

"I am going to resign from the CM position after two days. I will not sit on the CM chair until the people give their verdict."

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

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**Shanto and Co eye taking India to final session**

P11



**Prof Yunus's reform agenda for Bangladesh**

P9



**101 of the RTI Act for our youth activists**

P8



**Tk 523cr spent, yet city drowns every time it rains**

P5

## US stands ready to help carry out reforms

American delegation meets Yunus, holds talks on reforms, repatriation of laundered money, labour rights, Rohingya issue

DIPLomatic CORRESPONDENT

The US has expressed strong commitment to work with the interim government, which sought support to rebuild the country, carry out reforms, and bring back money laundered by corrupt individuals.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus asked for the help when a US delegation met him at the state guest house Jamuna.

The delegation, led by US Treasury Department's Assistant Secretary Brent Nieman, praised Prof Yunus' leadership and said Washington would be happy to support his reform agenda.

The US officials said they were eager to offer technical and financial assistance.

Yesterday, the two countries signed an agreement under which the US would provide \$200 million to Bangladesh as development support.

"Our delegation met Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, affirming our dedication to fostering inclusive economic growth, institution building, and development to benefit the people of Bangladesh," the US embassy said on its Facebook page.

"As Bangladesh looks to chart a more equitable and inclusive future, the US stands ready to support those efforts."

This is the first visit by any US delegation after the formation of the interim government.

PHOTO ON PAGE 12

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Residents pick up the pieces after the devastating flood left behind a trail of debris and mud in the Jagatpur area of Fulgazi, Feni. The embankment that used to protect this neighbourhood from being inundated by the Muhuri has been broken in 13 places.

PHOTO: NAHID MAZHAR

## Miladunnabi today

UNB, Dhaka

The holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, marking the day of the birth and passing away of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), will be observed across Bangladesh today with due religious solemnity. The day is a public holiday.

On this day in 570, the 12th of Rabiul Awal of the Hijri calendar, Muhammad (PBUH) was born in Makkah with divine blessings and messages of peace for mankind. He also passed away on the same day.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

### HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star office will remain closed today on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow. Stay tuned to our website for round-the-clock news coverage.

## 'At least 422 of the dead belong to the BNP'

Fakhrul says govt should focus on 4 areas of reform, leave others for elected govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said at least 422 of those killed in the July-August massacre were involved in party politics.

"According to various reports, 875 people were killed across Bangladesh until August 13, of whom at least 422 were involved in BNP politics," he said at a press conference at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.



"There is no scope for underestimating BNP's contribution [in the mass uprising]."

Reading out a statement, Fakhrul said, "It is not an isolated incident that the majority of the martyrs were BNP leaders and activists. It is a result of their long political struggle."

He said beside the student-led uprising, 1,551 BNP activists were killed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## Further uncertainty over Rooppur plant launch

Foreign workers constructing transmission line across Padma yet to return

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, back from Bheramara Kushthia

The construction work for the transmission line through the Padma and Jamuna rivers for the Rooppur nuclear power plant has come to a grinding halt with the ouster of the Awami League government as the Indian contractor has left the site.

Without the transmission line, the commissioning of the \$12.65 billion nuclear power plant is not possible, according to Md. Zahedul Hasan, its project director.

A total of 669 kilometres of grid line, including 16 kilometres of river crossing line in both Padma and Jamuna, is needed for power transmission to the national grid from the country's first nuclear power plant, according to the Power Grid Company Bangladesh (PGCB).

Laying the transmission line across the two rivers forms the bulk of the work and that has not progressed well.

Only 38 percent of the work for the Padma river crossing line has been completed, while the progress on the Jamuna river crossing line is less than 25 percent, according to Md. Delwar Hossain, project director of the river crossing line for the Rooppur transmission line.



The Indian company Transrail Lighting got the contract for construction of the river crossing line for \$524 million: a 2 km single circuit 400kv line across Padma, and one 7 km double circuit 400kv line and another 7 km 230kv line through Jamuna.

Of the three river crossing lines, Transrail has agreed to complete 2 km of 400kv river crossing line in Padma by October such that electricity could be transmitted from unit-1 of the Rooppur power plant, according to Rooppur project and PGCB officials.

The construction work had to be put on hold from the middle of July due to a huge flow of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



## Asaduzzaman Noor arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former minister for cultural affairs Asaduzzaman Noor and former state minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism M Mahub Ali were arrested in Dhaka last night.

A team of Detective Branch (DB) arrested Asaduzzaman Noor at Nawratan colony on Bailey Road around 11:00pm. He was accused in a case filed with Mirpur Police Station, said an official from the DMP media wing.

Noor, a prominent theatre activist, was a former lawmaker of Nilphamari-2 constituency.

Meanwhile, Mahub Ali was arrested at Segunbagicha.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

### Star INTERVIEW

Bangladeshi-American political scientist Ali Riaz spoke to The Daily Star's Sadi Muhammad Alok and Sharif M Shafique about the uprising, the constitution, wholesale cases and arrests, and ties with the US and India, among other issues.

## Constitution needs rewriting to bar autocracy

TDS: What's your take on the uprising that toppled the Awami League regime?

Ali Riaz: This didn't happen suddenly. Oppression, murders, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings over the last 15 years played a key role here. Anger from these things combined with the 36-day student movement and determined the fate of autocrat Sheikh Hasina. The young students played a vital role in breaking the culture of fear, which was the base of her government's operation. People got out of that culture and took to the streets when the students called Hasina a dictator.

TDS: How would you define the regime's fall, described as a "revolution" or "mass uprising" by some and a "second independence" by others?

Ali Riaz: Definitely it's a mass uprising carried out

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## No obligation to make arrest without probe

Says DMP boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no obligation to arrest the accused named in the first information reports (FIRs) without conducting investigation into cases filed over deaths during the student-led mass uprising, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Mainul Hasan said yesterday.

He faced questions about a spree of such cases, and journalists being named in the FIRs, during a meeting with the Executive Committee of Crime Reporters' Association of Bangladesh (CRAB) at the DMP headquarters.

It is not as if the police will arrest journalists if they are named in the FIR, Mainul said.

"Action will be taken after conducting a collective investigation. That's the instruction we've been given," the DMP boss said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Incessant rains for three days have flooded most areas of Khulna city. The photo of struggling commuters was taken yesterday morning on Outer Bypass Road. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## 'Stay in power as long as it takes for reforms'

81pc say about interim govt in survey by a Brac institute

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A survey on 2,363 people has found that 81 percent want the interim government to stay until the reforms are done.

In interviews conducted over the phone from August 22 to September 2, at least 47 percent respondents said the interim government's tenure should be two years or more while 35 percent said it should be one year or less.

Just 13 percent said the government should hold an election immediately and transfer power, according to the study by BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD).

Findings of the "pulse survey" were presented yesterday at the Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium of Dhaka University on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy.

The respondents are from all 64 districts; 43 percent of them were women; 67 were from rural areas and 33 percent from urban areas.

When it comes to politics, 71 percent of the respondents said that the country is on the right track.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

- 71 pc say country on right track
- 80 pc for banning partisan student politics





Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus visits the Army Headquarters in Dhaka for the first time yesterday. Upon his arrival, he was welcomed by Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman. PHOTO: PID

## Stay in power as long as it takes

FROM PAGE 1  
The BIGD also did a similar survey last year and found 41 percent were of the opinion that the country was on the right course.

Mirza M Hasan, senior research fellow at the BIGD, presented the findings.

Mamun Abdullah Hil, a member of Jatiya Nagorik Committee, said people's expectations and opinions change.

"If we fail to translate the reform proposals into actions, then people's trust would erode," he said.

Of the respondents, 40 percent identified economic issues as the main challenges facing the country, 13 percent political unrest and intolerance, and seven percent deterioration of law and order.

Sixty percent of the participants said Bangladesh's economy was in the right direction, up from last year's 32

percent. Regarding this, Bhuiyan Asaduzzaman, member of the liaison committee of Students Against Discrimination, said, "We need to work continuously to resolve the economic crises, and our first priority should be to stabilise the market."

According to the survey, 72.2 percent respondents said compared to other times, the rate of crimes has not increased in August; 25 percent said crime increased; 75 percent said violence did not increase in August; while 23 percent said it did.

Dhaka University's sociology teacher Samina Luthfa said the findings regarding crimes could either mean crimes had not increased or the respondents did not view certain acts as unlawful crimes.

Regarding educational institutions, around 80 percent said partisan student politics should be banned

and 84 percent said partisan teachers' politics should be banned.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, head of the Election System Reform Commission, said that the Election Commission must be non-partisan.

As per the 2022 election commission law, the government can make anyone an election commissioner.

The reform commission has not been officially formed yet and the process of appointing the election commissioner should be done through a search committee which "may include the prime minister and representatives of the opposition parties, civil society, youth, and women."

Samina Luthfa added the students against discrimination talk about building an inclusive Bangladesh by eliminating discrimination. But it is not clear to the people what their definitions of discrimination and inclusive Bangladesh are.

## US stands ready to help carry out reforms

FROM PAGE 1  
Officials concerned said the visit is a reflection of a fresh start of the relationship as US-Bangladesh ties were strained during the Awami League regime.

Over the last few years, the US imposed sanctions on Rab and implemented a policy under which Bangladeshis who would undermine democracy would be denied US visas.

Donald Lu, US assistant secretary of state for South Asia; Brendan Lynch, assistant US trade representative; Anjali Kaur, deputy assistant administrator; and Jerrod Mason, a director of the US Treasury Department, were in the delegation.

The delegation on Saturday met business leaders. Yesterday, it called on Yunus, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, and Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur.

It also had a meeting with Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin at the state guesthouse Padma, where secretaries of the Economic Relations Division, ministries of commerce, labour, home, Bangladesh Bank representatives, and the chairman of the NBR were present.

Yunus, during the meeting, said his administration has moved quickly to "reset, reform, and restart" the economy, initiate reforms to the financial sectors, and fix institutions, according to a statement of the Chief Adviser's Office.

He said six commissions have been formed in an effort to prevent vote rigging, reform the judiciary, the police, civil administration, the anti-graft agency, and amend the constitution.

Prof Yunus said the government is committed to getting back the stolen assets siphoned off by corrupt individuals. "We were in an ocean of corruption," he said.

Prof Yunus said the student-led revolution has ushered in a new era of hope in Bangladesh. "It is a very important time for us and a

significant moment in our history."

During the hour-long meeting, financial and economic reforms, investment, labour issues, and the Rohingya crisis were discussed.

Prof Yunus presented a book on the graffiti of Bangladesh to the US delegation. The book has photos of some of the finest work done during the student-led uprising in July-August on the walls of Dhaka and other cities and towns.

### FINANCIAL, REVENUE SECTOR REFORMS

After the meeting, Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin told the media that the US delegation prioritised reforms to financial and revenue sectors during the discussion.

He said Dhaka would take expert help from the US as Bangladesh Bank was discussing specific measures to bring back laundered money.

The two sides also discussed trade facilitation, GSP facility, and US International Development Corporation.

"We have informed them of the reforms made to the labour sector. They took note of those and appreciated the progress made. They will continue the discussion on labour reforms."

The US suspended GSP facility following the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013. It did not grant financing under the DFC facility, which mandates improvement of labour conditions.

However, there was no specific discussion on GSP or DFC finance yesterday.

Asked about withdrawal of sanctions against Rab, Jashim said they updated the delegation on Rab reforms and that Dhaka would continue to discuss the matter.

The US side brought up the recent developments in Myanmar and the humanitarian assistance for the Rohingyas in Bangladesh.

In the last few months, about 15,000 Rohingyas have entered Bangladesh, creating new concerns for Dhaka.

"We spoke about eliminating the root causes of the Rohingya crisis ...," he said.

Prof Yunus will be attending the UN General Assembly for five days from September 22.

Asked if there would be any bilateral meeting between US President Joe Biden and Prof Yunus on the sidelines, Jashim said if the schedule is adjusted, there may be such a meeting.

He said they presented the plans for reforms and discussed how the US can help in the process.

"The US side got an idea of these and eventually, the two countries will advance cooperation in various stages."

The US is Bangladesh's largest foreign direct investor (FDI) and the largest export country destination.

In 2022-23, US FDI in Bangladesh was \$261 million. Last year, Bangladesh's export to the US was \$7.72 billion and imports were worth \$2.04 billion.

Analysts said the US can support Bangladesh in various ways, like giving privileges for Bangladesh's export to the US market, funding reforms, and investing in Bangladesh.

**MEETING WITH BB GOVERNOR**  
Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur sought financial support from the US for the ongoing reforms to the banking sector when the delegation met him at the central bank.

During the meeting, the US team discussed macroeconomic issues, including inflation and GDP growth, money laundering, bad loans, and reforms.

Bangladesh Bank Spokesperson Husne Ara Shikha shared the meeting details while talking to The Daily Star over phone.

Shikha said the US team wanted to know about the challenges of reforming the banking sector. The governor responded by saying there were no challenges, unless there was an untoward political issue in future.

## Miladunnabi

FROM PAGE 1  
President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser to the interim government Prof Muhammad Yunus issued separate messages greeting the people of Bangladesh and the Muslims across the world on the eve of the day.

In his message, President Mohammed Shahabuddin said the holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi is a sacred and glorious day for the Muslims of the whole world. Allah had sent Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) to this world as 'Rahmatullil Alamin', a blessing for the entire universe, he added.

He (Muhammad) had emerged as 'Sirajam Monira', the enlightened light in the world, said the President, adding, "He showed the path of light in the era of sinful acts, injustice, falsehood and darkness and established a society based on truth, beauty and justice."

The speeches of the Prophet (PBUH) in his last Hajj will remain as the pathfinder for mankind forever, he added.

"May the Almighty Allah grant us to work for the welfare of the country, nation and humanity by following the noble ideals of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Ameen," he added.

Chief Adviser Prof Yunus in his message, said Allah had sent Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) as 'Rahmatullil Alamin' for peace, emancipation, progress and overall welfare of the whole world.

The Prophet (PBUH) came to the world with the messages of emancipating mankind from all sorts of prejudices, sinful acts, injustices, and slavery, he said, adding he had called the people across the world towards emancipation and peace and torched the light of truth by shunning the era of darkness.

The Prophet had blown the wind of peace throughout the world by engaging him in establishing brotherhood, justice, and equity-based society and ensuring welfare for mankind, he added.

The CA said peace, justice, and welfare of the world can be ensured only through following the unique lifestyle of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), his universal teachings, and Sunnah in today's conflict-ridden world.

"It is my firm belief that the noble ideals and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in religious and mortal life are best and emulated for the people of the world, and therein lies the infinite welfare, success, and peace of Muslims," the chief adviser said.

Marking the day, Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar will broadcast special programmes, and different national dailies will publish supplements highlighting the importance of the day.

## 'Never knew I own shares in bus company'

FROM PAGE 12  
chairman and their eldest son Asif Shahadat is a director, has 140 buses.

"By God, I know nothing about Moutita Paribahan, let alone holding its share. I do not have any land in Gazipur either. I also never filed tax returns," he told The Daily Star at his village home on August 30.

Nur Alam is Afroza's brother, and investigators currently looking into the Asaduzzaman family's wealth are trying to track down the source of Nur Alam's wealth.

An ordinary man, Nur Alam lives with his family in his ancestral home in Kamargram. His eldest son is a migrant worker in Malaysia. Nur Alam himself was a migrant worker in Bahrain from 1997 to 2008.

"I struggle to support my family with the little income from the lease money against my ancestral land and the rent from a shop in local Gopalpur Bazar," he said.

But a 2022-23 tax return filed in his name shows he has wealth worth over Tk 1.77 crore. The signature used in his tax file does not match with his bank account signature, seen by The Daily Star.

"Someone else may have used my name. I don't know who," he said, looking clueless.

His tax return was filed in Khulna, where Nur Alam says he never lived and where Asaduzzaman was deputy inspector general of police in 2007-2009.

Multiple police sources speaking on condition of anonymity said Asaduzzaman Mia is behind it all. According to them, the former cop bought various properties in the name of his family members and relatives to keep his hands clean.

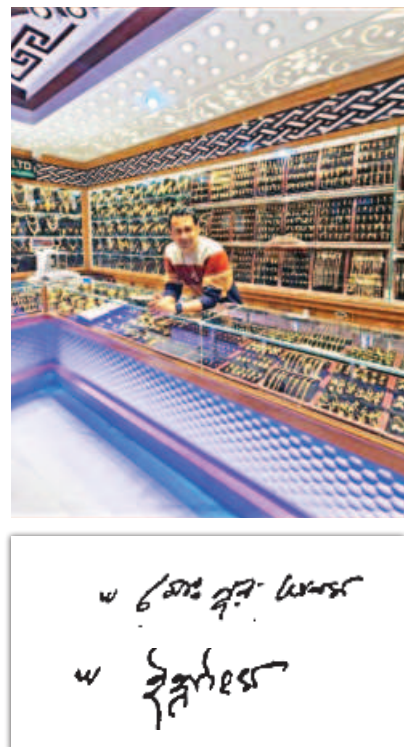
For example, his brother-in-law Harichur Rahman Shohan and nephew Ibrahim Sheikh now have properties and businesses worth at least Tk 14 crore, according to documents and relevant sources.

Like Nur Alam's, Ibrahim's tax return was filed from Khulna although he was a union parishad member in Faridpur from 2005-2021. According to his 2022-23 tax return, he has wealth worth Tk 1.17 crore. But again, the signature in his tax file does not match with the signature he officially used during a meeting when he was a union parishad member.

Ibrahim, who is also under the ACC scanner, runs a multipurpose cooperative called 'Sahuj Chhaya' at Gopalpur Bazar in Alfadanga. The investment for the high-interest rate microcredit business came from Asaduzzaman - a subject of an ongoing ACC investigation.

A source who has direct knowledge of the ongoing ACC investigation into Asaduzzaman family's "illegal wealth" said Ibrahim was likely involved in collecting money, on Asaduzzaman's behalf, from local people in return for jobs in police force and elsewhere.

He did not respond to our calls and text messages over the last two weeks. Harichur Rahman Shohan, Asaduzzaman's brother-in-law, used to look after the former DMP chief's



Top left, Harichur Rahman Shohan in his Pure Gold shop in New Market. Top right, the cover page of collection book of a microcredit organisation run by Asaduzzaman Mia's relatives in Faridpur. Bottom left, signatures of Nur Alam and Ibrahim Sheikh used in the tax returns filed in their names. Bottom right, their official signatures collected by The Daily Star.

interest in Dhaka, according to sources in police and transport sector, where Asaduzzaman's family has investment.

Shohan had gone to Saudi Arabia as a migrant worker in 2010, returning home in just two years almost empty-handed, at least 10 villagers told The Daily Star.

The man now owns gold business, transport business, 43 decimals of land in Faridpur's Alfadanga municipality and at least one flat in Dhaka's Shantibagh.

Their combined estimated value would be around Tk 10 crore, according to gold and transport business insiders and co-flat owners.

A former business partner of Shohan said most of Shohan's investment comes from the Mia family and he only looks after their business interest.

Documents show that the 43-year-old has shares in two bus companies in Dhaka - Gulshan Chaka (1,000 shares) and Moutita Transport Limited (1,500 shares) - where Asaduzzaman's wife, son and other family members and relatives also have investments.

Shohan also once held 25 percent shares in the now-defunct Modhumoti Paribahan Limited, according to a former business partner, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Each of these companies was set up and their route permit obtained when Asaduzzaman, as the DMP commissioner, was the head of Regional Transport Committee (RTC), which is responsible for allowing route permit. Asaduzzaman was DMP chief from January 7, 2015, to September 13, 2019.

In May this year, Shohan bought



FROM PAGE 1  
during the Awami League regime until 2023, while 423 had been forcibly disappeared during the period.

"During this time, six lakh BNP leaders and activists were implicated in 1.5 lakh cases. This reflects the party's unwavering struggle and contribution towards the country's second liberation."

BNP sources said the party collected the names, identities, and addresses of the victims, and the list will be published on the party's official website.

Responding to journalists' questions, the BNP secretary general said preparing the report of Electoral System Reform Commission should not take more than two months. "Complete it within two months..."

In his televised address to the nation on Wednesday, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus named Badiul Alam Majumdar as the head of the Electoral System Reform Commission, which is expected to finish its work within the next three months.

In this regard, Fakhrul said election-centric reforms should be given the highest priority.

"The reforms work should be completed quickly to move towards an election. The election will be held under a neutral government. The

election will be free and fair. The people will elect their representatives by voting."

Fakhrul also identified the key areas requiring reforms, including the Election Commission, administration, law enforcement agencies, and the judiciary.

Other reforms will be carried out by the government that will come to power through polls, he added.

He said, "This interim government will implement reforms based on the opinions of all and then move forward to hold the election. The election will be free and fair, and power will be handed over to the people."

"We hear many responsible political parties saying things that are not very conducive to overall unity."

"It is important to maintain unity. Be patient. Support all the work of this interim government and try to move forward."

The BNP will tomorrow hold a rally to mark International Democracy Day in front of its Nayapaltan central office at 3:00pm.

Party Standing Committee members Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain, Mirza Abbas, Nazrul Islam Khan, Abdul Moyeen Khan, and Salahuddin Ahmed were also present at the press conference.

## No obligation

FROM PAGE 1  
Maintul also said cases will be filed over the killings of officers, arson attacks on police stations, and looting of arms in Dhaka during the July-August movement.

Asked why the filing of these cases were delayed, he said, "Criminal events never expire. Cases will be filed in connection with police killing and looting of police stations."

He said some 177 police vehicles were damaged in DMP areas during the student-led protests.

"Many structures were damaged. Work is underway to repair them. Within a week or two, all police stations will return to normal activities," he said.

He said traffic management has improved as traffic police are now working until late at night. "Gradually there will be more improvement," said Maintul.

Three people involved in gold business around his shop said Pure Gold opened its doors with around 1,000 tolas of gold ornaments worth at least Tk 10 crore. Shohan alone invested around Tk 5 crore while the rest was invested by other partners.

After Sheikh Hasina's fall on August 5, a large amount of gold ornaments was moved to a safer place, the three businessmen said. Speaking on condition of anonymity, multiple sources said they have information that Shohan amassed his wealth through bribery, particularly through recruitment and posting business in police.

Shohan did not respond to our calls and text messages. Completing the grid line work is

Unusual traffic jams are created now as people are blocking the streets with different demands, he said.

Police are also working on freeing the roads and footpaths of hawkers and preventing battery-run auto-rickshaws from using the main roads.

"Gradually, the police are returning to their normal activities," he said. "Efforts to boost their morale are underway."

Maintul further said police will be more active in preventing mugging. They have resumed patrolling the streets and operating checkpoints.

Raids are underway to recover illegal weapons and arrest criminals. "Gradually, the drives will be strengthened."

CRAB President Kamruzzaman Khan, General Secretary Sirajul Islam, members of the executive committee, and DMP officials were also present.

## Further uncertainty

FROM PAGE 1  
water in the Padma, Hossain said.

"Then the protests began and most of the workers and experts, who are all foreign nationals, started fearing for their safety and left the country," he said.

About 150 foreign workers, including 100 Indians and 30 Indonesians, were working in the river crossing lines, according to PGCB.

"Most of them are yet to return, so there is no sign of resuming work. It is hard to give a timeline for when the work would be finished," Hossain said. Completing the grid line work is

the key priority now, said Rooppur's project director Hasan.

The first unit of Rooppur was supposed to start in 2023 and the second unit by 2024, as per the original schedule.

According to the revised schedule, the unit-1 was supposed to start in December but the abysmal progress of the grid line indicates the deadline will not be met.

The 1,200 megawatt power plant, which is being built with \$11.38 billion soft loan from Russia, is a flagship mega-project of the Awami League government.





Speakers at a roundtable on "A New Digital Vision for a New Bangladesh" yesterday. The event was organised jointly by Tech Global Institute and The Daily Star at the capital's The Daily Star Centre.

PHOTO: STAR

## 'New Bangladesh' must embrace anti-discrimination spirit

### Speakers tell Democracy Day event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To build the desired "New Bangladesh", it is imperative to flourish a political force imbued with the spirit of the anti-discrimination movement, said TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman yesterday.

Iftekharuzzaman made the remarks at a discussion, titled "Democracy and Good Governance in New Bangladesh: Youth Expectations," organised by Transparency International Bangladesh in observance of International Democracy Day 2024 at its Dhanmondi office.

He said the activities of anti-democratic forces that are communal, intolerant, and against pluralism contradict the core lessons of the anti-discrimination movement.

At the discussion, media professional Shimu Naser said in "New Bangladesh", no one should fear oppression from government forces for criticising someone's work.

**Due to previous bad experiences, people do not want to trust those who come to power.**

HASNAT ABDULLAH  
Key coordinator

"Over the past 10-15 years, political cartoons have been eradicated, curbing the freedom of expression of artists. We should be able to criticise those in power fearlessly," he said.

Mentioning that the marginalised communities played an active role in this movement, Naser said, "We are not hearing about what kind of Bangladesh they want. I believe the laws and governance structure of the 'New Bangladesh' should be formulated or amended keeping everyone in mind."

Hasnat Abdullah, a key coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, said due to previous bad experiences, people do not want to trust those who come to power.

"They [people] also look at us with suspicion. We cannot

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## Cops involved in killings must be brought to justice

Sarjis tells Manikganj meeting



**Some people are also making money by naming and removing names in the cases. The names of our brothers who gave their lives for the country should not be misused like this.**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Sarjis Alam, a coordinator of the central committee of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, yesterday said all the members of the law enforcement agencies who were directly involved in killings during the mass protests must be brought to justice.

They must be tried through legal investigation, case, or any means, he said.

He said this while exchanging views at the Manikganj District Shilpakala Academy yesterday afternoon with the families of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement martyrs and injured people in Manikganj.

"Many of the policemen, being overzealous, committed murders unjustly to prove themselves to the fascist government. So legal action should be taken against them. If the police are not prosecuted, then the justice will be questioned," said Sarjis.

Regarding the filing of cases on behalf of the victim's families, Sarjis

said in several cases innocent people are being harassed as their names have been mentioned as accused.

He added, "Some people are also making money by naming and removing names in the cases. The names of our brothers who gave their lives for the country should not be misused like this."

The families of Saad, who was killed in the student movement in Dhaka's Dhamrai, and Rafiq, who was killed in the Paturia Ghat area of Manikganj, were present there.

Apart from them, several injured students took part in the meeting. They shared their experiences of the movement and the role of police during the time.

A team of 10 coordinators, including Sarjis, reached the venue around 10:00am.

Before exchanging views with the families of the martyrs and injured, they participated in a two-hour discussion with students from the district.

## Overhaul surveillance, privacy laws: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's constitutional and legal framework enables state surveillance and fails to protect citizens' privacy and data rights, experts said at a roundtable discussion yesterday.

The event titled "A New Digital Vision for a New Bangladesh" was organised jointly by Tech Global Institute and The Daily Star at the capital's The Daily Star Centre.

Shahzeb Mahmood, head of Research, Legal, and Policy at TechGlobal, said a combination of at least four laws and over a dozen regulatory guidelines allow law enforcement agencies to monitor citizens. He also pointed out that Bangladesh lacks robust laws to safeguard individual privacy and data protection.

Mahmood cited laws such as the Competition Act, 2012, Consumer Rights Protection Act, 2009, Digital Commerce Operations Guidelines 2021, and Bangladesh Mobile Financial Services Regulations, 2022, saying these regulations are not suitable for the digital

ecosystem and often encourage anti-competitive practices.

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, highlighted how the previous authoritarian government criminalised freedom of expression, dissent, and privacy rights to maintain power.

"The past regime's strategy involved first eliminating or neutralising political opposition. Then they targeted dissenting voices and the media, creating a system to suppress them using various laws," he said.

Iftekharuzzaman stressed the need to overhaul the entire legal infrastructure related to freedom of expression. "No authority should come into power that criminalises public voices," he added.

He said the former regime's actions created opportunities for power abuse, illicit wealth accumulation, and money laundering. He described a system in which a political, bureaucratic, and business syndicate colluded to protect the regime and its illicit gains.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

**The entire legal infrastructure related to freedom of expression needs to be overhauled. No authority should come into power that criminalises public voices.**

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN  
Executive Director of TIB

## Wholesale filing of cases against journos must stop

Says Law Reporters Forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Reporters Forum (LRF), a platform of journalists covering law, justice, and human rights issues, yesterday said wholesale filing of cases against journalists is an obstacle to freedom of expression and establishing the rule of law.

In a statement, the organisation strongly condemned and protested the filing of cases against journalists, including its members Sheikh Muhammad Jamal Hossain and Abu Saleh Rony, without specific charges.

LRF's acting President Hasan Javed and its General Secretary Moneruzzaman Mission said in the statement that murder cases are not desirable without specific allegations against journalists.

LRF considers that filing such cases is against independent journalism, they said.

LRF leaders urged authorities concerned to verify the allegations before filing a case against journalists and to exempt them from the cases if their involvement is not found.

## Unspent flood relief money in four accounts

Hasnat says audit report will be released soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Amid allegations of not spending the relief funds collected in Dhaka University for the flood victims, Hasnat Abdullah, one of the coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, made his position clear in a Facebook status saying that all the money has been kept in three bank accounts and a mobile account.

In a Facebook status posted on Saturday night, Hasnat said they declared all the income and expenditure on September 4 in a press conference.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Tk 90 lakh lost from JS building on Aug 5

### Says Parliament Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Approximately Tk 90 lakh -- both from official and personal funds -- went missing from Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban during the vandalism and looting on August 5.

The amount was disclosed at a meeting on the overall situation of the JS building recently.


Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban's acting secretary (additional secretary, committee support wing) Zebunnesa Karim presided over the meeting held at the parliament building.

A decision was made to take appropriate action to refund the cash, according to a press release of the Parliament Secretariat yesterday.

Another decision was taken to prepare a list of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

# NexusPay অ্যাপ-এ



ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক-এর  
শক্তিশালী মোবাইল অ্যাপ


ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক-এর


ডেবিট, ক্রেডিট ও প্লিপেইড কার্ড, কোর ব্যাংকিং, রকেট ও এজেন্ট ব্যাংকিং

একাউন্ট অ্যাড করে যে কোন ধরনের লেনদেন ও পেমেন্ট করা যায়


যখন তখন সম্পূর্ণ নিরাপদে

এসকল লেনদেন একদম





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মানেই সবকিছু



**ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক**  
আপনার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী



# Hold proper polls to uphold spirit of mass uprising

Speakers tell rally

DU CORRESPONDENT

Expectations of the country's people can only be implemented through a strong election system, said speakers at a discussion rally yesterday.

Otherwise, the spirit of the mass uprising will fail, they added.

The event was arranged by Gono Mukti Moncho, a progressive liberation platform, at the Central Shaheed Minar, marking International Day of Democracy.

Speakers stressed the need for holding a strong election, involving all political parties that participated in the mass uprising. It will be a great gift for the nation, as sacrifices were made with such expectations during the mass uprising, they said.

The students' movement turned into a mass uprising only when all levels of people joined the movement. So, the democratic spirit of the people has to be upheld, they also said.

Coordinator Sajib Tushar of Gono Mukti Moncho, Harijan community's general secretary Pankaj Bashfor, activist Tuhin Khan, and Nazifa Jannat, a coordinator of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, spoke at the rally, among others.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The 20th graduation ceremony of Sunnydale was held at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Dhaka, on Saturday. Dr Haseena Khan, retired professor from the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Dhaka University and secretary of the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, attended the event as the chief guest and awarded graduation certificates to 116 graduates. Chairman Dr Tanvir Ahmed Khan and Head of School Tazeen Ahmed were also present.

# No steps taken over vandalism of two shrines in Dhamrai

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

The shrines of Buchai Pagla and Barkat Ma, located in Dhamrai upazila within Dhaka district, were vandalised last week, but police and the administration are yet to take any action regarding these incidents.

On Wednesday, over 500 people gathered at the Buchai Pagla Mazar (shrine of Buchai Pagla) in the Batulia area in Dhamrai and vandalised it. The incident took place around 12:30pm and continued for about two hours before law enforcers and upazila administration brought the situation under control, locals said.

They claim that people from other areas came and attacked the shrine.

Locals also emphasised that no anti-Shariah activities took place at the shrine. Drugs were prohibited, and a mosque was operated using money donated to the shrine, with part of the funds also going to a madrasa and people in need.

A video has gone viral on social media showing groups of people smashing everything inside the shrine with sticks, and the main building being demolished with an excavator.

In Dhamrai's Islampur, the Barkat Ma Mazar was vandalised on Thursday from the evening until late into the night. Hundreds of people took part in it, said locals, adding it was mainly women who used to come to this shrine in groups to worship and leave. There were no lavish ceremonies or urus held there.

Residents around the shrine demanded that the attackers, whoever they are, be brought to justice.

Prof Muhammad Yunus, chief adviser of the interim government, on Saturday,

announced strict legal action against any hate speech and attacks on religious and cultural places and Sufi shrines.

When asked what steps had been taken regarding the vandalism of the two shrines in Dhamrai, Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun, Dhamrai upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), said that as soon as the upazila administration received information about the vandalism of the Buchai Pagla Mazar, an executive magistrate was sent there along with a team of army and Rab members to stop the destruction.

"People who vandalised the shrine have made some demands. We will hear their demands next Tuesday. I will sit with them on that day and take a decision. Besides, the shrine in the Islampur area was vandalised at night. As soon as we got the news, we sent our men to stop it. We have reported both issues to our higher authorities. We will follow the instructions that come," he added.

Dhamrai police OC Monirul Islam said, "I have just joined the police station. We were not able to take any action quickly in the case of shrine vandalism. We don't have vehicles. If anyone wants to file a case regarding the vandalism of the shrine, they can file a case."

When asked if any action was being taken by Rab in the case of the two shrines in Dhamrai, Jalis Mahmood Khan, company commander of Rab-4 (CPC 2) Camp, said, "Rab basically starts a shadow investigation after receiving a written complaint in any incident. No one complained about the vandalism of the shrine. However, we have collected video footage of both incidents and are analysing the footage to identify the individuals involved in the crime."

# MATARBARI POWER PLANT A move against public interest

Says ex-River Commission chief Muzibur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chairman of the National River Conservation Commission, Muzibur Rahman, has questioned the decision to commission the Matarbari coal-fired power project in Cox's Bazar, calling it a move against public interest.

Speaking at the chief guest at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, during the presentation of the final declaration of the Climate Justice Conference 2023, Rahman said, "We are responsible for the Matarbari coal-fired power project. Why did we make this decision against the public interest? Establishments and factories occupying river land must be evicted. They should be held accountable under the law."

Rahman also stressed the need for transparency and accountability to ensure climate justice and to prevent corruption

in climate fund expenditure.

Sharif Jamil, member secretary of the organising committee for the Climate Justice Conference 2023, resented the final declaration. He called for the development of renewable energy under Bangladesh's Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan, urging the country to phase out coal and gas-based projects...

"The mobilisation campaign in response to public demands has contributed to a broader climate justice movement in Bangladesh. There must be people-oriented, environmentally friendly, and climate-resilient policy frameworks," said Jamil.

He also emphasised the importance of fostering dialogue between institutions and communities, calling for the completion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment in the southwest and ensuring transparency in the Strategic Ecological Survey of the southeast.

# Overhaul surveillance

FROM PAGE 3

For immediate actions, Iftakharuzzaman suggested that the interim government should evaluate the need for multiple security agencies, including the National Telecommunication Monitoring Center.

"In the name of these security agencies, the government has mainly undermined the people's security," he said, calling for the immediate destruction of spyware like Pegasus, allegedly used by the NTMC for citizen surveillance.

Barrister Sara Hossain urged the government to identify websites spreading fake videos, leaked calls, and rumours, many of which are allegedly sponsored by security agencies or foreign entities. She also advocated for the withdrawal of cases under the Cyber Security Act and Digital Security Act, as well as certain cases filed under ICT laws.

Shahidul Alam, founder of Drik Picture Library, criticised the lack of transparency regarding data collection and use.

"As individuals, we were never informed about how our data is being preserved or used, and what measures would be taken against misuse," he said,

emphasising the need for public awareness around data protection.

Huma Khan, senior human rights advisor at the UN Resident Coordinator's office in Bangladesh, said, "The issue of misinformation is worsening, and it could blind an entire nation." She stressed the urgent need to address this issue before it further destabilises the society.

Fahim Mashroor, CEO of Delivery Tiger - a courier marketplace - emphasised the importance of individual data ownership and empowerment, referring to personal data as an asset.

"I could sell my data to a commercial company, but there is no mechanism for that in this country. Facebook and Google are using my data, but we under the [local] don't have the same opportunity," he said.

Mashroor also highlighted the misuse of National ID cards, saying people are exploiting the ability to purchase up to 15 SIM cards under a single NID for activities like black market investments and online gambling, often without the NID holder's knowledge.

Fahim Ahmed, CEO of Pathao, called for a system

that allows consent-based data sharing between businesses, the government, and other organisations.

Mubin Khan, deputy editor of The Business Standard, emphasised the role of media, NGOs, and fact-checking organisations in promoting digital literacy. He highlighted the importance of teaching people about their privacy rights and how to recognise misinformation.

Zyma Islam, senior reporter at The Daily Star, called for a reevaluation of the surveillance systems run by security agencies like NTMC, DGI, and NSI.

"Our government has used intelligence agencies to illegally access citizens' data and sometimes harass them. This practice must not continue in a new digital Bangladesh," she said.

The roundtable was moderated by Tech Global Institute Founder and Executive Director Sabhanaz Rashid Diya and Tanjim Ferdous of The Daily Star. Other speakers included Global Voices regional editor Rezwan Islam, BLAST Advisor Ahmed Ibrahim, PhD candidate at Cambridge University Safir Abdullah, and Barrister Tazkia Labeeba Karim.

# 'New Bangladesh' must

FROM PAGE 3

blame them for this. There are concerns that those who come to power through movements might act the same way," he said, adding that in the past, asking questions during a government's tenure often came at a price.

"However, there is no way to get benefitted or pay the price for asking questions to us. No one will get a plot of land, an apartment, or any special benefits for asking questions about us. By questioning us, we will learn, and reforms will be accelerated."

Another coordinator, Arif Sohel, said, "This movement is aimed at ensuring equality, dignity, and social justice. Our flag changed in 1947 and 1971, but true independence was not achieved, as every ruler that followed contained elements of

dictatorship."

He said they believe the protest movement of 2024 has given rise to a language of resistance among the people, something that was not achieved in 2018.

"We were able to speak the language of the people, which is why we were able to remove the dictator," Sohel said.

Samanta Shermeen, spokesperson of the newly formed Jatiya Nagorik Committee, said the idea of a "New Bangladesh" has sparked great hopes and aspirations among the youth.

"To build this, we must create an environment for public discourse... To ensure the participation of all people in reforming the state's structure, discussions may need to be organised at the rural level and in regional settings," she added.

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নং-৫৮.০১.০০০০.১০২.৯৯.০১৯.২৪-৭৪৪

**দরপত্র স্থগিতকরণ নোটিশ**

ইমিগ্রেশন ও পাসপোর্ট অধিদপ্তরে আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় জনবল সরবরাহের জন্য প্রতিষ্ঠান নিয়োগের লক্ষে স্মারক নং-৫৮.০১.০০০০.১০২.৯৯.০১৯.২৪-৭৪৪, তারিখ ১৯-০৮-২০২৪ খ্রিঃ মূলে প্রকাশিত টেন্ডার নোটিশের সকল কার্যক্রম অনিবার্য কারণবশত পরবর্তী নির্দেশ না দেওয়া পর্যন্ত স্থগিত করা হলো।

২৫.০৯.২০২৪  
মোঃ আল আমিন মৃগা  
উপপরিচালক (ক্রম ব্যবস্থাপনা)  
মহাপরিচালকের পক্ষে।

GD-444

# Unspent flood relief

FROM PAGE 3

All the unspent money has been credited to three bank accounts of Janata Bank, Islami Bank and Sonali Bank and another mobile banking account.

The account holders of those joint accounts are a teacher of the Dhaka University, and a male and a female students of DU.

"No money was transferred from those accounts," his status reads.

He also said they are conducting an audit of the relief fund.

"Soon we will make the

audit report public," he said.

Different Facebook posts were making rounds in social media for the last couple of days where people were criticising some of the coordinators for not spending the relief funds when the flood victims need it most to rebuild their houses.

Some of the Facebook posts were asking for public statements about the whereabouts of those money, amounts ranging from Tk 5 crore to Tk 11 crore.

# Tk 90 lakh lost

FROM PAGE 3

goods lost and damaged at various offices, sub-sections and sections of the parliament building and submit it to the head of each department.

The heads of various departments of the JS Bhaban participated in the meeting and presented the overall situation.

They put emphasis on some repair works to be done on an urgent basis.

In the meeting, three committees were formed to strengthen the overall security of the Parliament House, Parliament Member House (Manik Mia and Nakhal Para), Old MP Hostel, Minister Hostel, Secretary Hostel and Sangsad Bhaban residential areas.

The meeting also decided to take necessary measures after inspecting the broken, lost and damaged goods in the above areas.

The committees were instructed to inspect the goods, which were damaged and piled up on the site and shift those to the oath room.

Minutes after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country on August 5, thousands of people defied the curfew and stormed into the parliament building.

Within minutes, the staircase in front of parliament was filled with thousands of protesters. Some entered through the main entrance while others climbed through the boundary fence.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
SEPTEMBER 16

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:30 6:09 7:45  
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:12 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

বাংলাদেশ প্রাণিসম্পদ গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট  
সাতার, ঢাকা-১৩৪১  
স্মারক নং-৩৩.০৫.২৬৭২.২০৪.০৯.০০১.১৮(অংশ-৩)-৪৫৪  
তারিখঃ ১২/০৯/২৪খ্রিঃ

**নিলাম দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

বাংলাদেশ প্রাণিসম্পদ গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (বিএলআরআই), সাতার, ঢাকা-তে গবেষণার অনুপযোগী সুস্থ পবাদিগ্রাদি লট/ভিত্তিক নিলামে বিক্রয় করা হবে। এতদসঙ্গে, বাংলাদেশী ব্যবসায়ী/ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান-কে নিলাম দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য নির্দেশক্রমে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

১	দরপত্রের নাম	বাংলাদেশ প্রাণিসম্পদ গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, সাতার, ঢাকা।
২	নিলাম দরপত্রে প্রার্থীর সংখ্যা	বিএলআরআই সদর দপ্তর, সাতার, ঢাকা-তে ২১ (একশ)টি পত্র, ১১৫ (একশত পনের)টি ছাগল ও ১৩৮ (একশত আত্রিশ)টি ভেড়া।
৩	প্রার্থীর বিবরণ ও লটে প্রার্থীর সংখ্যা	দরপত্র (সিডিউল মোতাবেক)
৪	পবাদি প্রার্থী হস্তান্তরের সময়সীমা	দরপত্র খোলার দিন হতে অনধিক ০৩ (তিন) কার্যদিবসের মধ্যে।
৫	দরপত্রের ব্যোপ্যতা	আম্রাই বাংলাদেশী ব্যবসায়ী/ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নিলাম দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন।
৬	নিলাম দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য (প্রতিটি)	প্রতি সিডিউলের মূল্য ৩০০.০০ (তিনশত) টাকা মাত্র (অক্ষরলেখযোগ্য)।
৭	জামানত প্রদানের বিবরণ	প্রতিটি লটের সহিত আবেদন করে যে কোন তফসীলি ব্যাংক হইতে মহাপরিচালক, বাংলাদেশ প্রাণিসম্পদ গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, সাতার, ঢাকা এর ব্যবসায় লটে প্রতি ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকার ব্যাংক ড্রাক্ট/পে-অর্ডার জামানত হিসাবে প্রত্যেক লটের সহিত দাখিল করিতে হইবে। দাখিলকৃত দরপত্রের সাথে পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাক্ট মূলকপি সংযুক্ত করে বন্ধ খামে জমা দিতে হবে।
৮	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	হিসাবরক্ষণ কর্মকর্তা, বাংলাদেশ প্রাণিসম্পদ গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, সাতার, ঢাকা।
৯	দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান	নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, বাংলাদেশ প্রাণিসম্পদ গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, সাতার, ঢাকা-এর অফিস কক্ষে রক্ষিত বাস্তব দরপত্র জমা দিতে হবে।
১০	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ	আগামী ২৬/০৯/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ (অফিস চলাকালীন পর্যন্ত)।
১১	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	আগামী ২৯/০৯/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১২	দরপত্র খোলা, মূল্যায়নের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	আগামী ২৯/০৯/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ দুপুর ১:৩০ ঘটিকায় সম্মেলন কক্ষ (৪র্থ তলা), বাংলাদেশ প্রাণিসম্পদ গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, সাতার, ঢাকা-তে উপস্থিত দরদাতা (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) সম্মুখে বাস্তব দরপত্র খোলা ও মূল্যায়ন করা হবে।
১৩	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	ক) দরপত্র গ্রহণের দিন কোন দরপত্র বিক্রয় করা হইবে না। খ) প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগ বা অন্য কোন কারণে কার্যদিবস বাহ্যে হইলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসের নির্দিষ্ট সময়সূচী অনুযায়ী বর্ণিত স্থানে নিলাম দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত কার্য সম্পাদন করা হইবে। এই জন্য আলাদাভাবে কোন বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারী করা হইবে না। গ) নিলামযোগ্য প্রার্থীর সংখ্যা কম/শেষী হতে পারে। ঘ) দরদাতা দরপত্র সাধারণ ডাকযোগে বা কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস যোগে নির্ধারিত স্থানে নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যেই দরপত্র দাখিল করতে পারবেন। ঙ) পবাদিগ্রাদিসমূহ 'খ'-খ খামেরে 'স্বাক্ষর'বিধি মেনে আম্রাই ক্রেতাগণ পরিদর্শন করতে পারবেন। চ) কোন কারণ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃক সংরক্ষণ করেন।

সাইজঃ (৮"X৩ কলাম)

২১/০৯/২৪  
ড. এ বি এম মুজিবুর রহমান  
অতিরিক্ত পরিচালক  
আবহায়ক, নিলাম পরিচালনা কমিটি

GD-441



## KHULNA WATERLOGGING

# Tk 523cr spent, yet city drowns every time it rains

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

Khulna City Corporation has spent Tk 523 crore in the last six years on a project aimed at alleviating the city's waterlogging problems.

However, the city goes under water every time there is rainfall.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department recorded 173mm of rainfall in Khulna as of 12:00pm yesterday, and the rain is expected to continue until Monday, said Md Amirul Azad, senior meteorologist at Khulna Meteorological Office.

KCC sources said two-thirds of Khulna's 1,215 roads were waterlogged after the deluge.

Areas such as Royal Intersection, KDA Avenue, Boyra Bazar, Mujgunni Park, Bastuhara Colony, Rupsha Stand, and Chanmari Bazar were submerged under knee- to waist- deep water.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Similar scenes were seen in Rayermahal, Gallamari, Moilapota, Tutpara Jorakal Bazar, Maheshwarpasha, and Daulatpur areas.

Many locals were forced to depend on rickshaws and vans to navigate the flooded streets, though the number of vehicles was sparse.

"Even after spending Tk 4.58 crore on reconstructing drains and Tk 2.50 crore on renovating roads, the waterlogging persists. We struggle to commute after even the slightest rain," said Enamul Haque, a resident of Ahsan Ahmed Road.

Kabir Hossain, a resident of Boyra Bazar,

stressed the need for urgent measures to free the Mayur river and Khulna's 22 canals from encroachment and conduct proper excavation. "Without action, the situation will only worsen," he added.

The Tk 823 crore project, titled "Development of Drainage System to Eliminate Waterlogging in Khulna City," was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council in July 2018. The project's first phase, which began in October 2020, is set to be completed by June 2025. So far, Tk 523 crore has been spent.

However, Sheikh Ashrafuzzaman,

president of the Greater Khulna Development Movement Coordination Committee, said merely constructing drains is not enough.

They must be cleaned regularly, but most of the new drains are already filled with garbage due to poor monitoring by KCC, he said.

He also highlighted that KCC lacks modern equipment to maintain the drainage system.

Anisur Rahman, chief conservancy officer of KCC, countered by stating that conservancy workers clean the drains regularly. However, many residents discard household waste inappropriately, clogging the drains and exacerbating waterlogging during rains.

"Once the project is completed, the waterlogging problem will be alleviated," he added.

## RAIN DROWNS BAGERHAT

Meanwhile in Bagerhat, a heavy downpour over the last 24 hours has triggered severe waterlogging in most areas. Several key roads in the town, including Khan Jahan Ali Road and District Hospital Intersection, were submerged, causing widespread disruption.

Additionally, fish farms in Rampal, Mongla, and Moreganj have been inundated by rain and tidal water.

Abu Raihan Mohammad Al Biruni, executive engineer of the Bangladesh Water Development Board in Bagerhat, said water level of the Pashur river has crossed the danger mark and may rise further if the rain continues, raising fears of flooding.

**Even after spending Tk 4.58 crore on reconstructing drains and Tk 2.50 crore on renovating roads, the waterlogging persists. We struggle to commute after even the slightest rain.**

ENAMUL HAQUE

A resident of Ahsan Ahmed Road

## CASE AGAINST HASINA Court asks for probe report by October 15

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked police to submit by October 15 the probe report of a case filed against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and six others over the death of grocery shop owner Abu Saeed in police firing in Dhaka's Mohammadpur during quota reform protests on July 19.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Zaki Al Farabi set the date after police failed to submit any report of the case yesterday.

The other accused are Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, former DB chief Harun Or Rashid, former DMP commissioner Habibur Rahman, and former DMP joint commissioner Biplob Kumar Sarker.

This is the first case lodged against Hasina after she resigned on August 5.

On August 13, SM Amir Hamza Shatil, of Mohammadpur, filed the murder case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury.

In his complaint, Shatil mentioned that Saeed was killed around 4:00pm on July 19 when police were firing indiscriminately on the protesters, following the accused's directives.

## Normalcy yet to return to 75 UPs in Patuakhali

Services being disrupted as most chairmen on the run

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

It has been more than a month since the fall of the Awami League government but the activities of 75 union parishads in Patuakhali district are yet to return to normalcy.

Since August 5, most of the AL-backed UP chairmen have been on the run fearing public anger, attacks and harassment for their corruption and abuse of power.

Some came under attacks and have been undergoing treatment in hospitals. As such, these public representatives have largely been absent in their workplaces, depriving service seekers.

In Sadar upazila, the chairman of Auliapur UP has fled to Italy, while those of Chhotobighai and Barabighai UPs have been removed and panel chairmen have been given their responsibilities. Allegations of corruption and abuse of power have emerged against Laukathi UP chairman. Apart from these, there is not much problem so far, said Iflat Ara Zaman, upazila nirbahi officer of Sadar upazila.

In Galachipa upazila, chairmen of 12 UPs have been performing their duties while the

rest remains absent, said Mohiuddin Al Helal, UNO of the upazila.

In Dasmina upazila, the chairman of Dasmina union parishad was removed and his responsibility was given to Wasuzzaman Chowdhury, assistant commissioner (land) in the upazila, said UNO Nafisa Naz Nira.

Shaheen Mahmud, UNO of Dumki upazila, said three government officials have been tasked with issuance of national IDs, birth and death certificates, and other responsibilities in Lebukhali, Angaria and Muradia unions.

In Kalapara upazila, most of the UP chairmen went into hiding and panel chairmen have been tasked with their responsibilities. Several chairmen of union parishads under Rangabali, Baulal and Mirzaganj upazilas have been removed and their responsibilities have been given to panel chairmen and assistant commissioners (land).

"Administrators have already been appointed in many union parishads in absence of the chairmen. In some unions, panel chairmen are performing the duties. Further action will be taken against those who are remaining absent," said Noor Qutubul Alam, DC of Patuakhali.

**Administrators have already been appointed in many union parishads in absence of the chairmen. In some unions, panel chairmen are performing the duties. Further action will be taken against those who are remaining absent.**

NOOR QUTUBUL ALAM  
Deputy Commissioner

## Man killed in mob beating over 'theft' in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

A man was killed in mob beating over suspected theft in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Md Jibon, 23, of Komarpur village in the upazila.

Mozibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Birganj Police Station, confirmed the matter.

Jibon went to Jotsna Filling Station in the upazila yesterday morning when people there surrounded him, suspecting him of theft, and beat him up indiscriminately, the OC said.

As he fainted, some locals took him to Birganj Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead, he also said.

Police recovered his body and sent it to Dinajpur M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy, the OC added.

## Cop sued over rape in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

A case was filed with Kotwali Police Station in Jashore against a policeman over rape on Saturday night.

A widow from Jashore Sadar upazila filed the case against Abu Bakkar Siddiqui, a policeman currently working in Dhaka Metropolitan Police, hailing from Chathuriya village under Kalaroa upazila of Satkhira.

The complainant initially filed the case with a Jashore court. Later, the court ordered Kotwali Police Station to record it as a regular case.

According to the case statement, after the woman got introduced to Abu Bakkar, he began visiting her house in Jashore town since January this year and raped her several times by intimidating her.

She alleged that she filed written complaints against Abu Bakkar with different offices, including Police Headquarters, to no avail, before filing the case with court.

Abdur Razak, officer in charge of the police station, said they are trying to arrest the accused.

## Milon's body exhumed 58 days after burial He was killed during student protests on July 19

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

The body of Muslim Uddin Milon, a goldsmith who was shot dead during the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement in Rangpur on July 19, was exhumed yesterday, 58 days after his burial.

The body has been taken to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy following a court order for investigation into his death.

During the exhumation, Ahmed Sadat, assistant commissioner (land) and also executive magistrate, was present along with investigating officer of the case, law enforcement officials, and Milon's family members.

Ahmed Sadat told journalists that Milon's body was exhumed in accordance with the court's directive to ensure a proper investigation.

Milon, a resident of East Ganeshpur area, was killed on July 19 during clashes involving students, police and Awami League men in City Bazar area. He was buried on July 20 without an autopsy.

On August 27, Milon's wife filed a murder case accusing 17 persons, including former Rangpur-6 lawmaker and former Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury.

## Two dead, seven injured as bus hits three-wheeler

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Two people were killed and seven others injured as a bus rammied into a battery-run auto-rickshaw on the Pabna-Rajshahi highway in Pabna Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased are Shimul Hossain, 32, and Safar Ali, 35. Both were from Pabna Sadar upazila.

Md Rawshan Ali, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station, said the auto-rickshaw was carrying nine passengers from Dashuria in Ishwardi upazila to Tebunia in Pabna Sadar upazila.

The collision occurred when a Ishwardi-bound Sabbar Paribahan bus hit the auto-rickshaw in the Islam Gati area, killing the two on the spot.

The injured were taken to Pabna 250 Bedded General Hospital. Four of them, who are in critical condition, were later transferred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. The bus driver fled the scene with the vehicle, the OC said.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Upazila Engineer  
Sadar, Laxmipur  
[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)

Memo No. 46.02.5143.000.14.001.24-2388

Date: 15/09/2024

#### e-Tender Notice (NOTM) Tender Notice No. 13/2024-2025

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works as stated as below:

Sl No.	Package No. & name of work	Tender ID No.	Tender submission date & time	Tender opening date & time
1	Package No.: e-Tender/PEDP4/LKS/SAD/2024-25/W15A.01627 (i) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Char Runita (i) Primary School under PEDP4 (ii) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Kaman Khola Primary School under PEDP4 (iii) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Porchim Nandanpur Primary School under PEDP4. ITT 30.1 The required Technical Proposal shall include the following additional information: Revised RDPP of PEDP4 is under approval process. So Contract agreement cannot be signed before RDPP approval if RDPP (2nd revision) of PEDP4 does not get approval then Tender will be cancelled.	1012908	09-Oct-2024 15:00	09-Oct-2024 15:00
2	Package No.: e-Tender/PLDP4/LKS/SAD/2024-25/W15A.01629 (i) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Char Monosha Primary School under PEDP4. (ii) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Char Shahi Primary School under PEDP4. ITT 30.1 The required Technical Proposal shall include the following additional information: Revised RDPP of PEDP4 is under approval process. So Contract agreement cannot be signed before RDPP approval if RDPP (2nd revision) of PEDP4 does not get approval then Tender will be cancelled.	1012909	09-Oct-2024 15:00	09-Oct-2024 15:00
3	Package No.: e-Tender/PEDP4/LKS/SAD/2024-25/W15A.01630 (i) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Kushakhali Primary School under PEDP4. (ii) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Uttar Pearapur Primary School under PEDP4. ITT 30.1 The required Technical Proposal shall include the following additional information: Revised RDPP of PEDP4 is under approval process. So Contract agreement cannot be signed before RDPP approval if RDPP (2nd revision) of PEDP4 does not get approval then tender will be cancelled.	1012910	09-Oct-2024 15:00	09-Oct-2024 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches upto 12:30pm on 09-Oct-2024. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helphdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helphdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

GD-439

  
Md. Jahangir Kabir  
Upazila Engineer  
LGED  
Sadar, Laxmipur  
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### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Directorate General of Health Services  
COVID-19 Emergency Response and Pandemic Preparedness Project  
28/8/C, Bir Uttam AK Khandekar Road, Gulshan, Dhaka  
[www.dghs.gov.bd](http://www.dghs.gov.bd)

Ref- DGHS/ERPP/GD-19.0/507/2024/5036


Date: 15 September, 2024

#### e-Tender Notice Open Tendering Method (NCT)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following goods.

e-Tender ID No.	Package No. & procurement type	Description of goods	Last selling date & time	Closing & opening date & time
1015896	GD-19.0 (NCT)	Procurement of Equipment for 20-Bedded Isolation Units in 30 District Hospitals	14-October-2024 12:00	14-October-2024 14:00

- This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
- The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to Date & Time mention above.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GPO System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helphdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helphdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

  
15.9.24  
Prof. Dr. Shah Golam Nabi  
Project Director  
Email: [pdccovid19wb@ld.dghs.gov.bd](mailto:pdccovid19wb@ld.dghs.gov.bd)

GD-443



# MEHAZABIEN AT TIFF

## Making waves with 'Saba'

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Mehazabien Chowdhury is currently in Toronto for the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), where her debut feature film, *Saba*, had its international premiere. In a conversation with The Daily Star, Mehazabien shared her excitement and experiences from the festival.

Directed by Maksud Hossain, *Saba* received an overwhelming response, with tickets selling out quickly. The actress described the audience's emotional reactions as surreal, saying, "I am amazed to receive such a response, and the emotional reactions from the audience were surreal to me."

Indian film critic Sucharita Tyagi showered high praise on the film, describing it as "a deeply moving Bangladeshi masterpiece that shines a glaring light on the irrevocably problematic nature of certain sections of society."



her pride, stating, "It's a great honour for the entire team to be in the People's Choice Award category. Our fingers are crossed as we await the announcement."

The actress experienced a star-struck moment when she met the renowned actress Naomi Watts. Overwhelmed with admiration, Mehazabien shared the unforgettable encounter on social media, posting a photo with the gorgeous star. She beautifully captioned it as her "ultimate fangirl moment with Naomi Watts at TIFF," perfectly capturing the thrill and wonder of standing beside a screen legend.

Meanwhile, Mehazabien's new web-film, *Forget Me Not*, was recently released on the OTT platform Chorki, where she plays the lead role of Aurthee. The film has garnered significant praise, with Mehazabien describing it as a love-centred story.

"At the end of the day, people want to watch light hearted content, especially during times of unrest," she explained. Known for her work in thrillers, Mehazabien found this project a refreshing change. "This was my first collaboration with Robiul Alam Robi, and I thoroughly enjoyed working on it."

In *Forget Me Not*, Mehazabien stars alongside Bijori Barkatullah, Yash Rohan, and Irfan Sajjad. Reflecting on her experience with Yash, she remarked, "Some people are born actors, and Yash is one of them. Although we haven't worked together on many projects, I got to work closely with him in this after *Sabrina*. It's an experience I'll always remember."

She also praised her on-screen rapport with Bijori Barkatullah and spoke fondly of reuniting with Irfan Sajjad, complimenting his portrayal in the film.

*Forget Me Not* was shot in November and spent considerable time in post-production. Mehazabien believes many will connect with its story, explaining, "The film shows how love is felt most when it's no longer there, giving the audience a lot to reflect on."

problematic nature of certain sections of society." With her words, she captures the film's haunting portrayal of societal flaws, lauding its emotional depth and raw power.

The festival's prestigious People's Choice Award, determined by audience votes, includes *Saba* among its 25 competing films. Mehazabien expressed



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

## Indian filmmaker sues Netflix for alleged plot theft in 'Squid Game'



In 2009, Soham Shah directed *Luck*, which underperformed at the box office. He has now sued Netflix, claiming they copied the plot for their hit series *Squid Game*.

A Netflix spokesperson told the media, "This claim is baseless. *Squid Game* was created and written by Hwang Dong Hyuk, and we plan to defend this case strongly."

Shah seeks compensation and a court order to halt Netflix's promotion, streaming, and merchandising of *Squid Game*, and prevent future copyright infringements.

## Reshuffled Artistes' Welfare Trust adds key figures



The interim government has restructured the 15 member trustee board of the Artistes' Welfare Trust to strengthen support for the creative community.

The new members, appointed by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, will serve a three-year term.

The new board will have the Cultural Affairs adviser as chairman, the ministry's secretary as vice-chairman, and the trust's managing director as member-secretary.

Kanak Chapa, Samina Luthfa, Ashfaque Nipun, and actress Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed—have been appointed to the 12 member board.

The board also includes leaders from Bangla Academy, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, and key government officials, alongside poet Nahid Hasan, writer Tuhin Wadud, and poets Imtiaz Mahmud and Syed Jamil.

# NEWS

## Constitution needs rewriting

FROM PAGE 1  
by the mass people because the autocrat was ousted by their participation in a student movement. I wouldn't call it a "revolution" because that requires a post-revolution government by the revolutionists, which did not happen. Again, I wouldn't call it a "second independence". The 1990's movement was also called a "second independence" then.

I want to place the Liberation War above everything.

TDS: What are your observations on the activities of the interim government in its first month in office?

Ali Riaz: This government is facing huge challenges that were not seen before as people have put their trust in the interim administration formed under special circumstances. We cannot say that they are flawless. There are some criticisms. Overall, I can say that they are moving forward despite various obstacles. They aren't stuck or moving backwards. But I'd be happier if their activities were more dynamic.

The police and the administration collapsed and they could not be reformed yet. I can see that some quarters are trying to destabilise the country. There are attempts to instigate and create pressure from within and outside the country.

Overall, it wouldn't be right to assess them so hastily. We shall continue to talk, keep pressure and express our expectations.

TDS: Is it possible for the advisers, who have no experience in politics, to create a healthy political environment?

Ali Riaz: One of the main responsibilities of the hastily formed government is to create a new political arrangement that'll prevent the re-establishment of an autocratic rule in the future. Structural reforms and a political roadmap are needed for this. The government needs to specify its goal about politics and the way to achieve it, which is possible through discussions with the political parties, civil society and the student leaders. We're waiting for that. The government has formed several commissions for reforms, which is a positive move.

TDS: You've spoken about rewriting the constitution. Why? And

how the interim government can do it?

Ali Riaz: One-third of the existing constitution has been declared unamendable. But it allows one to become incredibly powerful and it has some paths for creating autocracy. Rewriting the constitution is necessary to block these paths.

The July uprising has created such hopes and aspirations among the people that cannot be achieved by just amending the constitution. Besides, it is also necessary to ensure human rights, freedom of expression and accountability, and to make the state obliged to ensure these.

Rewriting the constitution is not solely the government's responsibility. Citizens and political parties should also be involved. I have suggested three possible ways.

The first is to form a constituent assembly, which can be done through election. The assembly and the interim government can work together to draft a constitution and hold a referendum on it.

Secondly, the interim government can draft a constitution and go for a referendum after taking expert opinions. The third option is to form a constitutional convention in consultation with all the political parties, and the draft constitution will be developed for referendum.

I am suggesting a referendum for all three options because people's opinions must be taken into consideration.

There might be other options, but at first, we need to decide whether we want to rewrite the constitution or just to amend it like we did in the past.

TDS: How can we stop the old practice of arresting and filing cases indiscriminately and taking people in remand arbitrarily?

Ali Riaz: Cases are being filed indiscriminately because of people's pent up anger, which must be kept in mind. But I fear the cases will lose merit if they are being filed in such a manner. The government can form a separate cell to review each complaint. Based on the review, well-founded cases can be filed by the authorities.

Proper emphasis should be given on the killings during the 36-day movement in July and August. Sheikh Hasina, Obaidul Quader,

the former home minister, and the former law minister must be held responsible because they gave orders to carry out such a massacre. They must be tried for committing crimes against humanity. Those who executed the orders should be tried based on the severity of the offences they committed. To ensure justice, all the perpetrators must be put on trial.

TDS: There are noticeable tensions in India-Bangladesh relationship. What are your thoughts?

Ali Riaz: Bilateral relationships must be based on equity and fairness, which was not the case for India-Bangladesh ties. India has done everything to keep an autocratic government in power here. Now, the people of Bangladesh have ousted that regime with the hope of restoring democracy. But, the Indian government is not willing to accept this reality.

The interim government has positive gestures towards the Indian government, but India's response is negative. India, not Bangladesh, is creating these tensions. So, India must resolve this. I hope, this relationship will be established on equity and fairness in future.

TDS: It is said that Bangladesh is entering the US's circle after the fall of Hasina. How correct is this?

Ali Riaz: Can the people who are making such statements give any specific evidence or sign to back their claims? Is there any change in US-Bangladesh relationship after August 5? I don't think so. Claiming Bangladesh is entering the US-led camp means spreading misinformation. Sticking to any bloc is like an attack on the country's sovereignty. The relationship with countries should be based on equity and fairness, whether with India, China, the US, Japan, Germany or others. National interests with sovereignty at the core should be the guiding factor in these relationships. Dhaka should communicate with Washington, Tokyo, Brussels, New Delhi directly, which is a natural thing for any sovereign nation. There was an idea that the US sees Bangladesh from India's standpoint. Will Washington change its policy to communicate with Dhaka directly bypassing New Delhi? Such signs aren't noticeable yet.

## Hasina sued over threats to Yunus, Khaleda

FROM PAGE 12  
Khaleda Zia should be thrown off the Padma Bridge and that Dr Yunus, who allegedly tried to stop funding for the bridge, should be given dunked in the Padma River.

The case statement further claimed that through the comments, Sheikh Hasina had expressed her secret desire to kill Khaleda and

Yunus and defamed them.

It also said by publicly threatening them, Hasina incited workers of Awami League and its affiliated organisations to carry out these acts.

Taking the case into cognisance, the court directed the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to conduct an inquiry and submit its findings

within 30 days.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the plaintiff's lawyer, Adv Rezaul Islam, said, "The case was filed against Sheikh Hasina as the sole accused, as she had issued death threats against BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and Nobel Laureate Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus."

## HSC results may be based on JSC, SSC

FROM PAGE 12  
been evaluated. For the cancelled exams, the results will be calculated based on the scores from the JSC and SSC or equivalent exams.

"For instance, if a student scored 80 in a particular subject in both JSC and SSC, they would receive 60 marks from SSC and 20 from JSC, resulting in a total score of 80 for that subject in HSC," the official explained.

Another official said that they are

also considering another approach — calculating the results of the cancelled exams solely from SSC and equivalent exam scores. "The process is not yet final. The ministry will decide whichever method proves to be most beneficial for the students," the official added.

This year's HSC exams began on June 30 and continued until deadly violence during the quota reform movement broke out on July 16.

The remaining exams were

postponed and after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina administration, the interim government set September 11 for the resumption of the tests.

In the face of protests by a section of the HSC candidates, the government cancelled the remaining exams on August 20.

Over 14 lakh students registered for this year's HSC examinations under nine general education boards, the technical education board, and the madrasa board.

## Maintain peace, order

FROM PAGE 12  
These shrines, as the gravesite of saints, have a long tradition of being visited with devotion and respect by their followers.

The district commissioners have been requested to take necessary steps to ensure peace and order at the shrines and to maintain normal movement for devotees, it added.

Additionally, if there is any risk of an attack on a shrine in any district, they

have been instructed to take immediate action and inform the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Earlier, the interim government strongly condemned the attacks on religious and cultural sites, as well as Sufi shrines.

The government stated that law enforcement agencies have been instructed to take adequate measures to protect these religious places and cultural establishments.

## Relentless rain floods

FROM PAGE 12  
from many enclosures were washed away.

"Water entered my house on Saturday night. We were compelled to move our furniture and cooking stoves elsewhere. So, we could not cook food today [Sunday]. Now, we are preparing to take shelter at a relative's house," Sagarika Sarker, of Mitha Pukurpar area of Cox's Bazar town, said yesterday. In Jashore, vegetables and crops on around 140 hectares have been submerged, said officials of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

"If such waterlogging continues in next two days, all the vegetables and kumar will be damaged," said Sushant Kumar Taraldar, deputy director of DAE in Jashore.

"I planted early winter vegetables on around three bighas. My vegetables have been under water for the last two days. I will have to incur huge losses, if my vegetables are damaged," said Abdur Rahim, a farmer of Hamidpur area in Jashore Sadar upazila.

In Pirojpur and Barguna, around 2.5 lakh people are without electricity since Saturday afternoon.

Power supply, which was suspended due to the rough weather, will be restored after the weather improves, said Amit Das, assistant general manager of Pirojpur Palli Bidyut Samity.

Besides, different roads in Pirojpur have been damaged.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report.]

## Five killed

FROM PAGE 12  
Deopara area.

Four passengers of the autorickshaw died on the spot. The injured child and autorickshaw driver were rescued and sent to Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex, where the five-year-old Aman Ullah was declared dead.

Confirming the matter to The Daily Star yesterday, Kaliganj Police Station Sub-Inspector Majed Mia said the lorry fled immediately after the collision.

Mostafizur Rahman of Kaliganj Fire Service and Civil Defence said that four bodies, including a woman, were recovered from the spot, and a child was declared dead after he was rushed to a local hospital by locals.

Later, the victims' bodies were handed over to their family members without autopsies upon their request, said a duty officer at Kaliganj Police Station.





## Kejriwal to resign as Delhi CM in two days

REUTERS

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal yesterday said that he will resign as chief minister of the Delhi regional government in two days.

Kejriwal was granted bail on Friday by India's Supreme Court and left prison on Saturday almost six months after being detained in relation to alleged irregularities in the capital city's liquor policy.

Kejriwal is a fierce critic of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a former anti-corruption crusader whose decade-old Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) quickly rose to mainstream politics, although its clout is relatively small compared to older opposition parties. AAP had expected that Kejriwal's release from prison would allow him to campaign as a chief minister in regional elections next month in the northern state of Haryana, and in Delhi early next year.

Kejriwal, announcing his resignation as chief minister at a meeting with AAP workers, said he would only return to the post if people certify his honesty by voting for him in the upcoming Delhi election.

He called on the Election Commission to bring forward the Delhi election to November, from February 2025.

# Staff, teachers fear they are 'a target' in Gaza

Says senior UN official after Israeli air strike hits a school-turned-shelter in the Palestinian territory

AFP, Jerusalem

A senior UN official said Saturday that teachers and other UN staff working in Gaza fear they are now targets after an Israeli air strike hit a school-turned-shelter in the territory this week.

Wednesday's strike on the UN-run Al Jawni School in central Gaza, which is housing displaced Palestinians, killed 18 people, including six employees of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA).

It was the deadliest single incident for the agency in more than 11 months of war and drew international condemnation.

"One colleague said that they're not wearing the UNRWA vest anymore because they feel that that turns them into a target," UNRWA senior deputy director Sam Rose told AFP on Saturday after visiting the shelter in Nuseirat.

"Another one said that that morning, their children had stopped them from coming into the shelter," he said in an online interview from Gaza.

**UNRWA said 220 members of the agency's staff have been killed in the Israeli offensive in Gaza**

The colleagues were gathering for a post-work meal in a classroom when the strike flattened part of the building, leaving only a charred heap of rebar and concrete.

"A son of one of the staff had brought a meal into the building," Rose said, adding the group then debated whether to eat it in the principal's office before settling on what appeared to be a classroom decorated with pictures of scientists.

"They were eating when the bomb hit."

The Israeli military said it had conducted a "precise strike" on Hamas members within the school grounds and had taken steps to reduce the risk to civilians.

The Israeli military published what it said was a list of nine Hamas fighters killed in the



Nuseirat strike, including three it said were employees of UNRWA.

An Israeli government spokesman said the school had become "a legitimate target" because it was used by Hamas to launch attacks.

Rose said such statements further battered morale among UN staffers still at the school, where thousands have sought shelter from the offensive that has displaced nearly all of Gaza's 2.4 million population at least once.

"They were particularly angry by the allegations that had been made as to the involvement of their colleagues in extremist and terrorist activities," Rose said.

"They felt that this really was a stain on the memory of dear colleagues, dear friends," he added, describing the mood as "bereft" and "desperate".

UNRWA has said at least 220 members of the agency's staff have been killed in the Israeli offensive in Gaza.

On Friday, UNRWA announced one of its employees was killed during an Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank, the first such death in the territory in more than a decade.

UNRWA has more than 30,000 employees

in the Palestinian territories and elsewhere.

It has been in crisis since Israel accused a dozen of its employees of being involved in the October 7 attack.

The UN immediately fired the implicated staff members, and a probe found some "neutrality related issues" but stressed Israel had not provided evidence for its main allegations.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 41,206 people have been killed in the Israeli offensive that began in October, now in its 12th month.

The toll includes 24 deaths in the previous 24 hours, according to the ministry, which said 95,337 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip.

Gaza's civil defence agency said Saturday that an Israeli air strike hit a house in Gaza City where displaced Palestinians had taken refuge, killing 11 people, while Israel said it struck a Hamas member.

"We have recovered the bodies of 11 martyrs, including four children and three women, after an Israeli warplane hit a three-storey house of the Bustan family," agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP.

## REUTERS/IPSOS POLL

# 56pc of Americans support Trump's proposed tariffs

REUTERS, Washington

Donald Trump's campaign vow to increase tariffs on imported goods, particularly from China, has the support of a narrow majority of US voters, illustrating his economic advantage over rival Vice President Kamala Harris, a new Reuters/Ipsos poll shows.

The Republican former president and his Democratic opponent have both vowed to pursue tax cuts if they win the November 5 election. But voters also credit Trump with being more likely to lower the \$35 trillion national debt -- even though independent economic forecasters say his proposals would have the opposite effect.

Some 56 percent of registered voters in the September 11-12 poll said they were more likely to support a candidate backing a new 10 percent tariff, or tax, on all imports, as well as a 60 percent tariff on imports from China. By comparison, 41 percent said they were less likely to support a candidate attached to that proposal.

The poll showed Harris with an overall 5-percentage-point lead over Trump nationally, though the US presidential race will largely be decided in about seven battleground states.

The poll details Trump's strengths on a key issue, the US economy. "This is what's keeping the election so close," said Karlyn Bowman, a polling expert at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

Bowman said Trump's advantage flows from a perception the economy did well during his 2017-2021 administration, and from his success convincing voters US economic problems stemmed from underhanded economic competition from other countries, notably China.

The poll found one in three Democrats said they were more likely to vote for a candidate backing higher tariffs and steep levies on Chinese goods, compared with two-thirds who said they were less likely to do so.

Until the Covid-19 pandemic ravaged the global economy in 2020, the US economy by many measures performed well during the Trump administration, boosted by tax cuts for consumers. Unemployment was at its lowest in decades, although the national debt was rising and would explode during the pandemic.



A firefighter assists with transporting people and pets on a boat amid evacuation efforts due to flooding in Czechowice-Dziedzice, Silesia region, Poland yesterday. One person has drowned in Poland and an Austrian fireman has died responding to floods, authorities said yesterday, as Storm Boris lashed central and eastern Europe with torrential rains.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Shanghai braces for direct hit from typhoon

### Flights, trains cancelled; red alert issued

REUTERS, Shanghai

Shanghai yesterday halted transportation links, recalled ships and shut tourism spots including Shanghai Disney Resort as it braced for Typhoon Bebinca, in what could be the strongest tropical cyclone to hit the Chinese financial hub since 1949.

The Category 1 typhoon, packing maximum sustained wind speeds near its centre of around 144 kph (89 mph), was about 400 km southeast of Shanghai as of 5:00 pm (0900 GMT). It is expected to make landfall along China's eastern coast after midnight today.

The China Meteorological Administration issued typhoon red alert yesterday afternoon, warning of gales and heavy rainfalls in eastern China.

The strongest storm to make landfall in Shanghai in recent decades was Typhoon Gloria in 1949, which tore through the city with gusts of 144 kph. Shanghai was last threatened by a direct hit in 2022 by the powerful Typhoon Muifa, which instead landed 300 km away in the city of Zhoushan,

in Zhejiang province.

Shanghai is typically spared the strong typhoons that hit further south in China, including Yagi, a destructive Category 4 storm that roared past southern Hainan province last week. But Shanghai and neighbouring provinces are taking no chances with Category 1 Bebinca.

All flights will be cancelled at Shanghai's two airports from 8:00 pm local time, and the operator, the Shanghai Airport (Group) Co said it will announce adjustments depending on typhoon's impact.

The Shanghai railway station has also suspended some services to ensure passenger safety, and the Shenzhen government said trains to and from Shanghai will be halted.

Resorts in Shanghai, including Shanghai Disney Resort, Jinjiang Amusement Park and Shanghai Wild Animal Park, have been temporarily closed while most ferries have been halted to and from Chongming Island - China's third-biggest island known as "the gateway to the Yangtze River".

## UKRAINE CITY

### Russian air strike injures 30 civilians

REUTERS, Kyiv

At least 30 people, including three children, were injured when a Russian guided bomb hit a high-rise residential building in Kharkiv in northeastern Ukraine yesterday.

"The rescue operation in Kharkiv continues. A Russian air strike. An ordinary residential building, a multi-storey building, was damaged.

There is a fire and rubble between the 9th and 12th floors," President Volodymyr Zelensky said on the Telegram messenger app.

He posted photos of smoke and fire billowing out of the windows of a multi-storey building. All windows had been blown out.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Divisional Forest Officer  
Wildlife Management & Nature Conservation Division, Chattogram  
and  
Project Director

Development & Expansion of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park, Cox's Bazar (2nd Phase)  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Revised) Project.

Memo No: 22.01.1500.122.29.002.2024.1645

Date: 15/09/2024

### e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for procurement of following works:

Tender ID & Package No.	Name of the package	Online Notice Publication Date and Time:	Online Tender last selling Date and Time:	Online Tender Closing Date and Time:
1013926 WMNCD/BSMSPC/2024-2025/WD-02	Construction of digital entry and exit gate.	17-Sep-2024 10:00:00	30-Sep-2024 17:00:00	01-Oct-2024 12:00:00
1013985 WMNCD/BSMSPC/2024-2025/WD-08	Construction of solid-wooden deck besides Crocodile enclosure.	17-Sep-2024 10:00:00	30-Sep-2024 17:00:00	01-Oct-2024 12:30:00
1014420 WMNCD/BSMSPC/2024-2025/WD-09	Construction of night shelter room for wildlife.	17-Sep-2024 10:00:00	30-Sep-2024 17:00:00	01-Oct-2024 13:00:00
1014456 WMNCD/BSMSPC/2024-2025/WD-19	Construction of water supply line.	17-Sep-2024 10:00:00	30-Sep-2024 17:00:00	01-Oct-2024 13:30:00
1014556 WMNCD/BSMSPC/2024-2025/WD-34	Repair and maintenance of Other buildings and structures.	17-Sep-2024 10:00:00	07-Oct-2024 17:00:00	08-Oct-2024 12:00:00
1014646 WMNCD/BSMSPC/2024-2025/WD-38	Repair & maintenance of water supply infrastructure.	17-Sep-2024 10:00:00	30-Sep-2024 17:00:00	01-Oct-2024 14:00:00
1015362 WMNCD/BSMSPC/2024-2025/GD-05	Supply of wildlife rearing equipment and tools.	17-Sep-2024 10:00:00	30-Sep-2024 17:00:00	01-Oct-2024 14:30:00
1015434 WMNCD/BSMSPC/2024-2025/GD-06	Supply of medical support equipment to wildlife (Tranquillizer gun).	17-Sep-2024 10:00:00	30-Sep-2024 17:00:00	01-Oct-2024 15:00:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for selling/downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

15.09.24

(Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury)  
Divisional Forest Officer

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## No innocent should be harassed legally

Directive for police officers must be enforced properly

One of the most immediate and rather disturbing side-effects of the August 5 regime change has been the surge in legal cases targeting individuals associated with the Awami League government. While cases over the crimes committed during the preceding days and weeks were expected, the legitimacy of many that have since been filed was dubious as they lacked credible evidence, and were potentially used as a means of harassing the accused. Among others, even academics, journalists, and artists have been targeted through such frivolous lawsuits—a trend that continues to this day.

Against this backdrop, it is heartening to see the police headquarters finally take steps to address these concerns. In a directive issued to police stations across the country, the authorities have recently instructed officers to remove the names of individuals from murder and other cases connected with the movement if no evidence of their involvement is found in initial investigations. Officers were also ordered not to arrest any government employee without proof. While such instructions were already in the CrPC and service rules, reiterating them in specific terms reflects wider concerns over the surge in arbitrary cases and also marks a policy departure from the previous administration's practice of harassing critics and political rivals through so-called "ghost cases."

The new directive, however, can open a Pandora's box of legal issues as it will mean rewriting the First Information Reports (FIRs) of many cases or withdrawing them altogether as there cannot be two FIRs in a single case. An even more concerning issue is the influence behind these arbitrary cases. Why would police officers indulge in writing unsubstantiated FIRs even after the regime change? In some murder cases predating August 5, BNP-Jamaat leaders who were previously named as accused have been replaced by Awami League leaders. In many instances, plaintiffs have admitted that they do not even know the accused. Clearly, the motive behind these lawsuits has been political. This is why it is essential to not just order the cessation of politically motivated cases, but also investigate how these cases were accepted in the first place and the complicity of officers and political actors responsible.

We must remember that the shift in power cannot be a justification for continuing such practices. If we are to hold to account those truly responsible for the indiscriminate killings in the lead-up to August 5, it is crucial that investigations be based on solid evidence. Blanket accusations and arbitrary cases risk not only the chances of justice but also further division at a time when national unity is vital. Innocent individuals who may have supported the previous government but had no involvement in crimes must not be subjected to any legal harassment.

## A sheer waste of public money

Why is Bangabandhu-1 satellite still incurring losses?

It is disappointing to see the woeful state of the much-advertised Bangabandhu-1 satellite, which was launched in 2018 at a cost of around Tk 3,000 crore. Reportedly, the Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited (BSCL), which was formed to operate the satellite, has not yet been able to make any profit from this project. Worse still, for all the losses it has incurred since, it has not shown that in its records. According to BSCL's last audit report (2021-22), its profit was Tk 85 crore; however, if the depreciated cost of the project is taken into account, its annual loss would stand at Tk 66 crore. Moreover, the delay in launching the satellite had led to an increase of project cost by about Tk 200 crore. The question is, was its financial feasibility thoroughly assessed before approving this costly project?

In its feasibility study, it was projected that the capacity of the satellite could be sold to Indonesia, the Philippines, SAARC countries, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and some other countries. But the Awami League government failed to create a market in these countries over the last seven years. This indicates that the project's feasibility was not studied properly. Also, due to some technical issues, Bangladesh has not been able to acquire the landing rights in those countries, meaning that the satellite has remained largely underutilised. In the process, it has truly become a white elephant, for which citizens are having to pay.

Unfortunately, this is not the only prestige project undertaken by the old regime without careful consideration of national interests. We can talk about the energy projects like Matarbari or Rampal power plants. Recently, the energy adviser has termed the Matarbari project as a "luxury project" with little benefit for ordinary people. Experts also repeatedly warned about the environmental costs associated with the Rampal project built in the Sundarbans. As such, we expect the interim government to critically re-evaluate all such projects draining national coffers and take decisive actions about them.

Regarding the Bangabandhu-1 satellite, the government should investigate why the project has failed to take off even after all these years and see if it is still feasible to operate. It should also hold to account officials involved with the project for failing to reap its benefits. In the future, the government should refrain from taking up such prestige projects and rather focus on initiatives that actually benefit the people in the long run. In a country where a large percentage of people still live below the poverty line, any wastage of money through ill-conceived projects is totally unacceptable.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY



### Bomb hits Wall Street in New York City

On this day in 1920, bombing at Wall Street in New York City killed 38 people and injured hundreds more. No group claimed responsibility for the crime, which remains unsolved.

# 101 of the RTI Act for our youth activists

Dr Shamsul Bari and Rubi Naz are chairman and assistant director (RTI), respectively, of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). They can be reached at rib@citech-bd.com.

SHAMSUL BARI and RUBI NAZ

Since the formation of a new popular government in Bangladesh in August 2024, the prevailing theme in the country has been reform and change of the entire governance mechanism. A popular outcry, particularly from students and the youth in general who led the movement to oust the previous regime, has called for a complete overhaul of all branches of the government, which have been mired in years of corruption and malpractice. The catchphrase for change is the establishment of transparency and accountability for all public servants to the people they serve.

While experts work out the reforms, citizens are also responsible for playing a more decisive role in holding all future

**Those among our youth who are charting change for the future should look at the proactive disclosure list in our RTI Act and decide how much more the government must disclose to be more transparent in its work. Many international guidelines are available online, where the sky is the limit. The most important thing is what we, as citizens, wish to obtain.**

governments and their administrative units accountable. For that, they can resort to an existing, readily available law: the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2009. Similar laws exist under different names in various parts of the world, mostly known as Freedom of Information (FOI) laws. In Bangladesh, the RTI law was first introduced as an ordinance by the caretaker government

in 2008 and later adopted as an act by the new parliament in 2009. As per the preamble, the law's primary goal was to empower citizens to monitor government work and ensure that it followed the laws of the land and was corruption-free.

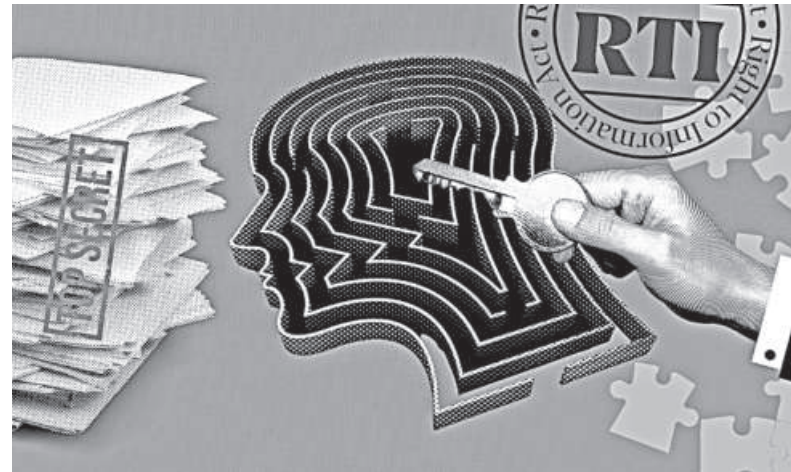
The law specifies two ways for citizens to obtain information from

government bodies on their website and by other public means, which are often benign and innocuous and hide more than they reveal. They include information such as organisational structures, functions, duties, powers, etc. While some countries disclose as much information as possible,

contain provisions on the right to access all official documents, which is a manifestation of the principle of public access to information, which includes all registered documents in the country. Let our young visionaries decide what the traffic would bear in our country.

Not all information available to public authorities can be disclosed proactively, as there is information within a piece of information that must be pried open through a reactive disclosure mechanism based on citizens' requests. For example, there could be a proactive disclosure as to who was awarded a tender, but there is little scope to know if the tender receiver was selected based on any favour or if any unfair means were involved. This can only be found through the reactive disclosure mechanism. Most sensitive information is obtained through this procedure. For example, the demolition order for the illegal construction of the BGMEA building on Hatirjheel Lake in Dhaka resulted from an RTI request submitted by Syeda Rizwana Hasan, now one of the advisers of the interim government. To appreciate the scale of information application under the reactive process, consider India, where an average of six million RTI requests are made annually to different public offices. In contrast, the average in Bangladesh is 10,000 annually.

Finally, what information should citizens seek from the authorities, and for what purpose? The short answer is that any government project or activity of any public body that affects public interest could be the object of inquiry by citizens to find corrective measures. Let our awakened student groups and the youth nationwide form citizen groups to identify issues on which to seek information from government bodies, in order to monitor their work and keep the pressure on them to be transparent and accountable. In the process, they will also discover why they must keep an eye on the formation and work of the Information Commission, which plays a crucial role in taking the law forward by, among other things, resolving disputes between the demand and supply sides of information. There could be no better law for our youth to be engaged in making a new Bangladesh where people's power reigns supreme in the true sense of the term.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

the government: i) through "proactive disclosure," which means citizens can demand that the government disclose on its own, without asking, all disclosable information, particularly those related to financial and human resources of the government; and ii) through the "reactive disclosure," which deals with information that is not proactively disclosed and must be specifically sought. Citizens are entitled to seek any information except what is exempted by the law, such as those that, if disclosed, may endanger Bangladesh's security, integrity or sovereignty, foreign relations, sensitive military or intelligence-related information, and citizens' privacy.

Beyond the exempted categories, citizens have the right to seek information related to governance from the public authorities, including NGOs that use public funds. It is best if governments use the proactive disclosure mechanism to disclose as much information to the people as possible, so the latter don't have to use the reactive disclosure mechanism. Unfortunately, that is often not the case.

The Bangladesh law provides a list

in Bangladesh, even innocuous information is often not disclosed, and the public shows no interest in this regard, partly due to a lack of awareness about the RTI Act and partly due to fear of reprisal from those providing information. Now that the younger generation is actively working to change these practices and undemocratic tendencies, it is time to consider the law more seriously.

Those among our youth who are charting change for the future should look at the proactive disclosure list in our RTI Act and decide how much more the government must disclose to be more transparent in its work. Many international guidelines are available online, where the sky is the limit. The most important thing is what we, as citizens, wish to obtain.

In Canada, for example, proactive disclosure includes financial and human resources-related information by all government departments and agencies, travel and hospitality expenses, and more. In Sweden, on the other hand, the principle of public access to information is considered the most fundamental principle of the government. Swedish laws

# The steep economic challenges the interim govt faces



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SELIM RAIHAN

The political upheaval in Bangladesh is having a profound impact on the country's economy. For the country to recover and stabilise, the interim government must prioritise political stability and the restoration of law and order. These steps are critical to setting the stage for economic recovery.

The ongoing political crisis can significantly slow down economic growth. Political instability breeds uncertainty, which in turn undermines investor confidence. As a result, both domestic and foreign investors can become more cautious, leading to reduced private investment. Political instability also affects the broader economic environment by disrupting business operations and creating an unpredictable financial climate.

Bangladesh has been experiencing high inflation since early 2022, with inflation rates reaching 11.66 percent in July 2024—highest in 13 years. Food inflation has been even more severe, hitting a record 14.10 percent. The ongoing supply chain disruptions and shortages are likely to keep inflation elevated, which disproportionately impacts low-income households. For many families, the rising cost of living is a significant burden, further straining their financial resources.

Unemployment, especially among educated youth, remains a pressing issue. Around 41 percent of young people aged 15-24 years are neither in education, employment, nor training (NEET), nearly double the global average. This high rate of NEET youth

exacerbates social and economic challenges, contributing to a sense of disenfranchisement and economic frustration among the younger population.

The country has been facing a worsening macroeconomic situation since the beginning of 2022, manifested by the decline in foreign exchange reserves and slow growth in exports and remittance earnings. During the ongoing political turmoil, small businesses and production units are particularly vulnerable to these challenges, facing disrupted operations, decreased productivity and, in some cases, forced closures. This affects the business owners and has a ripple effect on employees and suppliers, further compounding the economic difficulties.

The interim government's role is crucial in navigating these economic challenges and laying the groundwork for a stable transition to a permanent government. Immediate economic priorities should include combating inflation and restoring macroeconomic stability.

Addressing high inflation requires a coordinated approach involving monetary, fiscal and tariff policies. Effective market management is essential to stabilise prices. The appointment of a new central bank governor has raised expectations for better use of monetary policy tools to control inflation and stabilise the economy.

The government must work

to stabilise the macroeconomic environment by improving forex reserves, increasing remittance inflows through formal channels, and boosting exports despite the political crisis. These measures are crucial for restoring confidence in the economy and ensuring sustainable growth.

However, to address the country's structural economic challenges, comprehensive reforms are essential in several key areas:

**Banking sector:** Reforms are needed to tackle high levels of non-performing loans, poor governance, corruption, inadequate risk management, and regulatory weaknesses within the banking sector. Strengthening transparency, enhancing regulatory oversight, and ensuring sound financial practices are vital for restoring confidence in the financial system.

**Taxation system:** Bangladesh's tax-GDP ratio is notably low, standing at 7.8 percent in December 2023. Reforms should focus on broadening the tax base, improving compliance, and enhancing the efficiency of tax collection. Administrative and institutional reforms are necessary to strengthen the tax collection authority, curb corruption, and ensure a more equitable and effective tax system.

**Trade and investment policies:** To foster a more favourable environment for export diversification and foreign direct investment (FDI), reforms should address the heavy reliance on ready-made garments and the challenges in attracting FDI. As Bangladesh approaches its graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in November 2026, it is crucial to liberalise trade and investment regulations, remove structural barriers, and improve the ease of doing business.

**Public expenditure:** With public expenditure at around 15 percent of GDP, significantly lower than its

comparators, reforms should aim to improve allocation efficiency and enhance spending in key social sectors. Prioritising investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure will help address critical needs and support long-term economic growth.

**Institutional capacity:** Strengthening state capacity is essential for effective governance and service delivery. Institutional reforms should focus on improving efficiency and accountability within government institutions. This includes enhancing the capabilities of public servants, streamlining bureaucratic processes, and combating corruption to ensure that government actions are effective and transparent.

Addressing Bangladesh's economic challenges requires not only political stability, but also a robust and comprehensive approach to reform. The interim government must focus on both immediate economic priorities and long-term structural reforms to foster a stable and prosperous economic environment. By taking decisive action in these areas, the government can set the stage for sustained recovery and growth.

While the interim government may face limitations in implementing all desired reforms within its term, it is crucial to focus on setting a strong foundation for future changes. Establishing effective and robust frameworks for reform can ensure that progress is sustained beyond the interim period. By mobilising support from key stakeholders—including political leaders, civil society, and the private sector—the interim government can foster a collaborative environment that drives reform forward. This strategic groundwork will help pave the way for a more comprehensive and successful implementation of reforms in the long term, even if the immediate results fall short of expectations.



## FROM VISION TO ACTION

# Prof Yunus's reform agenda for Bangladesh



**Shafiqul Islam**  
is director of Water Diplomacy, and professor of civil and environmental engineering and water diplomacy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, US.

SHAFIQU L ISLAM

Prof Muhammad Yunus's transition from a Nobel laureate to the reformist chief adviser of Bangladesh's interim government continues to capture the nation's attention. In his August 25 speech, Yunus outlined an ambitious vision for a "new Bangladesh" centred on unity, transparency, and democratic renewal. While his message resonated with many, it also left citizens asking: can he turn words into action? Fast forward to September 11, and Yunus seems determined to answer that question. His latest address laid out specific reforms, marking the beginning of a long journey towards real change.

Diplomacy and governance today go far beyond traditional bureaucratic processes, and Prof Yunus stands at the forefront of this shift. Through Grameen Bank, he demonstrated

It requires navigating political complexities, balancing competing interests, and making compromises that NGOs can often avoid. While his outsider perspective and grassroots experience offer fresh ideas, Yunus and the interim government must be cautious not to fall into the political traps that can derail even the most well-intentioned leaders.

Politics requires balancing various factions, managing entrenched bureaucracies and interest groups, and dealing with opposition parties. The government must ensure that reforms are not seen as bypassing democratic processes or alienating key political actors. The government's ability to lead will depend on its skill in coalition-building and maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of both political elites and the public.

the political realities of governance. They must strike a delicate balance between being innovative reformers and astute politicians, ensuring that the vision of a new Bangladesh can survive the political process without being compromised by it.

In his August 25 speech, Prof Yunus's metaphor of the nation as a family resonated widely. The idea

initial speech with optimism, but also caution. Many were asking if he could deliver. This scepticism was not unwarranted, especially in a country where promises of reform have often been marred by inefficiency and corruption. Yunus responded directly to this scepticism in his September 11 speech by providing a clear roadmap for his reforms. The six

led uprising that ousted the previous regime, decision-making remains concentrated among the educated elites and privileged classes, with limited input from the broader public. To avoid past regime failures, the interim government must include all relevant stakeholders. This means going beyond the elites to include voices from four key groups:

of all four stakeholder communities.

Over the past month, the interim government has made several key decisions shaping Bangladesh's future. While some decisions may have sparked debate, there is widespread support for most of the government initiatives. However, one decision that has raised serious concerns is the appointment of Tajul Islam as chief prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT). Many view this choice as highly problematic, given his past association with the defence of Jamaat-e-Islami leaders convicted in controversial trials at the ICT. Critics argue that this appointment signals a potential return to politicised justice rather than a commitment to fair and independent trials, undermining the very goals of reform the interim government aims to achieve. If it is to maintain the public's trust and avoid the pitfalls of past regimes, it must ensure that appointments reflect the principles of impartiality, accountability, and fairness.

Earlier, I likened this journey to the metaphorical road from Tetulia to Teknaf—a long path towards democratic and institutional reform. The September 11 speech has laid the groundwork, with the commissions as the vehicles to move forward. However, the real challenge isn't just starting the journey; it's staying the course. The interim government has set Bangladesh on the right path, but success will depend on sustained public engagement, transparency, and a commitment to long-term change.

Prof Yunus's September 11 speech marks a critical step in turning vision into reality. The challenges ahead are immense, but the potential for meaningful reform is unprecedented. Now, the interim government must fulfil its promises, ensuring that the journey from Tetulia to Teknaf becomes a genuine transformation for the people of Bangladesh. This transformation must balance *nyay* (ideal justice) and *niti* (procedural justice). While *nyay* sets the values, *niti* ensures practical execution. As we move forward, autonomy, inclusivity, accountability, and justice should guide our government towards a more just and equitable future.



Prof Muhammad Yunus, chief adviser of the interim government, delivers an address to the nation on September 11, 2024. PHOTO: PID

was simple yet powerful: Bangladesh must come together as one to heal from years of corruption and mismanagement. However, as the days passed, some began to wonder if this metaphor oversimplified the challenges that lay ahead. Calls for unity, while necessary, are not enough to address the deep structural flaws embedded in the country's political and economic systems.

In his September 11 speech, the chief adviser pivoted from this metaphorical language to concrete steps. He announced the formation of six commissions aimed at addressing fundamental sectors: electoral system, police, judiciary, anti-corruption, public administration, and constitutional reform. This shift from a unifying metaphor to specific structural reforms is crucial. It signals a move from aspirational rhetoric to actionable governance.

In my previous article, I noted that the public had received Yunus's

commissions represent a pragmatic approach to institutional reform, offering a structured and transparent process for addressing corruption, inefficiency, and structural flaws. The commissions are not just symbolic gestures; they are tasked with delivering results within three months, after which consultations with political parties, students, and civil society will take place.

While Prof Yunus's move towards structured reform is promising, significant challenges remain. The timeline for the commissions—just three months—raises concerns about whether there will be enough time for thorough analysis and genuine consultation. The success of these efforts hinges on the cooperation of entrenched political and bureaucratic forces, many of whom have thrived in the current system.

A critical issue is the lack of representation from ordinary citizens. Despite the student-public-

the knowledge community, the political community, the resource community, and most importantly, the affected community.

As I discussed in an earlier piece, genuine reform would require a collective effort of all stakeholder groups. The affected community in particular—those directly impacted by decisions—cannot be sidelined. Their involvement is crucial for creating reforms that are not only theoretically sound, but also practical and just. If the interim government fails to include these diverse voices, there is a real risk of falling into the same elitist traps the uprising sought to dismantle. Prof Yunus has signalled the need for inclusivity, reflecting the ideals that emerged from the student-public uprising, but translating this vision into reality will be the true test. Rebuilding trust in the nation's institutions is possible, but only if the reforms produce tangible results that reflect the input

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how NGOs can drive powerful social and economic change where governments often struggle. This blend of engineering diplomacy—using pragmatic, principled solutions paired with negotiation—is a skill Yunus and the interim government can now bring to create a new Bangladesh.

However, running a government, unlike an NGO, is a different challenge.

Members of the interim government need to be cautious about becoming entangled in the very political games they seek to transcend—where loyalty, political capital and power dynamics can overshadow the principled pragmatism they aspire to attain. For the interim government, the key lies in harnessing the strengths of modern engineering diplomacy while staying grounded in

## Tax reform imperatives for the interim government



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BAZLUL H KHONDKER

Bangladesh is at a crossroads on several fronts. The expectations from the current interim government are enormous, particularly regarding the implementation of bold and radical reforms in key areas, including the economy. The key economic challenges facing the interim government include controlling inflation, preventing the depletion of foreign reserves, restoring discipline and public trust in the banking system, and overhauling the revenue mobilisation system. Historically, revenue efforts in Bangladesh—measured by the revenue-to-GDP ratio—have been seriously inadequate, which has constrained public expenditure.

This weak revenue effort has limited Bangladesh's ability to finance critical expenditures on physical infrastructure, human development, and pro-poor initiatives—thus restricting economic growth and employment. Additionally, it has strained the government's ability to fund social sector programmes, including social protection initiatives. Therefore, raising more revenue is essential for the government, and especially so for the interim government, given the heightened expectations from it for meaningful and positive changes.

Generally, in countries, there is a positive relationship between income growth (i.e., GDP, per capita GDP) and revenue mobilisation. In Bangladesh, the trend in per capita GDP shows it is rising, indicating that incomes—and thus the tax base—are increasing, which should lead to higher revenue generation, even if tax rates remain unchanged. However, contrary to this, the declining revenue effort trend suggests an inefficient revenue system in Bangladesh. Revenue efforts, which were around 11 percent in 2011, dropped to 8.3 percent in 2023—a decline of 2.7 percentage points over 12 years, during which per capita GDP increased by approximately 200 percent. This large negative association between per capita income growth and revenue efforts is both undesirable and unsustainable.

Furthermore, Bangladesh's performance in revenue mobilisation is dismal compared to its peers. Both Nepal and Cambodia, with lower per capita GDP than Bangladesh, have significantly higher revenue efforts—more than double Bangladesh's 7.4 percent.

Even Uganda, with half of Bangladesh's per capita GDP, managed to raise 12.5 percent in revenue—5.1 percentage points higher than Bangladesh. These comparisons further highlight the inefficiencies in Bangladesh's revenue system.

The two most important taxes in Bangladesh are value added tax (VAT)—an indirect tax—and personal and corporate income taxes, which are direct taxes. In FY23, these two taxes together accounted for 72 percent of total tax revenue. VAT, which makes up about 40 percent of tax revenue, has one of the lowest productivity rates in the world. This means that Bangladesh collects less VAT revenue at existing VAT rates compared to other countries with similar or lower rates.

When considering other indirect taxes such as import duties, supplementary duties, and excise taxes, the total share of indirect taxes is around 66 percent, while the share of direct taxes is only 34 percent. The inability to raise a higher proportion of tax revenue from direct taxes is another striking weakness of our system. The income tax system is based on an outdated 1984 ordinance, leading to complex tax forms and burdensome filing requirements, which discourage voluntary compliance. As a result, there were only 2.5 million taxpayers, or 1.52 percent of the total population in FY22. Low compliance and a narrow tax net have kept income tax revenue low, increasing reliance on indirect taxes, which disproportionately burden the poor.

A paradox of our tax system is the high tax-expenditure ratio despite dismal tax efforts. Tax expenditures are special provisions in the tax code—such as exclusions, deductions, deferrals, credits, and tax rates—that benefit specific activities or groups. These provisions result in forgone revenue. According to an NBR report ("The Tax Expenditure in the Direct Tax of Bangladesh: Estimation and Review," March 2024), tax expenditures in direct taxes amounted to 3.56 percent of GDP in FY21. While some of these may be justified on merit, such high tax expenditures alongside low revenue efforts are clearly unsustainable.

The assessment above suggests that Bangladesh's revenue system is both inefficient and inequitable. The dismal state of the revenue system is largely due to the lack of meaningful reforms over the past three decades since the introduction of the VAT system in 1991. Therefore, future reforms must focus on improving both the efficiency and equity of the system. Having a clear reform roadmap with specific targets is crucial. Bangladesh should aim to increase its revenue effort to 13.5 percent within the next two years and to 16.5 percent within the next five years. Although ambitious, these targets are feasible, as evidenced by the performance of other



ILLUSTRATION: STAR

countries. Additionally, revenue from direct taxes must increase to 40 percent within two years and 60 percent within five years.

### Strategic recommendations

Implementing the 2012 VAT law is likely to improve VAT revenue collection, address inefficiencies in the system, and enhance overall revenue through: i) eliminating the complexity of having multiple tax rates on the same products at different stages of production; and ii) reducing tax evasion, boosting revenues, and discouraging vertical integration, which will support the SME sector through subcontracting by large enterprises.

### Increasing revenue from the direct tax system

Bangladesh needs to mobilise more revenue from direct taxes to align with countries at similar income levels by: i) simplifying the personal income tax system by eliminating wealth and income expenditure statements, which contribute to corruption; ii) implementing electronic filing and payment systems while eliminating direct interactions between taxpayers and tax collectors; iii) lowering corporate tax rates to a maximum of 25 percent over the medium term with minimal exceptions—all sectors, including ready-made garments (RMG), should be treated equally; iv) replacing the wealth tax with a proper property tax system, based on realistic valuations of personal and commercial properties, with revenues earmarked for local governments; and v) reducing rebates, discounts, exemptions, and reduced rates of taxation, and introducing a tax-expenditure tool to clearly show the benefits and costs of tax policies.

### Improving tax administration

Bangladesh must: i) automate its tax administration; ii) establish a modern, computer-based audit system to identify audit candidates based on pre-determined red flags

and focusing on revenue productivity and genuine tax evaders; iii) create a separate tax policy division within the Ministry of Finance, staffed with tax policy experts to ensure tax changes are effective, efficient, and equitable; iv) incorporate alternative dispute resolution in income tax, VAT, and customs legislation to collect unpaid revenue; v) strengthen the research and administrative capacities of the National Board of Revenue through international technical assistance and partnerships with local research institutions—all tax data should be computerised, and online tax filing should be facilitated; and vi) introduce a redistributive fiscal policy tool (in line with SDG 10) to assess the impact of tax and expenditure proposals.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Memo No. 35.01.7587.190.09.141.24-2687

Date: 15.09.2024

## Corrigendum Notice No. 02

Due to unavoidable Circumstances some corrections are made in the following IFT. Bidders are requested to pay careful attention to IFT clauses in the e-GP website prior to submission of the tender.

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of works	Tender last selling (date & time) (modified)	Tender closing (date & time) (modified)	Tender opening (date & time) (modified)
01	1004639	SE/Noakhali/ NRD/PMP-Road/ 2023-2024/01 (Re-tender-01)	PMP work for DBS Wearing Course & Protective works at Ch. 21st (P) Km. to 28th (P) Km. of Lakshimpur-Dattapara-Chatkhil Road (Z-1510) under Noakhali Road Division during the year 2023-2024.	22/09/2024 at 16:00	23/09/2024 at 12:30	23/09/2024 at 12:30

All other terms and conditions of the tender document will remain unchanged. This Corrigendum Notice-02 will be the part and parcel of the Tender Document.

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

Sd/-  
**Ranapriya Barua**  
ID No. 005155  
Superintending Engineer, RHD  
Road Circle, Noakhali

GD-442



# Abdullah: The novel that pioneered a new era in Bengali literature

Much discussion revolves around the significance of *Abdullah* as a modern novel, where female characters are not vividly portrayed. However, the meticulous storytelling and detailed depiction of social realities stand out. Most critics interpret the novel as illustrating the contradictions between the declining, backward-looking older aristocratic Muslims and the emerging, modern, liberal-minded Bengali Muslims who were striving to lead the way towards modernity in Bengali Muslim life.

PRIYAM PRITIM PAUL

Kazi Imdadul Huq's novel *Abdullah*, written nearly a century ago, is regarded as one of the first modern novels by a Bengali Muslim writer. Initially known for his poetry and children's literature, Huq transitioned into a notable prose writer, offering profound insights into history, culture, and society. *Abdullah* was his only novel, published posthumously, and it has since become a milestone in Bengali literature, earning enduring acclaim from readers.

*Abdullah* is a social realist novel. Huq began writing it during the final phase of his life, infusing the work with mature reflections, imagination, and a realistic portrayal of Bengali Muslim life. Before embarking on the novel, he was deeply engaged in writing history, forming opinions, and participating in literary debates within the Bengal intellectual circle of his time. While not a social reformer, Huq was an artist whose hopes and ideals were vividly expressed in the novel. According to Syed Murtaza Ali, *Abdullah* was Imdadul Huq's greatest accomplishment and a significant contribution to Bengali literature. He writes:

*Abdullah's* character mirrors the writer's own life. Both the writer and *Abdullah* were ideal educators. *Abdullah* is depicted as an exemplary human being, never overwhelmed by danger or confused about his duty. As a writer, Huq envisioned Hindu-Muslim unity and created idealised characters from both communities. The novel contains many elements of humour, and Huq's satire is evident to readers through the descriptions of various events. Through a successful combination of various *Rasas*, *Abdullah* has become a delightful novel.

### The writer and the moment in history

Born on 4 November 1882 in Godaipur village, Khulna district, Kazi Imdadul Huq was a prominent educationist, thinker, and writer in early 20th-century colonial Bengal. His father initially worked in the Survey Division in Assam before becoming a mukhtar in the Khulna Criminal Court.

Imdadul Huq completed his BA at Presidency College, Kolkata, in 1900 and earned his BT in 1914. He gained extensive experience in the educational sector, starting as a temporary teacher at the Calcutta Madrasa in 1904.

In 1906, he briefly worked in the Education Department in Shillong, Assam, before joining the Dhaka Madrasa as a teacher the following year. He became a professor of Geography at the Dhaka Teachers' Training College in 1911, was appointed Assistant School Inspector of Muslim Education for the Dhaka Division in 1914, and served as headmaster of the Calcutta Training School in 1917. By 1921, he was the superintendent of the newly established Dhaka Education Board, a position he held until his death. Imdadul Huq passed away in Calcutta in 1926, at the age of just 44. Notably, he was president of the Publication Committee of the *Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Patrika* in Calcutta. In recognition of his contributions, the British Government honoured him with the titles '*Khan Sahib*' in 1919 and '*Khan Bahadur*' in 1926.

The novel is set during the first partition of Bengal in 1905, a time when the Swadeshi movement was in full swing, marking the first systematic political opposition to the British Raj. The novel vividly portrays the intense antagonism between Hindus and Muslims, capturing the social milieu of the era. It highlights how cities in Bengal were dominated by Hindus, who also held the majority of economically and socially significant positions and services.

The protagonist of the novel, *Abdullah*, resists continuing his family's religious legacy of *Prism*, choosing instead to focus on completing his BA exam and becoming an ideal schoolteacher with a modern education. He is deeply committed to uplifting his community through education and strongly supports women's emancipation.

Meanwhile, his brother-in-law, *Abdul Kader*, also pursues reform by striving to modernise madrasa education, introducing Bengali, English, and mathematics into the curriculum.

The main antagonist of *Abdullah* is his father-in-law, *Syed Sahib*, a staunch representative of Muslim aristocracy and a zamindar who fiercely clings to tradition, even as his rigid policies lead to his gradual decline. *Abdullah's* wife, *Saleha*, is a devoted follower of her father and shows little interest in *Abdullah's* progressive ideas. However, during a visit to town to care for *Abdullah's* ailing sister, she briefly questions her father's rigidity. Despite numerous challenges, *Abdullah* ultimately overcomes the obstacles in his path and fulfils his mission, guided by his uncle, *Mir Saheb*, a new type of entrepreneur in the Bengali Muslim community with practical ideas.

### The creation process

The creation of the novel *Abdullah* was a lengthy process. Kazi Abdul Wadud stated that in 1918, after a critical operation, Imdadul Huq had to stay in the hospital for an extended recovery period, around six months, during which he wrote the novel. Two years later, it began regular serialization in the newly established literary magazine *Moslem Bharat* in Calcutta, edited by poet Mozammel Haq and published by Mohammad Afzal ul Haq. The magazine serialized 30 chapters of *Abdullah* before it ceased publication.

*Abdul Qadir*, the editor of *Kazi Imdadul Huq's* works, mentioned that two additional chapters were drafted for the magazine but were never published due to its sudden disappearance. The complete version of *Abdullah* was finally released in 1933 by the Muslim Press in Calcutta. To finish the book, *Anwarul Haq* wrote chapters 31 to 41 based on the original draft, while poet *Shahadat Hossain* reviewed the entire manuscript. The whole process spanned over 15 years.

Kazi Abdul Wadud further mentioned that the entire drafts (chapters 31-41) written by Kazi Imdadul Huq should be included in the novel's appendix to understand the difference between Huq's intended ending and the one completed by *Anwarul Qadir*. However, *Abdul Qadir* only included chapters 31 and 32, which were written by Kazi Imdadul Huq for *Moslem Bharat*, in the appendix of Huq's works.

Notably, a dictionary was included at the end of the novel to explain



Kazi Imdadul Huq (1882-1926)

In his unofficial farewell speech to his students, *Abdullah's* mindset was clearly reflected. He said:

I bless you—be a human being, a true human being. If you are truly human, you will not hate each other. Hindus and Muslims should see one another as amicable beings. This is your mission. Remember, my brothers, as I have told you many times and will continue to say: do not allow discrimination between Hindus and Muslims. All the misfortunes and sufferings of our country stem from this discrimination. If it disappears, we will become truly human and make the face of our country shine.

*Syed Sahib*, a staunch upholder of his family's noble *Ashraf* legacy and a declining zamindar, resisted any change in social dynamics. During a visit to the city, he attended a mosque where he discovered that the Imam, though educated in religious traditions, came from a lower social stratum. Refusing to participate in *Namaz* under this *Maulavi's* leadership, he remarked:

He is the son of a *Zola* (Muslim weaver), now an *Alem*. His family has carried our shoes for 14 generations, and now he stands before us to lead *Namaz*? How can we pray under his leadership?

This incident underscores his refusal to accept social upliftment or equality, even within the realm of Islam.

The character of *Mir Saheb* was portrayed as a new type of Bengali Muslim entrepreneur, representing an emerging segment of Muslim society that adopted modified working ethics compared to the traditional Muslim community. He transformed his fortune by engaging in money lending with interest and the jute business. Needless to say, involvement in business with interest is considered prohibited according to Islamic ethics, leading to his near ostracism by his village and his own Islamic community.

Thus, although the interest rates charged by *Mir Saheb* were lower than those of Hindu lenders, the villagers preferred to borrow money from the Hindu lenders despite the higher interest, as interest is not a prohibited practice in Hinduism. This led *Mir Saheb* to leave his village, visiting only occasionally. However, whenever someone from the village sought his help, he would try to assist them with money or advice. While discussing the need to strengthen the position of the Muslim elite with *Abdullah*, he said:

Suppose those who were peasants two or three generations ago are now advancing through education, improving their economic conditions, and exhibiting good behaviour. If they are now interacting as equals with the upper section of our society, there should be no issue in associating with them. It is completely unreasonable to hate someone's pedigree indefinitely, even if they were once peasants. Instead, it would be wiser to integrate these newly developed individuals into the current elite class, as their hereditary line will also benefit from this contact. This will be advantageous to both parties.

*Mir Saheb* sought to broaden the traditionally narrow approach of maintaining the Islamic aristocracy through bloodlines. He did this not only by challenging conventional conservatism but also by adopting

practical measures to attain economic capital, such as education and wealth. Additionally, he utilised marriage as a means of transforming the social structure of Muslim society in Bengal. Significantly, *Mir Saheb's* vision of upward mobility allowed for the inclusion of previously lower-status individuals into the aristocracy, provided they met the necessary qualifications.

The first partition of Bengal was largely perceived by middle-class Hindus as a British conspiracy against them, designed to favour Muslims in the region. Hindu characters in government jobs and schools often discussed this perceived Muslim appeasement by the British Raj. For example, the Hindu headmaster at *Rasulpur* was quickly replaced following incidents involving Hindu students, and a British school inspector recommended appointing *Abdullah* to the position. This was seen by Hindus as patronising Muslims rather than recognising *Abdullah's* merits. The novel reflects the gradual increase of Muslims in education and public services, highlighting the social reality that Muslims were also entering these fields. *Abdullah's* approach to the school inspector was not for his individual benefit but also in response to demands from the Muslim community. He stated:

Sir, the number of Muslim students is increasing day by day. Two years ago, there were only 23, but now there are 38. However, there is no teacher for Persian. Therefore, *Anjuman* hopes a *Maulvi* will be appointed.

The fictitious district of *Barihati* is predominantly Muslim, but its town is overwhelmingly dominated by Hindus. In one corner of the city lies '*Muslim Para*', a neighbourhood where a few Muslims live and work in lower-status jobs. *Abdullah* and his brother-in-law, *Abdul Kader*, faced significant challenges in finding a house to rent, as Hindu landlords were reluctant to rent to Muslims. This narrative effectively captures the housing discrimination and difficulties that Muslims encountered in the cities of Bengal.

When *Abdullah's* sister urgently needed to be sent to the city, where they lacked adequate housing, a Hindu doctor known for his liberal ideas stepped in, offering his home to *Abdullah's* sister and her relatives. This gesture highlights how the rigidity of the Hindu *Bhadralok* began to soften through interactions with Muslims, and it underscores the doctor's deep commitment to his duty of service.

### Appreciation and legacy

Much discussion revolves around the significance of *Abdullah* as a modern novel, where female characters are not vividly portrayed. However, the meticulous storytelling and detailed depiction of social realities stand out. Most critics interpret the novel as illustrating the contradictions between the declining, backward-looking older aristocratic Muslims and the emerging, modern, liberal-minded Bengali Muslims who were striving to lead the way towards modernity in Bengali Muslim life.

*Saleha's* role was initially insignificant, as she remained deeply obedient to her father's dogmatic rules and showed little interest in her husband's enlightened thoughts. However, by the end of the novel, her character gained some prominence, particularly in the sections completed by *Anwarul Qadir*. Kazi Abdul Wadud noted this difference significantly:

Kazi Imdadul Huq is primarily a painter, whereas *Anwarul Qadir* is more of a psychologist, a difference

reflected in their writing styles. Notably, *Qadir's* contributions shine in two chapters: one depicting *Saleha's* death and the other describing *Mir Sahib's* final days. While Imdadul Huq portrays *Saleha* as nearly lifeless, overly constrained by her father's rigid principles, *Qadir* introduces a touch of compassion to her character and adds a hint of novelty and affection to *Abdullah's* otherwise mundane life.

At the time, Bengali literature was predominantly shaped by Hindu writers, resulting in portrayals of Muslim characters that many Muslims found objectionable and hurtful. These depictions were viewed as ahistorical and damaging to the Muslim community. In 1900, *Rabindranath Tagore* appreciated the increasing involvement of Muslims in Bengali literature in an article. He drew a parallel to how the French frequently depicted the British negatively in their literature, yet the English read French works with enthusiasm. *Tagore* suggested that Muslim objections to Hindu writers could be seen in a similar context.

Kazi Imdadul Huq critiques the comparison, arguing that the relationship between Hindus and Muslims is fundamentally different from that between the British and the French, as Hindus and Muslims are not only two parts of the same nation but also close neighbours. He contends that if Hindu writers maintain a hostile attitude towards Muslims, and Muslims similarly harbour hostility towards Hindus, then the blame for discord cannot rest solely on Muslims. Instead, Imdadul Huq asserts that writers, regardless of their religion, have a collective responsibility to engage in thoughtful reflection and pursue justice in the interest of a united India—the ultimate political aspiration of that era.

The novel can also be seen as a reflection of his lifelong commitment to the principles he embraced in his engagement with *Tagore* in 1903, which he further developed in this final work before his death. *Wadud* sent *Anwarul Qadir's Amader Dukkha* and *Abdullah* to *Tagore*. After reading *Abdullah* he remarked:

I am pleased to have read *Abdullah*, particularly because it offers valuable insight into the lives of Muslim households. This book prompted me to reflect on a societal aspect of our country. I observe how the lack of intellectual engagement has progressively hindered Hindus through rituals. This same blindness is evident in Muslims adopting *lungis* and *fezzes*, which, like the *dhoti* and *chadar* for Hindus, support the earnings of mullahs. Is this a reflection of the inherent qualities of our land? How long will this disease poisoned wind of barbarity continue to blow across our country? Will we persist in hurting and insulting each other until mutual destruction? The generosity of the author's writing adds a unique value to the book.

Towards the end of the novel, it takes on a somewhat utopian tone, suggesting an idealistic vision of peace between Hindus and Muslims. This is evident when the Hindu moneylender forgives the debt of the late *Syed Sahib* upon witnessing *Abdullah's* virtue—a scenario that seems overly idealistic, as if aiming to convey a message of unity between the two conflicting religions through literature. *Abdul Qadir* remarked that the novel might have been more compelling if Imdadul Huq had the chance to finish it, while *Syed Murtaza Ali* observed that *Abdullah's* resolution felt somewhat contrived, with events unfolding more by the author's design than by natural progression. It may have been the 'generosity' that *Tagore* noted after reading *Abdullah* that inspired the author to continue crafting stories with such imagination.

After Imdadul Huq's death, *Anwarul Haq*, who completed the novel, made a significant remark that sheds light on the historical development of the region. He said:

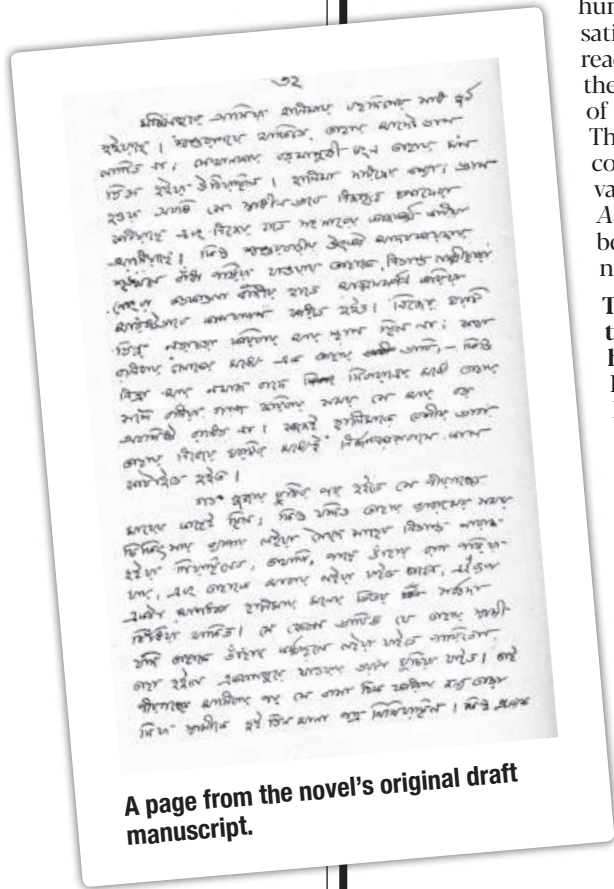
With the passing of *Kazi Imdadul-Haq*, a new era may dawn upon the Muslim society of Bengal. He lived with a degree of freedom and an appreciation for beauty, introducing several innovations. If Muslim society recognises and embraces these advancements, they could make significant strides towards progress.

Indeed, many changes occurred in the social and material life of Bengali Muslims after *Abdullah* was published, yet the novel's value remains vital in the literary scene for its visionary depiction of social reality.

*Priyam Pritim Paul* is a journalist and researcher.



Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)



A page from the novel's original draft manuscript.



"*Musalmani*" words used in the conversations and descriptions, reflecting common religious and everyday terms of Bengali Muslims. The narrative and descriptions were written in chaste Bengali, while the dialogue was in the local dialect, reflecting the characters' backgrounds and roles.

### Shaping protagonists and antagonists

The protagonist of the novel, *Abdullah*, is not a traditional heroic figure, yet he stands as the central character of the story. He emerges with a rational mind, serving as a harbinger of modernity for Bengali Muslims and a visionary advocating Hindu-Muslim unity during the turbulent Swadeshi period. Although not a revolutionary, he remained composed and committed to his liberal ideals, consistently persuading others with his beliefs. Rather than confronting his opponents, *Abdullah* sought understanding through dialogue, aiming to bridge differences and convey his ideas. When he found himself unable to sustain his arguments, he would gracefully exit debates, even with his wife, as he never sought to impose his opinions on others.



## 'Unpredictable and more interesting' CL set to begin

AFP, Paris



A new era in European club football begins this week when the first games are played in the expanded Champions League amid curiosity about the rejigged format as well as growing concerns over an ever-increasing number of matches.

UEFA, the European game's governing body, sensed the need for change at a time when the traditional group stage was becoming more predictable and the continent's biggest clubs were threatening to break away and form their own Super League.

The result is a league phase featuring 36 clubs – four more teams than in the past – with everyone playing eight matches against eight different opponents, two more games than previously.

The action starts in earnest on Tuesday, when reigning champions Real Madrid begin their quest for a record-extending 16th title with a home game against VfB Stuttgart, the surprise runners-up in last season's German Bundesliga.

That will be the first ever meeting of the sides, while the same night AC Milan host Liverpool in a heavyweight clash between clubs with 13 European Cups between them.

On Wednesday, Manchester City play Inter Milan in a repeat of the 2023 final won by Pep Guardiola's team.

For one week only, Champions League matches will also be played on Thursday and the line-up will include a glamour tie between Monaco and Barcelona.

The expanded competition also has room for a meeting of two historic names when former champions Red Star Belgrade and Benfica face off in Serbia.

**The league phase will feature 36 clubs – four more teams than in the past – with everyone playing eight matches against eight different opponents, two more games than before.**

In addition to that, there will be an encounter between French newcomers Brest and Austrian champions Sturm Graz, hardly the kind of tie normally associated with the European elite.

"In the end I think we came to a solution that will benefit all," UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin told Britain's Sky News recently when asked about the new format.

"It will make a more unpredictable and more interesting competition. It is a great change."

The top eight teams at the end of the league phase – which now runs into January – will advance to the last 16.

The teams placed from ninth to 24th in the standings will enter a play-off round to contest the remaining last-16 berths, while the bottom 12 teams will be eliminated.

There are greater financial rewards too, with the winners of the competition pocketing over 86 million euros (\$95.3m) just in prize money, not including bonuses of 700,000 euros for every point gained in the league phase or income from television.

The draw has thrown up plenty of glamour ties throughout the coming months, including Paris Saint-Germain meeting Arsenal and Manchester City, and Madrid playing Borussia Dortmund, Liverpool and Milan.



Bangladesh all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz enters the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday as the Tigers left for the India series. The Najmul Hasan Shanto-led side arrived in Chennai, the venue for the first Test, later in the evening.

PHOTO: STAR

# Shanto and Co eye taking India to the final session

SPORTS REPORTER

When a defeat of 208 runs is the best ever result for a cricket team against another in away conditions, the difference in strength of the sides hardly needs any further explanation.

The defeated team in this instance are Bangladesh and the victorious ones are India. The match had taken place in Hyderabad in 2017, which was also the Tigers' first ever Test against the neighbouring country on Indian soil.

Bangladesh have played two more Tests in India since then, both of them in 2021, where they showed little to no fight and suffered innings defeats.

The fact that the Tigers managed to make the opposition bat twice is not the only reason why the Hyderabad Test could be considered their best red-ball showing in India till now.

In the game, Bangladesh almost accomplished something they had never before done against India, that is to take a Test into the final session.

To be precise, there have been two Bangladesh-India Tests that have gone to the final session of the fifth day, but the Tigers can hardly take credit for that as in both of those matches, which took place in Chattogram and Khulna in 2007 and 2015 respectively, inclement weather had caused heavy disruptions in play, forcing them to end in draws.

In the Hyderabad Test in 2017, Bangladesh went into the fifth day with seven wickets in hand, 356 runs away from pulling off an improbable

chase of 459.

Overnight batter Mahmudullah hit a valiant 64 off 149 balls but the real star of the day from the Bangladesh camp was pacer Kamrul Islam, who fended off 70 balls for his three runs and remained unbeaten.

Bangladesh were ultimately bundled out in the second session, which went



**Our goal will be to play well throughout the five days, ensure the match is decided in the last session.**

BANGLADESH CAPTAIN, NAJMUL HOSSAIN SHANTO

on for 33.3 overs.

Had the others emulated Kamrul's resilience, the Tigers could have made the hosts sweat in the final session and even push for a heroic draw.

But back then, the Bangladesh team did not have the belief that they could pull off something like that in away conditions.

In the seven years since then, the Tigers have made steady progress in away Tests, pulling off a historic Test win over New Zealand in Mount Maunganui in 2022 and recently completing a 2-0 sweep against Pakistan.

The Bangladesh team have been showered with praises and cash bonuses for their feat in Pakistan and are riding high on confidence before the forthcoming two-Test series in India, starting in Chennai on

September 19.

Still, skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, perhaps realising the difference in strength of the two sides, had his feet firmly planted to the ground when he spoke about his expectations from the series before the team left for Chennai on Sunday, saying the first goal would be to take the game to the very end.

## SHORT CORNER

### Tarafder Ruhul Amin announces BFF presidency bid

About 24 hours after Kazi Salahuddin's decision to not run for presidency in the upcoming Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) elections, Tarafder Ruhul Amin has catapulted himself as a candidate for the top post in October 26 elections. It was the first footballing interaction on a public platform for the industrialist-turned-sports-organiser, who had apparently wiped his hands off his footballing ambitions after not running for the same post in BFF's last elections in 2020.

### Bangladesh women tune up further in Colombo

Bangladesh 'A' team beat their Sri Lankan counterparts by 10 runs in the third T20 of the five-match series in Colombo yesterday, winning the series with two games left to play. The visitors have continued to field a starting eleven totally resembling their national team, treating the series as a tune-up for next month's T20 World Cup – scheduled to begin on October 3 in the UAE.

Read full stories on The Daily Star's website



## Gabriel header earns Arsenal win at Spurs

REUTERS, London

Gabriel Magalhaes' second-half header earned Arsenal a crucial 1-0 win at Tottenham Hotspur in a feisty north London derby on Sunday to keep pace with early Premier League leaders Manchester City.

Spurs started sharper, and David Raya was forced into early saves before Arsenal fought their way into the contest, although Jurrien Timber was perhaps fortunate to avoid a straight red card for a reckless challenge on Pedro Porro in the first half.

The game was breathless but low on quality in front of goal until Arsenal punished Spurs from a corner, Gabriel escaping from Cristian Romero and powering a header past Guglielmo Vicario from close range in the 64th minute.

Arsenal withstood some late pressure from Spurs to secure the win, which puts them on 10 points, two behind champions City ahead of their trip to the Etihad next Sunday, while Spurs have four points from four games.



Lionel Messi leaps in celebration after netting the first of his two goals during Inter Miami's 3-1 victory over Philadelphia Union in a Major League Soccer fixture in Florida yesterday. Returning from an ankle injury that sidelined him since the Copa America final on 14 July, the Argentine maestro is now two goals away from Gonzalo Higuain's all-time club record of 29.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'Real Madrid didn't deserve to win'

AGENCIES

A 2-0 win for Real Madrid at Real Sociedad on Saturday might have served the purpose for the reigning LaLiga champions as they moved to second on the table with 11 points, one behind Barcelona, but there was nothing to write home about for the Spanish giants.

Second-half penalties from Vinicius Jr and Kylian Mbappe helped Real Madrid walk out with a victory in a game in which Real Sociedad had three shots rattle the bar and had the upper hand for almost the entirety of the game.

Real had a superior 16 attempts on goal compared to Sociedad's 11 but Los Blancos barely had any convincing build-up – with most of their opportunities coming from set pieces.

Hence, it was not surprising that Ancelotti conceded that his side did not deserve the win.

"It was a complicated match. We didn't deserve to win, because Real Sociedad pushed us really hard," he said in the post-match press conference.

"We held on and suffered, showed

character and a lot of commitment. I value that a lot because it's not easy to find commitment in a team with so much talent and quality and today we did it.

"I leave very satisfied and then we have to be self-critical in order to improve,"



Ancelotti added.

Real's midfield looked out of sorts while Rodrygo – who came off the bench early in the first half for an injured Brahim Diaz – Mbappe, and Vinicius could not find a way through upfront.

Ancelotti has been pegged by injuries to defender David Alaba and midfielders Jude Bellingham, Eduardo Camavinga, Dani Ceballos, and Aurelien Tchouameni, and can only hope for his side to get their rhythm back once most of the injury concerns subside.

Ancelotti acknowledged his side were struggling with fatigue and poor form, but said it was to be expected due to a busy calendar and coming off the back of the international break.

"We can talk about all the problems in the world with this match, but the important thing was to get out with a win.

"We have to take into account that we are not at 100 percent. It's normal, we don't have four midfielders who are injured. I value a lot the work of those who have played," added Ancelotti, who also mentioned that he saw improvement in Mbappe's performance after the France captain scored his third goal for Real on Saturday.

Real will now turn their attention to their Champions League title defence starting on Tuesday when they host Stuttgart.



## 'Never knew I own shares in bus company'

Says former DMP chief Mia's relative, whose tax file shows he has wealth beyond explanation

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Nur Alam Milon, now in his late 50s, says he has never been to Sreepur of Gazipur. The man from Kamargram village in Faridpur's Alphadanga upazila has also never heard of Moumita Paribahan Limited, a Dhaka-based transport company.



Asaduzzaman Mia

But tax returns filed in his name show he owns eight bighas of land in Sreepur's Kewa Mouza and has 1,000 shares in the transport line that operates between Savar and Narayanganj.

The company, where former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia's wife Afroza Zaman is

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



A US delegation led by Brent Neiman, deputy under secretary for International Finance at the US Department of the Treasury, meets Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the state guesthouse Jamuna yesterday. US Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu, left, was present.

PHOTO: PID

## Hasina sued over threats to Yunus, Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina was accused in an attempt to murder case in Chattogram yesterday for allegedly issuing death threats to Prof Muhammad Yunus and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Sourav Priyo Pal, former vice-president of Chhatra Dal's Chattogram Metropolitan unit, filed the case with the court of Chittagong Metropolitan Magistrate Jewel Deb.

According to the case statement, on May 18, 2022, during a press conference, former prime minister Sheikh Hasina said that

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## HSC results may be based on JSC, SSC performance

Officials say subject mapping to be used for calculating scores for cancelled exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities are working on a proposal to publish HSC results through subject mapping – a process in which the scores of six cancelled tests will be based on the students' SSC and JSC grades, sources at multiple education boards have said.

A similar process was followed when all HSC examinees were promoted after the exams were cancelled during the coronavirus pandemic. The results at that time were based on an average of the students' SSC and JSC scores.

Professor Tapan Kumar Sarkar, president of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee and chairman of Dhaka Education Board, said the latest proposal has been sent to the education ministry for approval.

"This may be the final process for determining the results, but it could also change. Until we receive the approval, we cannot provide further details. Once it is approved, we will share it officially."

The decision might be finalised within this week, Prof Tapan added.

The Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee submitted the proposal outlining the approach to calculate the final results as six examinations were cancelled due to the student-led mass uprising.

According to the proposal, 25 percent of the scores that the students obtained in their JSC exams, and 75 percent of SSC will be averaged to determine their final scores in the cancelled HSC tests, education board officials said.

Sources from Dhaka, Rajshahi, Barishal and Jashore education boards, who requested anonymity, said they have already started collecting the necessary information and documents from examinees to publish the results.

They said all the boards were asked to collect the HSC candidates' JSC and SSC transcripts and HSC admit card copies on September 3.

An exam controller from one of these boards said that most of the answer sheets for the exams already held have

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## Missile from Yemen hits central Israel

Houthi promise more strikes; 24 more Palestinians killed as Israel pounds Gaza

AGENCIES

The Iran-aligned Houthis who control northern Yemen yesterday hit central Israel with a missile for the first time and promised more strikes to come in solidarity with the Palestinians.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said the group struck with a new hypersonic ballistic missile that travelled 2,040 km in just 11 1/2 minutes. Israel's military said the missile fell in an open area and nobody was hurt.

Air raid sirens had sounded in Tel Aviv and across central Israel moments before the missile landed at around 6:35 am local time, sending residents running for shelter. Loud booms were heard, which the military said came from missile interceptors.

"Following the sirens that sounded a short while ago in central Israel, a surface-to-surface missile was identified crossing into central Israel from the east and fell in an open area. No injuries were reported," the Israeli military said.

Reuters saw smoke billowing in an open field in central Israel, though it was not immediately possible to determine if the fire was caused by the missile or interceptor debris.

The Houthis have fired missiles at Israel repeatedly in what they say is solidarity with the Palestinians, since the Gaza offensive began with a Hamas attack on Israel in October.

Previously, Houthi missiles have not penetrated deep into Israeli air space, with the only one reported to have hit Israeli territory falling in an open area near the Red Sea port of Eilat in March.

Hamas yesterday vowed that Israel "will not enjoy security" unless it ends its offensive in Gaza.

Apart from missiles, the Houthis have also attacked Israel with drones, including one that hit Tel Aviv for the first time in July, killing a man and wounding four people. That attack prompted Israeli air strikes on Houthi military targets near the port of Hodeidah that killed six and wounded 80.

The Israeli military also said that 40 projectiles were fired towards Israel from Lebanon yesterday and were either intercepted or landed in open areas.

In Gaza, civil defence agency yesterday reported at least three people killed in central Gaza and another around Gaza City when Israeli air strikes hit. Five Palestinians were killed after a school-turned-shelter for displaced civilians was hit by a missile in Gaza City.

## Five killed as lorry rams autorickshaw

Three of a family among them

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Five people, including three members of the same family, were killed in a head-on collision between a lorry and a battery-run autorickshaw in Gazipur's Kaliganj upazila.

The deceased were identified as Nazmul Hossain, 35, of Sakhira Sadar upazila; Amal Kumar Karmakar, 39, of Ashtagana Colony in Noagaon of Gazipur city; Rabeya Begum, 70, of Narsingdi's Shibpur upazila; her son Mohammad Ali, 55; and grandson five-year-old Aman Ullah.

The victims were all passengers of the autorickshaw. Besides, the driver of the autorickshaw was critically injured.

The collision took place in front of Deopara Pran RFL Filling Station in Kaliganj municipality area on the Tongi-Ghorasal bypass road around 11:00pm.

According to police and local sources, the autorickshaw carrying five passengers was heading towards Ghorasal on the Tongi-Ghorasal bypass road on Saturday night. Around 11:00pm, the lorry heading towards Tongi from Ghorasal rammied the autorickshaw

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

## Relentless rain floods low-lying areas in dists

STAR REPORT

Homes, roads, and other establishments in many districts, including Cox's Bazar, Bagerhat, Khulna, Jashore, and Barishal, were flooded due to torrential rain caused by a deep land depression.

One person drowned in Cox's Bazar.

A vast tract of low-lying land has gone under water, resulting in inundation of winter vegetables and crops. Many people were waterlogged and without power.

"Now it has been raining heavily in Bangladesh due mainly to the effects of the depression. The situation will start to improve from today," said Abul Kalam Mallik, weather expert at the Dhaka Met office.

He said except Sylhet, all other divisions saw significant rainfall yesterday.

He added that the depression formed near Sandwip Island and gradually moved towards Barishal, Jashore, and then moved towards West Bengal. It is now likely to move west-northwestwards at a rate of five to six km per hour and will weaken gradually.

In Cox's Bazar, a body was recovered from West Kutubdia Para point of the beach yesterday morning.

Although the victim could not be identified immediately, police suspect the person might be a fisherman and drowned at sea.

"We have sent the body to a hospital for an autopsy," said Masudur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of Cox's Bazar Sadar Model Police Station.

Bodies of two fishermen, who went missing after a fishing trawler capsized in the Bay on Friday, were recovered from Inani Beach on Saturday afternoon.

On Friday, six people of two families were killed in landslides triggered by incessant rain in Sadar and Ukhiya upazilas of Cox's Bazar.

In Bagerhat, low-lying areas have been inundated. Fish

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## 'Maintain peace, order at shrines'

Religious affairs ministry directs DCs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has instructed district commissioners (DCs) to take measures to maintain peace and order at religious shrines (mazars).

This directive was issued in a letter from the ministry yesterday.

According to a press release of the ministry, the directive was issued in response to planned attacks on shrines, allegedly aimed at embarrassing the interim government.

The letter states that some miscreants are targeting shrines in various parts of the country with the intent to disrupt law and order, which is both concerning and not desired.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Ukrainian rescuers work to extinguish a fire in a residential building following a Russian missile attack in Kharkiv yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## 3000-year-old Egyptian fort uncovered

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Archaeologists have uncovered a 3,000-year-old fort that defended the ancient kingdom against the invading "sea peoples" tribes from near the eastern Mediterranean.



Researchers uncovered a series of mudbrick building ruins in northwestern Egypt, including remains of military barracks for soldiers and storage rooms for weapons, food, and provisions from the New Kingdom era spanning 1550BC to 1070BC.

They also found several artefacts and personal items belonging to Egyptian soldiers stationed at the Tell Al-Abqain site on the Nile's Western Delta.

Previous research has hinted that the collapse of several dominant civilisations around 1200BC could be partly attributed to naval raids by the so-called sea peoples, whose exact origins still remain unclear.

The tribe coalition is thought to have managed to settle in a small section of the Mediterranean after its first wave of invasions in northern Egypt.