

The University Reform Initiative (URI), a platform of Dhaka University students that included some coordinators of the anti-discrimination student movement, put forward an eight-point proposal for reform during a press briefing on September 7. They demanded prohibition of all forms of partisan politics in residential and academic areas on the Dhaka University campus and enabling all candidates to run independently in the DUCSU or hall union elections. Another point is about not preventing individual students from expressing political views, but prohibiting collective political activities of any form, even forming panels or presenting a collective manifesto for university and hall student body elections. This is a meaningless oxymoron, because politics in any form is a



VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

collective action.

Meanwhile the University Teachers' Network, a voluntary body of university teachers which supported the student protest, put forward a proposal for university reforms. During a discussion at Dhaka University on August 19, they called for "modern universities that support freedom of thought and encourage students to ask questions." They want teachers to be held accountable for classroom performance and decentralisation of decision-making from the current concentration of all kinds of decisions with the vice-chancellor.

A group of teachers under the banner of Dhaka University Teachers' Society (DUTS) in a 15-point proposal presented to the University Grants Commission (UGC) on September 15 called for change

in university appointments process, research collaboration between public and private universities, and a uniform student admission system for higher education. Both the teachers' bodies would like to see an overhaul of the selection process for the heads of universities and other top positions, shunning partisan political loyalty as the main criterion for appointments.

have maintained the mindset and habits of the military rulers of Pakistan (some may remember the days of General Ayub Khan and Governor Abdul Monem Khan) who wanted to control academia by creating their own agents among students and teachers.

Ironically, since the restoration of democracy in 1991 following another public uprising, the ruling parties went one step

We can assume the interim government has no such aim, and therefore it has the opportunity and the responsibility to take the right steps. But how can it be guaranteed that the political class waiting impatiently in the wings to return to power will not fall back to their old habits?

The interim government should consider three major enabling steps both as urgent actions and for laying the ground for change in mindsets and practices in academia:

i) Make it clear that higher education administrators are required only to serve academic interests of the students and institutions, and not the partisan and narrow interests of the ruling regime; that their performance would be judged by these criteria; and that all support of the state would be given to do their job.

ii) Initiate a process of formulating a code of conduct for students and teachers and staff of higher education institutions—universities, colleges and professional institutions—that would create the conditions for students and teachers/staff behaving responsibly to achieve the common goals of the institutions. The UGC may take the lead in preparing the principles and models for the codes, which can be adapted for each type of institutions. This is not likely to be a quick process. But this exercise can also begin in each institution involving students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders. Institutions can make early decisions where there is a consensus on certain points, and other solutions can evolve and be adapted gradually in the light of the national discourse.

iii) Student body elections should be held soon in each institution of higher education to allow students to participate and contribute to the academic and co-curricular management of institutions, promoting student well-being and helping create the conditions for pursuing academic, creative and democratic values as students.

Coming back to how the political parties can be held accountable for nurturing and protecting the education system and the academia, it is a question of political parties themselves being self-reflective and engaging in their own reforms, vowing to abandon the old habits. Public representation rules requiring parties not to create their own agents among students and teachers that undermines the academic purposes of institutions would be necessary. Ultimately, the academic community has to remain united and vigilant to protect its integrity and freedom.

It can be said that both students and teachers are trying hard to navigate a treacherous path, trying to ensure that one set of hegemonic powerholders is not replaced by another set when a political regime returns. The task is made difficult and complex by decades of partisan control of academia by all stripes of regimes that have held power since the birth of Bangladesh.

The sight is often being lost that students' and teachers' participation in politics is not the problem; the problem is violence, extortion, criminality, breaking the rules and regulations of the institution, and tolerance and even encouragement of such by the state authorities and the university administration. In one form or another, ruling parties in Bangladesh

further by abandoning student union elections at universities, considering these as a spoiler for their plan to control the academia. One foray into student union election in Dhaka University under court orders was sabotaged via election-rigging by the university authorities. The university then did not cooperate with the elected union because the head of the body (vice-president), elected despite the rigging efforts, was not to the regime's liking. Student union elections were not heard of since then in Dhaka University or any other institution.

The task of restoring academia's integrity can be simple and achievable if the political decision-makers do not harbour the goal of controlling academia in order to maintain their grip on political power at any cost.

The impact of social media addiction on young children



Mohammad Zulfikar Ali
is a lecturer at Curtin University, Perth, Australia.

MOHAMMAD ZULFIKAR ALI

Studies have found that addiction to social media is a major cause of mental health issues in young children in Bangladesh. But according to Tobias Dienlin, assistant professor for interactive communication at the University of Vienna, Austria, there is no precise definition of social media addiction. He, however, suggests that just because no diagnostic system exists, it doesn't mean the phenomenon is not real. According to Dienlin, "excessive social media consumption turns into an addiction where users cannot get around to other important things in their lives, when they had the desire to use social media less but found themselves unable to think about anything else and when they started neglecting real-life social relationships." Observing children around us who are heavily engaged with platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat, we can sense that the concerns about excessive social media use are quite close to home.

Several studies conducted before and after Covid-19 have found that social media can have both positive and negative effects on mental health. A concerning finding comes from a 2017 study, which found that social media platforms, particularly Instagram, were responsible for increased anxiety, depression, loneliness, and feelings of inadequacy among young people. It also found that social media was more addictive than cigarettes or alcohol. These concerns were mainly raised because these platforms

often present an idealised version of life, encouraging constant comparison and competition, which can erode self-esteem and lead to poor mental health outcomes. Some other negative aspects of using social media were found in another study conducted in 2017. The risks identified in this study include depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendency. The study emphasised that cyberbullying and harmful content, exacerbating feelings of isolation and vulnerability, are linked to the prolonged use of social media platforms.

Like young children, adults are also prone to fall victim to excessive social media use. High levels of stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction with life are some of the common problems among adults who frequently use social media. This shared

It can be said that both students and teachers are trying hard to navigate a treacherous path, trying to ensure that one set of hegemonic powerholders is not replaced by another set when a political regime returns. The task is made difficult and complex by decades of partisan control of academia by all stripes of regimes that have held power since the birth of Bangladesh.

experience across age groups raises a critical question: What is the best way to address these problems?

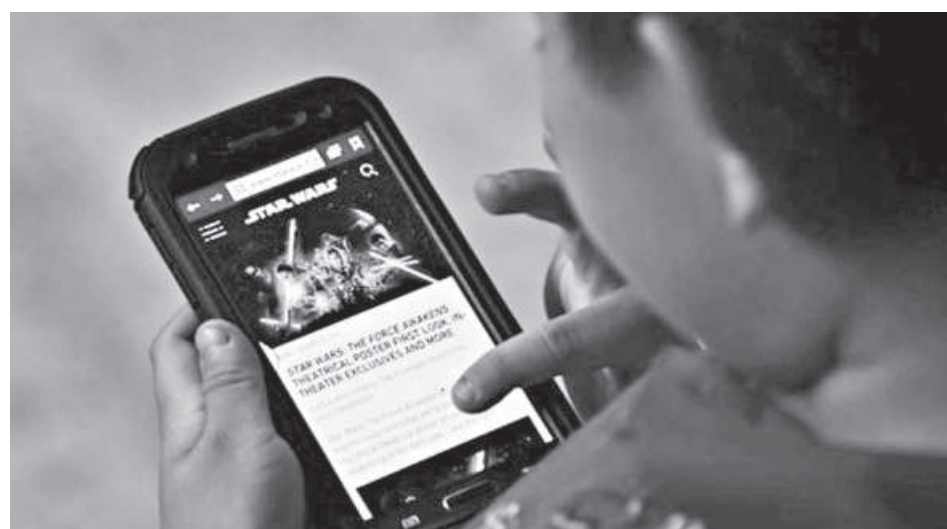
In identifying a solution to the problem of social media use, it's important to recognise its positive aspects. One key reason for using social media is that children, like adults, often seek online spaces for connection and self-expression. Studies such as "The Fake

Some might argue for banning social as a solution to these problems, but children would then resort to creating fake accounts to bypass age restrictions. Moreover, the use of fake accounts would drive children to use these platforms secretly, further limiting parental oversight and increasing the likelihood of unsafe online behaviour. Pew Research found 59 percent of children,

effective approach. Digital literacy is crucial, since it teaches children how to use social media responsibly—by setting boundaries, recognising harmful content, and limiting screen time. Over time, children with digital literacy would be less likely to experience the negative mental health effects associated with social media. Programmes such as Common-Sense Media's digital citizenship initiative provide children with the tools they need to navigate social media safely, without resorting to harmful comparisons or unhealthy consumption patterns.

With regards to mental health issues, it is important to create spaces for children to talk about their online experiences that can foster healthier social media habits. This is importance because teens often seek platforms where they can be vulnerable with their peers, making them susceptible to unrealistic content that dominates much of social media. Having said that, open dialogue between children and their parents, caregivers, and teachers is critical for reducing the stigma around mental health struggles and for offering young people the support they need to engage with social media in a healthy way. Encouraging children to participate in activities like planning trips or other real-life experiences can also help.

Deborah Childs, chief executive officer of Helping Minds, a provider of mental health education, suggests that it is important for children to navigate the online world safely. They need to understand how to avoid the pressures of comparison and perfection. Childs believes that by fostering environments where children feel safe to be themselves, both online and offline, it is possible to mitigate the mental health risks associated with social media and encourage healthier, more responsible engagement. Finally, the innovative potential to harness technology for the greater good, ensuring it enhances our lives rather than distracts from them, is an important consideration.



It is important to create spaces for children to talk about their online experiences that can foster healthier social media habits. PHOTO: AFP

One is the Real One: Finstas, Authenticity, and Context Collapse in Teen Friend Groups" by Christopher R Darr and Erin F Doss highlight that while entertainment is a part of using social media, it provides a space for authentic self-presentation among close friends. Their use of "finstas" (fake Instagram accounts) demonstrates how teens often seek refuge from the pressures of highly curated public profiles, opting instead for smaller, more intimate groups where they can be themselves.

aged 13 to 17, admitted having created fake accounts to bypass age restrictions. This points to a deeper issue: without addressing the societal and psychological factors that are driving children towards social media, legislative bans are likely to fall short.

In a developing country like Bangladesh, where enforcement is weak due to limited resources, regulating fake accounts would be challenging. Rather than imposing a ban, promoting digital literacy and offering mental health support would be a more

The luckless president & an American icon!



The 39th US President Jimmy Carter (born 1924)

WAQAR A KHAN

As I was completing my undergraduate program in USA, the American Presidential election of 1976 came up. The hopeful Democratic Presidential candidate James 'Jimmy' Earl Carter Jr., and the incumbent Republican President Gerald 'Jerry' Rudolph Ford Jr., emerged as the two final contestants. The mood of America was upbeat. Something new seemed to be in the offing. The era was post-Vietnam with lots of soul searching and a liberal political trend. The message of the former peanut farmer, state senator and erstwhile governor of Georgia, hailing from Plains, Georgia, with pale blue eyes and a ready disarming smile, Jimmy Carter, was simple "Trust Me" he said, to the expectant American public traumatized by the Vietnam war and the shameful exit of President Nixon following the Watergate scandal. As a foreign national, I took a lot of interest and watched the unfolding American Presidential election as a curious bystander. The year 1976, was also historically a memorable one for America. It was their Bicentennial Celebrations year, that is, 200 years as an independent nation and a democratic republic. Jimmy Carter was overwhelmingly supported by the American public weary of the republicans and the incumbent President Ford, who had exercised his constitutional prerogative to pardon Nixon, sparing him further humiliation from a Watergate prosecution and impeachment. Many voters never

to zoom for a while on an elegant elderly lady in a beige dress, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, her face covered by a black netted-veil. She was seated up front in a special gallery for invited guests. There was something imperious about her. She radiated class! The announcer informed the viewers that the aristocratic looking American lady was none other than President Teddy Roosevelt's eldest daughter 'princess' Alice Roosevelt Longworth, and that she had not missed a single presidential inauguration since her father's. She had a haughty, self-assured air about her. There was that unmistakable stamp of the so-called 'American aristocracy' on her person. She truly represented the American 'blue-blood'. I took great interest and decided to learn more about her. Alice was an inveterate high-society American socialite. The exalted and mighty in the corridors of power in Washington, the rich and famous in New York, Boston and elsewhere deferred to her. Society ladies almost curtsied to her. You didn't dare be on the wrong side of her, let alone cross swords with her. She had great wit and charm, but also an acerbic tongue. She did not suffer anyone, especially, fools gladly and lived life on her own terms. She was controversial and openly admitted to being an avowed sybarite. It reminded me of those legendary high society ladies of yore in Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian England, one gets to read about. However, it seemed strange that Alice did not go up to congratulate President Carter after his inauguration as she had ritually done before. She thought Carter lacked social grace and was an unsophisticated provincial man. It would also be Alice's last appearance in an American presidential inauguration.

Of her quotable quotes some of

unequivocally said that, "There will never be one quite like her!" She was the American high society's ultimate - an icon!

Now, back to the 39th President of the US, Jimmy Carter. He started off well, endowed with the goodness of heart and an untarnished reputation. He was well meaning and forthright. However, he was perhaps too simple a man devoid of pretensions and some of the Machiavellian qualities that his office demanded. A deeply religious Southern Baptist, he held politics to high ethical and moral standards, conveniently forgetting that it was naïve to do so and that the real world was unpredictable and a 'wicked' place. He made human rights and democracy

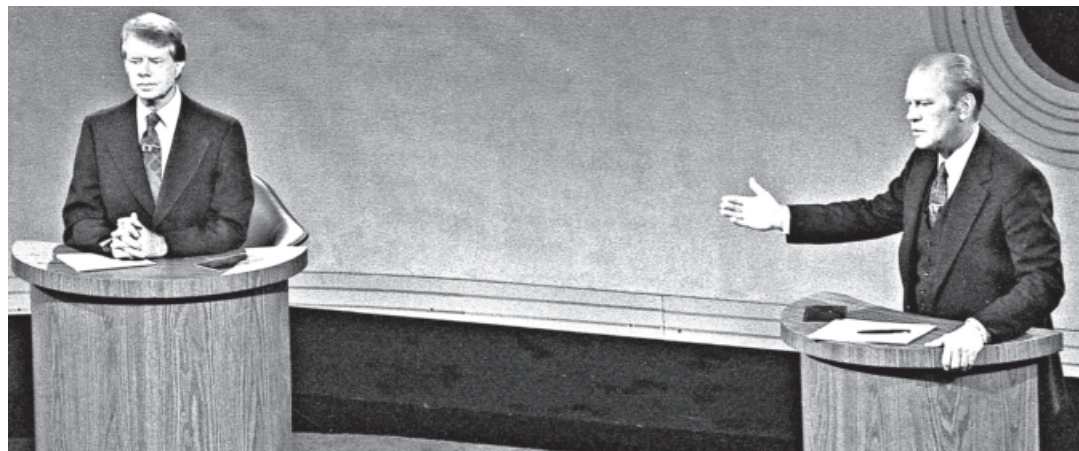
be called in for her belligerent behavior. Portly younger brother, Billy Carter a beer guzzler, with a sizable paunch launched his own brand of beer simply called 'Billy'. He tried to cash in on his brother's fame. He was a typical southern hillbilly, a country bumpkin with a ready idiotic grin. Nonetheless, as a Carter sibling with a loud mouth and embarrassing antics, he made it to the cover of both the TIME and Newsweek magazines. Needless to say, his 'Billy' beer which was marketed with much panache and fanfare, did not make the grades and soon ceased production altogether.

The highlight of the Carter era was the Camp David accord between the once irreconcilable Egyptian President

from Cuba to Florida, USA, eventually became a veritable eyesore even to foreigners like us in the US. What had initially started as a trickle on 15 April 1980, soon became a deluge by 31 October 1980, when an agreement between the two countries finally stopped the illegal flow. In the beginning the generous Carter administration had welcomed the first boat loads of Cuban refugees on the coast of Florida seemingly with open arms. A gleeful Carter naively said publicly that when all of Cuba was emptied of its people, Fidel Castro would be left all alone to cut the sugarcane, while smoking his cigar. This sort of foolhardy statement openly encouraged the



The Carter family



Carter and President Gerald Ford debating at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, September 1976

the cornerstone of his foreign policy. He put an effective stop to any covert operations overseas by the US. Once he famously confessed in an interview with the Playboy magazine for having sinned. He candidly said, "I have committed adultery in my heart." In a promiscuous, hedonistic western society we were amused. It all sounded so innocent and naïve! However, subsequent world and domestic events would greatly disappoint Carter, and eventually cost him a re-election and, thereby, the cherished presidency into a second term.

Carter's mother the elderly Miss Lillian Carter (1898-1983) made news as all fortunate living mothers do whose son makes it to the American presidency. She belonged to an antiquated old world generation from the onetime deep 'ante-bellum' American South. She once had a short

Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1977. Carter also gave up control over the Panama Canal to Panama, as a matter of legal and moral obligation. It made the American conservative groups, such as, the 'Birch Bayh' furious. His efforts at de-escalation of the cold war with the Soviets was praiseworthy. However, the Iranian revolution in 1979, and the taking of American hostages from the American embassy in Tehran by young Iranian radicals, resulted in a protracted 317 day hostage crisis, including a belated failed American rescue mission of the US hostages. All these negative events were counter productive to Carter's image nationwide. It surprises me now, that throughout the prolonged American hostage crisis, we as foreign nationals in Houston, Texas, never felt threatened and no untoward incidents like a grave assault or death were reported in the US. I shudder to think what would have happened to Muslims in the US, especially, those of foreign origin, if the same incident had occurred today? Regrettably, the world today is an intolerant one.

Cubans to send in more refugees by the boatloads, till the Floridians and rest of America started to protest accusing the Carter administration of laxity and callousness. By the end of the Cuban exodus, approximately 125,000 illegal Cubans had landed in Florida. It was also alleged not without reason, that the initial American failure to stem the tide of Cuban refugees, provided the Castro regime with a golden opportunity to ship off malcontents, vagrants, drug addicts, political prisoners as well as empty its jails and lunatic asylums of criminals and mental patients. Angry and exasperated, American protesters in Florida carried placards and shouted at Carter to settle the newly arrived illegal Cubans in Plains, Georgia, his hometown instead of Florida, so vehement was the outrage in the end. It cost Carter the much needed public support not only in the state of Florida but also elsewhere in the US. Remember the Hollywood crime thriller movie in the aftermath of the Mariel boatlift in Florida, 'Scarface' (1983) starring Al Pacino?



Alice Roosevelt Longworth (1884-1980)

twenty-one month stint working in India as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the mid-1960s. By then she was already 68 years of age. The Jimmy Carter siblings also made it to the pages of newspapers, magazines and tabloids, especially, The National Inquirer and The Globe. Jimmy's sister Ruth Carter Stapleton was an evangelist and a faith-healer, living for a while in San Antonio, Texas. Besides preaching and healing, she was also into writing spiritual books. We met her briefly quite by an accident in the summer of 1979, in a park one afternoon near San Antonio where she was speaking to a small group. We were visiting a friend in San Antonio from Houston, and needed a little break and use the restroom in the park. It is there that we heard from excited passersby that Carter's sister, Ruth, too, was in the park. It's sad that we did not have a camera with us. We introduced ourselves as foreign students and Ruth in turn, kindly invited us to come to her evangelical session in San Antonio, which we could not attend. She was unpretentious. There was a certain simplicity and calmness about her, which I found rather endearing. Jimmy Carter's other siblings, too, made headlines. Sister Gloria Spann, was once briefly arrested for loudly playing a harmonica at a restaurant to the great annoyance of diners. The police had to

the most famous are, "if you can't say something good about someone, sit right here by me". To the infamous American senator Joe McCarthy, who had jokingly remarked at a party, "Here is my blind date. I am going to call you Alice", she sarcastically retorted, "Senator McCarthy, you are not going to call me Alice. The truckman on my block may call me Alice, but you may not". With a stiff-upper lip she informed President Lyndon Johnson that she wore wide-brimmed hats in his presence so that he couldn't kiss her. When a prominent Washington senator was discovered having an affair with a young woman less than half his



William Alton 'Billy' Carter (1937-1988)

age, she winced and quipped, "you can't make a soufflé rise twice!"

The American 'princess' Alice Roosevelt Longworth, the darling of Washington society, died of prolonged illness and old age complications in 1980. In the official statement marking her passing away, President Carter had eulogized her thus, "She had style, she had grace, and she had a sense of humor that kept generations of political newcomers to Washington wondering which was worse - to be skewered by her or to be ignored by her". She was really one of a kind. Her death diminished the world she left behind. The final tribute came from the American media. It was

forgave him for that 'indiscretion'. They had wanted to see Nixon on the dock and in jail, especially the younger generation of voters who were idealistic and radicalized by the 1970s protest-era political orientation.

In the televised presidential debates a calm, self-assured, ever smiling Carter came out looking good. He had done his homework and scored easy points over his rival Ford, who fumbled and mumbled making everybody laugh. With his beady blue eyes, large forehead and an impassive face he sometimes looked like a bewildered man. He often forgot to deliver his 'punch lines'. Tall and hefty, Ford had a reputation for stumbling as he deplaned, hit his big head against a doorway or just bump into someone. He could be amusingly unsteady on his feet. An American friend made us all crack up during the electioneering, when he declared with a magisterial flourish of his hand, "how can Jerry Ford lead us anymore, when he can't even manage his own body? He must go!"

As predicted Carter won the presidential election by a good margin. It made our liberal Democratic American friends jubilant, while the conservative Republicans sulked. For the first time, I viewed live on television the inauguration of an American President in January, 1977, on a cold and frosty morning. It was an exciting time. Carter a devout Southern Baptist and his attractive wife, Rosalyn Carter, a 'southern-belle' made it to the White House amidst a roar of approval from the assembled crowd. Then there was this frail, shy, bespectacled little Amy Carter with a deceptive 'whiz-kid' look. She was nine years of age at the time of the presidential inauguration, the only daughter of President Carter and Rosalyn. Amy evoked a lot of media attention since no children had lived in the White House during the intervening period since the Kennedy's in the early 1960s.

However, as the television camera scanned the assemblage of dignitaries at the inauguration, it suddenly stopped

The highlight of the Carter era was the Camp David accord between the once irreconcilable Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1977. Carter also gave up control over the Panama Canal to Panama, as a matter of legal and moral obligation. It made the American conservative groups, such as, the 'Birch Bayh' furious. His efforts at de-escalation of the cold war with the Soviets was praiseworthy.

As his naivety and ill luck would have it, Jimmy Carter, by the end of his first term as the US president would go on losing his popularity with the American public. They thought of him as too soft natured, unduly cautious and thus a weak president. However, he is also remembered as the luckless, transitional president after Vietnam. Tumultuous world and domestic events, sheer bad luck and loss of public support at home cost him his re-election bid in 1980. He would lose the coveted office of the presidency for a second term to the conservative Republican candidate Ronald Reagan, a former Hollywood movie star, who went on to become the 40th president of the US. The Republicans and the conservatives were once again back at the helm of affairs, and started projecting their 'Macho' image! However, sooner than later history will vindicate Carter. To date, he remains the longest surviving ex-US president. His worldwide peace keeping missions and humanitarian efforts after leaving office has earned him global praise and won him many accolades as a popular, elderly world statesman endowed with wisdom, vision, sagacity and compassion for which he was finally awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. Carter's exemplary global peace initiatives in various conflict zones has made him one of the most successful, universally respected and admired ex-president in American history. He is a good man at heart and a decent soul, a rare breed these days. In the end of it all when the curtain falls, it's that singular aspect of his character which will ultimately shine through. On October 01, 2024, Jimmy Carter becomes a proud centenarian. May God bless him!

Waqar A Khan is the Founder of Bangladesh Forum for Heritage Studies

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UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY Yunus to draw his vision of an inclusive nation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will present at the 79th UN General Assembly the interim government's vision of building a democratic and inclusive Bangladesh where human rights will be upheld.



Prof Yunus is to leave for New York early today for his first trip abroad as the chief adviser.

The Nobel laureate will have a bilateral meeting with US President Joe Biden.

Prof Yunus will also address the General Debate of the UNGA on September 27 the theme of which will be "Leaving no one behind: acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for present and future generations."

On the sideline, he is likely to hold

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



What appears to be fog is actually kicked up dust on Shyampur-Narayanganj road on a sunny day. Locals of Shyampur say the dust is a menace to their neighbourhood and blamed it for people getting respiratory diseases. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

India eager to strengthen ties with Bangladesh

Says Mirza Fakhrul after meeting Pranay Verma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India is eager to further strengthen its relationship with Bangladesh, said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday after meeting Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma.

"They also want to strengthen our relationships with the political parties of their country," Fakhrul told reporters after the meeting at the BNP Chairperson's office in Gulshan.

The meeting, which lasted nearly an hour, is the first formal talks between Indian officials and BNP leaders since Sheikh Hasina's regime was deposed on August 5.

Fakhrul said, "We raised the issues Bangladesh is facing with India, including the water-sharing issue, which requires a swift resolution."

On border killings, Fakhrul said, "We also conveyed the necessity of stopping the border killings."

"We also discussed security concerns between both the countries. They assured us they are vigilant and working towards resolving these problems as quickly as possible."



SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Biden, Modi talk about Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The developments in Bangladesh came up during discussions between US President Joe Biden and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the former's personal residence in Wilmington, Delaware, yesterday.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said there was also an exchange of views between Modi and Biden about the situation in Bangladesh.

Vikram's remarks came during a media briefing in Washington in reply to a question from India's state-owned TV channel Doordarshan journalist if Bangladesh was a part of the discussions between the two leaders and if he could share the contours of the discussion.

"Look, as I said, these discussions cover subjects that are in the region. They may be of bilateral interest to one party or the other, but they do have significance beyond the region as well. In this context, a number of situations came up for discussion. Bangladesh also figured in the discussions, and there was an exchange of views with regard to the situation there."

Vikram did not elaborate further.

This was the first time that Bangladesh came up in the discussions between Modi and Biden in their first in-person bilateral meeting since the change of guard in that country after the ouster of Sheikh

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Sri Lanka elects Dissanayake as president

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka elected Marxist-leaning Anura Kumara Dissanayake as its new president yesterday, putting faith in the 55-year-old's pledge to fight corruption and bolster a fragile economic recovery following its worst financial crisis in decades.

Dissanayake, who does not possess political lineage like some of his rivals in the presidential election, led from start to finish during the counting of ballots, knocking out incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe and opposition leader Sajith Premadasa to become Sri Lanka's 10th president.

The election was also a referendum on Wickremesinghe, who led the heavily indebted nation's fragile economic recovery from a meltdown in 2022 but the austerity measures that were key to this recovery hindered his bid to return to office. He finished third with 17 percent of the vote.

Dissanayake polled 5.6 million or 42.3 percent of the votes, a massive boost to the three percent he managed in the last presidential election in 2019. Premadasa was second at 32.8 percent after the first round of counting of ballots yesterday.

It was the first time in Sri Lanka's history that the presidential race was decided by a second round of counting after the top two candidates failed to win the mandatory 50 percent of votes to be declared winner.

"The dream we have nurtured for centuries is finally coming true," Dissanayake said in a statement shortly after the announcement yesterday. "This victory belongs to all of us," he added. "Millions of eyes filled with hope and expectation push us forward, and together, we stand ready to rewrite Sri Lankan history."

Wickremesinghe congratulated Dissanayake on the win and said he was "confident" the politician would "steer Sri Lanka on a path of continued growth and stability."

Dissanayake will be sworn in this morning at the colonial-era President Secretariat in Colombo, election commission officials said.



SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Three addl IGP's sent into forced retirement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven more police officials, including three additional inspectors general of police, were sent into forced retirement yesterday.

According to home ministry circulars, signed by Mohammad Abdul Momen, senior secretary of the Public Security Division, the order was issued in public interest effective immediately.

The officers are Additional Inspector General of Police AKM Hafiz Akhtar, Addl IGP Bashir Ahmed, Addl IGP Devdas Bhattacharya, Superintendent of Police (Police Headquarters) Mizanur Rahman, Assistant Commissioner of Police Dadon Fakir, Assistant Commissioner of Police Shamim Or Rashid Talukder, and Assistant Superintendent of Police Rafiqul Islam.

The circulars said the decision was made as per section 45 of the Government Service Act, 2018 (Act No 57 of 2018), in public interest. It also mentioned that the retired officers would be entitled to benefits as per the regulations.

On September 2, four top police officials, including two additional inspectors general of police, were sent into forced retirement from service.

They are additional IGP's Khandker Lutful Kabir of Police Headquarters and Mir Rezaul Alam of Tourist Police, Deputy

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Hezbollah, Israel trade heavy border barrages

Three killed in south Lebanon; 40 more Palestinians killed in Gaza strikes

AGENCIES

Israel and Hezbollah exchanged heavy fire into yesterday, with Israeli warplanes carrying out the most intense bombardment in almost a year of conflict across Lebanon's south and Hezbollah firing rockets deep into northern Israel.

The Israeli military said it struck around 290 targets on Saturday night, including thousands of Hezbollah rocket launcher barrels, and said it would continue to hit more targets.

Israel closed schools and restricted gatherings in many northern areas and ordered hospitals there to transfer their operations to facilities with extra protection from rocket and missile fire.

Lebanon's health ministry said yesterday three people were killed in separate Israeli strikes on south Lebanon.

The UN special coordinator in Lebanon, Jeanine Hennis-Plasscharet, said in a post on X that "with the region on the brink of an imminent catastrophe, it cannot be overstated enough: there is NO military solution that will make either side safer".

The conflict - which sharply escalated over the past week - has raged since Hezbollah opened a second front against Israel after Israeli offensive in Gaza began on October 7.

In Gaza, civil defence rescuers said an Israeli strike on a school-turned-shelter in the Al Shati refugee camp yesterday killed at least 7 people, with the Israeli military saying it had targeted Hamas members.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

- Israel forces hit 290 targets, destroy rocket launchers
- Hezbollah targets airbase with dozens of missiles
- Gaza death toll rises to 41,431

Astronomers find biggest black hole jets ever

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

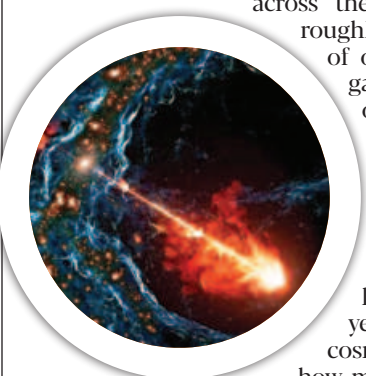
Scientists have found the biggest pair of black hole jets ever seen.

The two stretch 23 million light-years long across the universe. That is roughly as long as 140 of our own Milky Way galaxy stacked on top of each other.

Such jets are vast blasts of radiation and particles that erupt out of supermassive black holes. They can last for millions of years, reshaping the cosmos as they change how matter flows through space, blowing with a total output equivalent to trillions of suns.

Milky Way jets are the largest galaxy-made structures in the universe. But the two newly found are even bigger than we had ever seen before - previous observations had suggested they could only grow to around 16 light years in size.

The previous record holder was a jet system called Alcyoneus. It was found in 2022 by the same team, but was only around 100 milky ways in length.



Smoke billows from the site of an Israeli strike that targeted the outskirts of the southern Lebanese village of Zibqin yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

RMG workers block highway for attendance bonus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Thousands of workers of a garment factory blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in the Bagherbazar area of Gazipur yesterday morning, demanding attendance bonuses.

The protest led to severe traffic congestion from Chandana Chowrastra to Mauna.

According to the industrial police, the workers began demonstrating on the highway at 8:00am. Heavy traffic was reported across multiple points on the highway.

Several protesting workers, who preferred to remain anonymous, told The Daily Star that many garment factories across the country are providing an attendance bonus and they are demanding the same from their factories.

They said it was becoming difficult to manage their household expenses with rising prices of essentials.

"We can't survive on our current salary alone," one worker said, highlighting the urgent need for the attendance bonus.

When contacted, Ziaul Kabir Khokon, SEE PAGE 6 COL 4