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## IMPORT DUTY CUT FOR LDC GRADUATION

# Long way to go for readiness

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The government has proposed removing and reducing import duties and supplementary duties on 282 products in fiscal year 2024-25 as it continues its efforts to prepare the nation for its graduation out of the Least Developed Country grouping.

Experts, however, say the moves are inadequate and the government is leaving a lot to do before the country graduates in 2026.

In the current fiscal year, it withdrew import duties on 191 products and supplementary duties on 234 products.

Next year, it wants to withdraw supplementary duties on 19 more products and reduce supplementary duties on 172 and withdrawal duties on 91 others.

Once Bangladesh graduates in

November 2026, it may lose yearly \$8 billion worth of exports to erosion of trade preferences.

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, chairman of Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID), said the measures for dealing with the post-graduation challenges were inadequate.

He said the government was cutting supplementary duties, regulatory duties and has recommended further duty cuts on a few products and their number was not big.

Razzaque, however, said the government was not withdrawing or reducing customs duties.

Since Bangladesh's average customs duty is one of the highest in the world, more than 28 percent, many major trading partners would feel discouraged to sign a free-trade agreement with the

➔ Tariff on 400 products either cut or recommended for cut

➔ Bangladesh may lose yearly \$8 billion worth of exports after LDC graduation

➔ Bangladesh's average customs duty one of the highest in world, over 28pc



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, with heads of state and government, poses with Indian President Droupadi Murmu and Narendra Modi, who was sworn in as the prime minister of India for the third consecutive term yesterday.

PHOTO: PTI

## AL leader Babu secretly met one of the killers

DB says in report to Dhaka court

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

An Awami League leader of Jhenidah met one of the killers of lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar to learn about the details of the abduction and murder, police said.



Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, the relief and social welfare affairs secretary of Jhenidah AL, on May 17 met with Amanullah inside a vehicle by Dhaka-Bhanga expressway in Faridpur and viewed photos of the crime scene, and they talked about how much money had changed hands over the assassination.

This was mentioned in a report on the progress of the investigation police submitted to a Dhaka court yesterday.

Babu, known in his hometown as Babu,

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## 999 calls surge, reflect reliability

Approved as separate unit; capacity to be increased

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

After realising her five-year-old child was raped by her neighbour in Bagerhat's Brahmanakathi area, a mother called the National Emergency Helpline 999 at March 3 noon.

Sub-inspector Mehedi Hasan Mamun received the call and later directed the local police to take immediate lawful actions.

Soon enough, a police team went to the spot and arrested 40-year-old Labu Sheikh on charges of rape.

Since its launch on December 12, 2017, the helpline has gained nationwide popularity for emergency help in cases of accidents, child marriage, fire incidents, trafficking and violence. It also gets calls for help in recovering lost items and rescuing wild animals.

So far, it succeeded in preventing 27,409 child marriages till February this year.

According to the helpline's database, it

received around 17,52,826 emergency calls till April 30 this year. Through those calls, people sought assistance from police, firefighters and ambulance services.

In 2018, it received only 49,719 calls for emergency services.

However, within a year, the number of calls rose to 1,34,113, and in 2020, it hit 2,31,205. Since then, it has kept going up.

In the first quarter of this year, the helpline already received 1,82,226 calls.

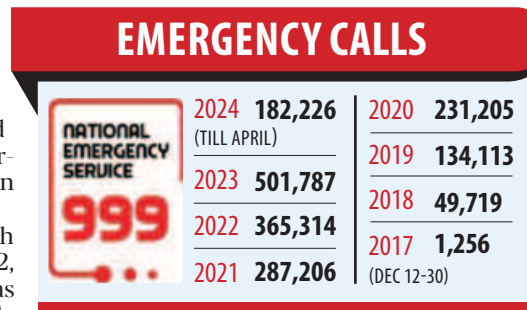
On March 24 this year, the helpline got a call from Patuakhali to recover a fishing stuck in the locality. The caller requested immediate rescue

so that people do not get the chance to harm the animal.

On information, local police rushed there, rescued the cat and then handed it over to the forest department.

On March 27, Saudi expatriate Momin Sheikh, 45, lost his bag with his passport

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## COP KILLS COP

Detectives have no clue about motive

CCTV footage shows victim being shot almost at point blank

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Close-circuit television camera footage revealed details of an on-duty police constable killing another cop near the Palestinian embassy in the capital's Baridhara Saturday night.

The footage shows Constable Kawsar Ahmed, 41, and his colleague Monirul, 27, engaging in an altercation. At one stage, Monirul appears to show Kawsar a duty notebook. Almost instantly, Kawsar is seen shooting Monirul.

Monirul immediately fell on the road from the pavement. Then Kawsar was seen firing several more shots, almost at point-blank.

Kawsar did not try to flee. At first, he did not allow anyone to get close to

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## Modi sworn in as India PM for third term

Faces coalition challenges; top ministers in previous govt also sworn in

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Narendra Modi was yesterday sworn in as India's prime minister for a record-equalling third consecutive term. He will lead the 71-member BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office to Modi at a grand ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

The event was attended by an estimated 8,000 dignitaries, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, accompanied by her daughter Saima Wazed, and other top leaders of seven South Asian countries, Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan and billionaire industrialists Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani.

Modi, 73, is only the second person after India's independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru to serve a third straight term as the prime minister.

Main opposition Congress party President Mallikarjun Kharge was present at the ceremony, but its key INDIA bloc constituent Trinamool Congress stayed away from the event.

Modi secured his third term in elections that concluded on June 1 with the support of 14 regional parties in his BJP-led alliance.

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## Benazir's family skips ACC quizzing

Commission reschedules it for June 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has rescheduled the interrogation of former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed's wife Jissan Mirza and two daughters in connection with allegations of amassing wealth illegally.

The new date is June 24 after the trio sought 15 days' time to appear before the commission, said ACC Public Relations Officer Akhtarul Islam.

They were supposed to appear yesterday, but the interrogation could not happen as they did not show up, he said, adding that they had written to the ACC seeking time.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that Benazir's family sought 15 days for appearing before the commission.

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Erosion by the sea is threatening a big portion of the Marine Drive in Mundardail area of Teknaf in Cox's Bazar. Waves slamming against the edge of the road since Friday evening caused the erosion. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

## GETTING NID WITH FAKE INFO

### Ex-army chief Aziz's 2 brothers to face EC probe

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission is going to investigate the allegations that the two brothers of former army chief General (ret'd) Aziz Ahmed obtained national identity cards "using false information".

The commission's NID wing yesterday got approval to form a three-member committee to see how Haris Ahmed and Tofael Ahmed, who goes by the alias Joseph, got NID cards using false information.

Anisur Rahman, an election commissioner, yesterday confirmed the development.

The US on May 21 imposed sanctions on Aziz Ahmed and his immediate family members for what it said was his involvement in significant corruption.

Aziz was the chief of army staff between June 2018 and June 2021. He led Border Guard Bangladesh between 2012 and 2016.

Aziz is the eldest of five brothers. His brothers Tofael, Haris and Anis Ahmed hogged headlines during the 1990s and the 2000s for murder, extortion, and possession of illegal firearms.

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Joseph

Haris