

## FOREIGN WORKERS Malaysia govt extends visa deadline to April 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysian government has extended the deadline for the visa with reference (VDR) application for foreign workers to April 21.

The new decision will allow source countries like Bangladesh more time to process VDR for intended job seekers in the Southeast Asian country.

The deadline was previously slated for March 31, reports New Straits Times (NST).

According to the website of High Commission of Malaysia, Dhaka, VDR is issued by the Malaysian Mission's office abroad to a non-citizen to enable visitor to enter Malaysia after the application is referred and approved by the Immigration Department of Malaysia. It is required for students, expatriates, dependants and professionals on a visit pass.

According to the NST report, Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail in a press conference

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Students of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Dhaka University are busy making masks for the Mangal Shobhajatra, a procession which welcomes Bangla New Year. Pahela Baishakh is celebrated on April 14 with fairs, cultural events and traditional sports.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## INDIAN ELECTION Congress party to bolster ties with Bangladesh if voted to power

STAR REPORT

India's opposition Congress party has promised to strengthen economic and cultural ties with Bangladesh and pay greater attention to its immediate neighbours if it is voted to power in the upcoming national elections.

"We will enhance economic and cultural relations between India and Bangladesh that are the two most populous countries in South Asia," the party said in its election manifesto released at its national headquarters in New Delhi yesterday.

Top party leaders including party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and former Congress Presidents Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi were present at the event, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

The party also vowed to protect minorities while accelerating growth and jobs, reports AFP.

Nearly a billion Indians will vote to elect a new government in six-week-long parliamentary elections starting on

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## Chicken prices soar by up to Tk 40 per kg Traders in city's kitchen markets blame sudden rise in demand ahead of Eid

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Much to the frustration of people from low-income groups, the price of chicken, one of the most common sources of animal protein, has shot up by Tk 30 to Tk 40 per kg over the last couple of days in the capital's kitchen markets.

Traders claimed demand for the poultry item has risen suddenly ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr and the market supply was not sufficient to meet the increased consumption.

Yesterday, a kilogramme of broiler chicken was being sold at Tk 240 to Tk 260, sonali chicken at Tk 350 to Tk 370 per kg, and local variety at Tk 650 to Tk 670 per kg at Karwan Bazar, Uttara, and Kachukhet kitchen markets.

In comparison, a day before on Wednesday, broiler chicken was sold at Tk 210 to Tk 230 per kg, sonali at Tk 300 to Tk 330 per kg, and local variety at Tk 600 to Tk 630 per kg.

Md Foyez, an employee of Bangla Chicken House at Karwan Bazar, said, "The demand for chicken has suddenly risen. The price of different breeds of chicken at Kaptan Bazar [a wholesale market] has increased by Tk 40 per kg on average over the past two days. As a result, we are also having to hike the price."

Md Sohel, proprietor of Nur Nabi Murgir Arot at Karwan Bazar, said, "With Eid approaching, more and more consumers are buying chicken from my shop. I usually sell 50 to 60 chickens per day on average. But I sold 150 chickens on Thursday and 200 chickens on Friday."

Mahfuzur Rahman, a consumer from Monipuripara who went to Karwan Bazar yesterday, said, "I bought

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## Israel okays reopening of Gaza crossing for aid

Approves use of Ashdod port after Biden call

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday approved the reopening of the Erez crossing into northern Gaza and the temporary use of Ashdod port in southern Israel, following US demands to increase humanitarian aid supplies into Gaza.

The United States welcomes Israel's latest efforts to allow more humanitarian aid into Gaza, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, adding that success would be measured in results in improving the situation on the ground.

"Really the proof is in the results, and we will see those unfold in the coming days, in the coming weeks," Blinken said, speaking along EU leaders in Belgium.

President Joe Biden on Thursday threatened to condition support for Israel's offensive in Gaza on it taking concrete steps to protect aid workers and civilians, seeking for the first time to leverage US aid to influence Israeli military behaviour.

Asked on Israel's action after Biden's shift in position, Blinken told journalists that Washington will be "closely looking" at specific metrics such as the number of trucks making their way into the Gaza strip and the evolution of famine risks.

UNRWA, the main UN aid agency in Gaza, welcomed the reopening of the crossings, but said Israel needs to do more, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military yesterday sacked two senior officers after seven aid workers were killed in a strike in Gaza on Monday.

- US will be looking for 'results' after Israel's move: Blinken
- 54 more Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes
- Death toll in the enclave rises to 33,091

More than 33,091 Palestinians have been killed and 75,750 have been injured in Israel's military offensive on Gaza since October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday. In the past 24 hours, 54 Palestinians have been killed and 82 injured, it said.

Relentless Israeli bombardment has reduced much of Gaza to rubble, collapsed the hospital system and

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## UNHRC passes resolution to halt all arms sales to Israel

AFP, Geneva

The UN Human Rights Council yesterday demanded a halt to all arms sales to Israel, highlighting warnings of "genocide" in Israeli offensive that has killed more than 33,000 people in Gaza.

The council passed a resolution with 28 of its 47 member states voting in favour, six opposing it and 13 abstaining.

This is the first time the UN's top rights body has taken a position on the bloodiest-ever offensive in the besieged Palestinian territory.

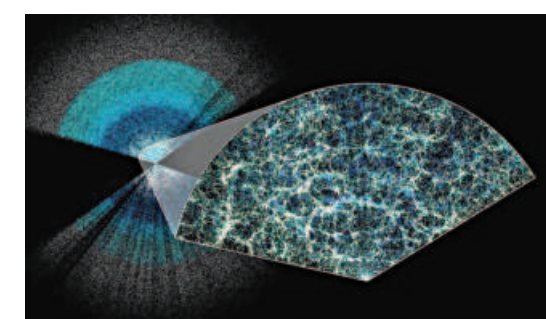
The strongly worded text called on countries to "cease the sale, transfer and diversion of arms, munitions and other military equipment to Israel... to prevent further violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights".

It noted that the International Court of Justice ruled in January "that there is a plausible risk of genocide" in Gaza.

Yesterday's resolution, which was brought forward

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## Scientists make 'largest' 3D map of expanding universe



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have made the largest 3D map of the universe, measuring how fast it has expanded over billions of years by using the most precise measurements to date.

An international team, including researchers from the UK, used an instrument known as the Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument (Desi) to create the map.

Their aim was to measure the effects of dark energy, a mysterious force that is believed to be making the universe expand faster and faster.

The scientists said they were able to measure the expansion history of the universe spanning 11 billion years with a precision of better than 1 percent.

The map, comprising more than six million galaxies, is the largest 3D map of the cosmos ever constructed, researchers say.

Dr Eva-Maria Mueller, Ernest Rutherford Fellow at the University of Sussex, who led part of the cosmological interpretation of the Desi data, said she could not initially believe the "fascinating" results.

Dr Mueller said: "It was a moment I'd been eagerly anticipating since the start of my PhD. The findings were not just interesting - they were captivating, sparking fresh insights into the fundamental nature of our universe."

## 6 Russian military planes destroyed by drones: Kyiv

AFP, Kyiv

Ukraine said yesterday it had destroyed at least six Russian military planes at an airbase in the southern Rostov region in a barrage of overnight drone attacks.

Kyiv launched once of its largest overnight attacks in weeks, firing more than 50 drones at Russian territory, according to Russia's defence ministry.

A security source in Kyiv told AFP that an attack on the Morozovsk air base in Russia's southern Rostov region had destroyed at least six Russian planes and "another eight were heavily damaged".

"This is an important special operation that will significantly reduce the combat potential of the Russians," the source said, adding that the attack was carried out by the SBU security service and the military.

There was no immediate response from Russia.

Ukraine's air force meanwhile said Russia launched five missiles and 13 drones at its territory overnight. Kyiv said it downed the 13 drones, but did not say anything about the missiles, which targeted the northeastern Kharkiv region.

Russia said 44 of the 53 drones Kyiv fired overnight targeted the southern Rostov region, which sits just across the border from Ukraine and is home to a number of major military sites, including its command headquarters for the offensive.

"During the night and on the morning of April 5, the Kyiv regime tried to commit several terrorist attacks with

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Demolition notice issued to 42 edu institutions

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PRAYER TIMING  
APRIL 6

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:29	12:45	4:45	6:20	7:45
JAMAAT 4:39	1:15	5:00	6:30	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IFTAR
26	6		6:20
27	7	4:23	6:21
28	8	4:22	6:21



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Fishermen of Khulna's Dakop upazila returning home after six long months of fishing at Sundarban's Dublar Char. Every year, they collect permits from the Forest Department to catch fish and dry them at the char. After the lengthy process, they pack up their haul and all their belongings, and head home to their families on trawlers. The photo was taken near the Chunkuri river in the upazila recently.