



ECNEC approves 12 projects involving Tk 1,68,780cr including 3 metro projects

Staff correspondent

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday approved a total of 12 projects involving an estimated cost of Taka 1,68,780 crore including three metro rail projects to facilitate environment-friendly mass transportation system in the capital. The approvals came from the 3rd ECNEC meeting of the current fiscal year (FY27) held at Bangladesh

Secretariat with ECNEC Chairman and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in the chair.State Minister for Planning Md. Zonayed Abdur Rahim Saki and Planning Division Secretary SM Shakil Akhter briefed reporters after the meeting at the NEC Conference Room in the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area.Of the total project cost, Taka 48,256.30 crore will come from the government of Bangladesh portion, Taka 1,20,466.39 crore as project loan and the rest of Taka

57.71 crore from the concerned organization's own fund.

In the day's meeting, the government approved a new metro rail project costing Tk 45,503.76 crore while also considered positively revisions to two ongoing metro rail projects.

The proposed MRT Line-5 Southern Route will develop a 17.20-kilometre metro rail corridor from Gabtali to Dasherbandi, including 13.10 kilometres of

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Sakhawat outlines four priorities to strengthen cooperation with China, others

Staff correspondent

Health and Family Welfare Minister Sardar Md. Sakhawat Husain yesterday outlined four priorities for further strengthening the cooperation in the health sector with China and other Asian countries. The priorities are pharmaceuticals and health technologies, artificial intelligence (AI) and digital health, healthy ageing and vaccines and health security. The health minister highlighted the priorities while addressing the BFA Global Health Forum-2026 Haikou Conference, held in Haikou in China. Sakhawat said Bangladesh has a strong pharmaceutical industry with medicines from the country being exported to nearly 160 countries. He said Bangladesh is interested in working jointly with China to facilitate access for Bangladeshi pharmaceuticals to the Chinese market, as well as in the areas including active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) production, technology transfer, research and the development of

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The country is everyone's ancestral property !.
Allegations of occupation and trade of Bangladesh
Railway, land in Chittagong Ambagan

Staff Reporter, Chattogram.

There are allegations of various irregularities, including occupation and trade, construction of illegal establishments and renting out quarters, around a large amount of railway land in the Ambagan area of Chittagong city. It is alleged that there have been allegations of irregularities in the use of government property against leaders and activists of various influential political parties as well as some railway officials and

employees. Locals complain that despite the fact that shops, houses and various establishments are being built one after another by occupying railway land day after day, no effective measures are in sight. As a result, a situation has been created in which many people feel that 'the more power, the more government property is occupied'. The names of Railway Transport Assistant Officer Md. Mahatab Uddin and Assistant Teacher

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JS Speaker stresses Bangladesh Germany parliamentary ties

Staff correspondent

Bangladesh and Germany are long-standing friendly countries, and the presence of German observers in Bangladesh's latest parliamentary election has further strengthened the existing ties between the two countries, Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, Bir Bikrom, said yesterday. "Both Germany and Bangladesh are fraternal countries in the democratic sphere," he said when German Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr Rüdiger Lotz paid a courtesy call on him at his office here. The Speaker said Bangladesh had faced prolonged exploitation

and experienced severe democratic discrimination during the Pakistan period. Although the country attained independence through the Liberation War in 1971, its democratic transition was repeatedly disrupted, he said. "People became frustrated with 15 years of misrule by the Awami League. A mass uprising of students and people took place against enforced disappearances, killings, extrajudicial killings and farcical elections," Hafiz Uddin said. He said democracy had been restored in the country through an acceptable and neutral election in the wake of the mass uprising, said a press release of parliament secretariat. The

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A composite image. The main part shows a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a white kurta and a thick orange garland, making a hand gesture. To his left, a man in a white cap is partially visible. In the background, another man in sunglasses is seen. A circular inset in the top right corner shows a close-up of a woman wearing a red hijab with gold jewelry.

8 Acquitted in Nusrat Murder Case Released from Kashimpur Jail

Jahangir Alam, Staff Reporter

?Eight people, including a woman, acquitted by the High Court in the murder case of Nusrat Jahan Rafi, have been released from Kashimpur High Security Central Jail and the Kashimpur Women's Central Jail in Gazipur. They were released in phases starting from 12:30 PM on Tuesday (September 15).

?According to prison sources, the released individuals are Md. Shamim, Hafez Abdoul Kader, Motiur Rahman Shakil, Afsar Uddin, Imran Hossain Mamun, Iftekhar Uddin Rana, Abdur Rahim Sharif, and Kamrun Nahar Moni. Moni was accompanied by her seven-year-old daughter, Mobasshera Khanam Rathi, upon her release.

?Confirming the matter, Md. Zakir Hossain, Jailer of Kashimpur High Security Central Jail, stated that the inmates were released in phases after verifying the necessary legal documents and acquittal orders received from the High Court.

?Nusrat Jahan Rafi, a student at Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fata Madrasa in Feni, was

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ECNEC clears three metro rail projects involving Tk 2.50 lakh crore

Staff correspondent

The government has approved three metro rail projects involving a combined estimated cost of about Tk 2.50 lakh crore including a new MRT Line-5 Southern Route project and revised costs for Japan-funded MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-5 Northern Route. The projects were approved at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) held at Secretariat on Wednesday, with Prime Minister and ECNEC Chairperson Tarique Rahman in the chair. The new 17.20-kilometre MRT Line-5 Southern Route connecting Gabtoli with Dasherkandi has been approved at an estimated cost of Tk 45,503.76 crore. Of the amount, the government will provide Tk15,197.66 crore, while Tk 30,306.10 crore will come as project loans from the Asian Development Bank and

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Describing the BNP's current position as a continuation of its long struggle for democracy under Khaleda Zia, Rizvi said the party remained committed to multiparty democracy. On Tarique Rahman's decision not to attend BRICS despite receiving an invitation, Rizvi said the decision demonstrated that Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty were being placed above all other considerations. Addressing the gas and fuel crisis, Rizvi

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International cooperation crucial for health, SDGs: Humaiun

Staff correspondent

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humairun Kobir yesterday underscored the importance of international cooperation and multilateral partnerships in advancing global health and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He made the remarks during a meeting with World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to Bangladesh Dr Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed at his office here.

according to a Foreign Ministry press release. During the meeting, they discussed issues of mutual interest, with particular emphasis on strengthening cooperation in public health, health security, disease prevention and access to essential health services. Kobir appreciated WHO's continued cooperation and support in strengthening Bangladesh's health sector and addressing emerging public health challenges. He stressed that enhanced

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Allegations of Money Collection Against SI Milton of Bar Aulia Highway Police Station in Sitakunda

Md. Omar Faruk, Special Correspondent

Sub-Inspector (SI) Milton of Bar Aulia Highway Police Station in Sitakunda, Chattogram, has been accused of allegedly collecting money from individuals and businesses involved in the transport sector, as well as harassment and abuse of authority.

The allegations are said to be supported by records of financial transactions and other information and documents. However, the allegations have not yet been independently verified. Local stakeholders are calling for a neutral investigation to establish the facts.

According to information obtained during an inquiry, a record allegedly shows that a total of Tk 836,500 was collected from various individuals and entities associated with the transport sector in August. The alleged record reportedly contains dates of payments, names or identities of the concerned persons, mobile phone numbers and amounts of money.

Questions Over the Alleged Transaction Records

According to the complainants, some of the alleged payments were made directly, while others were reportedly transferred through mobile financial services. There are also allegations that money was transacted through a bKash agent located near the police station.

However, whether these transactions were directly connected to SI Milton remains a matter requiring verification through relevant financial records and a lawful investigation.

Allegations of Money Collection From the Transport Sector

The allegations involve various types of vehicles, including buses, trucks, CNG-powered vehicles, microbuses and private cars.



The complainants allege that money was collected from different vehicles while highway police personnel were carrying out their duties.

If the allegations are substantiated, investigators would need to determine why the payments were allegedly made, from which vehicles they were collected and whether the transactions were connected to the inspection of vehicle documents or enforcement of traffic laws.

Records of vehicle inspections, cases filed and other legal actions taken during the relevant period could also help establish the facts. Government Revenue and Road Safety Concerns

If vehicles found to have deficiencies in fitness certificates, route permits, tax tokens or other required documents were allegedly allowed to continue in exchange for money instead of facing lawful action, the matter could raise

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Dhaka eyes resumption of direct NY flights: Millat tells Christensen

Staff correspondent

Bangladesh is working to resume direct flights between Dhaka and New York next year, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister M Rashiduzzaman Millat said yesterday. The minister revealed the plan during a courtesy call by US Ambassador to Bangladesh Brent T Christensen at his office at the Secretariat here. Millat said the initiative was being pursued considering the growing commercial and diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and the United States, as well as the travel needs of the large Bangladeshi community living there. He said securing Category 1 status under the US Federal Aviation Administration's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) programme is essential for operating direct commercial flights to the United States. The US ambassador assured that Washington would extend all possible cooperation to facilitate the launch of direct flights on the Dhaka-New York (JFK) route. During the meeting, the two sides emphasised further strengthening bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the United States, particularly in the civil aviation and tourism sectors. The minister said the government is attaching special importance to the country's civil aviation sector and working to formulate an aviation master plan to improve air connectivity. As part of efforts to transform Bangladesh into a regional aviation hub, a state-of-the-art Air Traffic Management System has recently been inaugurated at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, he said. The government has also undertaken an initiative to establish an international airport in Bogura, he added. Millat

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Ducusu’s politics of revisionism

The surprise attempt by the outgoing leaders of the Dhaka University Central Students’ Union (Ducusu) to rewrite the history of our nation by altering its archive is deplorable. In reorganising Ducsu’s archive, its top executives—who ran for office as non-partisan but are now identified as leaders of Islami Chhatrashibir, the student wing affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami, a party historically opposed to the creation of Bangladesh—have clearly overstepped their remit by making such changes without authorisation from the university administration. Their arbitrary inclusion of an infamous photograph of Pakistan’s founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, delivering his speech declaring Urdu as the state language is a blatant affront to the spirit of our Language Movement and independence struggle.

There can be little justification for dismissing this as mere ignorance. Jinnah’s speech, delivered at the University of Dhaka 78 years ago, was immediately met with strong protests from the students. His attempt to impose Urdu on a population in which Bangla was spoken by the overwhelming majority helped fuel the Language Movement and, more broadly, the struggle for self-rule that ultimately contributed to the break-up of Pakistan and the birth of independent Bangladesh.

No room for ‘parallel administration’: DU warns Ducsu over unauthorised activities, teacher-evaluation website

The outgoing Ducsu leadership’s audacious decision to prominently feature Jinnah, therefore, raises questions about its intentions. Those questions become even more pertinent given the removal of the photograph of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s historic March 7, 1971 speech, one of the defining moments of Bangladesh’s struggle for independence. Jinnah’s role in establishing Pakistan as a separate homeland for Muslims in the subcontinent following the end of British colonial rule is undisputed. Equally undisputed is Bangabandhu’s historic role in leading the struggle that culminated in the creation of Bangladesh through its separation from Pakistan. Any attempt to diminish Bangabandhu while simultaneously glorifying Jinnah—particularly by individuals associated with a political organisation that opposed Bangladesh’s Liberation War—amounts to an effort to construct a narrative that runs counter to the established history of the nation. This is not, however, the only instance in which the current Ducsu leadership appears to have exceeded its mandate. It has become embroiled in a number of controversies, raising questions about the scope of its activities and the authority under which they were undertaken. We also question why the Dhaka University administration remained seemingly passive in the face of several unauthorised activities by Ducsu, which increasingly appeared to operate as a parallel authority within the institution. These activities reportedly included assessing teachers’ academic performance and undertaking construction and engineering works on campus—functions that clearly fall outside the normal remit of a students’ union. We welcome the administration’s assertion that the latest display was incompatible with the history of the Language Movement and the Liberation War. The university authority should complete its investigation without delay, and take appropriate action against those responsible for violating the university’s existing laws, regulations, policies and administrative structures. Any attempt to establish a parallel administration by bypassing or defying the rules and regulations of the institution must be dealt with firmly.

Bangladesh must strategise carefully for the next Ganges treaty

Md. Neyamul Hossain

routine inspection and flow measurement work at Farakka and Hardinge Bridge. In September last year, Bangladesh signalled a preference for a longer-term treaty and more predictable flows. A reported 40,000-cusec target, against the treaty’s 35,000-cusec benchmark established in 1996, has entered the public debate, although its basis remains unclear. Dhaka has also proposed a new institutional mechanism covering 14 transboundary rivers, while New Delhi has suggested strengthening the existing JRC instead. These provide a foundation, but it is not yet clear whether they have been

The wider state of Bangladesh-India relations makes the resilience of the water-sharing arrangement even more important. The two countries have gone through a difficult period, although both sides have recently spoken of a “fresh start” in bilateral relations. Water cooperation, nevertheless, has continued through the JRC and technical channels. The next treaty should be designed to keep essential water cooperation functioning when the wider relationship becomes difficult. Joint monitoring, data exchange, regular review and clear procedures for resolving differences are important to keep the treaty working, when political trust is under pressure.

The next agreement should also be designed not just to establish predictable dry season flows but to remain workable as hydrological conditions change. The 1996 treaty contains some of the foundations for this, including periodic review and emergency consultations, but the changing river may require a more adaptable framework. The UNECE guide for transboundary water cooperation similarly emphasises adaptable agreements, shared data, and effective institutions. The objective should not be just to settle the next allocation but to establish an arrangement that can continue to work as conditions change. These challenges point to what the Ganges negotiation will require from Bangladesh, bringing its technical knowledge, institutional experience and diplomatic judgement together in an effective position for discussion. The country has a clear national interest in securing more predictable water flows, but the next agreement must also reflect what it has learnt about the river and the institutions needed to keep cooperation working through periods of political strain. That preparation needs to be complete before formal negotiations begin. Ultimately, what Bangladesh secures will depend on how well it has prepared to negotiate for it.

brought together into a coherent negotiating strategy.

However, a negotiating strategy requires more than preparatory activity. Targets such as 40,000 cusecs of river water need a clear basis. Is it a scientifically derived requirement, a preferred outcome, or a starting point for negotiation? What is the minimum Bangladesh can accept? Which parts of the position are negotiable, and what could Bangladesh offer in return? The same questions apply to the institutional arrangement. If the existing JRC is to remain the main framework, what needs to change within it? How quickly should the two sides respond during a drought, and how should disagreements be handled when political relations deteriorate? Experts have also called for economists, urban planners, sociologists, and environmental specialists to be part of the preparation. The task is to turn technical knowledge and institutional experience into a clear negotiating strategy.

This distinction matters because formal renewal negotiations have yet to begin. Bangladesh sent its proposal for talks in June and has since been waiting for India’s response. At the same time, routine technical cooperation has continued. This is an important advantage because Bangladesh is not starting from a breakdown in all channels of communication. However, routine technical cooperation is not a substitute for the political and diplomatic work of negotiation. A negotiating strategy needs to anticipate India’s likely objections, identify where compromise is possible, and establish what Bangladesh will do if its preferred outcome cannot be secured.

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ECNEC approves 12 projects

underground tracks.

The meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, considered andapproved revised proposals for MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-5 Northern Route.

The government would provide Tk 15,197.66 crore for the Line-5 Southern Route, while Tk 30,306.10 crore will come from loans from the Asian Development Bank and South Korea’s Economic Development Cooperation Fund.The two ongoing metro projects, both approved in 2019, were originally estimated to cost a combined Tk 93,799.97 crore. Their combined revised cost has now reached Tk 2,04,243.25 crore, an increase of Tk 1,10,443.28 crore, or 117.74 per cent.

The revised figure is Tk 9,741.84 crore lower than the Tk 2,13,985.09 crore proposed by Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited in August, following recommendations from a Project Evaluation Committee meeting on August 30.The revised proposals were sent to the Planning Commission on September 13 after reassessment of costs related to mainline construction, land development, buildings, electrical and mechanical systems, utility relocation and equipment.

The cost of the 31.24-kilometre MRT Line-1, connecting the airport with Kamalapur and featuring an elevated branch from Natun Bazar to Purbachal, has been increased to Tk 1,14,394.89 crore from Tk 52,561.43 crore approved by ECNEC in 2019.The increase is Tk 61,833.46 crore, or 117.64 per cent. The government contribution would rise by 133 per cent to Tk 30,552.26 crore, while the Japan International Cooperation Agency loan would increase by 112.53 per cent to Tk 83,842.63 crore.

Sakhawat outlines four

smart health infrastructure.On AI and digital health, the minister said modern technologies have significant potential in disease diagnosis, treatment and medical education, as well as in oncology, precision medicine, robotic surgery, chronic disease management and remote patient monitoring.

He also called on technology companies to establish partnerships in Bangladesh in these areas.Regarding healthy ageing, the minister said the elderly population is growing rapidly across the Asia. Regional cooperation is therefore needed to develop rehabilitation services, assistive technologies, geriatric care and age-friendly healthcare systems, he said. Similarly, he stressed the need for joint initiatives among the countries to advance vaccine research and production, facilitate technology transfer and ensure stable supply chains.

"The future of healthcare in Asia will depend on how well we cooperate, innovate and share our responsibilities," the minister said. He called for stronger regional cooperation to advance healthcare across the Asia. Senior officials from China, Laos, Egypt and the World Health Organization attended the conference including Leung Chun-Ying, Vice-Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and the fourth chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The country is everyone's ances

of Bangladesh Railway Government High School, Chittagong Pahartali, Nigat Sultana have appeared in the list of complaints. There are allegations that they are earning about 15 thousand taka per month by renting the government houses allotted to them.

Not only that, there are also allegations of constructing addi-

tional structures within the boundaries of the allotted houses with their own funds and collecting money from them by renting them out year after year.

It is also alleged that Chittagong Bangladesh Railway Transport Government Officer Md. Mahatab Uddin is earning about 15 thousand taka per month by renting out the government-allocated house and has also built about 12 additional rental houses within its boundaries. It is known that the monthly rent of each of these houses is from 3 thousand to 3 thousand 800 taka. Accordingly, there are allegations of collecting about 40 thousand taka per month from the additional houses built. If the allegations of earning money by renting out government residential quarters privately and constructing additional structures without permission in the allotted areas are true, the question has arisen as to whether it is in conflict with government regulations or not.

When asked about the allegations, Railway Transport Assistant Officer Md. Mahatab Uddin said that he is not alone in these activities; Many other officials are involved in such activities. According to him, he is also doing the same thing as others are doing occupation and trade.

More questions have arisen around his statement - if there are irregularities in the use of government property, then who is responsible for taking action against the concerned?

Regarding the complaint, Railway Divisional Transport Officer Farhan Mahmud said that he took charge a few days ago. So, the matter was not known earlier. However, he said that after receiving the complaint, the matter will be investigated and if the truth of the complaint is found, legal action will be taken against the concerned official.

On the other hand, when asked about collecting rent from Nigat Sultana, an assistant teacher of Chittagong Pahartali Bangladesh Railway Government High School, she denied the matter.

JS Speaker stresses Bangladesh

Speaker said the people of Bangladesh had repeatedly sacrificed themselves for democracy and had never deviated from their long struggle to establish the rule of law.

German Ambassador Dr Rüdiger Lotz said Bangladesh had moved from authoritarian rule towards democracy after being freed from 15 years of authoritarian governance.

He said the elected government currently faces many challenges and pledged the German government’s highest possible support to make democracy effective in Bangladesh.

During the meeting, the delegation stressed the formation of a Germany-Bangladesh parliamentary committee and expansion of parliamentary diplomacy through friendship groups.

They also emphasised increasing German economic investment in Bangladesh, particularly exploration for oil and gas wells in coastal areas and the establishment of fertiliser factories.

The Speaker invited German experts to explore oil and gas resources in Bangladesh’s maritime boundary and coastal areas.He informed the ambassador that Bangladesh’s future economy would depend on energy. Representatives of the German Embassy and relevant officials of the Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat were present at the meeting.

Rizvi urges unity to protect

attributed the disruption to difficulties in importing LNG, fuel and diesel amid the US-Iran war. He said the government was seeking alternative supplies from Indonesia, Malaysia and Qatar to maintain gas pressure and keep industries and house-

holds running.

Referring to recent signs and activities at Dhaka University Central Students’ Union (DUCSU) and elsewhere, Rizvi called for greater vigilance, saying any attempt to undermine the legacy of the 1971 Liberation War would be an insult to the country’s martyrs.He urged all political and social groups to uphold the spirit and achievements of the Liberation War. Muktijoddha Dai President Bir Muktijoddha Ishiaq Aziz Ulfat presided over the programme, while Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Muktijoddha Projnmo Convener and State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Ishraque Hossain attended as the special guest. Leaders and activists of the two organisations took part in the human chain and protest rally.

Allegations of Money Collection

concerns regarding government revenue and road safety.

Therefore, the alleged payment records should be cross-checked against relevant vehicle documents and records of legal action to determine whether there was any connection between the alleged transactions and official duties.

Allegation Regarding a Tk 9 Million Fixed Deposit

Another allegation concerns a fixed deposit reportedly worth approximately Tk 9 million (Tk 90 lakh) allegedly held in the name of SI Milton’s wife at Sonali Bank.

The existence, ownership and source of funds of the alleged fixed deposit have not been independently verified through bank documents. Therefore, no conclusion can reasonably be drawn solely on the basis of the allegation.

The matter could be clarified through an appropriate investigation and verification of relevant banking records in accordance with applicable law and banking confidentiality requirements.

Allegations Relating to Previous Posting

Various allegations have also been raised concerning SI Milton’s previous posting at Teknaf Police Station. These include allegations of detention, harassment, threats of being implicated in drug cases and demands for money.

The veracity of these allegations would require examination of relevant case records, general diaries, duty records and any previous complaints filed during the period concerned. SI Milton Denies the Allegations

8 Acquitted in Nusrat

burned to death after protesting sexual harassment. A trial court had previously sentenced all 16 accused to death. However, following the appeal hearings, the High Court rejected the death reference, granted their appeals, and acquitted the eight individuals. Following the completion of required legal procedures based on the High Court verdict, they were set free yesterday from the two Kashimpur prisons.

ECNEC clears three

South Korea’s Economic Development Cooperation Fund.The route will include 13.10 kilometres of underground tracks and is scheduled to be implemented from September 2026 to August 2033.The project will pass through Technical intersection, Kalyanpur, Shyamoli, College Gate, Asad Gate, Sukrabad, Karwan Bazar, Hatirjheel, Tejaon, Aftabnagar, Nasirabad and Dasherbandi.The ECNEC also approved revised cost proposals for MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-5 Northern Route, both of which were originally approved in 2019.The revised cost of the 31.24-kilometre MRT Line-1 connecting Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport with Kamalapur has been set at Tk1,14,394.89 crore, up from the original Tk52,561.43 crore.The increase is Tk61,833.46 crore, or 117.64 per cent.Under the revised proposal, the govern-

ment’s contribution will rise to Tk30,552.26 crore, while the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) loan will increase to Tk83,842.63 crore.The revised proposal cited delays in design and tender preparation during the Covid-19 pandemic and complexities associated with implementing the country’s first underground metro rail project as so

Changes during detailed design included larger stations, relocation of station entrances, exits and ventilation shafts, a three-storey Rajarbagh station and around 20 kilometres of detour roads for traffic management during construction.The cost of the 20-kilometre MRT Line-5 Northern Route from Hemayetpur to Bhatara has been revised to Tk 89,848.36 crore from Tk 41,238.54 crore, an increase of Tk48,609.82 crore, or 117.88 percent.The government contribution will rise by 84.22 percent to Tk22,330 crore, while the JICA loan will increase by 131.89 percent to Tk67,518 crore.Hemayetpur-Amin Bazar section of the Northern Route will be elevated, while Amin Bazar-Bhatara section will run underground through densely populated areas.The project was originally scheduled for completion by 2028. The revised proposal extends the completion target to 2032.The combined original cost of MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-5 Northern Route was Tk93,799.97 crore.Their combined revised cost now stands at Tk2,04,243.25 crore, an increase of Tk1,10,443.28 crore, or 117.74 percent.The revised combined figure is Tk9,741.84 crore lower than the Tk2,13,985.09 crore proposed earlier by Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited following a reassessment of construction, land development, buildings, electrical and mechanical systems, utility relocation and equipment costs. The ECNEC meeting also approved other development projects from several ministries, including Roads and Highways, Defence, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Railways, Labour and Employment, and Power, Energy and Mineral Resources.

International cooperation

international cooperation and effective multilateral partnerships are essential to advance health objectives while accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs.The WHO representative briefed the state minister on the organisation’s ongoing and planned cooperation with Bangladesh, including support for strengthening the health system, capacity building, disease surveillance and preparedness for public health emergencies. Both sides expressed their commitment to further strengthening cooperation between Bangladesh and WHO.They also agreed to maintain close coordination on issues of common interest at national, regional and international levels.

Dhaka eyes resumption of direct

said steps have been taken to procure new aircraft to develop Biman Bangladesh Airlines into a globally reputed legacy carrier.An agreement has already been signed to purchase 14 Boeing aircraft, representing an important example of long-term commercial and strategic cooperation between the two countries, he said.The minister, however, stressed the need for expediting the delivery of the Boeing aircraft.Turning to tourism, Millat said Bangladesh possesses immense natural beauty, while the government is encouraging private investment to develop the country’s 1,498 tourist sites into international-standard destinations.Christensen said the United States stands beside Bangladesh in its efforts to become a regional aviation hub and expressed confidence that the friendly relations between the two countries would remain strong.He said US investors are interested in contributing to the development of Bangladesh’s civil aviation and tourism sectors.



Role of engineering, technology universities crucial to build world-class human resources: President

Staff correspondent

President Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the country's engineering and technology universities play a very important role in preparing world class human resources.

"Engineering and technology universities of the country play a very important role in developing skilled, innovative and technology-oriented human resources, who are capable of meeting

the challenges of the modern world," he said. President said this when a delegation of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (RUET) paid a courtesy call on him at the Bangabhaban yesterday. President's Press Secretary Md. Sarwar Alam told BSS. RUET vice-chancellor Professor S M Abdur Razzak led the delegation. During the meeting, the delegation briefed the President on the university's academic activities,

research, infrastructural development and overall academic progress "Engineering and technology universities have a very important role in the country's technological, and economic development," the President said. He also stressed enhancing the capacity of RUET to improve the quality of its education and research and elevate them to international standards. Relevant secretaries of the President's Office were present during the meeting.

PM's press secretary urges media to help counter rumours, dengue through public awareness

Staff correspondent

Prime Minister's Press Secretary Saleh Shibby on Wednesday urged the media to help counter misinformation and raise public awareness about dengue prevention, saying the government's efforts to ensure accountability and improve public services need to be communicated clearly to the people. Speaking at a press conference at the Karobi Hall of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Shibby said the media acts as a bridge between the government and the people by informing the

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Application deadline for DSHE master trainer posts extended to Sept 26

Staff correspondent

The deadline for applications to form a master trainer pool to enhance the professional skills of secondary-level teachers has been extended to September 26. The information was disclosed in a notice issued by the Learning Acceleration in

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Bakery product price hike put on hold

Staff correspondent

The proposed price hike of bakery products, including biscuits and bread has been put on hold for the time being following a meeting between the government and business leaders yesterday. The decision was taken at a meeting held at the Ministry of Commerce with Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir in the chair, said a press release.

The meeting discussed in detail the recent announcement by businesses to increase prices of bakery products and the costs involved in their production and marketing. Representatives of relevant business organisations attended the meeting. Following the discussion, business leaders agreed to keep the decision to increase the prices of

biscuits and bread suspended for the time being. Meanwhile, a committee headed by the chairman of the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) has been formed to review the costs related to the production and marketing of bakery products, prices of raw materials, taxes and duties, and other relevant issues. The committee has been asked to submit its report within seven days. The government will take further decisions after reviewing the issues concerned based on the committee's report.

The government said at the meeting that it would take initiatives to keep the market of essential food items stable, giving the highest priority to public and consumer interests without causing losses to businesses. It also said necessary

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DNC Drive in Feni. Cannabis Liquor, and Beer Seized from House, Suspect Amjad Absconding

Jahangir Alam, Staff Reporter.

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) seized a substantial quantity of illicit drugs during a drive in Feni Sadar Upazila on Tuesday afternoon (September 15). The drive yielded 3 kg of cannabis, nearly 22.5 liters of foreign liquor, and 15 liters of beer. However, the accused drug trader fled the scene after sensing the presence of the law enforcers. According to DNC office sources, acting on a tip-off, a DNC raiding team conducted a sudden drive at around 5:45 PM in the Tehsildar Bari area under Ward No. 7 of Madhya Kazirbagh Union, Feni Model Police Station. The team searched the seven-room semi-pucca residence of local resident Amjad Hossain alias Bitu (50).

During the search, officers recovered 3 kg of cannabis



wrapped in scotch tape, 48 bottles (22.5 liters) of foreign liquor, and 30 cans (15 liters) of "Gold Flo" beer cleverly hidden inside the house. The seized liquor included twelve 750 ml bottles and thirty-six 375 ml bottles.

The accused, Amjad Hossain, is the son of Golam Sarwar and Rahima Begum from the Kazirbagh area. Mohammad Abdul Hamid, Assistant Director

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Multiple Complaints Over C-Section Procedures at Private Hospital in Jaintapur; Concern Over Maternal and Newborn Deaths

Naem Ahmed, Jaintapur-Gowainghat Sylhet.

Multiple complaints have been raised by relatives of patients regarding Caesarean section (C-section) treatment at Jaintapur Central Hospital and Diagnostic Center in Jaintapur, Sylhet. According to the patients' relatives, several patients developed physical complications following C-section operations and were subsequently taken to the hospital's intensive care unit (ICU).

Meanwhile, concern and anger have emerged among relatives following the deaths of mothers and newborns while receiving treatment at the hospital. Relatives alleged that in several cases, patients' physical conditions deteriorated after C-section operations, and although they were provided ICU care, they eventually died.

However, the hospital authorities have not yet provided their statement regarding these allegations. The relatives of the affected patients have called for the allegations to be investigated and for authorities to determine whether there was any negligence or medical error in the treatment.

The incidents have also raised concern among local residents. They have urged the relevant authorities to investigate the matter and take necessary action if any irregularities are found.

Govt committed to upholding freedom of expression, press: Andaleeve

Staff correspondent

Information and Broadcasting Minister Andaleeve Rahman yesterday said the government is committed to upholding freedom of expression and an environment conducive to a free media.

He made the remarks when US Ambassador to Bangladesh Brent T Christensen met him at his Secretariat office here. State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Yasser Khan Choudhury was present. During the meeting, the US envoy congratulated Andaleeve Rahman on assuming the role of Information and Broadcasting Minister. Andaleeve said the incumbent government is working to bring positive changes in political culture apart from state administration. In this context, he cited the broadcasting of opposition party news on Bangladesh Television (BTV) as an example. At the same time, the minister said necessary measures would be taken to curb the spread of defamatory statements, misinformation, and disinformation across various platforms, including social media.

Christensen emphasised the importance of



engaging with stakeholders on the issues. Andaleeve said their experiences over the past 17 years had not been positive but the current government is working with sincere intentions to bring about positive changes in state governance. At the meeting, Yasser Khan stressed the need for taking effective initiatives to combat misinformation and disinformation, as well as the utilisation of artificial intelligence in this regard.

He noted that ordinary citizens suffer the most due to misinformation and disinformation, highlighting how malicious propaganda is spread through fake social media accounts.

He spoke of the need for effective measures to ensure citizens feel safe while using social media. The US ambassador said the relationship between Bangladesh and the United States

◆ see page 7

Sammilito Bank success signals early progress in banking reform drive

Staff correspondent

Bangladesh's banking-sector reform drive has registered an early milestone, with Sammilito Islami Bank PLC beginning to repay depositors six months after the merger of five troubled Islamic banks, while maintaining regular operations and attracting fresh deposits. The development comes as Bangladesh Bank and the government have taken a series of measures since April to tackle financially weak banks, strengthen depositor protection, improve supervision, recover defaulted loans and establish a formal framework for restructuring, merging or resolving troubled financial institutions. From April to September 2026, the authorities have moved towards a structured bank-resolution system instead of relying primarily on emergency liquidity support for troubled institutions.

The latest cumulative figures from Sammilito Islami Bank show continued customer transactions and fresh deposit inflows. Between September 1 and 15, a total of 154,289 customer applications involving Tk 6,342 crore were submitted, while the bank disbursed Tk 2,438 crore to 60,752 customers, according to the bank's mid-month update. Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Sammilito Islami Bank PLC Md. Abedur Rahman Sikder said the bank received deposits and other receipts amounting to Tk 2,020 crore between September 7 and 15, indicating a gradual return of customer confidence in the newly formed institution. He said normal scheme transactions and regular deposits and withdrawals also continued during the

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Improved Moody's outlook govt measures to boost investment, jobs: Mahdi

Staff correspondent

Prime Minister's Office spokesperson Mahdi Amin yesterday said the improvement in Bangladesh's economic outlook by global credit rating agency Moody's, coupled with the government's multi-faceted initiatives, would help attract foreign investment and create more employment opportunities. "Improvement

in Bangladesh's economic outlook will help attract foreign investment and create employment opportunities," he told a press briefing at the Karabi Hall of the Prime Minister's Office, highlighting the government's devel-



opment activities, economic progress and various public welfare initiatives during its seven-month tenure. Mahdi said the government is implementing integrated programmes in seven areas -

'Zia Smriti Complex' set for major facelift

Staff correspondent

The 'Zia Smriti Complex' at Kalurghat in Chattogram is set to undergo major renovations very soon, with plans to give the landmark facility a more attractive and modern look.

Confirming the matter Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Jahidul Islam Mian told BSS that there are very few recreational spaces offering a healthy environment for our people. Anyone who appreciates Bangladeshi culture and history can learn more about the country thanks to these structures.

"Kalurghat represents a significant historic location within Chattogram that holds considerable importance to Bangladesh's independence movement, as it served as the location from which Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman declared independence, thereby establishing its designation as the Shaheed Zia Complex," he added.

He further stated, "People maintain profound emotional connections and considerable interest in this location. We are deliberating on approaches to enhance its aesthetic and functional qualities, and we have already engaged in consultations with the relevant ministry to this end." He added, "Following the events of August 5, the Zia Smriti Complex experienced vandalism, resulting in substantial structural damage. The preceding administration relinquished responsibility for the site and departed." Sources said that the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs is currently engaged in developing strategies for more efficient administration of this complex. We have established communication with the ministry. The general public expresses a desire to visit and experience this location. The ministry will commence the competitive bidding process in the immediate future, they added. The Deputy Commissioner articulated the district administration's commitment to enhancing the complex's standing, stating, "Our objective is to establish an agreeable

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Climate change adds 25 risky heat days to Bangladesh's summer, new Climate Central analysis finds

Staff correspondent

Climate change added 25 days of risky heat to Bangladesh's June-August 2026 summer, according to a new analysis by Climate Central, as the country experienced 31 days of temperatures above its local 90th percentile threshold during

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Md Delowwar Hossen
Appointed as Director (Administration)
The Daily Bangla Sky Newspaper.
Dhaka Office.

PM’s press secretary urges media to help

public of government activities and ensuring accountability.He said the government considers itself accountable to the people and wants its activities to be placed before the public in a transparent manner.“Since the government is accountable to the people, the media works as a bridge in ensuring this accountability between the government and the people,” Shibly said.He said the government has been regularly sharing information about its activities through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the PMO and the Prime Minister’s Press Wing.The press secretary said the government has been working to address challenges facing the country and that some initiatives have already begun producing results, while others will require more time.He urged people to remain patient and allow the government’s plans to take effect, particularly in addressing the country’s power and gas situation.Referring to the recent energy crisis, Shibly said the situation has now come under control and expressed hope that people will soon see further improvements.He recalled that during the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, the then government had taken measures such as changing office and banking hours and adjusting school schedules to deal with power shortages.The current government, the press secretary said, assumed office in February amid an international environment still affected by the Russia-Ukraine war and later faced additional pressures, but is working to establish a lasting solution to the energy situation.He also urged the media and the public to join the government’s three-month dengue prevention and cleanliness campaign, saying September to November is a particularly vulnerable period for dengue.Shibly said dengue could not be effectively tackled only through treatment after people became infected and stressed the importance of preventing the breeding of Aedes mosquitoes by eliminating stagnant water.“Everyone should allocate at least five minutes every day and make a regular effort, particularly every Saturday, to keep their surroundings clean and ensure that stagnant water is not allowed to accumulate,” he said.The press secretary urged media workers, ministers and ordinary citizens alike to participate in the effort, saying mosquitoes do not distinguish between people.“If each of us starts keeping our own homes and surroundings clean from yesterday, I believe, InshaAllah, we will be able to protect ourselves from this deadly disease,” he said.Shibly also called on television channels and newspapers to introduce regular segments to help people distinguish facts from rumours and misinformation. He said there is often confusion on social media and in public discourse over what information is true or false.The press secretary suggested that television channels could devote 10 to 15 minutes, and newspapers could regularly publish dedicated content, to identify and explain the rumours and misinformation circulating throughout the day.“If we can do this regularly, I believe we will be able to help people move away from the environment of rumours and misinformation,” he said.Shibly said the government’s work is not limited to political activities and debates, but also involves restoring the country’s socioeconomic and political values and improving the lives of ordinary people.He said the government wants people to feel that they are the owners of the state and that public office is a responsibility rather than an opportunity to enjoy power. “The government is working to make people feel that the state belongs to them and that the government is there to serve them,” the press secretary said.

Govt committed to upholding

is steadily strengthening and expanding into various sectors, including trade and commerce.Highlighting the US's continued economic support for the Rohingya, he said specific support is being provided to the health sector to prevent infectious diseases.The information minister said the government has no intention of controlling the media. He said the government is taking necessary steps with responsible and sincere intent, while upholding media freedom and the right to freedom of expression. During the meeting, various issues related to mutual interest were also discussed.

Application deadline for

Secondary Education (LEASE) Project under the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) onSeptember 14.The LEASE Project, jointly financed by the government and the World Bank, will provide 42-dayprofessional development training to 53,760 secondary-level teachers in Bangla, English,Mathematics and Science. A subject-based master trainer pool is being formed with skilled and experienced teachers and officials from government secondary schools, colleges, training institutes, education administration and related offices and projects. Applicants must submit a forwarding letter from their institution head confirming permission to participate in the training and subsequently train other teachers at their workplaces. The master trainer pool will be formed from online applicants based on professional qualifications under the approved ‘Trainer Selection Policy’. Interested candidates have been urged to submit applications with required documents through the designated website by September 26. For technical assistance, applicants may contact 01746150720.

Where is security in this independent country?

Taslima Khandokar Nusrat (Sarail Upazila)

In this independent country, the flag bought with blood hangs on walls, echoes in slogans but the ink of the pen dries out of fear.

Is asking questions a crime? Is speaking the truth a conspiracy?

The moment you stand with a microphone in hand, the growl of shadows follows behind. News is supposed to be a mirror a mirror that shows society’s wounds. At the sound of that mirror shattering, sleep breaks again and again in the night. Cameras are stopped. Notebooks are snatched away. Names are cut from the list.

And yet they say "independence" out loud. Listen, if you break the pen, history does not stop being written. If you choke the voice, truth does not die. The journalist who stands alone on the street yesterday is tomorrow the thousand voices of the people. In this independent country, we demand security for journalists. Not a license for words, but a guarantee to return home safely. Because independence is not just the flag. Independence means the right to ask questions.



Bakery product

measures would be taken in coordination with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the supply of products at reasonable prices. Commerce Secretary Md Ataur Rahman Khan and leaders of bakery product businesses were present at the meeting.

Sammilito Bank success

period, with payments totalling Tk 1,330 crore involving around 90,000 customers.Some customers who received approval for withdrawals did not collect the funds immediately and informed the bank that they would withdraw them later, he added. Between September 7 and 15, he said, total cash withdrawals from the bank stood at Tk 3,568 crore, including the Tk 2,438 crore paid against customer applications. At the same time, 1,27,281 customers deposited Tk 762 crore in cash during the period, while 60,233 customers transferred Tk 1,258 crore through the Bangladesh Electronic Funds Transfer Network (BEFTN) and Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) channels.The bank also opened 24,965 new accounts during the period, with new account holders depositing Tk 303 crore. Bangladesh Bank Executive Director and spokesperson Arif Hossain Khan said restoring depositor confidence was a key objective of the resolution process.

He said Bangladesh Bank had provided Tk 5,000 crore to Sammilito Islami Bank to support its liquidity position and enable the newly formed bank to continue normal banking operations. Khan said the authorities were closely monitoring the bank’s operations and the repayment process, while the gradual normalisation of transactions was important for rebuilding confidence among depositors and customers.The bank was created through the merger of First Security Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Union Bank, Global Islami Bank and EXIM Bank, five institutions that had suffered severe financial and governance problems.The latest deposit and account-opening figures provide an indication of continued customer engagement with the new institution.

Bankers say the ability of the bank to meet withdrawal requests while attracting fresh deposits is an important part of restoring confidence.Economists, however, say the repayment process is only one stage of the broader rescue programme and that sustainable recovery will depend on recovering bad loans, rebuilding capital and improving governance.During the six-month period, the authorities also strengthened the legal foundation for dealing with distressed banks.The Bank Resolution Act, 2026, enacted in April, gave Bangladesh Bank a formal mechanism to restructure, merge or resolve financially non-viable institutions.Parliament subsequently passed amendments to the law in September to further strengthen the resolution framework. The authorities also strengthened protection for depositors during the period.

Under the new Deposit Protection Act, 2026, the maximum protected deposit amount was raised from Tk one lakh to Tk two lakh, providing greater protection for small depositors in the event of a bank failure.Another major initiative during the six months was the establishment of the Bank Restructuring and Resolution Fund, designed to provide resources for resolving troubled institutions and reduce dependence on repeated government-funded bailouts.Bangladesh Bank also accelerated Asset Quality Reviews (AQRs) to determine the actual financial condition of weak institutions. Comprehensive reviews of six Shariah-based financial institutions contributed to the decision to restructure five troubled Islamic banks through the formation of Sammilito Islami Bank PLC.

The capital structure of the new bank was also arranged as part of the resolution process.Sammilito Islami Bank has Tk 35,000 crore in paid-up capital, including Tk 20,000 crore in government capital support, while the remaining Tk 15,000 crore is being raised through conversion of certain deposits into shares.The reform drive during the past six months has extended beyond commercial banks to non-bank financial institutions.Bangladesh Bank identified nine financially distressed NBFIs for winding-up proceedings. These institutions held approximately Tk 15,370 crore in deposits, including Tk 3,525 crore belonging to individual depositors. The authorities have indicated around Tk 5,000 crore for repayment to NBFi depositors.At the same time, Bangladesh Bank has intensified its efforts to determine the true scale of non-performing loans.The banking sector’s classified loans have been reported at around Tk 6,06,555 crore in June 2026, accounting for 32.78 percent of the total outstanding loans, highlighting the scale of the problem that the reform programme has to address.Bankers say the authorities’ decision to recognise the actual condition of troubled institutions is an important change from the previous approach. They argue that restoring confidence requires banks to become financially transparent and capable of recovering loans rather than relying indefinitely on regulatory concessions or liquidity assistance.Economists have similarly stressed that the banking-sector crisis is fundamentally a solvency and governance problem in many institutions, rather than merely a shortage of liquidity. They have called for stronger action to recover defaulted loans, prevent politically influenced lending and hold those responsible for financial irregularities accountable.

Distinguished Fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Professor Mustafizur Rahman said the officially reported NPL figures during the Awami League government did not fully reflect the actual condition of the banking sector.“When the Awami League came to power in 2008, NPL stood at around Tk 22,000 crore. By 2024, the officially reported figure had risen to nearly Tk 2 lakh crore. However, while preparing the White Paper, we found that the actual amount was around Tk 6.5 lakh crore,” he said.During the six-month period, the authorities have also moved towards risk-based supervision and preparation for implementation of the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) framework under IFRS 9.The objective is to identify credit risks earlier and ensure that banks make adequate provisions against potential losses.The government has also ordered forensic audits of the five banks merged into Sammilito Islami Bank to identify loan irregularities, fund diversion and other financial misconduct. The new bank has reportedly initiated around 10,000 legal cases for recovery of defaulted loans.he progress made between April and September, however, should not be interpreted as the complete resolution of the banking crisis. The sector continues to face a large stock of bad loans, capital shortages and governance weaknesses.The significance of the past six months is that the authorities have begun putting in place the institutional tools needed to address those problems. The cumulative figures up to September 15 on withdrawals, deposits, fund transfers and new account openings provide an early indication of how Sammilito Islami Bank’s resolution process is functioning in practice.The next phase will determine whether this approach can be sustained through loan recovery, recapitalisation, stronger governance and orderly resolution of other weak banks and NBFIs. For the past six months, therefore, the banking-sector reform process has shifted towards structured resolution, with Sammilito Islami Bank serving as its first major practical test case.

Shaheed Ziaur Rahman’s

memoir of the history of the Great War of Liberation- in the curriculum.CTB Chairman Professor Mohammed Fakhruul Mawla told BSS that the NCCC has given final approval to include Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman’s article ‘Memories of the War of Liberation’ in the ‘Bangla Literature’ textbook for Class-IX and X, starting from the next academic year. He said the government has taken this initiative to present everyone’s respective contributions to textbooks in an impartial and objective manner.

Educationists and experts observe that after including this article, students will be able to learn without any bias about the historic “We Revolt” message broadcast from Chattogram and the eyewitness account of the declaration of the independence from Kalurghat; which marks a major milestone in presenting the objective history of the county’s 1971 War of Liberation. Talking to BSS, eminent educationist and National Professor Dr Mahbub Ullah said this article written by Shaheed Ziaur Rahman holds historical value. Through it, students can become aware of the struggle for independence and its inclusion in the textbook is logical, he said.Professor Shah Shamim Ahmed, a teacher of the Institute of Education and Research (IER) at Dhaka University, said through the inclusion of this article, future generations will have the opportunity to learn the true and objective facts about the Liberation War.

“The incumbent government’s view of presenting an objective and impartial history will put an end to the mindset that fostered a one-sided historical narrative during past political shifts,” he said.

According to the Ministry of Education, this decision to include the article in textbook was taken at a NCCC meeting on August 24. Secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division of the ministry chaired the meeting.The NCTB officials said the author biography section accompanying the 22nd prose piece in the Class IX-X ‘Bangla Literature’ textbook identifies Shaheed Ziaur Rahman as the declarer of the Great Independence, a former President, Army Chief, Commander of Z Force, Commander of Sector 1, and a recipient of the ‘Bir Uttam’ award.

DNC Drive in Feni. Cannabis

of DNC Feni, stated that Amjad managed to slip away after sensing the presence of the officials during the raid. Drives are underway to arrest him.

In connection with the incident, DNC Sub-Inspector Ishtiaq Hossain filed a case under the Narcotics Control Act at Feni Model Police Station. The DNC added that drives against such drug syndicates across the district will continue under a zero-tolerance policy.

Improved Moody's

youth empowerment, education, innovation, social protection, energy, healthcare and infrastructure - along with institutional governance, with the aim of addressing immediate challenges and laying the foundation for a more prosperous and knowledge-based Bangladesh.As part of the initiatives, he said, a Taka 50-crore special loan fund has been established under Bangladesh Bank to support young entrepreneurs. Around 5,000 promising young entrepreneurs will receive collateral-free startup capital support every year under the programme.Besides, interest-free e-loan facilities through digital channels are being introduced for marginal and small entrepreneurs without collateral, he said.Commenting on the economic situation and inflation, the PMO spokesperson said the inflation rate is currently showing a declining trend compared to the same period last year, while the supply of essential food items remains at a satisfactory level.He said the government continues to provide the highest possible subsidy to keep diesel prices affordable in Bangladesh compared to neighbouring countries.Regarding the improvement in gas supply, Mahdi said gas flow had increased significantly since yesterday in line with the Prime Minister’s directive. “We are seeing significant improvement in gas supply yesterday and, InshaAllah, this trend will continue in the coming days,” he said.Referring to Moody’s decision last Tuesday to change Bangladesh’s sovereign rating outlook from negative to stable, Mahdi said the country’s long-term issuer and senior unsecured ratings remained unchanged at B2.

“This development will further strengthen Bangladesh’s international position and create a more favourable environment for foreign investment and employment,” he said.Mahdi added, “We believe this will not only increase foreign investment in Bangladesh but also enhance the country’s standing internationally, while employment opportunities needed to empower women and youth will also move in a positive direction.” Asked whether the improved sovereign outlook also reflected other factors, including political stability, democracy and foreign pressures, the PMO spokesperson said an elected government, policy continuity and a more stable business environment were also important considerations in the assessment.He said the government’s business- and investment-friendly policies and active engagement in the international arena are helping boost confidence among investors and business leaders.On fuel prices, Mahadi said diesel prices in Bangladesh were relatively lower than in many other countries, particularly neighbouring countries, as the government was providing subsidies to reduce the burden on the people. Elaborating on the government’s seven areas of focus, he said its public welfare and reform initiatives over the past month could broadly be grouped into seven sectors.These are youth empowerment, education, information technology and innovation, physical wellbeing and improvement of quality of life, women’s advancement, universal welfare and social protection, environment-friendly energy and climate-resilient industrialization, modern healthcare, infrastructure and public health, communication and traffic management, and institutional governance, public diplomacy and foreign relations.Referring to Bangladesh Innovation Fair-2026, organised to connect young innovators directly with global investors, Mahadi said Prime Minister’s wife Dr Zubaida Rahman had provided guidance and encouragement to the participating young entrepreneurs.In the cybersecurity sector, initiatives have been taken to introduce a national ICT and cybersecurity rating system and a cyber investment reporting system, he said.The government is also taking policy initiatives to encourage modern smartphone manufacturing in the country, he added. He said the initiatives are part of the broader effort to build a technology-driven and innovation-based Bangladesh while ensuring that the benefits of economic growth create wider employment and opportunities for the people. PM’s Press Secretary AAM Saleh Shibly and Additional Press Secretary Atikur Rahman Ruman also

spoke at the briefing.

‘Zia Smriti Complex’

environment. So, we have convened yesterday to undertake a comprehensive cleaning initiative. We shall restore the entire premises to ensure that citizens have access to a secure recreational destination." he 'Zia Smriti Complex' commenced operations in 2006, encompassing 16.38 acres situated adjacent to the Kalurghat Betar Kendra (Radio Station) within the Chandgaon locality of Chattogram city. Later, its design was modified to 'Swadhinata Complex' (Independence Complex). DC Jahidul Islam said architectural reproductions of numerous historically significant structures—including Ahsan Manzil, the Jatiya Sangsad, Lalbagh Fort, Curzon Hall, the National Martyrs' Memorial, Choto Sona Mosque, Kantajew Temple, and Paharpur Buddhist Vihara—were established throughout the premises. As a result, the complex acquired the colloquial designation 'Mini Bangladesh', he added.Following the events of August 5, 2024, the site experienced deliberate destruction. Following, this facility administered by the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs has remained substantially unoccupied. Owing to prolonged disregard, numerous architectural elements within the complex have been overtaken by dense vegetation, and structural deterioration has manifested in certain installations. On August 12, an official directive promulgated by the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs officially redesignated the complex as the 'Zia Memorial Complex'

Climate change adds 25 risky

the period.The analysis shows that Bangladesh’s average seasonal temperature between June and August was 0.7°C above normal, while temperatures on 54 days were made at least twice as likely by human-caused climate change, as measured by Climate Central’s Climate Shift Index (CSI).The findings are part of a global analysis showing that climate change added 30 or more risky heat days for 1.5 billion people worldwide between June and August 2026.More than one-quarter of the world’s population experienced a strong influence of climate change on temperatures on any given day during the period.Bangladesh’s cities experienced substantial additional heatThe impact was not uniform across Bangladesh, with several major cities experiencing substantial numbers of risky heat days and additional days attributable to climate change.Rangpur recorded the highest number of risky heat days among the cities analysed, with 50 days, of which 38 were added by climate change.Gazipur experienced 33 risky heat days, including 26 attributable to climate change.Comilla recorded 30 risky heat days, with 27 days added by climate change, while Dhaka experienced 30 risky heat days, including 26 added by climate change.Dhaka also experienced 30 risky heat days, with climate change adding 26 of them and inn Khulna, 19 risky heat days were recorded, including 14 added by climate change, while Chattogram recorded 16 risky heat days, with 11 added by climate change.The analysis also found that Rangpur had the highest seasonal temperature anomaly among the cities listed, at 1.1°C, followed by Gazipur at 0.7°C, Comilla and Dhaka at 0.6°C, and Khulna and Chattogram at 0.4°C.

Prolonged exposure to unusually high temperatures can increase the risk of heat-related illness, particularly among people who work outdoors, children, older people, pregnant women and those with underlying health conditions. The combination of high temperatures and humidity can be particularly dangerous because humidity reduces the body’s ability to cool itself through sweating. Climate Central notes that dangerous humid heat can compromise the body’s primary cooling mechanism and contribute to serious and potentially fatal heat-related illnesses. Dr. Rashedul Hasan Kanak, Associate Professor (Medicine) at Green Life Medical College & Hospital, said the health impacts of intense heat are becoming increasingly visible among vulnerable groups in Bangladesh.“Mothers, children, and pregnant women face the highest health risks during intense heat. Along with diarrhoea, typhoid, and jaundice, cases of heat exhaustion and heat stroke are also on the rise.”For Bangladesh, where millions of people work outdoors in agriculture, construction, transport and other heat-exposed occupations, the increasing frequency of risky heat days also raises concerns about productivity, worker safety and pressure on health services.Asia experienced the largest population exposureBangladesh’s experience is part of a much larger regional pattern. Asia had the largest population exposed to at least 30 days of risky heat added.



Md.Hossain Chowdhury

Man of Clean Image Politician Who Serve His local Area, Among the poor, helpless and destitute people.

Russia highlights Ukraine war veterans in parliamentary election



International Desk

Russians who have fought in Ukraine are playing a prominent role in this week's parliamentary election, appearing on party tickets, in campaign videos and in televised debates. Election officials say nearly 200 candidates have served in Ukraine. The Kremlin has promoted the veterans as part of what it calls Russia's "true elite," seeking to portray them as people who will receive an honored place in civilian life after the war.

However, analysts say few of the veterans are likely to gain significant influence among Russia's ruling elite. They view the campaign as partly an effort to encourage more men to join the military. Independent Russian media have frequently reported cases involving returning veterans in assaults, drunken fights and killings. Some of those involved were recruited into the military from prison.

The election for the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, begins Friday. It is the first parliamentary vote since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine and will also include areas of Ukraine that Russia seized and illegally annexed. The Kremlin is closely controlling the election as it seeks to demonstrate public support for the war and strengthen the legitimacy of its actions.

Most Kremlin-aligned parties allowed to participate have candidates identified as participants in the so-called "special military operation" in Ukraine.

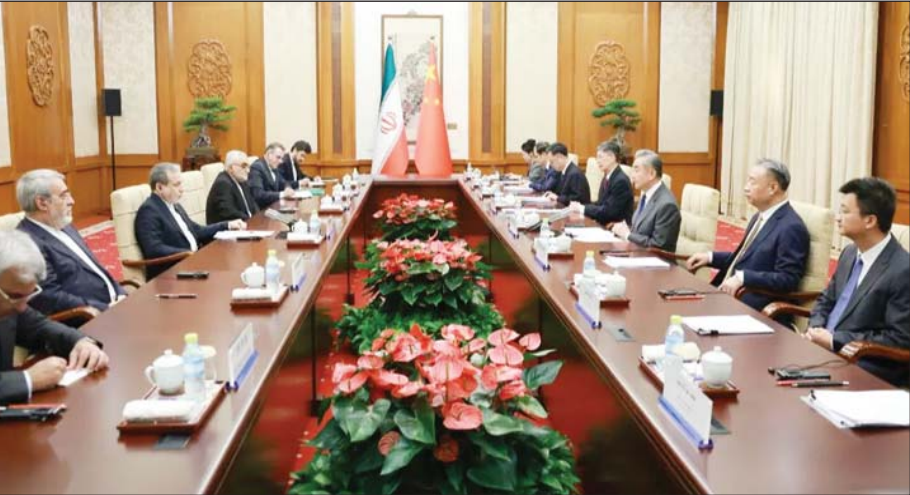
One of the prominent candidates is Vladislav Golovin, 29, of the ruling United Russia party. He fought in the battle for the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol and lost part of his leg. President Vladimir Putin has appeared with Golovin at events and awarded him the Hero of Russia title, the country's highest honor. Golovin participated in Putin's "Time of Heroes" program in 2024, which prepares war veterans for careers in government. He now leads the Young Army, a military and patriotic youth organization. He has also been placed on Western sanctions lists. United Russia has several dozen candidates with backgrounds in the Ukraine war. Another prominent candidate is Yevgeny Poddubny, a state television war correspondent with close ties to the authorities who was wounded by a Ukrainian drone. The ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party's leading candidate, Alexei Vereshchagin, is described as having joined Moscow-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine in 2014 and later led a volunteer brigade.

"We are the ones our homeland has called upon to fight for the 'Russian World,' and we will fight," Vereshchagin, who was born in Kyiv, says in a campaign video, referring to a term promoted by Putin, particularly since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea. Ukrainian police said in March that they were investigating Vereshchagin over alleged home invasions and threats against civilians in the Kyiv region in 2022, before Ukrainian forces regained control of the area. Police said he had fought against Ukraine for more than a decade. Vereshchagin has not publicly commented on the allegations.

Kremlin seeks to encourage more enlistment

By giving veterans a prominent role in the election campaign, the Kremlin wants to demonstrate to potential recruits that fighting in Ukraine can lead to future career opportunities, said Nikolay Petrov, a senior research fellow at the NEST Centre, founded by exiled Russian businessman and opposition figure Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Petrov said Russia also appears uncertain about how to reintegrate soldiers returning from the battlefield. He said many are offered positions with limited influence, while greater atten-



China encourages Iran, U.S. to return to Islamabad MoU

International Desk

China's top diplomat Wang Yi held talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran Seyyed Abbas Araghchi on Wednesday in Beijing. Wang, Chinese Foreign Minister and a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said the continued prolongation of the U.S.-Iran conflict is not in the common interest of the parties concerned and the international community.

China encourages Iran and the United States to stay rational and exercise restraint, return to the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at an early date, rebuild the negotiation mechanism on the basis of the consensus reached so far, and conduct substantive consultations on issues of

respective concern, Wang said.

China supports dialogue between Iran and other Gulf countries, supports the two sides in respecting each other's territorial sovereignty and national security, and safeguarding the shared interests of the region in a constructive manner, Wang said.

Wang urged all parties to take effective measures to reopen the Strait of Hormuz at an early date, keep international waterways open and secure, and safeguard the stability of international energy transportation as well as production and supply chains.

China does not wish to see regional tensions spill further over into Yemen and the Red Sea, Wang said, calling on all parties to refrain from actions that further complicate the situation and resolve issues through dialogue and negotiation.



US announces new travel restrictions on South African officials

International Desk

The Trump administration has announced new travel restrictions on South African officials it accuses of supporting discrimination against white people and other minority groups.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Tuesday that the United States would revoke visas or reject visa applications from foreign nationals found responsible for or involved in enforcing laws and policies that permit uncompensated land seizures, racial discrimination or incitement of violence against minority ethnic and racial groups in South Africa.

"The United States will not allow such behavior to go unchecked," Rubio said in a statement, adding that such actions undermine peace, economic stability and the rule of law and conflict with the principles of US foreign policy.

The South African government has strongly rejected the US allegations, describing claims of discrimination against whites as baseless and saying they have resulted from misinformation since US President Donald Trump returned to office last year.

Rubio did not name any officials who could face the restrictions. However, a South African lobby group representing white minorities has previously urged the US to sanction officials from the African National Congress (ANC), the party of President Cyril Ramaphosa and the largest party in Parliament.

The announcement is the latest step by the Trump administration against South Africa over its claims that white South Africans, particularly Afrikaners, face discrimination under the country's Black-led government.



US confirms deployment of weapons in space for first time

International Desk

The United States has acknowledged for the first time that it has deployed weapons in space, a significant disclosure following years of warnings about the possibility of countries such as Russia placing weapons in orbit.

US Air Force Secretary Troy Meink said Monday that the United States has deployed "on-orbit space control weapons" capable of protecting the Joint Force from hostile actions by adversaries.

Meink did not provide details about the weapons, how they operate or whether they are designed to target objects in space or on Earth.

The United States warned two years ago that Russia was developing a new space-based anti-satellite weapon, although the White House said at the time that there was no immediate threat.

The reports renewed longstanding concerns about space-based threats from Russia and China, particularly because much of the US infrastructure depends on satellite communications. The United States has also previously demonstrated its ability to destroy satellites from the ground.

Speaking at the Air and Space Forces Association's Air, Space & Cyber Conference, Meink said the Air Force was expanding its use of autonomous systems and predicted that the service would look "radically different" by 2032.

He said, for example, that one-way attack drones could replace artillery as the "primary killer." "We are increasing readiness against existing threats," Meink said.

The disclosure comes as the Trump administration places greater emphasis on space-based military capabilities.

During Trump's first term, in 2019, he estab-

lished the Space Force as a separate branch of the US military. In his second term, he has announced the "Golden Dome" missile defense system, which includes plans to deploy US weapons in space.

Trump said last year that he expected the system to be "fully operational before the end of my term," which ends in January 2029. He said it would be capable of intercepting missiles "even if they are launched from space." He also ordered the Pentagon during the first week of his presidency to pursue space-based missile interceptors.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the space-based components of the Golden Dome alone could cost as much as \$542 billion over 20 years.

In 2024, the Biden administration said Russia was developing a space-based nuclear weapon capable of remaining in orbit for long periods before releasing a burst powerful enough to destroy nearby satellites.

The disclosure sparked renewed debate at the United Nations over weapons in space.

In April 2024, Russia vetoed a US-Japanese resolution calling on countries not to develop or deploy nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in space. Such weapons are prohibited under a 1967 international treaty signed by both the United States and Russia.

The treaty also established outer space as a global commons to be used only for peaceful purposes. Russia's delegation described the resolution as hypocritical and a double standard. Moscow instead proposed a separate resolution calling for a ban on all weapons in space "for all time," but it failed to pass.

Russia has argued that the United States and its allies oppose a complete ban on weapons in outer space because they intend to deploy weapons there.



Saudi Arabia calls alleged Houthi attack on Mecca a 'red line'

International Desk

Saudi Arabia has accused Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels of attempting to attack Mecca, Islam's holiest city, prompting condemnation from countries across the region but no immediate offer of military support.

The kingdom, a key US ally, described Mecca as a "red line" as it became increasingly drawn into a new front of the Iran war. Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, is facing attacks from the Houthis, who are backed by its regional rival Iran. The kingdom is seeking secure routes to export its crude as well as military support, but it remains unclear how either objective can be achieved. A key Saudi oil pipeline has reportedly been out of operation for weeks as the Houthis have targeted infrastructure inside the kingdom and shipping in the Red Sea. Iran continues to target vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, while oil prices remain above \$100 a barrel.

The Houthis denied launching drones toward Mecca, which lies about 1,100 kilometres (680 miles) from Yemen's border. Saudi authorities said they intercepted and destroyed the drone before it could enter the airspace over Mecca, the birthplace of Prophet Muhammad.

Turkey and Pakistan say Saudi Arabia has not sought help

A recently announced defense pact involving Saudi Arabia, NATO member Turkey and nuclear-armed Pakistan has not been activated. Officials from Turkey and Pakistan told The Associated Press that Saudi Arabia had not requested military support following the latest Houthi escalation.

The Turkish official said efforts to "institutionalize" the alliance must be completed before the pact can become operational. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the alleged attempted attack on Mecca, saying Pakistan and Saudi Arabia stand "unwaveringly, shoulder to shoulder."

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which represents more than 57 Muslim countries, also condemned the incident, saying any attempt to target Mecca violates the "sanctity of holy sites." According to Col. Turki al-Maliki, spokesperson for the Saudi-led military coalition fighting the Houthis, the incident marked the second attempted Houthi attack on Mecca. The rebels previously fired a ballistic missile toward the city in 2017.

US remains outside the conflict for now

Top US officials have indicated in recent days that Washington does not want to become directly involved in the conflict. "The Houthis called us, and they don't want to fight with us," US President Donald Trump said Saturday, adding that the rebels appeared to be focused on Saudi Arabia.

Vice President JD Vance said Monday that Washington had remained in "constant contact" with Saudi Arabia and had held "direct conversations with the Houthis themselves."



Building collapse in Gaza kills at least 16 as Mideast tensions continue

International Desk

A damaged building housing displaced Palestinian families collapsed in Gaza City on Wednesday, killing at least 16 people, most of them women and children, as other tensions continued across the Middle East.

The multistory building had been badly damaged during the Israel-Hamas war, and residents had previously been warned about its safety.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia said Tuesday night that its air defenses had intercepted a drone that the kingdom said was heading toward Mecca, Islam's holiest city. Saudi forces have been defending the kingdom against attacks by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in neighboring Yemen.

Building collapse kills at least 16

A damaged building in Gaza City that was sheltering about six displaced families collapsed Wednesday morning, killing at least 16 people and injuring more than 25 others.

The dead included eight children and five women, according to Zaher al-Wahidi, a spokesperson for Gaza's Health Ministry. The death toll was expected to increase as rescue teams recovered more bodies from the rubble.

Video footage showed civil defense workers examining the wreckage and using bulldozers to search for survivors, including children.

The building had been partly destroyed in an Israeli strike earlier in the war. The immediate cause of its collapse was not known. Across Gaza, where most buildings have been damaged or destroyed during the war, dozens of damaged multistory structures have collapsed. Such incidents have been particularly common during winter weather.

Building collapses have become another major danger for residents of Gaza. Many displaced families have returned from tent camps to damaged homes after being forced from their communities during nearly three years of war.

Saudi Arabia says drone intercepted near Mecca

Saudi military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki said the kingdom's air defenses intercepted and destroyed a drone Tuesday evening before it entered the airspace over Mecca.

Mecca is Islam's holiest city and a central place of worship for Muslims. It is the birthplace of Prophet Muhammad and home to the Kaaba, the black cube-shaped structure toward which Muslims around the world face during their five daily prayers. Muslims believe Prophet Muhammad first received God's revelations of the Quran, Islam's holy book, in Mecca.

"The security of the holy city is a red line," al-Malki said, adding that Saudi forces would not hesitate to respond to what he described as "hostile and terrorist behavior."

The Iran-backed Houthis in neighboring Yemen denied targeting Mecca.

The allegation nevertheless drew condemnation from across the Islamic world, including from Pakistan and the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation.



Humaiun Kobir visits Badhon's home on PM's behalf

Entertainment Desk

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir on Tuesday visited the residence of actor Azmeri Haque Badhon and her family to inquire about their well-being, following the difficult situation she recently faced in Italy.

Badhon said Kobir visited her home on behalf of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

She shared a photo of the visit on social media on Tuesday, expressing gratitude for the state minister's initiative.

"State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir Humaiun Kobir visited our home on behalf of Hon'ble Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to inquire about me and my family. I am deeply honoured and grateful for his sincerity, courtesy and sense of responsibility," Badhon wrote.

She said the government's support during the difficult time had reassured her personally and strengthened her confidence in the state.

"This initiative to stand beside us on behalf of the state

has not only reassured me personally, but also strengthened my trust in the state as a citizen," she said.

Badhon added that the incident had reminded her that unity, courage and a sense of responsibility towards others are among the strongest tools against injustice, fear and division.

"Differences of opinion may exist, but there can be no compromise when it comes to a citizen's safety, dignity and rights," she said.

The actor also expressed gratitude to the Bangladesh government, the head of government, the Bangladesh Embassy, the Italian government and police, as well as those at home and abroad who stood by her, inquired about her and her family, and provided humanitarian assistance and support.

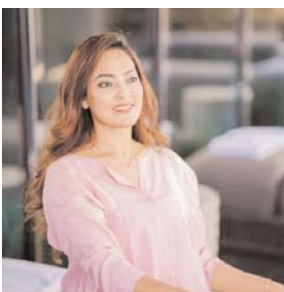
She said the experience had shown once again that when people unite in support of justice and truth, their strength to stand against injustice increases manifold. "I believe our collective responsibility is to build a safe, dignified, democratic and humane Bangladesh," she said.



'This too shall pass': Samia Afreen embraces change amid cancer treatment

Entertainment Desk

Presenter and actress Samia Afreen, who has been battling cancer for the past five years, recently revealed that



she has been diagnosed with cancer again. Having previously overcome colon cancer, Samia said she has now been diagnosed with uterine cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy as part of her treatment. Amid her treatment, Samia shared a photo of herself with a shaved head on social media, reflecting on losing her hair and learning to embrace the change. Tap here to add The Daily Star as a trusted source google-preferred-source-badge Posting the photo on Facebook yesterday, Samia wrote, "I never thought there would come a time in my life again when my head would be completely bald. Perhaps it happened when I was a child, when I was too young to even think about it. But as an adult, losing your hair like this for reasons beyond your control is an experience very few people probably go through." Rather than allowing the experience to overwhelm her, Samia,

and giving 'An Apple Tree Inside the Head' a new life through photography," Rahman added.

Written and directed by Fazly Rabbi Mridha, the film draws on the biblical story of Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit to explore faith, fear, family and the human mind.

The story follows Mintu Mridha, whose wife Jasmin and son Shohag often wander away from home without explanation. Believing an unseen force has entered his family, Mintu seeks help from a saint, who gives him a blessed apple believed to have healing powers.

As strange patterns recur and the boundaries between reality and illusion begin to blur, the apple assumes an increasingly mysterious significance, becoming a possible cure, temptation and symbol of the unknown.

The film is produced by Bijon Imtiaz, Arifur Rahman and Josim Ahmed.

Fazly Rabbi Mridha previously directed 'Payer Tolay Maati Nai', which received the Gautam Buddha Award for Best Feature Film at the 5th Nepal International Film Festival and a Special Jury Mention for Best Debut Film at the 7th Jaffna International Cinema Festival in Sri Lanka. Open to all, the exhibition welcomes visitors daily from 3 pm to 9 pm at La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD), 26 Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi.

'An Apple Tree Inside the Head' photo exhibition opens at AFD

Entertainment Desk

A photographic exhibition based on the unreleased Bangladeshi film 'An Apple Tree Inside the Head', directed by Fazly Rabbi Mridha, is underway at La Galerie of Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD). Goopy Bagha Productions Limited and Views & Vision Production are jointly presenting the exhibition, which opened on Tuesday and will continue until Sep 19 at the Dhanmondi venue.

The exhibition features photographs taken during the making of the film, offering visitors glimpses of its visual and emotional world through characters, landscapes, gestures and fleeting moments. The opening was attended by anthropologist and public intellectual Dr Manosh Chowdhury, theatre, television and film actor Jayita Mahalanobish, and independent filmmaker Josim Ahmed, founder of Views & Vision Production and one of the film's producers.

Producer Arifur Rahman said the exhibition was conceived as an alternative way of presenting the film beyond conventional distribution channels.

"As a producer, I see cinema as an artistic expression that must travel and reach as many people as possible. Yet conventional distribution systems do not always allow a film to find its widest audience," he said. "With this exhibition, we are breaking away from those familiar routes

Ed Sheeran tour faces disruption as four opening acts quit over Macklemore removal

Entertainment Desk

Ed Sheeran's North and South American tour faced major disruption Tuesday after four supporting acts withdrew in solidarity with rapper Macklemore, who was removed from the tour following pro-Palestinian comments he made onstage.

Irish acts Aaron Rowe and Beoga, Danish band Lukas Graham and Finneas announced on Instagram that they were leaving the tour, shortly after Sheeran posted about Macklemore's removal and said the decision was made by the tour's promoters.

Rowe and Lukas Graham were due to replace Macklemore on Sheeran's remaining US dates. Beoga had been joining Sheeran for several songs, including some they co-wrote, during the middle of his sets. Finneas, the brother and musical collaborator of Billie Eilish, was scheduled to join Sheeran's South American tour later this year.

"Artists must not be silenced when they speak up for the oppressed," Finneas wrote on Instagram. "I have decided to withdraw from my upcoming tour dates with Ed Sheeran. I stand with Palestine and its people."

Pressure grows on Sheeran The withdrawals have increased pressure on Sheeran, who has generally avoided taking a public political position on the Gaza conflict. He has said fans attend his concerts for music rather than political discussions.

Rowe and Beoga referred to Ireland's history in explaining their decisions.

"We are Irish people who understand colonialism," Beoga said. "As founding members of the Irish Artists for Palestine movement, we are committed activists for justice and will continue to be."

Rowe described Sheeran as a friend who had changed his life but said his Irish background made it difficult for him to remain silent.

"As Irish people we know all too well about genocide, forced famine and violent occupation," he said, adding that he could not "stand by and allow billionaires to use their position of power to silence the rightful voices of those who speak up."

Lukas Graham, known for hits including "Mama Said" and "7 Years," thanked Sheeran and described its decision as difficult.

"Money doesn't give you the right to own the conversation. Nobody's bank balance should decide who gets to speak or which suffering we're allowed to acknowledge," the band said in an Instagram post, apparently referring to billionaire Robert Kraft's reported role in Macklemore's removal.

Emails seeking comment were sent to Sheeran and the tour's promoter, Messina Touring Group.

Macklemore's removal sparks dispute

Sheeran addressed Macklemore's removal after the rapper made pro-Palestinian comments during their tour. Sheeran said the decision was made solely by the promoters and that he did not want to become involved in a public debate over the Gaza war.

"Macklemore coming off tour was the promoter's decision, it was not mine," Sheeran wrote on Instagram Tuesday. "I would never let down the fans who had made plans, nor would I abandon the touring crew and the

other support acts and musicians who rely on me for work and to make a living."

His statement came a day after Macklemore said he had been removed from the Loop Tour after saying "Free Palestine!" during a Sept. 5 concert at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium while introducing his protest song "Hind's Hall."

"To all of my Jewish brothers and sisters, criticism of Israel, criticism of apartheid, being against genocide, it in no way is criticism of you," Macklemore said during the concert.



Macklemore said Monday that several US venues had told the promoter they would not allow him to perform as Sheeran's opening act following efforts by Kraft, owner of the NFL's New England Patriots. Kraft's Kraft Group also owns Gillette Stadium, the Patriots' home.

In a statement Monday, Kraft said Macklemore was removed because of his recent comments and what Kraft described as a wider history of "antisemitic rhetoric and imagery" that he said had been offensive and hurtful to the Jewish community.

Kraft's representatives did not immediately respond Tuesday to questions about the other artists' decisions to leave the tour.

Sheeran says he is "not complicit"

A growing number of organizations and experts have said Israel's wartime actions in Gaza amount to genocide, an allegation that Israel strongly rejects.

Macklemore was scheduled to perform at eight of the 10 remaining shows on Sheeran's stadium tour, which is due to resume Saturday in Philadelphia. The upcoming stops include Gillette Stadium, Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium and Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium.

Sheeran said he had spoken extensively with venues throughout the week in an effort to find a solution, but the venues and promoter ultimately stood by their decision.

He said he tries to use his music to bring together people from different backgrounds and cultures. While he has personal views about the "devastating conflict," he said he chooses not to discuss them publicly because concertgoers do not expect his shows to become political forums.

"I am not complicit," Sheeran wrote.

"I respect Macklemore's strength of purpose to stand up and shout for what he believes," he added. "However, there is room for multiple approaches to the same end: peace." Sheeran said he prefers to use his public platform as "a place of safety and sanctuary" and to support diplomacy and keep conversations open.

Chamak getting praise for releasing video on dangers of online gambling



Entertainment Desk

Popular TV actress Rukaiya Jahan Chamak has raised awareness about the terrible consequences and negative effects of online gambling.

She has urged the youth to stay away from the trap of online betting by releasing a video on social media.

The actress is receiving widespread praise for presenting the terrible statistics and real picture of gambling in the video.

In the video, Chamak told the story of a young man named Shihab, who started betting out of greed for easy income of just Tk 1,000.

But later, on the pretext of withdrawing the deposited money and recovering the lost money, he took a loan from his relatives and ended up losing Tk 1 million.

Citing a 2026 report by the General Economics Division (GED), the actress said that more than 5 million people are currently involved in online gambling in Bangladesh. If immediate action is not taken, this number is likely to exceed 20 million by 2027.

Currently, the estimated market value of online gambling in the country stands at around Tk 830 crore.

In addition, Chamak also mentioned in the video that a 2026 DB investigation identified illegal transactions

worth around Tk 5 crore daily through a gambling network.

Highlighting the World Health Organisation's perspective, Chamak said that gambling is not just a financial crisis, it is a serious public health and family problem.

According to statistics, about 5.5 per cent of women and 11.9 per cent of men worldwide suffer physical and mental harm due to gambling, which also increases the risk of suicide.

In his video, Chamak urged other stars and social media influencers in the country not to share links to betting apps in exchange for small advertising money.

She reminded that operating or promoting an online gambling platform is a serious crime under Section 20 of the 'Cyber Security Ordinance 2025', which carries a maximum penalty of 2 years in prison and a fine of up to Tk 1 crore.

Finally, Chamak urged the youth to abandon the easy way of earning money through gambling and rely on their own work and skills. After the video was released, netizens are widely praising Chamak. They have termed this awareness video as a timely step. They say that when many so-called stars and influencers are busy promoting betting apps for a small amount of money, Chamak's social responsibility is exemplary.



Sydney Sweeney responds to controversy over nude scenes in ad

Entertainment Desk

Sydney Sweeney is synonymous with discussion. Sometimes she is controversial for her nude scenes on screen, sometimes she faces criticism for acting in commercials. But there is no way to deny her popularity.

From 'The Housemaid' to 'Euphoria' – the young actress has seemingly increased her popularity by starring in two high-profile projects in the past year. She recently appeared in front of camera almost completely naked in an advertisement for the new sports trading and prediction app 'Novig'. After the advertisement was released, criticism started on social media about her appearance. Many also questioned the nature of the advertisement and the way Sweeney was presented.



Espi saves Real Madrid with late winner at Elche



Sports Desk

Real Madrid substitute Carlos Espi snatched his team a last-gasp 3-2 win at Elche on Tuesday to pull them level with Barcelona at the top of La Liga.

The striker, who already saved his team at Espanyol in their opening game with a late strike, tucked home at the back post in the 91st minute after Madrid threw away a two-goal lead.

Espi, who Madrid signed this summer from Levante, has not started a game for the club but both of his goals have been vital for Jose Mourinho's side.

Madrid have five wins from six matches, level on points with champions Barca, who host Racing Santander on Wednesday.

"(Espi) comes on with great motivation, (but) he has in front of him a player who is not a normal player," said Mourinho of Kylian Mbappe, who also scored for Madrid.

"Playing with the two of them is not easy... with the changes I made late on I risked everything, because a draw was not enough."

Mourinho was unhappy with his team not extending their 2-0 lead and allowing Elche, now bottom of La Liga, to fight back.

"There are games which seem to be over... which we're not killing off, and after not killing them off they go from easy to being out of control," added the veteran coach.

Mourinho rested Jude Bellingham for the first time this season, bringing Arda Gulur into the team in his place.

Players from both teams wore t-shirts in support of residents from the city of Ceuta after the recent migration crisis in the Spanish territory in north Africa, although Mbappe, Vinicius Junior and Ibrahima Konate rolled them halfway up, appear-

ing to slightly obscure the message "we are all Ceutans".

Vinicius has been struggling for his best form this season and missed some presentable opportunities at the Martinez Valero stadium.

The forward prodded wide after Gulur set him up in the second minute, and he also sent another effort badly off-target from the edge of the box.

Tete Morente threatened at the other end but Madrid were on top and took the lead midway through the first half.

Guler curled a free-kick around the wall and against the post, with the ball hitting Elche goalkeeper Matias Dituro before it crossed the

line, for an own goal.

Madrid's second came eight minutes later, created by record signing Yan Diomande, who registered his first assist for the club.

Starting for the second time, the Ivorian winger crossed for Mbappe to slip past Dituro for his eighth goal of the season across all competitions.

Mbappe collided with the goalkeeper and appeared to be hurt but soon recovered and was able to play on.

The striker combined again with Diomande early in the second half but could only head the winger's blasted cross high over the bar.

Vinicius drilled wide before he was replaced, ending a frustrating evening for the Brazil international.

- Elche battle back -

Elche pulled one back through Abiel Osorio's header from Lucas Cepeda's cross, with the forward leaping high to nod past Thibaut Courtois.

It struck fear into Los Blancos and Elche capitalised, equalising in the 83rd minute through Nino.

The Spanish striker produced a fine low finish to pull his team level with the 15-time European champions.

Mourinho threw on strikers Espi and Endrick to try and find a late winner, and he got what he was looking for.

Espi made a run to the back post where Mbappe found him to knock in the late winner. Earlier Valencia earned a 1-0 win at Alaves, while Rayo Vallecano defeated Espanyol 2-1. It was Valencia's first win of the season, after they sacked coach Carlos Corberan on Sunday, secured with a Luis Rioja strike with 12 minutes to go.



Messi set for Argentina farewell in Benin friendly

Sports Desk

Lionel Messi was on Tuesday named in Argentina's squad for a friendly against Benin on October 6, a match that will serve as his farewell appearance after announcing his international retirement last month.

The 39-year-old said in August he was retiring from Argentina duty after a two-decade international career that included winning the 2022 World Cup and Copa America triumphs in 2021 and 2024.

"We made the decision to invite the best player in the world, the symbol of our national team, our captain, Lionel Andres Messi, so that he can have the farewell he truly deserves on October 6 here in Argentina," said Argentine FA president Claudio Tapia.

Maiden Renshaw ODI century sets up Australia win in Zimbabwe

Sports Desk

Matt Renshaw scored a maiden one-day international century as world champions Australia beat Zimbabwe by 59 runs in Harare on Tuesday in the first of three matches.

Quick Nathan Ellis also starred for the visitors, taking a career-best 5-31, including top Zimbabwe scorer Craig Ervine (59) and opener Brian Bennett (25).

Australia won the toss and posted 294-8 as they began a nine-match ODI and Test tour of southern Africa. Zimbabwe were all out for 235 in reply with 4.5 overs remaining.

Entering with the visitors 107-4, Renshaw, whose one international century came in the Sydney Test against Pakistan in January 2017, stamped his authority with a 109-run mix of big hitting and slick running.

Apart from three sixes and seven fours, Middlesbrough-born Renshaw also hit 49 singles and seven twos.

Batting at No.6 in his 10th ODI, Renshaw surpassed his previous best 61 to set up Australia for a predictable victory. They are ranked fourth, seven places above Zimbabwe. His 94-ball innings ended when he skied a delivery from seamer Newman Nyamhuri to midwicket, where Wessly Madhevere made the catch. Renshaw was involved in the most profitable Australian stands, putting on 72 with Alex Carey (27) and 75 with 19-year-old Oliver Peake (30).

"I just tried to rebuild the innings. We lost a few wickets (after) the boys started really well," player-of-the-match award winner Renshaw told reporters.

"I did not feel under any scoring pressure. It was really nice. Pitch was nice. Ten years between international hundreds was not something I was expecting."

Cooper Connolly, whose innings began after the dismissal of opener Travis Head (4),



secured his second ODI half century. His 51 included three sixes and four fours.

He was out when he failed to read the turn from a good length ball from Zimbabwe captain and all-rounder Sikandar Raza which uprooted his off stump.

Twenty-year-old Nyamhuri was the outstanding Zimbabwe bowler, producing a career-best 5-62 in nine overs.

After Zimbabwe slumped to 62-4, Craig Ervine (59) and Raza (57) added 98 runs for the fifth wicket.

Ellis sent Ervine packing by knocking over his off stump and a Spencer Johnson yorker ended the Raza innings.

After the Zimbabwe series concludes on Sunday, Australia travel to South Africa, where they will play three ODIs from September 24, then three Tests.

Brief scores

Australia 294-8 in 50 overs (M. Renshaw 109, C. Connolly 51; N. Nyamhuri 5-62) v Zimbabwe 235 in 45.1 overs (C. Ervine 59, S. Raza 57; N. Ellis 5-31)

Result: Australia won by 59 runs

Toss: Australia

Series: Australia lead 1-0 before matches on Friday and Sunday

Referees chief Webb 'really disappointed' over VAR error in Manchester derby

Sports Desk

Referees' chief Howard Webb said he was "really disappointed" with the VAR mistake that allowed Erling Haaland's winner in the Manchester derby last weekend.

Haaland scored in the second half of City's victory against arch rivals United at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Haaland's close-range finish from Josko Gvardiol's cross was initially disallowed for offside, but VAR official Matt Donohue and his assistant Blake Antrobus overturned the decision.

Donohue ruled City midfielder Enzo Fernandez was not interfering with play when he tried to reach the ball before it was finished off by Haaland. City went on to win 1-0, but the result was overshadowed by the controversy involving the decisive goal.

United manager Michael Carrick said he was "staggered" by the decision because Fernandez blocked Lisandro Martinez's attempt to clear and potentially distracted goalkeeper Senne Lammens.

Donohue and Antrobus have been stood down by the Pro Ref organisation for this weekend's Premier League matches.

Webb, the chief refereeing officer at Pro Ref, said on the 'Match Officials: Mic'd Up' programme on Tuesday: "I was really disappointed with this outcome. We all are. None more so than the officials themselves."

NCL captains receive baggy caps ahead of new season

Sports Desk

In a new move by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), the captains of the eight divisional teams received baggy caps at a special ceremony yesterday ahead of the 28th edition of the National Cricket League (NCL), which begins on October 3. The board has introduced the caps for domestic cricket in an initiative modelled on the traditional baggy cap associated with Test cricket.

Former cricketers who represented their respective divisions in the NCL presented the caps to the eight captains at the ceremony at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

Khulna captain Mohammad Mithun, Barisal captain Iftekhar Hossain Ifti, Mymensingh captain Rakibul Hasan, Sylhet captain Zakir Hasan, Rangpur captain Akbar Ali, Dhaka captain Mahidul Islam Ankon, Rajshahi captain Pritam Kumar Das and Chattogram captain Yasir Ali Rabbi received the caps in different colours.

The four-day tournament will feature eight divisional teams playing 28 matches across seven rounds.

Matches will be staged at eight venues across the country, including the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, venues in Chattogram, Sylhet and Khulna, Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, the Academy Ground of the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra and Cox's Bazar Academy Ground.



Sepak Takraw to be included in Notun Kuri Sports based on performance

Sports Desk

State Minister for Youth and Sports Md Aminul Haque said Sepak Takraw would be included in the national talent-hunt programme 'Notun Kuri Sports' in the future if players continue to demonstrate consistent performance.

He made the remarks during an unannounced visit to the National Sepak Takraw Stadium on Tuesday to watch the finals of the Sepak Takraw competition and encourage the participating players.

The State Minister also attended the closing ceremony and assured the players that their facilities would be improved. He said necessary steps would be taken to arrange a suitable dressing room for the players at the earliest.

The State Minister's surprise visit and assurances were welcomed by the young players and organisers.

In the men's final, Satkhira district defeated Nilphamari district 2-0 to clinch the championship title.

In the women's category, Rangamati district were crowned champions with six points from the group-league standings, while Nilphamari finished runners-up with four points.

Spurs in 'tough moment' after League Cup exit as De Zerbi says sorry

Sports Desk

Roberto De Zerbi admitted Tottenham are in a "tough moment" as he apologised for their League Cup exit in a dismal 3-1 defeat against Liverpool on Tuesday.

After a woeful start to the Premier League season, Tottenham's hopes of a morale-boosting cup run came to a dispiriting end at rain-lashed Anfield.

They were swatted aside by Liverpool, with Alexis Mac Allister, Cody Gakpo and Dominik Szoboszlai scoring for the Reds.

Conor Gallagher's reply, which came with Tottenham trailing 2-0, was their first goal against top-flight opponents this term.

De Zerbi's fourth-bottom team are without a win in their first four league matches, losing twice and drawing twice.

De Zerbi claimed Tottenham have been unlucky this season. "We have to shoot more times, we have to shoot better, but we are sorry for the result, disappointed, frustrated for the result," he said.

"I think, unfair, but we have to accept and to be stronger than this unlucky moment."

"I'm honest with myself and I'm honest with you. I think in these five, six games, we have been for sure not lucky with Newcastle, with Everton, even with Nottingham and tonight as well."

Tottenham's only win this season has come in the League Cup against second-tier Charlton.

After successive 17th place finishes -- including avoiding



Tottenham from relegation, is convinced they are still on the right path.

"We have to understand if we are in the right way or not," he said.

"I think watching the game, the last three games, four games, maybe until minute 60 with Newcastle, I think we are in the right way."

"I believe in my players, I have a big confidence, a big opinion of my players, and when we arrive to find the click, to win a game."

"I think we enjoy with these players, because the qualities of the players are incredible."

Accepting the blame for Tottenham's woeful start to the season, De Zerbi vowed they will bounce back at home to Aston Villa on Saturday.

"I'm sorry, and it's my responsibility. Because maybe in the middle of the first half we didn't recognise the clear situation man-to-man," he said.

"It's a tough moment, but we have to be stronger to prepare our best for the next game with Villa and to find this click."

Samson relishing battle with teen star Sooryavanshi for India spot

Sports Desk

Teenager Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's rise has intensified the battle for places in India's line-up but Sanju Samson, competing with the batting prodigy for the opener's slot, says he relishes the challenge.

The 31-year-old hit an attacking 57 to lead India to a series-clinching win over Afghanistan in the second T20 international in New Delhi on Tuesday after being picked in the team ahead of Sooryavanshi.

Fast-tracked into the senior team after a stellar IPL season, 15-year-old Sooryavanshi became the youngest cricketer to represent India when he played against England at Manchester in a T20 international in July.

The left-hander was also India's highest scorer with 151 runs in the team's 3-0 sweep against hosts Zimbabwe in July.

But in the first two matches against Afghanistan, India opted for Samson to partner another swashbuckling opener, Abhishek Sharma.

Samson scored 10 in the opener but responded with a 22-ball blitz in the second match as India chased down their target of 160 with seven wickets and 31 balls to spare.

"We may be competitors to the outside world, but we are a team and we are playing for a country and we want to win the game first," Samson told reporters after the victory.

"We just have to be ready for our own opportunity. We can't sulk that, 'Oh, I didn't get (the chance), or why did they give it to him?' Those kind of mindsets don't work here," he



said.

"It is a very challenging place to be in... I know how hard these decisions are (for the management) when everyone has been performing really well."

Samson made his T20 debut in 2015 but was not always the first choice of selectors due to

his patchy batting form on the international stage.

But he came of age during the T20 World Cup in India in March despite being benched at the start of the tournament.

He impressed with the bat in the semi-final and final with attacking half-centuries as India defended their crown.

Samson said he switches off his internet to screen out external noise over selection choices.

"I try to turn off the Wi-Fi," he told reporters.

"But sometimes the Wi-Fi comes back on and I see the comments of the senior players."

"At first, it feels bad. I am not a machine. We are not robots that it wouldn't affect us at all. It definitely matters, and you kind of get a bit affected."

India have an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match Afghanistan series, with the final match on Thursday.

Taskin, Ebadot share stories as nationwide pacer hunt set to begin

Sports Desk

Bangladesh fast bowlers Taskin Ahmed and Ebadot Hossain urged the aspiring fast bowlers to bowl with pace while maintaining the accuracy in a bid to develop them as a deadly pacer.

Their statement came ahead of the nationwide fast-bowling talent search programme which is set to start this month.

The initiative, titled "Robi Bowler Hunt," will be organized jointly by the BCB and Robi Axiata PLC.

The program was officially inaugurated yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Tamim Iqbal and national team pacers Taskin Ahmed and Ebadot Hossain attended the launching ceremony.

Robi Axiata PLC Chief Executive Officer Ziad Shatara along with officials from both organizations was also present.

Ebadot, who rose to prominence through a pace-hunting programme, credited the initiative with helping him launch his cricket career.

"First of all, I would like to thank Robi and the BCB. They gave me an opportunity through a programme like this in 2016. That is why I am standing here yesterday and representing Bangladesh," Ebadot said.

Recalling his experience, Ebadot said he was nervous when he attended the programme on a winter morning after travelling from Faridpur.

"I was very nervous at that time. It was a winter morning. I came from Faridpur. Imran Sarwar Sir gave me the opportunity to bowl. I bowled fast and finished first in the Robi Pace Hunt in 2016," he added.

Taskin urged the aspiring pacers to focus on bowling with pace while maintaining accuracy.





Dilapidated condition of the road from Chandura Dak Bungalow to Chandura Bazar in Bijohnagar



Taslima Khandakar Nushrat (Sarail Upazila)

The approximately 1-kilometer road from Chandura Dak Bungalow to Chandura Bazar in Chandura Union of Bijohnagar Upazila of Brahmanbaria is in a severely dilapidated condition. With potholes, peeled-off bitumen, and water-logging even after light rain, the road has now turned into a death trap. Due to lack of renovation for a long time, thousands of people from 10 villages in the locality are suffering immensely. On-the-spot observation shows that carpeting has come off in various places of the road, creating large potholes. In some places, water has accumulated like a pond over an area of 30-

40 feet. Bricks and rubble have surfaced. School and college students, patients, farmers and traders commute daily through this road. But currently, auto-rickshaws, CNGs, and motorcycles overturn, causing small and big accidents every day. Locals said that Chandura Bazar is the main commercial center of this union. Through Dak Bungalow intersection and via this road, one has to go to the Upazila Parishad, police station and the Dhaka-Sylhet highway. Due to the poor condition of the road, a 10-minute journey now takes 30-40 minutes. Fares have also doubled. At present, Nadia Pathan Papon, MP of the reserved women's seat of Brahmanbaria, has to use this road to travel to and from her residence. The heartfelt demand of the local people to MP Nadia Pathan Papon is to urgently repair this road and make it suitable for public movement. Rifat Mia, a trader of Chandura Bazar, said, "We cannot transport goods. Goods get damaged when vans overturn. No one is there to look after it." A student said, "Every day we have to go to college risking our lives. When it rains, we cannot even walk." The locals have demanded immediate intervention of Bijohnagar Upazila LGED and Upazila administration in this regard. They demanded immediate renovation of the road from Chandura Dak Bungalow to Chandura Bazar.

3 jailed for leaking primary teacher recruitment test 'question paper'

Khulna Correspondent

A court here yesterday sentenced three people to seven years' of rigorous imprisonment each for allegedly leaking answer sheets of the preliminary examination for recruitment of primary assistant teachers. The court also fined each of them Taka 5 lakh, in default, to suffer one year more in jail. Another accused in the case was acquitted. Judge of the Khulna Cyber Tribunal (Senior District and Sessions Judge) Arunava Chakraborty pronounced the verdict this afternoon in presence of the convicts. Bench Assistant of the court Gopal Chandra Pal confirmed the matter. The convicts are Reshma Khatun, wife of Sakhawat Hossain of Ispahani Lane under Sadar Police Station, Ferdousi Afroze, wife of Belaluzzaman of Munshipara Second Lane and Md Abul Hasan, son of Haji Alauddin of Sheikhpara Main Road.

The acquitted accused is Mahbubur Rahman, son of Kalam Molla alias Kolom of Gopalpur village under Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj district. According to court sources, police received information in August 2015 that a fraud gang was staying in Khulna and collecting large sums of money from candidates on the pretext of sending the answer sheets of the preliminary examination for primary assistant teacher recruitment, scheduled to be held on August 16, 2015, to candidates through mobile phones. Based on the information, a team of plainclothes detectives led by DB Sub-Inspector Bahauddin Molla began surveillance in and around Hotel Royal intersection. On the evening of August 17, the detectives learned that members of the fraud gang were staying on the fourth floor of a house at Ispahani Lane under Sadar Police Station. Police subsequently conducted a raid and detained them. During interrogation, they allegedly confessed to their involvement. Later, DB Sub-Inspector Bahauddin Molla filed a case with Sadar Police Station under the Information and Communication Technology Act. Detective Branch Inspector Molla Abdul Bari subsequently submitted a charge-sheet against the four accused before the court.



Pothole Ridden Pirojpur Bus Terminal

G.M. Adol, Pirojpur District Correspondent

The central bus terminal in Pirojpur has fallen into a deplorable state due to years of poor maintenance, excessive vehicular pressure and mismanagement. Numerous small and large potholes have developed across the roads inside the terminal, causing severe inconvenience to thousands of passengers and transport workers every day. Even a light shower leaves the potholes filled with water, turning the terminal premises into a muddy and slippery area. Passengers often have to wade through muddy water while getting on and off buses, making their daily journey increasingly difficult. Built in 2006, the important transport hub has crossed nearly two decades without receiving significant modernisation. Dilapidated infrastructure, damaged roads, inadequate drainage and poor management have continued to worsen the situation. A visit to the terminal revealed numerous potholes scattered across different sections of the premises. Some of the larger potholes were filled with rainwater, resembling small ponds. Passengers were seen walking through muddy water to reach buses. Elderly people, children, women, and students are among those suffering the most. Besides damaging clothes and footwear, the

deep potholes frequently cause vehicle wheels to get stuck, leading to traffic congestion inside the terminal. Transport workers are also facing difficulties. Bus, minibus, auto-rickshaw, rickshaw and motorcycle drivers regularly struggle to navigate the damaged roads. Vehicles sometimes get stuck in potholes or slip in muddy water, while various mechanical parts are also damaged. According to the transport owners association, the central bus terminal was constructed in 2006 at Machimpur, beside the city's bypass road, under an initiative of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). Although the terminal initially had necessary facilities for passengers and transport workers, those facilities have become inadequate over time. Regular passengers say that simply repairing the potholes will not provide a permanent solution. They are demanding a comprehensive modernisation of the terminal, including improved drainage, RCC roads, proper passenger platforms and renovation of the old infrastructure. They have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate and effective measures to bring an end to the long-standing suffering of passengers and transport workers and turn the Pirojpur central bus terminal into a safe, modern and passenger friendly transport hub.



Arrest of a person with five Yaba tablets in Amtoli

Amtoli (Barguna) Correspondent

In an anti-drug operation in Amtoli, a team led by SI Md. Shahriar Naeem Roman conducted a raid on the Miraj Telecom shop located at Alishar intersection in South West Amtoli village, Ward No. 1 of Sadar Union on Tuesday night and arrested Md. Miraj Molla (20) with 05 (five) pieces of Yaba tablets. A regular case has been registered against the arrested person at the Amtoli police station. Amtoli Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md. Yakub Hossain said that the arrested person has been handed over to the learned court.

Farewell Reception to Nasiragar UNO by Press Club

M. Badal Khandakar (District Correspondent) Brahmanbaria

On her promotion to Additional Deputy Commissioner of Gopalganj District, Nasiragar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ms. Shahina Nasrin was given a farewell reception by the Nasiragar Press Club. The reception ceremony was organized at the Nasiragar Press Club office. Honorable Member of Parliament for Brahmanbaria-1 (Nasiragar) constituency and Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Mr. M.A. Hannan, MP, was present as the chief guest at the event. The event discussed the career of the outgoing UNO Shahina Nasrin and various memories of her tenure in Nasiragar. Speakers said that Shahina Nasrin, with her efficiency, honesty and sincerity, has played an important role in maintaining law and order in Nasiragar, implementing government development activities and serving the common people. Especially, the people of Nasiragar will remember with gratitude her timely decisions during various disasters. In his speech as the chief guest, MP M.A. Hannan said, "Shahina Nasrin is a talented and people-friendly officer. Even in her short



tenure in Nasiragar, she has earned the trust of the people. Having been promoted, she is now getting the opportunity to serve the country on a larger scale. I wish her continued success." At the reception ceremony, floral greetings and a crest of honor were handed over to the outgoing UNO Shahina Nasrin on behalf of the Nasiragar Press Club. At that time, an emotional Shahina Nasrin said that she will remember the love and cooperation of the people of Nasiragar for a lifetime. She expressed her hope that she will perform her duties with the same dedication at her new workplace. The President, General Secretary and all members of the Nasiragar Press Club, officials of various government and private institutions and local dignitaries were present at the event.

12 arrested in Jahedul murder case in Ctg

Chattogram Correspondent

The Detective Branch of Chattogram Police has arrested 12 people for their alleged involvement in the murder of Jahedul Alam in Satkania. Among those arrested, Md. Azad made a confessional statement under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure after being produced before a judicial magistrate. Chattogram District Superintendent of Police Md. Masud Alam disclosed the details at a press briefing this afternoon. The other arrested individuals are Jashim Uddin (50), Zainal Abedin Manik (26), Md. Riduan (26), Md. Tipu (35), Abu Mazharul Islam Ifaz (20), Abdullah Al Tushar (30), Khorshed Alam alias Faruk (52), Md. Rabiul Hossain (21), Abul Kashem (38), Habibur Islam alias Habib (28) and Nur Mohammad (36). On August 30, a gang attacked Jahedul with sharp weapons in the Notun Hat area under Satkania Police Station at around 10pm, leaving him dead on the spot. The victim's mother, Manowara Begum, filed a murder case with Satkania Police Station.



Tree Planting Initiative by the Anti-Corruption Committee in Fakirhat

S A Kalam Fakirhat Bagerhat

A tree planting programme has been held in Fakirhat Upazila of Bagerhat with the aim of environmental protection and greening. On Wednesday (16 September), this programme was held at Haji Abdul Hamid Secondary School, organised by the Upazila Anti-Corruption Committee and with the overall cooperation of the Upazila Administration. The chief guest at the tree planting programme was the Upazila Executive Officer, Md. Roknuzzaman. The special guest present was Academic Supervisor Md. Asaduzzaman. The programme was presided over by Sheikh Kamrul Islam Gora, President of the Fakirhat Upazila BNP and Chairman of the Managing Committee of Haji Abdul Hamid Secondary School. At this time, the President of the Upazila Anti-Corruption Committee Sheikh Mizanur Rahman, Vice President Sardar Hafizur Rahman, General Secretary Khan Al Mustasim Billah Sojal, members Sheikh Al Imran and M Zakir Hossain, social worker Sheikh Abdul Salam, along with various teachers, media personnel, students, and people from different professions were present. During this time, various types of saplings were planted in the school premises. The tree planting programme aimed to create public awareness about environmental protection, encourage students about the importance of trees, and emphasise the need to create a green environment. The speakers stated that there is no alternative to regular tree planting and care to maintain the balance of the environment and ensure a livable environment for future generations. They emphasised the importance of collective efforts in environmental conservation and called for proper care of the planted trees alongside tree planting.

Serious allegations of indulging in homosexuality by decorating a house have been made against two young women in Kalapara

Kalapara (Patuakhali) Correspondent.

In Kalapara of Patuakhali, two young women have been accused of indulging in homosexuality by decorating their houses. The incident took place in Hasnapara village of Lalua Union. This incident has created a lot of excitement in rural areas. When we went to the surface on Wednesday, local sources said that a woman of the same village has been renting for some time in Hanif Mridha's homestead of government housing in Hasnapara village of Lalua Union. One of his sisters was already acting like a boy. Four days ago, he brought a woman from Mymensingh to that homestead and they spent the night in the same house as husband and wife. When the matter came to light, Kawsar Habib, UP member of Ward No. 6 of that union, informed their family members and kept the two women in his custody. Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kalapara Police Station. Nazrul Islam said, the matter has been reported to the upazila social service officer and the police has been sent to the spot.



Call to reduce wasteful spending in electricity and energy in Rajshahi

Rajshahi Correspondent

Speakers at a discussion here yesterday unequivocally called for protecting public interest by reducing wasteful spending in electricity and energy in Rajshahi. According to them, to ensure energy justice, along with reducing costs and increasing transparency and accountability, public interest must be placed at the center of power and energy policy. Speakers said this at a day-long citizen dialogue titled "CAB-Proposed Just Energy Transition Policy and Energy Justice" held at the conference hall of Hotel Warishan in Rajshahi. Rajshahi District chapter of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) organised the dialogue. CAB Rajshahi District President Kazi Gias presided over the dialogue that was moderated by its General Secretary Golam Mostafa Mamun. The keynote paper was presented by CAB Coordinator Engineer MAM Golam Kibria. CAB Central Adviser Engineer AKM Khademul Islam Fikson and CAB Project Manager Marufa Koli also spoke. The speakers said the burden of non-transparent contracts, excessive costs and inefficiency in the power and energy sector is ultimately falling on consumers. In a "cost-plus-profit" based system, there is no pressure to reduce costs, so the more the cost increases, the more the opportunity for profit increases.



Experts claim that over the last decade and a half, irregularities and inefficiency in this sector have increased due to non-competitive contracts, legal provisions for indemnity, and weakness of the regulatory body. Speakers at the dialogue said that the crisis in the power and energy sector is now not just a supply crisis, but has turned into a financial and institutional crisis as well. It used to be said, "There are poles, but no electricity"; now, even though there are power plants, in many cases there is no fuel for production. As a result, power plants have to pay capacity charges even without producing electricity. The financial liability for this ultimately has to be borne by the state and the consumers." CAB has put forward a 12-point proposal in the government's five-year plan to reduce costs and reduce the pressure of price hikes on consumers. These include making government electricity and energy services profit-free to save about Taka 45,000 crore per year, stopping excess LNG imports, increasing domestic gas production, and quickly connecting electricity from the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant to the grid.

7 tonnes of banned African magur seized in Jashore, farmer fined

Jashore Correspondent

A joint team of the district administration and fisheries department in a drive seized more than seven tonnes of banned African magur and fined a fish farmer Taka 20,000 for cultivating the fish in Chanchra Sabjibag area of the district town yesterday. Executive Magistrate Bishal Kumar Jajodia conducted the mobile court and fined fish farmer Shafiqul Islam. Upazila Fisheries Officer Ripon Kumar Ghosh said the drive was conducted after receiving information that banned African magur was being cultivated in the Chanchra Sabjibag area. The seized fish were later distributed among a local orphanage and disadvantaged and poor people. Besides, a fish trader has been fined Taka 5,000 for failing to produce documents related to the import and prescribed price of Indian hilsa during a market inspection. The fine was imposed on Karnaphuli Fish, a fish wholesaler at the town's Barabazar, during a drive conducted at the fish market around 11.30 am yesterday. The operation was led by Jashore Assistant Director of the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP) Selimuzzaman, who inspected retail and wholesale outlets to verify the purchase and sale of Indian Hilsa. Selimuzzaman said the owner of Karnaphuli Fish, Shamim Hossain, failed to produce the prescribed price details and documents related to the Letter of Credit (LC) for importing Indian Hilsa when asked during the drive. He was subsequently fined Taka 5,000. The authorities also instructed the business to sell Hilsa at the prescribed price and preserve all