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ABRAR MURDER

HC upholds gallows for 20 Buet students

Confirms life term for 5 in the 2019 brutal killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld a trial court verdict sentencing 20 Buet students to death and five others to life in prison for killing Abrar Fahad in 2019.

Abrar, a student of electrical and electronics engineering at Buet, was beaten to death by the leaders and activists of the now banned Chhatra League at a dormitory of the university in October 2019 in an incident that shook the nation to its core.

A Dhaka court on December 8, 2021, delivered verdict in the case.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Syed Enayet Hossain accepted the death reference (trial court documents for confirmation of death sentences) and dismissed the appeals filed by the convicts.

Citing the documents, the HC said the accused in connivance with each other killed Abrar, and nobody stepped forward to save him.

The detailed observations on which the



HC came up with the verdict will be known when its full text is released, Deputy Attorney General Jashim Sarker told The Daily Star.

After the HC delivered the verdict, Abrar's father Barkat Ullah told reporters on the Supreme Court premises that he hoped the verdict would be implemented without any delay.

"Parents send their children to educational institutions and work hard so that the children have education. However, when children go astray, giving in to temptation, parents are deeply hurt. I urge the students not to engage in bad politics," he said.

Abrar's younger brother Abrar Faiyaz said, "We did not think even a year ago that the High Court verdict would be delivered so soon. It may have been possible because of the changeover on August 5 last year. However, there is still a lot to be done."

If the verdicts are implemented fast, it will act as a deterrent, he said, adding,

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Dockyards have been illegally built by occupying the Buriganga bank in Char Kaliganj area of Dakkhin Keraniganj. Constructing anything beyond the pillar, marked in red, is illegal.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'Rape is rape'

Says CA's office; TIB calls DMP chief's remarks on rape 'arrogant'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Adviser's Office yesterday condemned the DMP commissioner's call on the media not to use the term "rape" in their reporting.

"Rape is rape, whether committed against an 8-year-old or an 80-year-old. Such a heinous crime must be called by its rightful name," said a statement issued by the CA Press Wing.

The interim government will not tolerate any form of violence against any citizen of Bangladesh, added the statement.

On Saturday, DMP chief Sheikh Md Sajjat Ali told a programme, "I strongly dislike the word 'rape'. I request you [media] not to use it. Instead, use terms like 'violence against women' or 'repression of women'. Even the law is called the 'Women and Children Repression [Prevention] Act.' Let's avoid words that sound unpleasant."

Reacting to his remark yesterday, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said that by requesting the media to refrain from using the word "rape," the DMP commissioner has essentially taken the side of rapists and created a means to protect them.

"If a police official makes such a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Highway Police struggling amid resource crunch

SHARIFUL ISLAM and MUNTAKIM SAAD

The special police unit, which was established nearly two decades ago to ensure safety and security on the highways, continues to struggle to prevent robberies and other crimes.

Highway Police officials cited insufficient manpower, inadequate logistics support, and the absence of a modern, technology-driven policing system as key factors behind the unit's struggles.

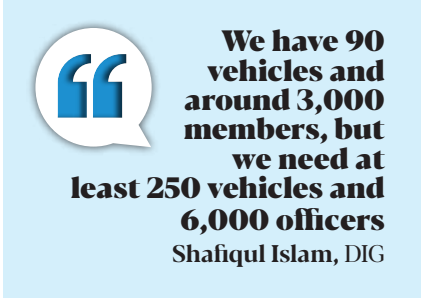
Although the officials could not immediately say how many robberies on the highways took place in recent months, data from the Police Headquarters showed the number of robbery cases in general was 171 in January and 153 in February this year, compared to 114 and 121 in the same months last year.

In recent months, armed gangs ambushing buses, trucks, and private vehicles have made headlines very often. News reports show regional roads are particularly vulnerable after dark.

Returning expatriates, businessmen, and goods-laden trucks are among the most frequent targets. Many victims

refrain from filing cases due to the legal hassles and a lack of confidence in law enforcement. They opt for general diaries that often lead to no action.

The most shocking incident took place on February 17, when a gang took charge of a Rajshahi bound bus from Dhaka near Mirzapur in Tangail. They assaulted passengers before fleeing



with cash, mobile phones, and jewellery.

On February 21, armed criminals robbed passengers and drivers on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway, taking jewellery, cash, and mobile phones. In another incident on February 23, robbers blocked a highway in Patnitala,

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DEATH IN CUSTODY

Victim had torture marks on his body Shows inquest report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The murder suspect who died in police custody while undergoing treatment at a hospital had multiple injuries, including dark bruises on various parts of his body, according to his inquest report prepared by the police.

Hezaz Bin Alam, also known as Ezaz, 37, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Friday just hours after detectives detained him and took him there, his family said.

The inquest report, prepared yesterday by Sheikh Kader Ahmed, a sub-inspector of Mohammadpur Police Station, in the presence of an executive magistrate, noted dark bruises on Ezaz's back, handcuff marks on both wrists, and additional bruises on his thighs, buttocks, and swollen legs.

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Next budget must be designed for LDC graduation

Says CPD, wants tax policy revision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country must revise its tax policies to align with World Trade Organisation regulations as part of its preparations for graduation from the least-developed country bracket in November 2026, said the Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday.

One of the most immediate challenges will be the elimination of direct export incentives, said Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at CPD, at a press briefing organised to share recommendations for the upcoming fiscal year.

Currently, the government provides cash incentives ranging from 3 percent to 4 percent for garments and up to 20 percent for agricultural exports.

Under WTO regulations, such subsidies will no longer be allowed for developing nations, raising concerns about the competitiveness of Bangladeshi products in global markets.

To support exporters, Bangladesh must replace cash incentives with alternative WTO-compliant measures, the CPD said.

Rahman emphasised the need for a long-term strategy. "Our focus should shift from market-access-dependent competitiveness to skills- and productivity-based competitiveness. We still have some time – three more years in the European market. Canada and China have also assured us of continued trade benefits for a period. We must maximise this transition period," he said.

Beyond tariff reforms, Bangladesh must also revise its agricultural trade policies to meet the WTO standards.

Post-graduation, the country will be required to submit annual notifications on domestic agricultural support measures, a shift from

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Trump freezes VOA and other US-funded media outlets

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump's administration has put journalists at Voice of America and other US-funded broadcasters on leave, abruptly freezing decades-old outlets long seen as critical to countering Russian and Chinese information offensives.

Hundreds of staffers at VOA, Radio Free Asia, Radio Free Europe and other outlets received a weekend email saying they will be barred from their offices and should surrender press passes and office-issued equipment.

Trump, who has already eviscerated the US global aid agency and the Education Department, on Friday issued an executive order listing the US Agency for Global Media as among "elements of the federal bureaucracy that the president has determined are unnecessary."

Kari Lake, a firebrand Trump supporter put in charge of the media agency after she lost a US Senate bid, said in an email to the outlets that federal grant money "no longer effectuates agency priorities."

The White House said the cuts would

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Several demonstrators assault a pedestrian who asked them to clear Khamarbari Road near Farmgate in the capital. The protesters kept the road blocked for almost an hour yesterday afternoon, demanding the removal of agriculture secretary because of what they say is rehabilitation of pro-Awami League officials by him.

AID TO RAKHINE

Dhaka should weigh all options carefully

Experts say as many questions remain unanswered

PORIMOL PALMA

Dhaka needs to carefully consider the geopolitical and security implications before agreeing to a humanitarian corridor to Myanmar, which was discussed during the UN secretary-general's Bangladesh visit, say foreign policy and security analysts.

Antonio Guterres, who left Dhaka yesterday for New York after a four-day visit, on Saturday told media he discussed with Bangladesh authorities the possibilities of channelling humanitarian aid inside Myanmar via Bangladesh as a means of creating conditions for Rohingya repatriation to Rakhine State.

He admitted it would, however, require the "authorisation and the cooperation of the parties to the conflict".

A day before the UN chief's visit, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam in a Facebook post said in the light of the dire humanitarian situation in Rakhine, Bangladesh would positively consider supporting UN-led humanitarian assistance to the state.

Analysts say that establishing the corridor being discussed between the UN and Bangladesh is not easy at all, as it involves numerous geopolitical, security, and

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Dhaka Central University for 7 colleges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly proposed university comprising seven government colleges in the capital will be called the Dhaka Central University.

The seven colleges involved in the new university are Dhaka College, Government Bangla College, Government Titumir College, Eden Mohila College, Kabi Nazrul Government College, Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College, and Begum Badrunnesa Government Girls' College. The colleges currently serve about 2 lakh students in both graduate and postgraduate programmes.

The decision was made yesterday at a meeting held at the University Grants Commission (UGC) with a delegation of 28 student leaders, said Abul Kalam Azad Majumder, the deputy press secretary to the chief adviser, at a press briefing yesterday.

Regarding the university's interim administration, a proposal has already been prepared and sent to the University of Dhaka (DU) authorities via the education ministry.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Palestinians gather for a mass fast-breaking iftar meal in front of the destroyed Salim Abu Muslim mosque in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip, during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan. Israel and Hamas are set for more indirect talks yesterday on the Gaza ceasefire, but deep divisions persist between the two warring sides on the terms of the fragile truce. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Correction

In our story titled "The Disappeared of the July Uprising: Families Want Closure, However Painful" published on March 16, 2025, we ran a photo of Ishtiak Hasan, a college student from Bogura, and said he remains unaccounted for since August. He had indeed remained missing for a few days at the time, but has since returned home. We apologise for failing to provide the updated information.



Ishtiak Hasan

'Rape is rape'

FROM PAGE 1
statement, it reflects the institutional culture and practices. This is shocking, and we must express our outrage," Iftekharuzzaman said at a human chain in front of Parliament yesterday. TIB organised the programme to protest violence against women and children.

Iftekharuzzaman rejected the DMP chief's comments and termed those "arrogant" and "unacceptable," especially from a law enforcement official.

He called for the media to reject the commissioner's position and to amplify coverage of rape incidents to ensure that the issue remains in public attention. "We must continue to draw attention to the horrific reality of rape, not suppress it."

Reflecting on the state of women's rights in Bangladesh, he said, "In 54 years of independence, men have largely enjoyed freedom, but women have not truly experienced it. If women were truly free, they would not continue to suffer from rape and violence."

Iftekharuzzaman also urged the government not to implement legal reforms on rape cases unilaterally, but to involve civil society organisations in the process to ensure the law is effective in protecting women and children.

Also speaking at the programme, Laki Akter, of Nagorik Uddyg, said that punishment for perpetrators must be severe enough to deter future offences. "The punishment must instill fear in future offenders."

Mohuya Leya Falia, of the Manusher Jonno Foundation, criticised the culture of disrespect towards women, pointing to the prevalence of harmful social media content and religious sermons that perpetuate misogyny.

"These must be stopped," she said, urging the government to take immediate action to eliminate all forms of sexual violence.

Mohuya also said that no reforms will succeed if women continue to feel unsafe. "Political parties must demonstrate what measures they are taking to protect women's rights."

Shamsul Huda, executive director of the Association for Land Reform and Development, called for a redefinition of rape and sexual abuse, stressing that women face insecurity across all areas of life—whether at school, work, or in public spaces. "Women are subjected to sexual assault even in the presence of many men. We live in a barbaric society, and it is shameful."

Shamsul also emphasised the need for reforms in the justice system, urging the expansion of the definition of sexual harassment and abuse, which should also include harmful discussions and misogynistic content on media platforms.

Over a hundred participants from various rights organisations attended the human chain, demanding justice for all incidents of violence against women and children and calling for an end to the culture of impunity.

Highway Police struggling

FROM PAGE 1

Naogaon, with logs and attacked a BRTC bus and a microbus, stealing Tk 3 lakh in cash and valuables. A gang looted cash and mobile phones from teachers and students on an educational trip in Tangail's Ghatail upazila on February 25.

On March 1, robbers attacked a microbus carrying a Bangladeshi expatriate in Pabna's Santhia upazila, injuring three people and looting valuables. A day later, a moving bus near Savar's Bank Town area was ambushed in broad daylight by armed robbers.

In response to these incidents, police have prepared a list of 1,446 suspects, including individuals who have been formally charged or convicted in past highway robbery cases.

Md Shafiqul Islam, deputy inspector general (operations) of Highway Police, told The Daily Star that the force had already sent the list to the Police Headquarters with a request to launch a coordinated drive by district police and other units concerned.

UNDERSTAFFED, ILL-EQUIPPED

With its headquarters operating from a rented house in Uttara, the unit faces an acute shortage of vehicles, leading to heavy reliance on patrolling on foot or requisitioned vehicles.

It had around 99 patrol vehicles and only 2,931 personnel for over 3,000 kilometres of highways across

Bangladesh—an average of one vehicle per 30 kilometres.

Of the original 99 patrol vehicles, nine were torched during the July uprising, leaving even fewer resources to maintain order.

The Highway Police operates under four regions, nine zones, 36 police stations, 37 outposts, and seven camps.

Alarmingly, nine police stations or outposts do not have a single patrol vehicle, forcing officers to rent human haulers to conduct their duties.

One official from the Bogura region, wishing anonymity, revealed that Hatikumrul Highway Police Station has only two patrol vehicles to cover an 88-kilometre stretch across three major highways.

With limited resources, officers struggle to cover high-risk crime zones, leaving vast areas completely unguarded. In some instances, the lone ambulance designated for accident rescue is repurposed for patrolling.

To improve highway security, DIG Shafiqul stressed the need for each police station and outpost to have at least four patrol vehicles.

"We have 90 vehicles and around 3,000 members, but we need at least 250 vehicles and 6,000 officers," he said.

The DIG said that although reports of highway robberies waned in the first half of Ramadan, 700 additional policemen would be deployed on deputation ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr

to maintain law and order on the highways during the holiday travel rush.

He also said 39 people allegedly involved in highway robberies were arrested after the recent incidents.

A shortage of firearms and ammunition has further weakened the force. During last year's student-led mass uprising, several Highway Police establishments were attacked and torched, while 33 firearms and over 11,000 rounds of ammunition were looted. Among the looted arms, 10 are 7.62mm rifles, one submachine gun, nine 9mm pistols, 10 shotguns, and three gas guns.

The challenges extend beyond manpower, vehicles and firearms.

The design of highways, particularly on four-lane and eight-lane sections, makes it difficult for officers to respond quickly to incidents on the opposite side. Delayed response times only embolden criminals.

Furthermore, the force's wireless communication system has a range of just two kilometres, severely hindering coordination among units.

To ensure road safety, DIG Shafiqul called for access to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) database, which he said would help track offenders more effectively.

"If a driver violates traffic rules, the owner may receive an automated SMS alert, and BRTA may collect the fines during document renewal," he said.

secretary-general or even the UN

General Assembly cannot go ahead with such a humanitarian corridor if the UN Security Council does not approve it.

Also, though the Arakan Army controls the majority of Rakhine, the Myanmar Army is still the country's official authority. Both these parties also need to be consulted, he said.

The other major countries in the region, including China, Japan and India also need to be engaged in the process. China or India, who are major neighbours of Myanmar, may not allow some other security forces to be in the region, he added.

"We need to do a lot of homework before agreeing to such a decision," said Dr Imtiaz.

Shafiqat Munir, senior research fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, said there are many questions that need to be answered before any humanitarian corridor is established.

"Who will establish the corridor, how will these be operated, and who will guard it? What will be the other end of the corridor and who will ensure security?" he asked.

"Bangladesh needs to carefully weigh the pros and cons", the security analyst said.

and later granted bail."

Iftekhar Hasan, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said, "An army team arrested Ezaz and then handed him over to us on March 11 as his name was found in a murder case. We produced him before the court the same day, but he got bail."

The suspect was undergoing treatment at a hospital, from where a DB team detained him, he told this paper.

A local trader alleged that Ezaz was closely associated with top criminal Emon and engaged in various criminal activities.

Refuting the claims, Shah Alam accused law enforcement of falsely labelling his son a criminal and subjecting him to torture, which led to his death.

"I demand a thorough investigation," he said.

Trump targets Venezuela gang with wartime aliens law

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump tried Saturday to invoke a law last used during World War II against Japanese residents to target a Venezuelan gang -- only to find his decision blocked by a judge.

The US president had issued an order to deport alleged members of the Venezuelan drug gang Tren de Aragua, arguing he had a right to declare them "alien enemies" under a wartime act.

But rights lawyers went to court and a federal judge ordered the administration not to deport anyone until he has more time to consider the legality of the order.

The Alien Enemies Act of 1798

HC upholds gallows for 20 Buet students

FROM PAGE 1

"No one else should have the same fate as Abrar Fahad."

The murder triggered widespread protests on campuses across the country, compelling the Buet administration to ban political activities on the campus in October.

On the night of October 6, 2019, the convicts tortured Abrar with skipping ropes and cricket stumps. Just a few hours earlier, he came back to the dormitory from his home in Kushdia and was in his room at Sher-e-Bangla Hall.

Around 8:00pm, some Chhatra League leaders and activists of the dormitory asked him to go to room number 2011 on the first floor.

At room 2011, Abrar saw some BCL leaders waiting for him. One of them took Abrar's phone and started checking his Facebook page and Messenger app. The BCL men asked him whether he had links with Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat.

The men started hitting him after finding Abrar's Facebook post which was critical of a government deal with India. Two of them had cricket stumps.

At one point, one of the stumps broke in half. A third man then picked up the broken piece and started hitting him with it while another whipped Abrar with a skipping rope.

Abrar begged for water, but they didn't give him a single drop. When he fell to the floor, the BCL men forced him back on his feet and started hitting him again. Abrar then started throwing up and became motionless soon afterwards.

The attackers then called Abrar's classmates and along with them took him to the staircase landing between the first and ground floors around 2:30am. The BCL men then went out to have dinner. After it became clear that Abrar had died, they took the body downstairs.

Abrar's father Barkat filed a murder case with Chawkbazar Police Station the next day.

After yesterday's verdict, Attorney General Asaduzzaman, expressing satisfaction, said the concept for bringing discipline to the state and society and ensuring justice was established.

Azizur Rahman Dulu, lawyer for convicts Morshed Amartya Islam and Mefthahul Islam Zia, told The Daily Star that his clients were deprived of justice because they were not involved in the torture or murder.

"We will move appeals on behalf of my clients before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the High Court verdict once we receive the full text. After the appeals are filed, the execution of the death sentence will be suspended," he said.

If the verdict on the appeal goes

is a wartime authority that allows a president to detain or deport citizens of an enemy nation, and has been invoked three times.

It was used in the War of 1812, World War I and -- most famously -- between 1942 and 1946 during World War II to intern around 120,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans.

Now, Trump, who has promised supporters an aggressive drive to deport thousands of undocumented migrants, is targeting Tren de Aragua.

In a proclamation, the White House declared that the transnational criminal organization is closely linked to the government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

against his clients, they will file review petitions before the Appellate Division, the lawyer said.

If the review petitions are dismissed, those sentenced to death can seek the president's mercy.

THE CONVICTS

Those sentenced to death are Mehedi Hasan Russel, former general secretary of Buet Chhatra League; Mehedi Hasan Robin, ex-organising secretary; Anik Sarkar Apu, ex-information and research secretary; Moniruzzaman Monir, ex-literature secretary; Mefthahul Islam Zion, ex-sports secretary; Ilti Mosharrar Shokal, ex-deputy social welfare secretary; Mustaba Rafid, ex-deputy office secretary; former members Mujahidur Rahman Mujahid, Muntasir Al Jemy and Ehtashamul Rabbi Tanim; activists Khandaker Tabakkarul Islam Tanvir, ASM Nazmus Sadat, Majedur Rahman alias Majed, Hossain Mohammad Toha, Shamim Billah, Mizanur Rahman Mizan, SM Mahmud Setu, Shamsul Arefin Rafat, Muhammad Morshed-Uz-Zaman Mondol and Morshed Amartya Islam.

Buet BCL's former vice-president Muhtasim Fuad, former library and publication secretary Ishtiak Ahmed Munna, former deputy legal affairs secretary Amit Saha and activists Akash Hossain and Moaz Abu Hurayra were sentenced to life in prison.

Among the convicts, Mustaba, Jishan and Tanim have been absconding while Muntasir Al Jemy, sentenced to death, escaped from Kashimpur Central Jail on August 6, a day after the fall of the Awami League regime. Abrar's family did not know that he had escaped until February 24 this year.

Abrar's brother Faiyaz said he did not know why the information was disclosed after six months.

According to the charge sheet, the accused held meetings for two consecutive days and had the intention to beat Abrar to death.

On January 6, 2022, the documents of the case reached the HC as death references to examine the lower court's verdict. The HC bench led by Justice AKM Asaduzzaman began the hearing on the death references and appeals on November 28 last year.

At the appeal hearings, the prosecutors were Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman, deputy attorneys general Jasim Sarker, Khandaker Bahar Rumi, Nur Muhammad Azmi and Rasel Ahmed, and assistant attorneys general Abdul Jabbar Jewel, Laboni Akhter, Tanvir Prodhan and Sumaiya Binte Aziz.

On the other hand, lawyers SM Shahjahan, Azizur Rahman Dulu, Masud Hasan Chowdhury and Mohammad Shishir Manir represented the convicts.

জন ও নিরাপদে টেমিটিয়ান্স পাঠান
প্রিয়জনকে প্রয়োজনে...

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EU pledges technical, fund support for polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union has pledged to provide its expertise and financial support to help ensure that the upcoming national election is free and fair.

It will support Bangladesh to conduct the polls in line with international standards with a significant financial package.

EU Ambassador Michael Miller, who led a five-member delegation, told reporters yesterday after meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the EC Secretariat in the capital's Agargaon.

Miller, also the head of the EU delegation to Bangladesh, said this was their second meeting with the EC.

"We came to discuss and be briefed on the work that the Bangladesh Election Commission is currently undertaking to prepare for a democratic election as Bangladesh moves through its political transition," he said.

"I passed three key messages to the Election Commission today [yesterday]. Firstly, the European Union is a steadfast partner of this country, and we stand

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Various organisations -- including Transparency International Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust -- formed a human chain in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday, demanding an immediate stop to violence against women across the country.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

JULY UPRISING

Ex-IGP shown arrested by ICT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Inspector General of Police (IGP) Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun was shown arrested by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) yesterday, in a case filed five months ago against ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over alleged crimes against humanity during the July uprising.

Initially, Hasina was the sole accused in the case, filed on October 17 last year, marking the first case under the reconstituted tribunal. With yesterday's order, Mamun has become the second accused.

Mamun was brought to the court premises around 10:00am and produced before the tribunal at 1:00pm.

Following a prosecution petition, the tribunal granted the request to show Mamun as arrested and permitted the ICT investigation agency to interrogate him on March 18.

A two-member ICT bench, led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, passed the order.

During a briefing after the proceedings, ICT Chief Prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam said as Hasina's right-hand man, former IGP Mamun executed all her commands.

He added Hasina bears command

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Rights groups decry lack of coordination in child protection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Child rights organisations have voiced concerns over the lack of coordination among government ministries, which they say is undermining child protection efforts in Bangladesh.

At a press conference yesterday, they pointed out that despite the involvement of the labour ministry, women and child affairs ministry and social welfare ministry, inadequate cooperation has created critical gaps in safeguarding children.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a Child Affairs Department
- Establish a Child Rights Reform Commission
- Set up fast-track tribunals
- Provide mental health support for survivors
- Form protection committees locally

They also highlighted the absence of a dedicated department for children, unlike the Department of Women

Affairs, and stressed the urgent need for a Child Affairs Department to streamline policies across ministries.

Additionally, they urged the interim government to establish a Child Rights Reform Commission to address the crisis effectively.

The event, titled "Protest and Concern of NGOs Working on Child Rights on Incidents of Child Rape, Abuse, and Murder", was jointly organised by Ain o Salish Kendra, Breaking the Silence, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Plan International Bangladesh, and Save the Children at the Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, delivered the keynote speech on behalf

of the organisations and presented key recommendations. With child abuse cases on the rise, she called for the establishment of a fast-track tribunal to ensure swift trials and punishment for offenders.

She warned that delays in investigations and prosecutions allow perpetrators to evade justice, fostering a culture of impunity. Law enforcement agencies must act decisively to deliver justice, she said.

The recommendations also include stricter oversight of educational institutions to prevent abuse, including rigorous background checks on teachers and school staff to ensure individuals

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Parades to be held in 63 dists except Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has announced that Independence Day parades will be held in 63 districts on March 26, excluding Dhaka, due to ongoing renovation work at the National Stadium.

A statement from the Chief Adviser's Press Wing yesterday evening dismissed reports claiming the parade would be cancelled this year, clarifying that while the capital will not host the event, all deputy commissioners have been instructed to organise the parades and ensure due honour for freedom fighters across the country.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

REFORM PROPOSALS

Four more parties submit feedback

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four more political parties have submitted their feedback in response to the National Consensus Commission regarding key reform proposals recommended by various reform commissions.

With these four, a total of 11 out of 38 political parties have now provided their feedback to the commission.

The feedback came from Rastrosongskar Andolan, Bangladesh Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Labour Party, and Khelafat Majlish, Prof Ali Riaz, vice-president of the National Consensus Commission, told The Daily Star.

"Amid the weekend, four more parties have submitted their feedback," Prof Riaz added.

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RAPE ACROSS COUNTRY

Five sent to jail

STAR REPORT

At least five people were sent to jail yesterday and another placed in a three-day remand in cases filed over rape and attempted rape charges in six districts.

Of them, CNG-run autorickshaw driver Abdul Ali, 55, who allegedly raped a female street beggar at Chattogram's Chandgaon on March 11 night, was sent to jail, said Aftab Uddin, OC of Chandgaon Police Station.

In Tangail, Firoz Miah, 45, of Mirzapur, was remanded for three days on the charge of raping a nine-year-old girl on February 24, said Mosharaf Hossain, OC of Mirzapur Police Station.

In Mymensingh, Abdul Khaleque, 65, of Muktagacha upazila, was sent to jail for raping a 36-year-old woman on March 8, said Md Kamal Hossain, OC of Muktagacha Police Station.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 7

রমজান
ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক
নিয়ে এলো
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Khan Mohammad Amir no more

CITY DESK

Khan Mohammad Amir Biltu, chairman of Padma Group of Companies, passed away at United Hospital in the capital yesterday. He was 82, said a press release.

His namaz-e-janaza was held after Isha prayers at Gulshan Azad Mosque yesterday. The industrialist will be buried at his family graveyard in Paikpara of Dharmrai following another janaza after the Zohr prayers tomorrow.

Ex-IGP shown

FROM PAGE 3
responsibility for ordering police to shoot students and civilians during the uprising.

“For strategic reasons, we have included Mamun in this case. His inclusion is crucial in proving Sheikh Hasina’s crimes,” Tajul said.

Hasina faces two other cases – one related to enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings during her 15-year tenure, and another concerning the killings during a Hefajat-e-Islam protest at Motijheel’s Shapla Chattar on May 5, 2013.

EU pledges technical

FROM PAGE 3
with you in this incredibly important transition.

“The second is that the European Union is looking to reinforce its partnership with Bangladesh in all its dimensions. We are here to support the ambition of the interim government to conduct an election in line with the expectations of your own citizens, as expressed last year.”

He said that the third message was to tell the CEC that the EU will support the conduct of elections in this country in line with international standards.

Miller said, “We will do this with a significant financial package as well as by offering our experience and expertise. This also extends to offering to deploy an election observation mission, should that be the wish of the authorities here in Bangladesh.”

Meanwhile, CEC Nasir Uddin told reporters that the EU wants to see an election that meets international standards.

“We are committed to that. There is no disagreement on this matter. They want a free, fair, and acceptable election, which is also our promise. We want the same.”

“We have informed them about everything we are doing in preparation for the election. They enquired about the election budget,

whether the funds are properly allocated, and if there are any financial issues. We assured them that we have no financial difficulties.”

Nasir Uddin said that the EC has requested a budget from the government and the EU representatives have expressed their willingness to assist.

Parades

FROM PAGE 3
Earlier in the day, Home Ministry Senior Secretary Nasimul Ghani said that no parade would take place this year. “The Victory Day parade was not held last year, and there will be no Independence Day parade this year,” he told reporters after a meeting.

He cited the government’s current stance, saying, “Advisers have stated that we are in a wartime mode. We are not in a celebratory mood.”

Asked about potential security concerns surrounding 26 March, Ghani said, “At present, I do not see any security risks.”

He added that the government has implemented extensive security and logistical measures during Ramadan and in preparation for Eid-ul-Fitr and Independence Day. Authorities have also taken steps to curb extortion and street crimes in transport hubs, he added.

Lax monitoring lets

FROM PAGE 5
have been dumping their untreated toxic waste into rivers and canals through pipelines.

“The installed ETPs are often just a facade. The condition of water of the nearby rivers and canals is glaring proof of how these industries have been poisoning the waterbodies by dumping untreated wastes,” said Shamsul Alam, a rights and environment activist in Mirzapur.

The Louhajang river flowing through Tangail Sadar upazila is now all but dead due to industrial pollution over the last couple of decades, especially by mills and factories in Taratia, Gosaibari Kumulli, Khudirampur, Karatia and Birpushia areas.

Illegal encroachment further added to the river’s woes.

“We have held numerous programmes protesting mindless pollution of rivers and waterbodies, and demanding action against the polluters, but our voices fell in deaf ears,” said Ibrahim Mollah of Gosaibari Kumulli area.

The wastes remain stagnant during dry season, before being washed away during monsoon, contaminating

other waterbodies and rivers, said locals.

The polluters are influential and have managed to keep the authorities at bay through bribing the concerned officials, they alleged.

“While the issue has been highlighted in media time and again, local public representatives, administrations, and also DoE could hardly do anything in this regard,” said Shipon Ahmed, a resident of Khudirampur area.

Contacted, Mia Mahmudur Rahman, deputy director of DoE in Tangail, said they send water samples from the mills and factories to Dhaka for testing every few months since there is no water testing laboratory in Tangail.

“We have recently collected water samples from the waterbodies and sent those to be tested. If pollutants are found, action will be taken against the mills and factories concerned,” he added.

Ratan Ahmed Siddiqui, general secretary of River, Canal and Waterbodies Protection Movement Committee in Tangail, expressed concern that the test results could be tampered with to produce misleading conclusion.

Rights groups decry lack

FROM PAGE 3
with histories of sexual misconduct are not recruited.

To ensure accountability and effective policy implementation, the organisations proposed an independent monitoring system to assess child protection measures. They also underscored the need for mental health support and rehabilitation for child survivors.

“Without proper psychological care, many victims struggle to reintegrate into society and suffer long-term trauma. The government must prioritise these services,” said Shaheen Anam.

The NGOs further stressed the importance of stronger community involvement, proposing the formation of Child Protection Committees at the neighbourhood level to create a local safety net for vulnerable children.

Additionally, they called for legal and social protection for victims and witnesses of child abuse

cases. “Many families face threats and intimidation after filing complaints, often forcing them to withdraw cases. Ensuring their safety is crucial to holding perpetrators accountable,” Shaheen Anam added.

The recommendations urged the government, law enforcement agencies, and civil society to take immediate action, emphasising that ensuring children’s safety must be a national priority.

During the Q&A session, speakers strongly opposed Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Sheikh Md Sajjat Ali’s recent suggestion that the media should refrain from using the term “rape” in reports, instead opting for phrases like “violence against women.”

Shaheen Anam expressed shock at the commissioner’s remarks, saying, “The issue is not the unpleasantness of the word but the severity of the crime itself.” She warned that using softer terminology could downplay

the gravity of rape.

Nishath Sultana, Director of Plan International Bangladesh, asserted that rape must be explicitly labelled as such, leaving no room for euphemisms.

Abdullah Al Mamun, Director of Save the Children, echoed similar concerns, emphasising that while rape falls under the broader category of violence against women, it must be clearly identified to ensure justice and accountability.

Nishath Sultana, director of Influencing, Campaigns, and Communications at Plan International Bangladesh, moderated the event.

Speakers included Kabita Bose, country director of Plan International Bangladesh; Abdullah Al Mamun, director of Child Protection and Child Rights Governance at Save the Children; Zahidul Islam, director of Programme and Planning at Breaking the Silence; and Tamanna Hoq Riti, coordinator at Ain o Salish Kendra.

**Bangladesh Open University**
Engineering & Estate Division
Gazipur-1705, Bangladesh
Website: www.bou.ac.bd

বাউবির দীক্ষা : সবার জন্য উন্মুক্ত কর্মমুখী, গণমুখী ও জীবনব্যাপী শিক্ষা

Ref. No. BOU/E&E/28/395/2024/45 Dated: 16.03.2025

e-Tender Notice
e-Tenders is invited through e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by University Engineer, Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur-1705 for the procurement of work, which will be available at e-GP website from 17.03.2025, on 10.00am.

Sl. No.	Tender ID, Ref. No. & Package No.	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time
1	Tender ID: 1087402 Ref. No. BOU/EE/Repair/SOB/17/2024-2025. Package No. 02	Repair & renovation works of School of Business (Room No. 255A and 263) at BOU Campus, Gazipur-1705.	Date: 06/04/2025 Time: up to 14.00pm	Date: 07/04/2025 Time: at 14.00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents can be deposited online through any bank's branches as per tender notice.

Sd/-
Engr. Md. Shahriar Sahan
University Engineer
Bangladesh Open University
Phone: 02996691121

GD-672

**Bangladesh Open University**
Engineering & Estate Division
Gazipur-1705, Bangladesh
Website: www.bou.ac.bd

বাউবির দীক্ষা : সবার জন্য উন্মুক্ত কর্মমুখী, গণমুখী ও জীবনব্যাপী শিক্ষা

Ref. No. : BOU/E&E/28/393/2024/46 Dated : 16.03.2025

e-Tender Notice
e-Tenders is invited through e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by University Engineer, Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur-1705 for the procurement of work, which will be available at e-GP website from 17.03.2025, on 10.00 a.m.

Sl. No.	Tender ID, Ref. No. & Package No.	Name of work	Last Selling date & Time	Tender Closing date & Time
01	Tender ID : 1073774 Ref. No. BOU/EE/DTW/Chapainawabgonj/19. Package No. 03	Installation of Deep Tube Well at Chapainawabgonj Sub-Regional Center, Chapainawabgonj.	Date : 06/04/2025 Time : up to 14.00 pm	Date : 07/04/2025 Time : at 14.00 pm

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

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Sd/-
Engr. Md. Shahriar Sahan
University Engineer
Bangladesh Open University
Phone : 02996691121

GD - 674

Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)
Road Division, Pirojpur.
E-mail: pirdivisionrhd@gmail.com

Memo No. 35.01.7980.462.07.001.20-872. Dated: 16/03/2025

Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method, NCT)

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal for the following works:

Tender ID & Package No.	1088168, 31/e-GP/PRD/OTM/PMP-Minor/2024-2025
Name of Tender	Repair and Seal Coat work at Ch.17+000 km to 18+500 Km of Rajapur-Bhandaria-Pirojpur Road (R-870) under Pirojpur Road Division during the year 2024-2025.
Tender Last Selling Date and Time	06-April-2025 & Time 16:00
Tender Closing & Opening Date and Time	07-April-2025 & Time 12:00

Tender ID & Package No.	1088170, 32/e-GP/PRD/OTM/PMP-Minor/2024-2025
Name of Tender	Repair and Seal Coat work at Ch.19+500 km to 21+500 Km of Rajapur-Bhandaria-Pirojpur Road (R-870) under Pirojpur Road Division during the year 2024-2025.
Tender Last Selling Date and Time	06-April-2025 & Time 16:00
Tender Closing & Opening Date and Time	07-April-2025 & Time 12:15

Tender ID & Package No.	1088172, 33/e-GP/PRD/OTM/PMP-Minor/2024-2025
Name of Tender	Road Marking work at different locations of Rajapur-Bhandaria-Pirojpur Road (R-870), Charkhali-Tushkhali-Mathbaria-Patharghata (R-871), Pirojpur-Nazipur-Matibhanga-Patgati-Gonapara Road (Z-7704), Naikati-Bhandaria Road (Z-8717) Road Under Pirojpur Road Division during the year 2024-25.
Tender Last Selling Date and Time	06-April-2025 & Time 16:00
Tender Closing & Opening Date and Time	07-April-2025 & Time 12:30

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline /hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system. (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details please contact e-GP help desk, (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

Tamim Alim
ID No-602308
Executive Engineer (C.C.), RHD,
Road Division, Pirojpur

GD-671

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STATUTORY NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH, HIGH COURT DIVISION (ORIGINAL STATUTORY JURISDICTION) COMPANY MATTER NO. 297 OF 2025
IN THE MATTER OF :
An application under Sections 81(2) and 85(3) read with section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994, AND, In the Matter of
Mozammel Haque Zilla, shareholder & Managing Director of "Technic construction Company Ltd.", having its registered Office:- at Ananika A-47, East Shahi Gidyal, Sylhet. —Petitioner
—VERSUS—
Technic construction Company Ltd., a Private Limited Company having its Registered Office:- at Ananika A-47, East Shahi Gidyal, Sylhet, representative by its Managing Director Mozammel Haque Zilla and another. —Respondents
Notice is hereby given that an application under Sections 81(2) and 85(3) read with section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was moved in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner for condoning the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of the company name & style as "Technic construction Company Ltd." The Hon'ble Company Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohail has admitted the said application on 23.02.2025 and Hon'ble court directed the petitioner to publish the notices within 3(three) weeks and also to submit affidavit-in- compliance on or before 20th April, 2025 from the date of publication. Any person interested in the said application may appear before this Hon'ble Court. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of charges.
(Mohammad Shariful Islam)
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Hall Room No. 1, Supreme Court Bar Association Bhaban, Dhaka-1000. Mobile: 01711173360

STATUTORY NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH, HIGH COURT DIVISION (ORIGINAL STATUTORY JURISDICTION) COMPANY MATTER NO. 265 OF 2025
IN THE MATTER OF :
An application under Sections 81(2) and 85(3) read with section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994, AND, In the Matter of
Mr. Abdullah Al-Mahmud, shareholder & Chairman of PEAL Engineering and Construction Limited having its registered Office:- at 57, C.W.S (B), Road-28, Gulshan-1, Dhaka. —Petitioner
—VERSUS—
PEAL Engineering and Construction Limited, a Private Limited Company having its Registered Office:- at 57, C.W.S (B), Road-28, Gulshan-1, Dhaka, representative by its Managing Director Riazul Mahmud and another. —Respondents
Notice is hereby given that an application under Sections 81(2) and 85(3) read with section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was moved in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner for condoning the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of the company name & style as "PEAL Engineering and Construction Limited" The Hon'ble Company Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohail has admitted the said application on 23.02.2025 and Hon'ble court directed the petitioner to publish the notices within 3(three) weeks and also to submit affidavit-in- compliance on or before 20th April, 2025 from the date of publication. Any person interested in the said application may appear before this Hon'ble Court. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of charges.
(Mohammad Shariful Islam)
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Hall Room No. 1, Supreme Court Bar Association Bhaban, Dhaka-1000. Mobile: 01711173360

STATUTORY NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH, HIGH COURT DIVISION (STUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION) COMPANY MATTER NO. 265 OF 2025
IN THE MATTER OF :
An application under section 81(2) 85(3) read with section 396 of the Company Act, 1994, AND IN THE MATTER OF :
Chowdhury Md. Abu Sayeed, Managing Director of SANISILA PAPER BOARD MILLS (PVT.) LTD. Add. Daupara, Fatullah, Narayanganj —Petitioner
—VERSUS—
The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, 1, Kawan Bazar, 6th Floor, TCB Bhaban, Dhaka. —Respondents
Take notice that an application under 81(2), 85(3) read with section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994, was filed before the Honorable High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the petitioner for condonation of delay in holding Annual General Meeting of the SANISILA PAPER BOARD MILLS (PVT.) LTD. for the calendar year, 2021, 2022 and 2023. Upon hearing the application on 16-02-2025 the Honorable Company Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohail was pleased to admit the application. Interested person may appear before the Honorable Court on or before the date 20-03-2025 fixed for hearing of the matter. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed fees.
Ripon Chandra Biswas,
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Membership No. 6059, Supreme Court Bar Association Bhaban, Shahbagh, Dhaka-1000

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e-GP Tender ID No.
1086390, 1086529, 1086569, 1086600, 1087032, 1087381, 1087485, 1087943, 1087974, 1088073, 1088086, 1088091, 1088092, 1088194, 1088217, 1086296, 1088263, 1088285, 1088312.

তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী
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GD-673

**নদী গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট**
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ফরিদপুর-৭৮০০, বাংলাদেশ
Phone: +88 02478803007, E-mail: rridb@yahoo.com, Website: www.rr.gov.bd

Memo No: 42.03.0000.401.14.001.24-1382 Date: 16/03/2025


e-Tender Notice (OTM)
This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the national e-GP portal:

Sl.No.	Tender ID No.	Last Selling Date	Opening Date
1	1087536	06 April 2025	07 April 2025
2	1087537	06 April 2025	07 April 2025
3	1087538	06 April 2025	07 April 2025


This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

Pintu Kanungoe
Director (Admin & Finance)
Office of the Director General, RRI, Faridpur.


GD-667

**বাড়ী ভাড়া বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ডের নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (এসওডি) এর কার্যালয়, বাপবিবো, গাজীপুর এর অফিস হিসেবে ব্যবহারের জন্য গাজীপুর সিটি কর্পোরেশন/গাজীপুর পবিসের পাশবর্তী এলাকায় প্রশস্ত পাকা সড়ক সংলগ্ন গাজী পাকিং, গ্যারেজ, পানি, বিদ্যুৎ ও যথাযথ নিরাপত্তা সুবিধাসহ আনুমানিক প্রায় ২০৫০ বর্গফুট হতে ২২০০ বর্গফুট আয়তনের একটি বাড়ী সন্ধ্যা আগামী ০১-০৪-২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ অথবা চুক্তিপত্রে উল্লিখিত তারিখ হতে কার্যকর সাপেক্ষে পরবর্তী ৩৬ (ছত্রিশ) মাস মেয়াদের জন্য চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের মাধ্যমে ইজারা গ্রহণ করা হবে। ইজারা চুক্তির শর্তাদির নমুনা নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তর অথবা নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (এসওডি) এর কার্যালয়, বাপবিবো, গাজীপুর হতে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। বাড়ী ভাড়া প্রদানে আগ্রহী ও বাড়ীর প্রকৃত মালিকগণকে বাড়ীর মালিকানা, অনুমোদিত ফ্লোর প্রানের নকশা ও ফ্লোর এরিয়া সংক্রান্ত কাগজ পত্রাদিসহ প্রত্যাশিত মাসিক বাড়ী ভাড়া (বিদ্যুৎ বিল ব্যতিত) উল্লেখ পূর্বক আগামী ২৫-০৩-২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা-১১:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে তত্তাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, ঢাকা জোন (উত্তর), বাপবিবো, সাভার-এ সীলমোহরকৃত আবেদনপত্র দাখিল এর জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে। নির্ধারিত তারিখ বা সময়ের পরে প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্র না হুদ্রিয়াই আবেদনকারীর বরাবরে ফেরত প্রদান করা হবে। আবেদনপত্র সমূহ আগামী ২৫-০৩-২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১১:৩০ ঘটিকায় নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে আবেদনকারীগণের সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে। কোন কারণ প্রদর্শন ব্যতিরেকেই যে কোন/সকল আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিলের ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

**বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড**
Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board
বাপবিবো/জোন (২৫০৩-১৬৬) ২০২৪-২৫
Superintendent Engineer
Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board,
Dhaka Zone (North), Savar, Dhaka.
E-mail : sdhkrebb@gmail.com

GD-669

**Chittagong Dry Dock Limited**
Bangladesh Navy
East Patenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh
Phone: +88(031)2501113, Mobile: +8801769744470
Fax: +880-31-2501123, E-mail: drydock.bd@gmail.com, Website: www.cddl.gov.bd

Re-Tender Notice Date: 17.03.2025

Sl. No.	Procuring Entity Name	Chittagong Dry Dock Limited, Bangladesh Navy
01.	Procuring Entity Name	Tender
02.	Invitation for	23.02.1565.341.53.003.25.46 Date: 17 March 2025
03.	Invitation Ref No.	Construction of pavement work from gate No 3 to weigh bridge at Chittagong Dry Dock Limited (CDDL), East Patenga, Chattogram.
04.	Project Name	
05.	Budget and Source of Funds	Own Fund
06.	Tendering Method	Open Tender Method (One Stage Two Envelope System)
07.	Eligibility of Tenderers	Required eligibility criteria have been mentioned in the Tender Document.
08.	Price of Tender	Tk 2,000/- (Tk Two Thousand only) (Non Refundable)
09.	Amount of Tender Security	Tk 5,00,000/- (Tk Five Lac only) in the from of pay order/Bank Draft/irrevocable Bank Guaranty in favor of "The Managing Director, Chittagong Dry Dock Limited" issued by a schedule Bank of Bangladesh. (Refundable)
10.	Name & Address of the Office (s)	
a.	Selling Tender Documents	Cash Section, Finance and Accounts Department Chittagong Dry Dock Limited Bangladesh Navy
b.	Receiving Tenders	Office, General Manager (Production and Maintenance) Chittagong Dry Dock Limited Bangladesh Navy
c.	Opening Tenders	Office, General Manager (Production and Maintenance) Chittagong Dry Dock Limited Bangladesh Navy
11.	Tender Selling last Date and Time	10 April 2025 03:00 pm
12.	Tender Closing Date and Time	13 April 2025 11:00 am
13.	Tender Opening Date and Time	13 April 2025 11:15 am
14.	Brief Description of Works	Construction of pavement work from gate no 3 to weigh bridge at Chittagong Dry Dock Limited (CDDL), East Patenga, Chattogram. (As Per Schedule)
15.	Contract Details of Official Inviting tender	Phone:+8801769-744470, Fax: 880-31-2501123 Email: drydock.bd@gmail.com
16.	Special Instructions	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all or any tender prior to acceptance without showing any reason. If it is not possible to open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and same venue.

Managing Director
Chittagong Dry Dock Limited
Bangladesh Navy

GD-676

Lax monitoring lets industrial waste pollute waterbodies

MIRZA SHAKIL, *Tangail*

Discharge of untreated and potentially hazardous industrial waste from dyeing and printing units of mills and factories in Tangail has long been indiscriminately polluting the rivers and other waterbodies across the district amid lax monitoring by the authorities concerned.

Lives and livelihoods of local people, as well as the aquatic biodiversity have been severely affected adversely due to pollution of these waterbodies over the years.

According to sources at the Department of Environment in Tangail, there are more than 15 mills and factories in Mirzapur upazila alone, including Gorai Industrial Area, as well as two mills in BSCIC Industrial area and adjacent Khudirampur under Sadar upazila.

The mills and factories have Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs), the sources said.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw that the water of Sohagpara and Pakulla canals in Mirzapur upazila has turned pitch black due to pollution caused by discharge of untreated waste from the adjacent mills and factories.

Locals alleged that most of the industries have yet to install ETPs following rules and as per capacity, while those that have ETPs installed keep those non-operational to minimize costs. As such, all these mills and factories

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Locals catch crabs from Dhaki River near the Sundarbans. Many residents of villages near the mangrove forest rely on catching fish and crabs to make a living. During low tide, they catch crabs, with an average daily catch of 5-7kg. Depending on size, they sell each kilogramme for Tk 200-800 in the local market. The photo was taken from Dakop upazila, Khulna yesterday.

ACC sues Inu, SK Sur Starts probe against Sheikh Selim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ACC has filed separate cases against former information minister Hasanul Haque Inu and his wife and former lawmaker Afroza Haque, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank Sitangshu Kumar Sur Chowdhury, his wife Suparna Sur Chowdhury and daughter Nandita Sur Chowdhury.

The anti-graft body also launched an investigation against former health minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim over allegations of taking 10-15 percent commissions from contractors in different projects across the country. ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain confirmed the developments at the commission's headquarters in Dhaka's Segunbagicha yesterday.

Inu and Afroza were accused of acquiring illegal wealth worth Tk 4.84 crore and Tk 1.50 crore respectively. Additionally, Inu allegedly conducted suspicious transactions worth Tk 11.88 crore from his four bank accounts.

ACC also filed three separate cases against SK Sur, his wife and daughter over abusing power, acquiring wealth illegally and conducting suspicious bank transactions.

Turning rodents into revenue

Homemaker finds success in albino rat farming

JAHID HASAN, *Shariatpur*

Laboni Akter, a resident of Dhaka's Khilgaon, after completing her post-graduation in Zoology from Khilgaon Model College, sought a unique venture to achieve financial solvency.

For around a year, she has been raising albino rats of a foreign breed in Tulashar village of Shariatpur Sadar upazila.

When asked what motivated her to set up a farm of albino rats, which is reportedly the first of its kind in the country, Laboni said these rats are essential for research purposes.

"Different laboratories and university students require foreign albino rats for research, which are not easily available in Bangladesh. As a zoology graduate, I knew it is relatively easy to breed and rear rats.



So, this sparked the idea of starting a rat farm," she explained.

A homemaker and mother of two, Laboni launched her farm in July 2024 with an initial investment of Tk 1,500 in Shariatpur, from where her husband Md Rakib hailed.

Her husband provided her the initial investment and purchased four Swiss albino rats, a popular breed from Switzerland, for Tk



1,000 and two cages for Tk 500.

Even though she had no formal training in rat farming, Laboni began learning on her own from Google and YouTube about how to ensure the ideal environment, provide the right diet, and treat illnesses for the rats.

By October, the rats had their first litter of ten babies. Currently, she has 40 parent rats that produce about 200 babies every month, which she primarily sells to laboratories and other farms.

At present, her farm has around 350 rats, including parent stock and litter.

She sells 200 baby rats at Tk 100 each monthly, generating around Tk 20,000, making a net

profit of Tk 15,000 per month.

"My first buyer was a snake breeder from Narayanganj. I sold 20 baby rats at Tk 50 each," Laboni said.

However, since she has been selling the rats through middlemen, it reduces her profit. These middlemen buy the rats from her at Tk 100 each and later sell those for Tk 200-250 each to the laboratories.

Laboni aspires to expand her farm by establishing direct contracts with research laboratories and universities to eliminate middlemen and sell at fair prices.

She also wants to encourage more women in Shariatpur to engage in different



entrepreneurial ventures with minimal investment and achieve financial solvency.

Laboni believes that if she could have training on rat farming, alongside support and dedicated land, it could help her expand her venture and create employment opportunities for other women.

"My husband and mother-in-law have been my biggest support in this journey," she said.

Contacted, Ilora Yasmin, upazila nirbahi officer of Shariatpur Sadar upazila, lauded Laboni's initiative.

"Her initiative is undoubtedly remarkable. If Laboni approaches us, we will provide her with all possible support," she said.

ITALIAN VISA CRISIS Victims demand CA's intervention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Victims of the ongoing Italian visa crisis have sought intervention of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus to resolve the crisis.

They have warned that if the issue is not resolved soon, expatriates will announce a remittance shutdown and initiate an indefinite sit-in protest.

They have also declared a 15-day ultimatum in this regard.

The Italian visa applicants made these demands at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Riaz Hossain, a visa applicant, said that visas have been stuck without any resolution since August 2023.

"The embassy is haphazardly delivering visas. We seek a peaceful solution. We have spoken with the expatriate community in Bangladesh, and they are willing to support us during this difficult time."

They demanded that the CA must invite the Italian ambassador for discussions and request that the embassy immediately process visas from 2023 onwards within a month, proper work permit visas should be issued while fake visas must be cancelled, and the Italian ambassador must also confirm this.

They said if the envoy expresses an inability to resolve the issue, a government delegation must visit Italy to discuss with the Italian prime minister and foreign minister to find a diplomatic solution.

Five sent to jail

FROM PAGE 3

In Noakhali, a 55-year old man was sent to jail for raping his daughter-in-law at Companyganj upazila on March 13.

The victim filed a case yesterday and police arrested the accused on the same night, said Gazi Muhammad Fouzul Azim, OC of Companyganj Police Station.

In Narsingdi, one Azad Miah, 55, from Sadar upazila, was arrested in a case filed for raping a 30-year-old RMG worker on Friday, said Nasir Uddin, inspector (investigation) of Belabo Police Station.

In Lalmonirhat, Meher Ali, 55, from Sadar upazila, was sent to jail on charges of attempting to rape a

third grader, said police.

In Patuakhali, mother of a 10th-grader girl demanded immediate arrest of a group of stalkers, who harassed the girl and beat her brother on March 10, at a press conference.

MAN ACCUSED OF RAPING NIECE

In Lalmonirhat, a 5-year-old girl was allegedly raped by one of her uncles in Hatibandha upazila yesterday, said police.

Hatibandha Police Station OC Mahmudun Nabi said they are trying to arrest the accused.

The girl was undergoing treatment, said doctors.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report]

Four more parties

FROM PAGE 3

Earlier, by March 13, seven political parties had submitted their feedback, while 16 political parties have requested additional time to submit their responses.

Meanwhile, 11 political parties have yet to contact the commission regarding their feedback.

The reform proposals in question stem from the Constitutional Reform Commission, Public Administration Reform Commission, Electoral System Reform Commission, Judicial Reform Commission,

and Anti-Corruption Commission Reform Commission.

These proposals were compiled into spreadsheets and sent to 38 political parties with a request to submit their feedback.

The National Consensus Commission was formed under the leadership of the Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

The commission officially began its operations on February 15 and has since been engaging with political parties to gather opinions on the proposed reforms.



Join Shahjalal Islami Bank as MANAGEMENT TRAINEE OFFICER | PROBATIONARY OFFICER

Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC., a leading progressive Shariah based private commercial bank having 141 branches across the country with state of the art technology providing fully online services to the customers. The Management of Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC. is comprised of a team of highly motivated personnel committed to develop excellence in banking. We offer high-caliber graduates the opportunity to develop career as Management Trainee Officer (MTO) under Future Leadership Program.

To meet the growing need of the expansion program the Bank is inviting applications from the talented, proactive and hardworking fresh graduates with strong academic background for induction in the Bank as Management Trainee Officer (MTO) and Probationary Officer (PO) who fulfill the following criteria:

Educational Qualifications:

- Post Graduate from a highly reputed UGC approved University with following grades/results.

Education Level	Management Trainee Officer	Probationary Officer
SSC/O-Level, HSC/A-Level, or Equivalents	CGPA 4.75 out of 5.00 and Minimum 4A & 1B in O-Level and Minimum 1A & 1B in A-Level	CGPA 4.50 out of 5.00 and Minimum 3A & 2B in O-Level and Minimum 2B in A-Level
Graduation & Post-Graduation or Equivalents	CGPA 3.25 out of 4.00 and CGPA 4.00 out of 5.00/First Class.	CGPA 3.00 out of 4.00 and CGPA 4.00 out of 5.00/First Class

Job Requirements:

- Ideal candidate should be self-motivated, conversant with MS Office and must have willingness to work anywhere in the country;
- Age not over 32 years as on March 16, 2025

Selection Procedure:

The selection process will be purely on merit basis. The candidates shall go through a comprehensive selection process which includes initial shortlisting strictly based on the eligibility criteria, written test and two phase interviews. Selected candidates shall go through a formal and structured training process comprising of both classroom and on the job practical training.

www.sjibld.com

Compensation Package:

We offer a great career for the performers with excellent pay package. Selected MTOs and POs shall remain on probation for a period of 1 (one) year. The positions will have the following pay package.

On Probation		After successful completion of probation period	
Position	Monthly Consolidated Pay	To be confirmed as	Monthly Gross Salary
MTO	Tk.49,500.00	First Executive Officer	Tk.71,500.00
PO	Tk.38,500.00	Assistant Executive Officer	Tk.52,955.00

Placement Policy:

Selected candidates must serve in any Branch/Office of the Bank. The MTOs will be nurtured as future leaders of the Bank placing in different key business areas/Corporate Branches/Offices. While the Probationary Officers will be placed outside the city branches of Dhaka and Chattogram. Candidates not willing to serve outside Dhaka/Chattogram need not to apply.

Commitment to serve:

We want your commitment to serve Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC. for a period of minimum 5 (five) years (by signing a surety bond) to reciprocate to our investment in your career.

Application Procedure:

Shahjalal Islami Bank provides an equal employment opportunity. If you fulfill the criteria and have a desire to grow in banking career with a strong willingness to take up the challenge, please apply online through <http://www.bdjobs.com/sjib> with a recently snapped photograph by April 7, 2025 where one candidate can apply for one position only.

No hardcopy of any application/resume will be entertained. Only short listed candidates will be allowed to sit for written examination.

The Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason whatsoever at any stage of the recruitment process.



Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC.
Committed to Cordial Service


AR Rahman recuperates after brief hospitalisation

Last Saturday, Oscar-winning music composer AR Rahman was admitted to Apollo Hospital in Chennai. However, AR Ameen, his son, provided an update, while the hospital issued a press release confirming that Rahman was discharged yesterday.

The musician returned from London on Saturday and started feeling unwell, prompting him to seek a check-up. Rahman was admitted to the hospital, where he received an ECG and echocardiogram.

As per ANI, all the tests conducted by doctors showed Rehman's condition to be normal. They stated that Rahman's condition was due to dehydration, probably resulting from fasting during Ramadan.

His team also dismissed "false" reports that suggested he was hospitalised due to chest pain.



‘CHOKKOR 302’

Mosharraf Karim ready to steal the show this Eid

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

After a prolonged hiatus, Mosharraf Karim is making his return to the silver screen this Eid-ul-Fitr with *Chokkor 302*. Directed by Saraf Ahmed Zibon, the film's teaser has already been released, garnering widespread praise from netizens.

Mosharraf Karim, who takes on the role of police officer Mainul in this thriller, recently spoke to The Daily Star about it. According to him, the narrative of *Chokkor 302* unravels multiple mysteries as the story progresses. "Zibon is one of my favourite people, and his storytelling approach is rather unique," said Mosharraf Karim. "Our promotional video has captivated the audience, and from that, I believe they will definitely come to watch the film in cinemas."

Director Zibon emphasised that the film does not only surround a murder mystery but that it also



delves into the emotional depth of humane relationships. The film, which received a government grant in 2023, was filmed in several locations, including Dhaka, Manikganj, Diyabari, and Sadarghat, among others.

Beyond his long awaited return to cinema, Mosharraf Karim is particularly excited about the film's release during the festive atmosphere of Eid. "My fans and well-wishers have been waiting for this comeback for so long. That wait will finally be over. I earnestly hope they will enjoy the film," he expressed.

Apart from his established career in theatre and television, Mosharraf Karim made his silver screen debut with *Joyjatra* in 2004.

Over the years, he has delivered several acclaimed performances in films such as *Daruchini Dwip* (2007), *Third Person Singular Number* (2009), *Television* (2012), *Jalaler Golpo* (2014), and *Haldaa* (2017). His Tollywood debut, *Hubba* (2024), received widespread acclaim from both critics and audiences alike.

Along with *Chokkor 302*, Mosharraf Karim also has another film, *Bikdakin*, awaiting release.

Purobi Cinema Hall falls, Chayabani now Mymensingh's last standing

Mymensingh's iconic Purobi Cinema Hall, a relic of the city's golden film age, is being demolished to make way for a market.

Mymensingh once had five bustling cinema halls—Ajanta, Chayabani, Alka, Purobi, and Sena Auditorium. Over time, only Chayabani and Purobi remained. Now, as commercial developments take over Purobi, Chayabani will remain the sole survivor.

Purobi manager Kazi Delwar confirmed to local media that demolition began last month, he added, "A market is planned for the site, with hopes of a cineplex on the ground floor, though it may take four to five years."

On December 7, 2002, JMB bombed four Mymensingh cinemas, killing 17 and injuring over 200. Since then, the city's cinema culture has declined, with halls shutting down one after another.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?



Indigenous Tree Plantation at Panthakunja Park


The Bangladesh Tree Protection Movement (BTPM) is hosting a 10-day tree plantation event featuring infrastructural art installations, music, and performing arts by environmental artists, aimed at raising awareness of the Panthakunja Park rehabilitation project.

The program invites public participation and contributions of indigenous saplings to restore the park's natural greenery during the monsoon season.

DATE: TODAY-SUNDAY | MARCH 17-23

TIME: 12PM-3PM

VENUE: PANTHAKUNJA PARK, KARWAN BAZAR



‘Single White Female’ remake in the works

Actresses Taylor Russell and Jenna Ortega are in discussions to star in a remake of *Single White Female*, as per recent reports. The film company 3000 Pictures is planning to remake the 1992 psycho-sexual thriller, which originally featured Bridget Fonda and Jennifer Jason Leigh.

Russell and Ortega are set to star in and produce the remake. However, Sony, which has a partnership with the production company, has yet to comment on the project.

NEWS

Yunus to discuss law and order

FROM PAGE 12

the world, reported BSS.

Top Asian leaders and CEOs of leading firms will participate in the conference.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen called on Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna yesterday to discuss the upcoming tour.

After the meeting with the ambassador, Shafiqul said that the chief adviser was likely to meet CEOs of some companies on the sidelines of the forum.

The Chinese envoy informed Yunus that Chinese companies made larger investments in Bangladesh after the interim government took charge last year.

"We hope that more Chinese companies will come to Bangladesh with their investment after the visit," Shafiqul added.

He said the chief adviser would hold talks with Chinese hospital chains to invite them to explore

business potential and set up hospitals in Bangladesh under joint venture initiatives.

The first bilateral meeting between Prof Yunus and Chinese President Xi Jinping will be held in Beijing on March 28, the press secretary said.

He said that issues related to bilateral interest will be discussed in the meeting.

Bangladesh wants to take its relations with China to a new height aiming to turn Bangladesh into a manufacturing hub, he said, adding, "They [China] think that this would be the most important visit by the Bangladeshi leader."

The government's focus will be on attracting Chinese companies to relocate their factories to Bangladesh, Shafiqul said.

On the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York last year, the chief adviser talked to the Chinese foreign minister and sought Chinese investment in

Bangladesh's solar energy sector.

In response, two Chinese companies, including the world's leading supplier of solar PV solutions Longi, will soon set up their offices and manufacturing plants in Bangladesh, according to Shafiqul.

During the visit, Prof Yunus would deliver a lecture at Peking University, which would confer an honorary doctorate on the chief adviser, said the press secretary.

The chief adviser will also visit the Chinese Hi Tech parks.

Regarding the government's reform initiatives, Shafiqul said that Bangladesh had the full support of its friendly partners and well-wishers in its reform agenda, but the reform initiatives were completely "homegrown" and they would remain so, reported UNB.

"The reform process is fully homegrown. We are maintaining the highest transparency," he added.

Bangabandhu

FROM PAGE 12

began as a humble activist during his student years. After completing his studies at Islamia College in Calcutta in 1947, he enrolled in law at Dhaka University. However, his involvement in politics ultimately led to his expulsion from the university in 1948. That same year, he was imprisoned twice.

By 1954, he had evolved into an activist politician, driven by his involvement in the formation of the Awami Muslim League in June 1949.

Following Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy's death in 1963, he revived the Awami League in January 1964. In February 1966, he unveiled the Six-Point Programme for regional autonomy during a conference of Pakistan's opposition parties in Lahore.

In May that year, he was arrested under the Defence of Pakistan Rules. While in prison, he was charged, in January 1968, with conspiracy to break up Pakistan through what was given out as the Agartala Conspiracy Case.

A mass upsurge forced the withdrawal of the case on February 22, 1969. The next day, at a huge rally at the then Race Course Maidan, Sheikh Mujib was bestowed with the title "Bangabandhu" – the Friend of Bengal.

Bangabandhu led the Awami League to a decisive victory in Pakistan's first general elections in December 1970.

On March 7, 1971 he delivered the historic speech, which united the entire nation for the Liberation War.

As the Pakistan army launched its genocidal crackdown on Bangalees on March 25, 1971, Bangabandhu was arrested shortly afterward. He was flown to West Pakistan, where he faced trial on charges of treason.

Pakistan's defeat and the emergence of an independent Bangladesh saw him return home on January 10, 1972.

During his rule, Bangabandhu made several controversial moves, including establishing the Rakkhi Bahini, introducing a one-party rule called Baksal, and banning or closing all but four state-owned national newspapers.

On August 15, 1975, he along with most of his family members was assassinated by a disgruntled group of army men.

Bangabandhu's birthday used to be celebrated as National Children's Day throughout the past Awami League rule. It used to be a public holiday. However, the interim government has cancelled the National Children's Day.

Tarique promises trials

FROM PAGE 12

election in the future.

Regardless of which party comes to power, he said there must be a programme, alongside various other activities, to ensure justice for all victims of torture and injustice.

"The trial must be conducted fairly at any costs. If we fail to hold trials for past injustices, and if there is no fair

and proper trial for these incidents, then injustice could happen once again in the country," he warned.

Tarique urged the victim families not to lose hope but to live up to their expectations.

"If we all remain united and vocal against injustice, we will certainly be able to hold these trials in this land," he added.

Penalise wealthy

FROM PAGE 12

towards direct taxes to alleviate the financial burden on ordinary citizens and for revisiting corporate tax.

The meeting addressed the inflation crisis, emphasising that monetary policies alone are insufficient, and discussed measures including buffer stock scheme and open market operations.

Participants also discussed

enhancing transparency in tax expenditures and integrating them into the monetary framework.

Prominent figures, including CPD Distinguished Fellow Mustafizur Rahman, PRI Chairman Zaidi Sattar, and InM Executive Director Mustafa K Mujeri, contributed to the dialogue, underscoring the need for reforms to fortify the nation's economic foundation.

Dhaka Central University for 7 colleges

FROM PAGE 2

Once the proposal is approved by the DU Syndicate, the interim administration will be finalised, Majumder said.

The university's administrative structure is nearly complete, and final decisions will soon be made. Initially, the interim administration will be led by one of the principals from the seven colleges.

The UGC has conducted interviews with the seven principals, and one will be selected to head the new university. The respective principal's college will serve as the university's headquarters.

Earlier, on January 27, the DU authorities announced they would sever ties with the seven colleges following

demands from the students.

From the 2024-25 academic year, no new students will be admitted under DU though existing students will continue their studies under DU's administration.

Before the creation of the National University in 1992, the seven colleges were affiliated with DU.

After the National University was established, it took over the responsibility for the colleges and others affiliated with various public universities.

However, in August 2014, then-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the education ministry to re-affiliate the colleges with their respective public

universities.

The process of re-affiliation was formally initiated in November 2016, and on February 17, 2017, the seven colleges were re-affiliated with DU.

The aim was to improve education quality, reduce pressure on the National University and eliminate session jams.

However, the re-affiliation led to significant issues such as delays in exam schedules, result publication and administrative inefficiencies, eliciting student protests.

In October 2024, students began calling for the establishment of an independent university for the seven colleges.

US strikes kill 31 in Yemen

FROM PAGE 12

Trump also issued a stern warning to the group's main backer.

"To Iran: Support for the Houthi terrorists must end IMMEDIATELY!" he said, adding it would be held "fully accountable" for any continued threats.

The Huthis vowed the strikes "will not pass without response", while Iran's top diplomat Abbas Araghchi condemned the deaths and said Washington had "no authority" to dictate Tehran's foreign policy.

The Huthi Ansarullah website slammed what it called Washington's

"criminal brutality".

US Central Command, which posted videos of fighter jets taking off and a bomb demolishing a compound, said "precision strikes" were launched to "defend American interests, deter enemies, and restore freedom of navigation".

The Huthis' political bureau said its "forces are fully prepared to confront escalation with escalation".

The rebels, who have controlled much of Yemen for more than a decade, are part of the "axis of resistance" of pro-Iran groups

staunchly opposed to Israel and the United States.

They have launched scores of drone and missile attacks on ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said the Huthis had "attacked US warships 174 times and commercial vessels 145 times since 2023".

The campaign put a major strain on the vital route, which normally carries about 12 percent of world shipping traffic, forcing many companies to take a costly detour around southern Africa.

Macedonia nightclub fire kills 59

AFP, Skopje

A fire tore through a nightclub in North Macedonia early yesterday, killing 59 people, apparently after on stage fireworks set the place ablaze, authorities said, announcing arrest warrants for four people.

They said 155 injured people had been taken to hospitals across the country, 18 of them in critical condition. Some of the serious cases were to be taken to other European countries for treatment.

The blaze started in the Club Pulse in the eastern town of Kocani around 3:00am, as the place was packed with more than 1,000 mostly young fans attending a concert.

The fire was probably caused by the use of pyrotechnic devices “used for light effects at the concert”, said Interior Minister Pance Toskovski.

“Sparks caught the ceiling, which was made of easily flammable material, after which the fire rapidly spread across the whole discotheque, creating thick smoke,” Toskovski said.

Pak separatists kill 5 troops in Balochistan

AFP, Quetta

Separatists in southwest Pakistan killed at least five paramilitaries and wounded more than 30 yesterday, police told AFP, days after an attack on a train in Balochistan province left dozens dead.

“There were seven buses in the convoy which was heading to Taftan (on the Iranian border). At Noshki, a car laden with explosives hit one of the buses,” said Mohammed Zafar, a police official in Noshki, a town in Balochistan.

Five people were killed and 35 wounded, he said.

The attack was claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), the main separatist group in the province, which said the bombing was carried out by its suicide attack branch.



People cheer as Mohammed, an Egyptian ‘musaharati’, beats a drum and makes calls for observant Muslims to wake up for the ‘suhur’ meal (last meal before fasting), in the old quarter of Cairo during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan, early yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Gaza truce talks dogged by deep divisions

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel and Hamas are set for more indirect talks yesterday on the Gaza ceasefire, but deep divisions persist between the two warring sides on the terms of the fragile truce.

Mediated by Qatar, Egypt, and the United States, the initial phase of the ceasefire took effect on January 19, largely halting 15 months of deadly fighting in Gaza.

That phase ended in early March, and though both sides have since refrained from all-out war, they have been unable to agree on the next stage of the ceasefire in the Palestinian territory.

Late on Saturday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed Israeli negotiators to continue the talks, his office said.



But he directed the team to base its negotiations on a proposal by US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff that calls for the “immediate release of 11 living hostages and half of the deceased hostages”.

That came after Hamas said it was ready to release a living Israeli-US hostage, Edan Alexander, along with the bodies of four other Israeli-Americans in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

A Hamas delegation, which left Cairo for Doha where the movement is based, said the proposal to hand over the five had also been put forward by the United States.

But the United States, the key military ally of Israel, has since criticised Hamas’ insistence on that proposal.

Blast kills 16 in Syria

AFP, Damascus

A massive explosion believed to have been triggered by a scrap dealer handling an old bomb killed at least 16 people in Syria, civil defence officials said yesterday.

The blast on Saturday in the city of Latakia demolished a four-storey building, crushing residents underneath chunks of their flattened homes.

Aid agencies warned last month of the dangers posed by unexploded munitions left over from Syria’s civil war that erupted in 2011. It said up to 300,000 of the roughly one million munitions used during the war never detonated.

Rubio, Lavrov discuss ‘next steps’ on Ukraine

AFP, Washington

Russia and the United States have discussed the “next steps” of how to end the war in Ukraine, the Kremlin said yesterday, hours after Kyiv’s European allies urged Moscow to commit to an unconditional 30-day ceasefire.

The United States this week proposed the halt in fighting in the more than three-year war after talks in Saudi Arabia, which Kyiv agreed to.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has given no clear answer, instead listing a string of conditions and raising “serious questions” over the proposal.

Next budget must be designed

FROM PAGE 1

The current biennial requirement.

Furthermore, minimum import prices on certain goods must be eliminated as they violate the WTO rules.

“These will need to be withdrawn following LDC graduation since such practices are not WTO-compatible,” the CPD said.

The think-tank has urged the government to adjust tariff structures where current customs duties exceed the bound tariff commitments Bangladesh has made under the WTO agreements.

Bound tariff is the legally binding, maximum tariff rate a country commits to at the WTO for a specific product.

Bangladesh committed bound tariffs for 955 tariff lines, ranging from 25 percent to 200 percent.

For instance, while the country’s bound tariff rates stand at 45 percent for milk powder and 30 percent for biscuits, the actual import taxes – comprising customs duty, regulatory duty, supplementary duty, value-added tax and advance income tax – exceed Bangladesh’s limits.

The National Board of Revenue already identified 60 such lines that need to be brought down to bound tariff rates to ensure that the duty structure does not discriminate between imported and domestically produced items.

“This exercise will have to be continued until November 2026, the time of graduation, at which point compliance will have to be established,” said Fahmida Khatun, executive director of CPD.

In contrast, unbound tariffs offer flexibility, allowing governments to adjust rates as needed.

Currently, Bangladesh has bound tariffs on only 17 percent of its tariff lines, retaining control over the remaining 83 percent.


Bangladesh will continue to have flexibility on unbound tariff items even after graduation, the CPD said.

This flexibility enables the government to increase tariffs on imported goods that compete with local industries while lowering them on essential raw materials to reduce production costs.

“The NBR should fully utilise this flexibility. It should also be more vigilant to prevent any misuse of these tariff adjustments,” she said.

To mitigate future trade risks, the CPD advised the government to invest in legal expertise, trade policy analysis and dispute resolution mechanisms.

“There is a need to build national capacity for handling possible trade disputes. The fiscal 2026-26 national budget should allocate resources for this,” it said.



To all houthi terrorists, your time is up, and your attacks must stop, starting today. If they don't, hell will rain down upon you like nothing you have ever seen before!

Donald Trump
US president

Air strike killed 12 in Myanmar

AFP, Letpanhla

A Myanmar junta airstrike on a village held by anti-coup fighters killed at least 12 people according to a local administrative official, who said the bombardment targeted civilian areas.

The Friday afternoon strike hit the village of Letpanhla around 60 kilometres north of the country’s second-biggest city of Mandalay.

The village in Singu township is held by the People’s Defence Forces (PDF) – anti-coup guerrillas who took up arms after the military toppled the country’s civilian government four years ago.

“A lot of people were killed because they dropped bombs on crowded areas,” said the local administrative official.



পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি
POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC
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e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের জিএমডি, চট্টগ্রাম (দক্ষিণ) দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টালে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

ID	Reference	Title of Works	Closing Date and Time
1081111	27.21.0000.684.07.001.25.099; Date: 27/02/2025	Untanking & Internal inspection for fault detection of 132/33 kV 80/120 MVA defective Transformer (SL No- 54LYPT11095.3, LEEEC, Made in China) of Modunaghat 132/33 kV Grid Substation under GMD, Chattogram-South, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC.	24 Mar 2025 at 14:00

আগ্রহী তিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

নূরউদ্দীন মোহাম্মদ ফরহাদ সৌখুরী
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, জিএমডি, চট্টগ্রাম (দক্ষিণ)



Bangladesh Power Development Board
Office of the Senior System Analyst
Dhaka Computer Center
Wapda Building (4th fl.), Motijheel, Dhaka
Phone No. 47113484

Ref No. 27.11.0000.716.77.25.538

Date: 13/03/2025

Invitation for e-Tenders

e-Tender are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of following work.

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Ref. No.	Name of works	Tender publication date	Tender closing date
1	Tender ID: 1086222 Ref. No: 27.11.0000.716.77.25.537 Dt.: 13.03.2025	Works for IT Support services and Data Connectivity (Installation, Testing and commissioning and Configuration of Router Switch and other communication devices for data connectivity along with monthly recurring charge for all computer centers and zonal offices to Dhaka Computer center of BPDB) for 2 (two) years.	13.03.2025	07.04.2025 Time: 12:00

বিস্ময়/জন- ৯০৮(২)/১৬/০৩/২৫

Signed
Manik Chandra Ghosh
Senior System Analyst
Dhaka Computer Center
BPDB, Dhaka

GD-681

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Youth Development
Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project
Jubo Bhaban, 108, Motijheel, C/A, Dhaka-1000
www.dyd.gov.bd

Invitation for Tender

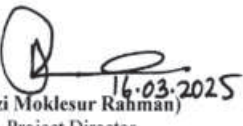
Memo No. 34.01.0000.046.26.055.24-423

Date: 16-03-2025

1	Ministry	Ministry of Youth and Sports
2	Agency	Department of Youth Development
3	Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not Applicable
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
6	Invitation for	Procurement of Non-Consulting Services (Vehicle Rental Service)
7	Invitation Ref No	
8	Date	16/03/2025
KEY & FUNDING INFORMATION		
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10	Budget and Sources of Fund	Development Budget, GoB
11	Development Partners	International Development Association (IDA)
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12	Project Code (if applicable)	Not Applicable
13	Project Name (if applicable)	Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project
14	Tender Package No.	S-2.2
15	Tender Package Name	Hiring of vehicle rental service for PMU officials
16	Tender Publication Date	17/03/2025
17	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	15/04/2025 at 5.00 pm
18	Tender Closing Date and time	16/04/2025 at 11.00 am
19	Tender Opening Date and time	16/04/2025 at 11.30 am
20	Name and Address of Offices	
	(a) Selling Tender Document	Office of the Project Director, Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project, Department of Youth Development, 5th Floor, Jubo Bhaban, 108, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000
	(b) Receiving Tender Document	Office of the Project Director, Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project, Department of Youth Development, 5th Floor, Jubo Bhaban, 108, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000
	(c) Opening Tender Document	Office of the Project Director, Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project, Department of Youth Development, 5th Floor, Jubo Bhaban, 108, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
21	Eligibility of Tenderer	Tenderers shall have the legal capacity to enter into the Contract under the Applicable Law. Tenderers shall have fulfilled its obligation to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh.
22	Brief Description of Services	Rental service of 1 unit Cross Country Vehicle and 5 units 12 seated Microbus
23	Price of Tender Document (BDT)	4,000/- (Four Thousand) only.
24	Location	Anywhere in Bangladesh under EARN project.
25	Tender Security, Amount (BDT)	9,50,000/- (Nine Lakh and Fifty Thousand) only.
26	Completion Time	31/12/2028
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
27	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Kazi Moklesur Rahman
28	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director (Joint Secretary), Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project
29	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Department of Youth Development, 5th Floor, Jubo Bhaban, 108, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000
30	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel: +880-02-55101121, e-mail: pd.earn@dyd.gov.bd

The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings

GD-680



Kazi Moklesur Rahman
Project Director
(Joint Secretary)

Reform power sector to reduce subsidy

Govt must prioritise increasing efficiency, cutting costs

The interim government's move to increase power and fertiliser subsidies in the revised FY25 budget by 57.9 percent highlights, once again, the prevailing mess in the power sector. There had been increases in subsidies during Awami League's tenure too, most of which ended up lining the pockets of vested interest groups and eventually increasing the debt burden of the nation. The interim government seems to be following the same prescription, albeit for different reasons. Reportedly, it is looking to increase the power subsidy to Tk 62,000 crore (a 55 percent rise) and the fertiliser subsidy to Tk 28,000 crore (a 64.7 percent rise).

A report by this daily quoted a finance ministry official who explained that the power subsidy increase is being considered so as not to raise power prices during this time of high inflation and to pay off the huge arrears carried over from the previous regime. While we appreciate that the authorities took into account consumers' interests and refrained from increasing prices, they could have, for our long-term benefits, taken measures to address the institutional inefficiency of the sector that are draining resources. It is estimated that as much as Tk 11,444 crore could have been saved by reducing power production costs by 10 percent, which in turn could have kept the subsidy in control.

In fact, a recent study by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) found that the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) can save Tk 13,800 crore annually—a loss currently covered by government subsidy—just by fixing some core problems. Its recommendations included shifting half of the existing industrial demand to the grid, which is currently met by captive generators, and adding 3,000 megawatts (MW) of renewables, reducing load-shedding, as well as limiting transmission and distribution losses.

During Hasina's tenure, 81 percent of the power subsidy—Tk 39, 406 crore in the revised budget for FY2023-24—was spent on the rented power plants to pay for capacity charges, even when those plants were sitting idle. It is time to critically revisit the collusive deals of the last regime and reduce reliance on rental power plants. According to IEEFA, transitioning to electric systems from gas driven appliances, like boilers, will help increase BPDB's revenue from selling additional energy while reducing capacity payments to idle plants.

The arrears left by the previous regime may take time to repay, but the interim government should take prudent measures to rectify the situation. Every effort must be made to ensure that the nation is not burdened with additional debt. We can no longer afford inefficiency in the power sector or allow it to run without accountability.

Bangladesh Railway must tighten its belt

Another case of wasteful spending shows need for corrective action

In yet another exposé of corrupt practices under the Awami League government, it has been revealed that Bangladesh Railway spent about Tk 38 crore on two automated train washing plants in 2021, only for them to become nonfunctional within just 20 months. During this time, the plants managed to clean 2,929 trains. Considering the total expenditure on their procurement and installation, it means that each wash cost the government about Tk 1.3 lakh, which is quite unthinkable. For context, only Tk 1,000 or so would have been required for a manual wash. This case, reported by Prothom Alo, serves as a glaring example of how government projects were often wasteful, mismanaged, and riddled with questionable procurement decisions.

The automated washing plants, purchased as part of a railway coach procurement project, were meant to modernise train cleaning by saving time and minimising water consumption. Instead, they turned out to be an overpriced failure. Not only did they cease to function in less than two years, but even when operational, they failed to clean train interiors, including toilets, requiring manual labour afterward. The entire endeavour reeks of a plan designed more for inflating project costs and lining the pockets of those involved than for serving the public.

Unfortunately, the railway sector was plagued by such corruption and mismanagement throughout the 15-plus years of Awami League's rule. And unnecessary procurement or excessive spending using various excuses was the hallmark of such ill-conceived projects. For instance, three officials visited the US apparently to "see the effectiveness" of the automated washing plants, one of them retiring soon after the purchase. As part of various projects, four tamping machines—used in track repairs—were also purchased, each at a cost of Tk 15-30 crore. These machines are now mostly non-functional. The plight of the DEMU trains imported from China is also well-known. There have been many such procurements and expenditures that were not needed, or carefully thought through, but were green-lighted anyway only to fulfil the wishes of politically-backed contractors and railway officials, who hardly ever faced justice for such corruption.

This must change. A country with scarce resources cannot afford to waste billions on dysfunctional projects while essential public services struggle for funding. We urge the authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into the washing plant fiasco and other such failed initiatives, and hold to account those behind them. Bangladesh Railway, and by extension all public offices, must ensure that all projects and procurements follow strict cost-benefit analyses, and that they are utilised properly to serve the public.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

South Africans vote to end apartheid

On this day in 1992, nearly 69 percent of White South African voters backed F.W. de Klerk's reforms—which included the repeal of racially discriminatory laws—and effectively endorsed the dismantling of apartheid.



What's impeding the reforms in Bangladesh?



Dr Selim Raihan is professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Dhaka and executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM). He can be reached at selim.raihan@econdu.ac.bd.

SELIM RAIHAN

Continuous reform is vital for sustainable progress. Over the years, Bangladesh, a developing economy, has struggled to implement necessary economic, political, administrative, judicial and social reforms. While significant economic reforms in the 1980s and early 1990s laid the groundwork for a market-oriented economy, major structural reforms have stalled since then. In contrast, Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam have achieved remarkable progress through continuous reform, such as the 1986 "Doi Moi" policy, which boosted productivity, investment, and trade.

Economic reforms in the 1980s and 1990s spurred private sector growth and investment, but recent stagnation in domestic and foreign investment, banking sector weaknesses, and limited tax collection highlight the need for structural changes in banking, revenue systems, and trade policies.

Political reform is vital for democratic development, electoral transparency, and internal party democracy, but corruption and political reluctance hinder progress. Without it, good governance and sectoral reforms remain challenging. Administrative reform is key to improving bureaucratic efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Digitalising operations and reducing complexities can make governance more citizen-friendly.

Judicial reform is necessary to address delays, backlogs, and corruption, ensuring swift justice and judicial independence to restore public trust. Social reform, including education, healthcare, labour market improvements, poverty alleviation, and the empowerment of women and marginalised groups, is fundamental for inclusive growth. Comprehensive reforms across these sectors are imperative for Bangladesh's long-term progress.

Why reform is difficult in Bangladesh
Implementing the desired reforms in

Bangladesh is particularly challenging due to the complexities of political and social realities. Reluctance of the major political parties, influence of vested interest groups, and weak demand for reform from society play crucial roles in obstructing reform efforts. Although policy reform initiatives have been undertaken in the country at various times, their structural and effective implementation have not taken place. The existing political culture and



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

the centralised nature of power are significant barriers to reform.

The lack of internal democracy within major political parties prevents them from being genuinely interested in implementing democratic and governance reforms at the national level. Party leaders' dominance, hereditary leadership, and irregular decision-making processes hinder political reform. Furthermore, elite groups benefiting from the existing system oppose reform. Political parties often promise reforms while in power, but fail to take concrete steps for implementation. Meanwhile, when in opposition, they use reform demands as a political strategy, which they do not follow through on once in power. As a result, there is a clear lack of political will for long-term structural

changes.

Another major reason for the stagnation of the reform process is the influence of vested interest groups. Political and business elites, along with bureaucratic opponents of reform, benefit from the current system and resist change. These groups actively work against reform efforts to preserve their privileges. For instance, attempts to increase transparency and accountability in the banking and taxation sectors face resistance from influential individuals, as such reforms could limit their irregular financial activities and special benefits. Similarly, efforts to reform tariff policies, government subsidies, and procurement processes are often obstructed by powerful groups using their political and administrative influence.

Public opinion and societal demand

international buyers, for example, in the case of the ready-made garment (RMG) industry.

Civil society, conscious citizens, and the reformist factions within political parties believe that the tenure of a caretaker or interim government presents a favourable opportunity for implementing reform initiatives. They hope that such a government will swiftly undertake and execute key reform measures. However, resistance from anti-reform bureaucrats within the administration, the absence of a clear roadmap, and the lack of sustained, strong and unified public pressure in favour of reforms often slow down or stall these initiatives.

Moreover, the lack of genuine commitment to reforms among political parties renders the future of caretaker or interim government-initiated reforms uncertain. After returning to power, these parties often discontinue previous reform efforts or modify them to align with their political interests, ultimately failing to ensure the continuity of the desired reforms.

There is no alternative to reform

Growth without reform is not sustainable in the long run, as economic development depends not only on increased production or income but also on effective institutions, good governance, and inclusive policies. Without structural reforms, income and wealth inequality may rise, corruption and administrative inefficiencies may worsen, and the investment climate may deteriorate. As a result, even if economic growth accelerates temporarily, it fails to ensure long-term public welfare. To build a prosperous, poverty-free and equitable society, it is crucial to establish a strong foundation through economic, political, administrative, judicial and social reforms.

A sustainable and inclusive society requires reform-oriented political leadership willing to implement structural changes for long-term development. However, vested interest groups often seek to obstruct the reform process to maintain their influence, making social and civic pressure vital for successful implementation. If a strong social movement in favour of reform emerges, it will be possible to counter vested interests and help Bangladesh move forward on its desired path of development.

Pain, bleeding and helplessness

Living with fibroids and cysts



Sifat Afrin Shams is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

SIFAT AFRIN SHAMS

The world as we know it is full of inequalities. Some are more detrimental than others, like the glaring inequity in the research fields of women's and men's health.

Medical treatment is a basic need and women are different from men in many ways, including physiologically. Women's cardiovascular health, hormonal balance, mental health, musculoskeletal health, immune system, metabolism, and last but not least, reproductive health, are different from those of men. For instance, with heart attacks, the most common symptom in both men and women is chest pain. However, women are often more likely to experience other symptoms, such as shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, or jaw pain. Women and men also metabolise and respond to many drugs differently. There are also gender-based variations in the physiological mechanisms underlying pain.

However, even though women make up close to 50 percent of the world's population, there is a glaring lack of research on their health.

This historical focus on the "default" male body sidelines conditions predominantly affecting women such as uterine fibroids—non cancerous growths on or in the uterus, and ovarian cysts—sacs filled with fluid that form on or inside an ovary. Is this oversight just a scientific failure? No,

it is also a social injustice with deep, multifaceted implications.

Some claim that an estimated 171 million women worldwide have uterine fibroids. Another source indicates global prevalence has increased from 126.41 to 226.05 million cases in recent decades.

On the other hand, an ovarian cyst is a widespread phenomenon in women of reproductive age. Among the people I know closely, seven women are combating this problem in various stages. The number will be eight if I count myself. So, even though I failed to collect information on the number of cases worldwide, again due to the lack of research in this area, I know that the number is very high.

These conditions hamper the quality of life with their debilitating symptoms—painful periods, heavy and inconsistent bleeding, unmanageable cramps, chronic pelvic pain, bloating and swelling, back and leg pain, constipation and diarrhoea, anaemia, etc. Along with these, stress and feelings of helplessness stem from lack of options.

So, who develops cysts and fibroids and why? Can they be prevented? You guessed the answer correctly. We do not know what leads to the development of these unwanted growths, nor is there any prevention. To date, no long-term or non-invasive treatment option exists for uterine

fibroids or pathological ovarian cysts. All you can do is be vigilant and regularly visit your sonographer and gynaecologist, hoping to catch them early so you don't need to go to the operating table.

The consequences of this imbalance in the medical research sector are stark. Without sufficient research, the pathogenesis and preventive strategies for these common yet debilitating conditions remain poorly understood, resulting in women suffering through cycles of pain, fertility issues, and diminished quality of life.

The lack of preventive measures for fibroids and ovarian cysts means that treatment is reactive rather than proactive—addressing symptoms after significant damage has been done. This reactive approach not only burdens the healthcare system but also places an emotional and physical toll on millions of women, whose reproductive health is sidelined in favour of conditions deemed more "urgent" or "universal."

The situation is even more pronounced in the Indian subcontinent, where patriarchal norms and socio-cultural taboos further hinder open discussions about women's health.

Bangladesh faces unique challenges: a high population density, widespread poverty, and a healthcare system stretched thin by infectious diseases and maternal health emergencies. These pressing concerns, while critical, have often crowded out the nuanced research and measures needed for chronic conditions like fibroids and ovarian cysts. Moreover, the stigma attached to discussing menstrual irregularities or pelvic pain further discourages women from seeking medical advice until conditions have advanced, thereby complicating treatment and outcomes.

Obstetrician-gynaecologist (OB-GYN) Dr Ferdousi Begum, a professor of the Bangladesh Institute of Research and Rehabilitation in Diabetes, Endocrine and Metabolic Disorders (BIRDEM) Hospital, said that there has only been sporadic and small-scale research in this area in Bangladesh, which is not nearly enough.

In developing countries, including Bangladesh, funding for research on women's health is much less in proportion to other fields, she said, adding that more research in the area can assist doctors in helping the patients in newer ways.

Women's reproductive health is still a taboo in many households. Fibroids and cysts are often diagnosed late when the only available treatment left is surgery, she said.

Pain and excessive bleeding during periods should not be ignored as these can be symptoms of cysts and fibroids, the OB-GYN said. In case of recurrent fibroids, which is fairly common, doctors sometimes suggest removing the uterus. However, this option is not for those who want to conceive. However, fibroids and cysts (which are also likely to recur) may cause infertility as well.

Establishing powerful genetic labs in Bangladesh is one of the steps required to address the lack of research in the medical sector, including in women's health, she said. There are only a few such labs in the country—that too in private capacity, she added.

Research about ovarian cysts and fibroids is at the intersection of healthcare equity. More research and better treatment are also necessary for society and the economy. Ovarian cysts and fibroids cost women, their families, and businesses hundreds of thousands in lost work hours and medical procedures.



H.M. NAZMUL ALAM

History has a way of repeating itself, often with different actors but the same tragic plotlines. The fall of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government has left behind a political landscape harshly familiar to students of history and political psychology. The party's steadfast refusal to acknowledge its mistakes, its insistence on conspiracy theories, and its remorseless demeanour all indicate a textbook case of cognitive dissonance. As the pioneering social psychologist Leon Festinger argued, when confronted with overwhelming evidence contradicting deeply held beliefs, people do not necessarily change their views; instead, they double down.

Festinger's seminal work on cognitive dissonance explains the mental discomfort experienced when reality clashes with pre-existing beliefs. In the 1950s, he infiltrated a doomsday cult whose members were convinced the world would end on a specific

reality, is now on full display in the Awami League.

For more than 15 years, Sheikh Hasina and her party built a political fortress based on dominance, authoritarian tendencies and the erosion of democratic institutions. Opposition parties were crushed, the media muzzled, and electoral mechanisms hijacked to perpetuate her rule. When the walls of this fortress crumbled under the weight of mass protests, Hasina and her followers did not introspect. Instead, they sought solace in an alternative narrative: their downfall was not due to popular outrage but rather an international conspiracy.

The Greek concept of hubris—the excessive pride that leads to downfall—perfectly encapsulates the Awami League's attitude. Political scientist Graham Allison's theory of organisational failure suggests that when institutions become too entrenched in their

The Greek concept of hubris perfectly encapsulates the Awami League's attitude. Political scientist Graham Allison's theory of organisational failure suggests that when institutions become too entrenched in their ways, they resist necessary adaptation even in the face of imminent collapse. This is evident in Sheikh Hasina's unchanging rhetoric, even after her government was ousted.

date. When the prophecy failed, rather than admitting their mistake, the cultists rationalised their beliefs by claiming their faith had saved the world. This pattern, where individuals or groups faced with disconfirming evidence refuse to accept

ways, they resist necessary adaptation even in the face of imminent collapse.

This is evident in Hasina's unchanging rhetoric, even after her government was ousted. Leaked phone conversations reveal her solid belief that she was the victim of

a grand design. Despite evidence that her government's mishandling of the student-led movement resulted in mass casualties, Hasina and her exiled ministers refuse to acknowledge any wrongdoing. This is not merely political stubbornness but a deeper psychological need to avoid self-recrimination.

Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre argued that people avoid self-reflection because it forces them to confront their own responsibility. If



Hasina were to admit that her government collapsed due to internal corruption, misgovernance, and public outrage, she would have to struggle with a lifetime of political miscalculations. The easier option, as cognitive dissonance theory suggests, is to alter the narrative.

Political history is rife with examples of leaders who refused to accept responsibility for their downfall. US President Richard Nixon, after Watergate, remained convinced that he was the victim of a media-driven witch hunt. In more recent history, Donald Trump's continued insistence that the 2020 US presidential election was stolen shows a similar psychological mechanism at play.

The Awami League's strategy of non-apology serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it

provides a coping mechanism for its leaders and supporters, many of whom have invested their careers and reputations in the party's narrative. Admitting failure would be personally and professionally devastating. Secondly, by externalising blame, the party keeps alive the possibility of a political resurgence. If the narrative remains that the Awami League was unjustly removed rather than rightfully ousted, its leaders can

violent suppression of protests, but because they feel abandoned. These were the foot soldiers who once championed the party's cause, only to find themselves leaderless in its darkest hour.

Political theorist Antonio Gramsci wrote extensively about how political movements sustain themselves through "organic intellectuals" at the grassroots level. These are the local leaders, student activists, and community organisers who serve as the bridge between ideology and the masses. However, when a party's leadership becomes too insular and removed from ground realities, this bridge collapses.

The Awami League's grassroots members now face an internal dilemma: do they continue to defend a leadership that refuses to acknowledge them, or do they begin seeking alternative political affiliations? This is where cognitive dissonance becomes an individual as well as a collective phenomenon. For years, these activists believed they were part of a righteous cause. The reality that their leaders abandoned them in exile creates a painful internal contradiction, one that can only be resolved in two ways: either by continuing to believe in the party despite its failures, or by breaking away and facing an uncertain political future.

Acknowledging mistakes is not a sign of weakness; it is a prerequisite for political rehabilitation. Countries with strong democratic traditions have seen fallen parties regain public trust by embracing self reform. Germany's Social Democratic Party, after years of political decline, rebounded by admitting past mistakes and adjusting its policies. Even in Bangladesh's own history, parties that have embraced change have managed to return to relevance.

Charles Darwin famously stated, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." If the Awami League wishes to remain politically relevant, it must recognise this fundamental truth. Denial, conspiracy theories, and deflecting responsibility may serve as temporary shields against the pain of political loss, but they do not constitute a long-term strategy for survival.

The future of international crimes prosecution in Bangladesh

**QUAZI OMAR FOYSAL**

The International Crimes Tribunal, Bangladesh (ICT-BD) has been widely perceived as the ultimate forum for prosecuting crimes committed during the July uprising. The high expectations placed on the ICT-BD often lead to the filing of cases that may not fall within its jurisdiction. This tendency may result in prolonged proceedings or improper use of tribunal resources.

The prosecution of international crimes, whether at the international or domestic level, is a serious matter. The gravity of these crimes, their contextual elements, and the ranks of the offenders distinguish them from other domestic offences. For instance, murder is criminalised under all penal legislation worldwide. However, murder may be classified as genocide, a crime against humanity, or a war crime depending on the presence of specific contextual elements. It may often appear that certain complaints—such as those related to single incidents or incidents falling below a particular threshold—don't fall within the jurisdictional framework of the ICT-BD.

The trial of international crimes has always been considered an exception to a country's general criminal justice system. This implies that an alleged crime should first be prosecuted through the general criminal justice system before being referred to a specialised tribunal dealing with international crimes, rather than being directly referred to a specialised tribunal.

Recognising the importance of this issue, the interim government incorporated Section 11A, paragraphs 3 and 4, into the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 through the International Crimes (Tribunals) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024. Section 11A(3) states that if an accused is charged under the 1973 act but the subsequent evidence suggests the commission of a different offence punishable under the Penal Code, 1860, or any other applicable law, the case may be transferred to a competent court for appropriate adjudication. Section 11A(4) outlines procedural matters related to such transfers.

It is worth noting that the application of Section 11A(3) of the 1973 act applies only after charges have been framed. However, it would be more effective if this process could be initiated at the time of charge-framing. In order to maximise the benefits of Section

11A(3), the ICT-BD should adopt prosecutorial guidelines to filter out cases that fall outside its jurisdictional framework. This approach can be referred to as “domestic complementarity.”

In the context of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the ICC can only investigate and prosecute individuals accused of international crimes if the forum state is unwilling, unable or inactive in addressing the situation. Here, the ICC and domestic criminal justice systems function in a complementary manner. One of the key objectives of the principle of complementarity in the Rome Statute is to reduce the ICC's workload and give precedence to domestic justice mechanisms. Similar justifications can be applied to the ICT-BD.

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The foremost reason for adopting a domestic complementarity policy is strategic policymaking. The trial of international crimes is legally complex and politically sensitive, requiring a careful balance between the victims' rights and the accused's fair trial rights while facing multifaceted challenges from both domestic and international quarters. Therefore, the ICT-BD should be selective in selecting cases. This approach is also crucial from the perspective of the judicial economy. In some instances, external political pressures may urge the ICT-BD to take on cases that do not satisfy its jurisdictional requirements under the 1973 law. Outright rejection of such cases could also provoke a public outcry. A clearly defined policy on domestic complementarity would help manage such situations constructively.

Another reason in favour of adopting

this policy is to mitigate the risk of political backlash. Though it is entirely legal to prosecute an individual for a general crime after determining that the allegations of international crimes against them are not substantiated, the political ramifications of such prosecutions could be significant. Such a prosecution may be perceived as an abuse of process or an act of political vengeance by the supporters of the accused, even if fair trial standards are thoroughly upheld. A well-implemented domestic complementarity policy would help the ICT-BD avoid such controversies. From the accused's perspective, such a policy would also simplify legal proceedings, reduce procedural complexities, and help the accused avoid harassment.

In light of these considerations, the ICT-BD should formulate a clearly defined policy on domestic complementarity. At minimum, it should include definitions and elements of relevant crimes, the relationship between the ICT-BD and the general criminal justice system, case filing procedures, and other procedural guidelines. A standardised complaint submission form for the ICT-BD could also be introduced.

Simultaneously, the government should

reconsider broadening the scope of Section 11A(3) through an amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973. As noted earlier, the provision currently applies only after a charge has been framed. Its effectiveness would be significantly enhanced if amended to allow its application from the moment of case initiation. The expansion of the scope of interlocutory appeals under the 1973 act can also help achieve the objectives of Section 11A.

At present, Section 21A of the law limits interlocutory appeals to cases involving contempt of the ICT-BD. By contrast, the Rome Statute and the statutes of UN ad hoc tribunals permit interlocutory appeals on jurisdiction, admissibility, arrest warrants, and framing of charges. Expanding the scope of interlocutory appeals of the ICT-BD through an amendment to the 1973 act would align the tribunal with

international standards.

The recent report on Bangladesh by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has raised concerns about the compliance of the ICT-BD with human rights standards. In response, the government has expressed its intention to the OHCHR to further amend the 1973 act, to address these human rights-related criticisms (2025

OHCHR Bangladesh Report, Para 255).

At this juncture, the government should seriously consider amending sections 11A(3) and 21A of the law to enable the ICT-BD to formulate a domestic complementarity policy. Concurrently, the ICT-BD should adopt a policy to manage its workload, reduce external pressures, enhance judicial efficiency, and strengthen its legitimacy and effectiveness.


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Invitation for e-Tendering

Invitation Reference No.	Memo No: 35.01.8800.471.07.001.25-697		Date: 16/03/2025
Tender ID & No.	Work description	Publication publication date & time	Opening date & time
1087082, e-GP/68/EE/SRD/2024- 2025	Protective works by RCC Palisiding at 5th(p) Km of Kaliakandapara- Kamarkhanda-Ullapara (Bhutgacha) (2- 5403) Road under Sirajganj Road Division during the year 2024-2025.	16 Mar -2025 11.00 Hrs	08 April-2025 15:30 Hrs
1087081, e-GP/69/EE/SRD/2024- 2025	Repair of Potholes and Seal Coat at Ch: 4+476 (p) to 5+976 (p) Km of Porabari- Kamarkhondo-Nalka (Jamtoil) (2-5406) Road under Road Division Sirajganj during the year 2024-2025	16 Mar -2025 11.00 Hrs	08April-2025 15:40 Hrs

This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline and hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches for **08.04.2025 up to 13:00 Hrs**. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (+8809609112233, +8801762625528-31).


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DHAKA’S DEADLY AIR

What we know and what we can do

This report was prepared jointly by researchers at ICDDR,B and the Bengal Institute for Architecture, Landscapes and Settlements.

We are what we breathe. Now imagine that breath—something we do without thinking—could be quietly slashing years of our lives. That’s no idle fear: air pollution claimed 8.1 million lives in 2021 alone, roughly one in every eight deaths worldwide and one in three in South Asia, according to the latest Global Disease Burden report. It’s the second deadliest health risk on the planet, trailing only high blood pressure, and it spares no one.

The threat comes in two forms: the polluted air filling our streets and the smoke lurking indoors from cooking fires or dusty homes. Over 90% of us breathe air so toxic it acts as a slow poison, says the World Health Organization. Tiny particles—PM_{2.5}—slip past our defenses, wreaking havoc: 48% of chronic lung diseases like COPD tie back to this particulate matter, while 34% of preterm births in 2021—babies arriving too early—link to the air mothers breathe.

Dhaka has some of the deadliest air pollution in the world. Routinely among the world’s most polluted cities, its air is a stew of brick kiln soot, exhaust fumes, construction dust, and factory emissions, whipped up by runaway urban sprawl. Recent reports show its Air Quality Index (AQI) often topping 200—“very unhealthy”—a daily gamble for lungs and hearts. The Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) project tracked the toll: In 2018, 75% of days were unfit to breathe. Even in 2020, over half stayed hazardous. For millions in Dhaka, it’s coughs that won’t quit, cancers that bloom silently, and hearts that give out too soon.

In 2024, Dhaka ranked 13th

among the most polluted global cities based on AQI-US standards. This year, in January and February, Dhaka consistently ranked first in the list of most polluted global cities for 11 days when AQI exceeded 243, with the highest of 392 on February 10, 2025, surpassing even Delhi and Lahore, two of Asia’s most polluted cities. From 25th January 2025 to 23rd February 2025, IQAIR data shows Dhaka’s air was unhealthy for 18 days, very unhealthy for 15 days, and hazardous for 1 day. During this period, the average AQI of Dhaka City was 203, and the average PM_{2.5} concentration was 124 µg/m³. This PM_{2.5} concentration is eight times the 24-hour standard (15 µg/m³) and 25 times the annual standard (5 µg/m³) set by the WHO.

The biggest polluters

It is critical to pinpoint the sources of air pollution correctly. When it comes to pointing out the causes of Dhaka’s toxic air, most reports and features attribute it singularly to the brick kilns surrounding the city. While brick factories play their part, the actual causes remain largely unexplored due to a lack of comprehensive research. National and international studies provide valuable insights into how different sectors contribute to Dhaka’s air pollution. For example, a survey by the Norwegian Institute for Air Research (2015) identified industrial emissions, transportation, and fossil fuel combustion as the primary culprits behind the city’s toxic air. The report reveals that these three sectors together release 19,000 tons of Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) into Dhaka’s air annually, with industries alone contributing 17,556 tons of PM_{2.5} each year. Industries are also the leading source of Sulfur Oxide (SO₂) emissions, releasing around 60,000 tons annually. Additionally, transportation (18,450 tons/year) and fossil fuel combustion (12,350 tons/year) are the dominant sources.

Another report, the Bangladesh National Air Quality Management Plan 2024-2030, identified six sectors of PM_{2.5} pollution in Dhaka City: household combustion, power plants, brick kilns, solid waste, road dust, and transport. Among these, household combustion contributes the most (28%) and transport the least (4%), according to the document. The report states that brick kilns contribute only 13% of Dhaka’s total PM_{2.5} pollution, yet surprisingly, it does not mention industrial emissions at all.


A significant discrepancy shows up when comparing the two studies. While the Norwegian study identifies industry as the major contributor to PM_{2.5} pollution, the national report attributes the largest share to households. Additionally, the national report does not provide data on gas pollution, and neither report accounts for ozone pollution. These discrepancies and gaps highlight the urgent need for a comprehensive study.


Seasonal patterns of pollution in Dhaka’s air

Air pollution in Dhaka also exhibits seasonal variability, with significantly higher levels in the winter months (December–February) and lower levels in the monsoon season (June–September). However, in the summer and post-monsoon seasons, although the levels of particulate matter and gases remain lower than in winter, they still exceed air quality standards set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Bangladesh’s National Air Quality Standards. A similar seasonal pattern can be observed in other


Immediate Air Pollution Remediation Measures


**Enforcing industrial emission control regulations**


**Developing a green belt around the city**


**Protecting green space and urban forestry**


**Mapping pollution sources and hotspot areas in the city**


**Developing air pollution forecast system**


**Strictly banning vehicles emitting black smoke**

**Imposing traffic congestion fees to reduce cars on streets**

**Regular inspection of brick kilns and industries polluting the air**

**Relocating brick kilns and solid waste dumping sites**

**Developing dust pollution control mechanism**

**Implementing efficient solid waste management strategies**

**Installing air purifiers at homes, schools and workplaces**

Immediate measures to improve Dhaka’s air quality. Prepared by the Bengal Institute.

record concentrations of PM_{2.5}, SO₂, NO₂, O₃, and CO in the surrounding air of the station location based on which daily Air Quality Index (AQI) data is provided. However, 16 stations are insufficient to assess national air quality, and four stations alone cannot accurately represent Dhaka’s air quality. If there are no monitoring stations installed in areas like industrial and other active zones, how can we measure the quality of air for those areas? How can meaningful management strategies be developed without detailed spatial air quality data for all those zones?

Bangladesh launched the National Air Quality Management Plan (2024–2030) (NAQMP), developed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change and the Department of Environment. The primary goal of the NAQMP is to meet the interim target for annual PM_{2.5} set by the World Health Organization (WHO) while meeting the targets outlined in the national air quality standards: (1) reducing PM_{2.5} concentration in the air of the entire country to 15µg/m³ and in Dhaka’s air to 30µg/m³ by 2030, and (2) gradually increasing Good and Moderate AQI days annually. Focusing on meeting those targets, a national committee on air pollution control was formed to implement Air Pollution Control Rules (2022) and coordinate with relevant agencies on specific interventions to comply with the new rules. However, this management plan

forecast information so people can take cautionary measures in advance. Preparing this forecast model also requires intensive spatial data, as mentioned before.

Controlling industrial emissions

Upgrading factory technologies and shifting to clean energy utilization in factories need to be encouraged through tax exemptions. In addition, industries should install indoor air purification systems for the health benefits of the people working there. Since brick kilns significantly worsen Dhaka’s air quality, particularly in winter, alternative locations for these factories should be explored. If relocation is not feasible, improved production methods, such as the Zigzag 2.0 technology proposed by ICDDR,B, must be adopted.

Regulating vehicular emissions and promoting sustainable transportation

Investing in low-emission public transportation infrastructure, such as buses, trams, and metro systems, can substantially reduce emissions by decreasing dependence on private vehicles. This shift will also reduce travel times, minimizing residents’ exposure to traffic-related pollution. Additional measures, such as limiting vehicle speeds, designating parking zones, banning vehicles that emit black smoke, restricting heavy-duty vehicles during the daytime, phasing out expired vehicles or upgrading them with

using water sprinklers, and installing dust barriers—can minimize airborne particles. Some studies identified that open sand can travel more than 40 kilometers with wind, and so dust pollution control mechanisms can be developed to reduce particulate pollution from the open sand areas (approximately 17,700 acres) in Dhaka City.

Protecting and expanding urban blue and green infrastructures

Trees and green spaces act as natural air filters, absorbing pollutants and improving air quality. Expanding parks, rooftop gardens, and roadside plantations can mitigate pollution and heat while also providing ecological benefits. Implementing urban forestry projects, particularly in high-traffic and industrial areas, can have a long-term positive impact on air quality. Developing a green tree belt around the city on the riverbanks can be a good option to sink dust and gas pollutants and provide city dwellers with a green ambience.

Implementing strict waste management policies

The burning of solid waste, particularly plastic and organic materials, releases harmful pollutants, including PM, CO, and CO₂ into the air. Establishing proper waste segregation, promoting recycling, and enforcing bans on open-air burning should be the top priorities to reduce emissions from waste disposal. Encouraging composting and biogas production can provide eco-friendly solutions and generate alternative income sources.

Improving indoor air quality

Numerous studies have shown that indoor air quality can be just as poor as outdoor air quality. Polluted air from outside can easily infiltrate homes, exposing residents to the same harmful contaminants. Even in air-conditioned rooms, individuals are not immune to toxic air, as air conditioners primarily cool the air but do not filter out pollutants. Installing air purifiers in homes, schools, and workplaces can improve indoor air quality. Additionally, maintaining indoor plants such as aloe vera and spider plants can naturally improve air quality. Promoting cleaner cooking alternatives, such as LPG, electric stoves, or improved biomass stoves, can reduce household air pollution.

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Long-term Air Pollution Control Measures

**Installation of zone-wise air quality monitoring stations**

**Developing a locational database of respiratory disease patients**

**Comprehensive research on air pollution and disease correlation**

**Promoting and improving low-emission public transport systems**

**Introducing pedestrian-friendly footpaths for bicycle lanes, & parking**

**Encouraging industries to shift to cleaner energy**

**Encouraging clean cooking technologies**

**Upgrading brick kiln chimney technology**

Long-term initiatives to reduce Dhaka’s air pollution. Prepared by the Bengal Institute.

among the most polluted global cities based on AQI-US standards. This year, in January and February, Dhaka consistently ranked first in the list of most polluted global cities for 11 days when AQI exceeded 243, with the highest of 392 on February 10, 2025, surpassing even Delhi and Lahore, two of Asia’s most polluted cities. From 25th January 2025 to 23rd February 2025, IQAIR data shows Dhaka’s air was unhealthy for 18 days, very unhealthy for 15 days, and hazardous for 1 day. During this period, the average AQI of Dhaka City was 203, and the average PM_{2.5} concentration was 124 µg/m³. This PM_{2.5} concentration is eight times the 24-hour standard (15 µg/m³) and 25 times the annual standard (5 µg/m³) set by the WHO.

The biggest polluters

It is critical to pinpoint the sources of air pollution correctly. When it comes to pointing out the causes of Dhaka’s toxic air, most reports and features attribute it singularly to the brick kilns surrounding the city. While brick factories play their part, the actual causes remain largely unexplored due to a lack of comprehensive research. National and international studies provide valuable insights into how different sectors contribute to Dhaka’s air pollution. For example, a survey by the Norwegian Institute for Air Research (2015) identified industrial emissions, transportation, and fossil fuel combustion as the primary culprits behind the city’s toxic air. The report reveals that these three sectors together release 19,000 tons of Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) into Dhaka’s air annually, with industries alone contributing 17,556 tons of PM_{2.5} each year. Industries are also the leading source of Sulfur Oxide (SO₂) emissions, releasing around 60,000 tons annually. Additionally, transportation (18,450 tons/year) and fossil fuel combustion (12,350 tons/year) are the dominant sources.

major cities nationwide.

Weather phenomena and the intensity of human activities influence the seasonal fluctuations in air pollution. In winter, limited rainfall, increased construction activities, and sporadic sand filling are the primary contributors to elevated pollutant levels in Dhaka. Additionally, northwestern winter winds carry transboundary pollutants and smoke from brick kilns in northern and northwestern Dhaka over the city, pushing air quality to highly toxic levels.

During this period, not only does particulate pollution increase, but the emission of toxic gases—such as NO₂, SO₂, CO, and O₃—from proliferated industries in the city also reaches its peak concentration in the air. However, as the monsoon begins in June and continues through September, heavy rainfall reduces the levels of both gases and particulate matter in Dhaka’s air, slightly improving air quality and making it breathable.

Despite slightly better conditions during the monsoon, ground-level ozone (O₃) concentrations remain elevated in summer due to reactions between NO₂, emitted by vehicles and industries, and ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. This lower atmospheric Ozone (O₃) is particularly harmful to individuals with respiratory conditions. Satellite-based analyses by the Bengal Institute reveal clear seasonal trends in the concentration of major pollutants in Dhaka and its surrounding areas.

Proliferation of brick kilns in and around Dhaka City

Brick manufacturing in and around Dhaka City continues to be the most cited polluting culprit. While in 1990, there were around 250 brick kilns in the proximity of the city, the number grew three-and-a-half-fold in 2000, driven by the increasing demand for construction projects. Over the past two decades, the number of brick kilns surged to around one thousand. These brick kilns now encircle the city along the five rivers: Buriganga,

requires shutting down academic institutes and calls for people to work from home.

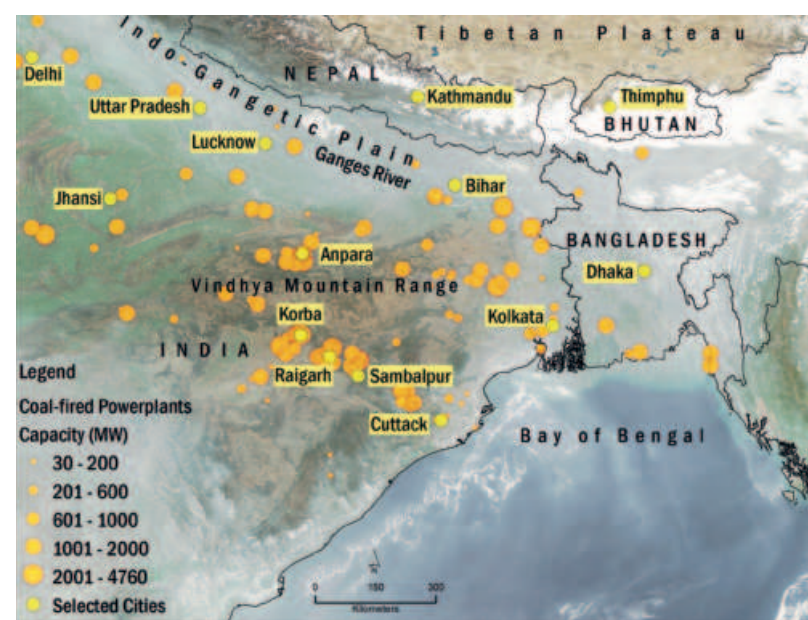
An article published by the World Bank on February 3, 2023, says that around 30% of the pollution in Bangladesh’s bigger cities originates in India. As winter sets in, the northwestern wind carries fine-particle-laden smoke from the extensive Indo-Gangetic region of India towards the southeast, which at that time looks like a river of haze following the Ganges River’s flow direction towards Bangladesh. This massive cloud of dust spills out into the Bay of Bengal, crossing the entire sky of Bangladesh.

REMEDATIONS AND MEASURES: WHAT WE CAN DO

Given Dhaka’s persistently hazardous air pollution, remediation is neither straightforward nor quick. Addressing air pollution requires coordinated efforts from the government, industries, businesses, and citizens. While various measures must be implemented across multiple sectors with both short- and long-term goals, the ultimate responsibility lies in comprehensive urban and regional planning that prioritizes the health and well-being of the city’s residents. Below is a summary and diagram of the key remediation measures that need to be undertaken.

Enhancing monitoring and recording systems

Proper monitoring is the first crucial step in addressing this dire condition affecting the city’s health and well-being. The government of Bangladesh initiated the Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) project to monitor air pollution across the country. Under this project, to provide real-time air quality information, the DoE installed 16 Continuous Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAMS) in eleven cities: Dhaka has 4 stations, Chattagram has 2, and Gazipur, Narayangaj, Narsingdi, Khulna, Barishal, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Rangpur, Cumilla, and Mymensingh, each has one. All of these CAMS



Movement of transboundary air pollution. On 28 January 2025, the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on the Aqua and Terra satellites captured this true-color image of dust drifting across the Gangetic Plain, stretching over India and Bangladesh. Image by NASA, 2025. Map prepared by the Bengal Institute.

has not been effective due to several resource constraints and limitations. A critical gap in the NAQMP is that it provides a set of suggestions for different entities polluting the air without setting up strict obligations for them. Another weakness is the absence of regulations in the NAQMP to control toxic industrial emissions.

Disease and pollution correlation

To identify the health impacts of air pollution, it is essential to develop a comprehensive locational database of respiratory diseases. Continuous monitoring of patients’ respiratory health with their locational information can be collected throughout the year. Once the database is created, it can be correlated with pollution data to understand how people are affected by air pollution and at what level, according to specific areas.

Issuing air pollution forecasts

Another important measure is to provide 2/3 days of air pollution

particulate matter reduction devices, implementing stringent regulations for diesel-powered vehicles, and promoting environmentally friendly transportation options, can further curb air pollution from traffic. Improving current motor vehicle exhaust technologies to ensure more efficient combustion will also contribute to reducing emissions. In addition, Dhaka’s footpaths need to be more pedestrian-friendly to encourage people to walk short distances. In summary, Dhaka’s traffic system needs a complete overhaul to create a more sustainable, pedestrian- and eco-friendly urban environment.

Managing construction, road dust, and open sands

The rapid urbanization of Dhaka has led to excessive dust pollution from construction sites and unpaved roads. Implementing mandatory dust control measures—such as covering construction materials,

Breaking the 20-second barrier

The 20-second barrier in the 200m is one of the defining marks of world-class sprinting – a threshold that few ever cross. Now, for the first time in history, an Australian has done it. Teenage sensation Gout Gout has etched his name into the record books, becoming the first-ever Australian to achieve the feat. Stopping the clock at a wind-assisted 19.98 (+3.6) in the Under-20 200m final of the Queensland State Championships, he made history just hours after turning heads with a world-leading time of 20.05 (+1.2) in the heats.



Hamza’s arrival sparks festivities in Habiganj

MINTU DESHWARA

Excitement and anticipation are at an all-time high in Snganghat village of Bahubal Upazila, Habiganj, as English footballer of Bangladeshi origin, Hamza Choudhury, prepares for a historic visit.

The Sheffield United star, who has decided to represent Bangladesh at the international level, will arrive at his ancestral village today ahead of his debut for the Bangladesh team in the Asian Cup Qualifiers against India in Shillong on March 25.

The entire village has transformed into a festival ground, with over 500 decorative gates erected along the 4-5 km road from the Putijuri highway to his home. People from all walks of life, politicians to sports enthusiasts, have united to celebrate the arrival of the prodigal son of Snganghat.

Mohammad Monir Khan, a local entrepreneur, shared his excitement: “My house is just 100 feet away from Hamza’s. Everyone is eagerly waiting for his arrival. Even families with past disputes have come together in joy. This is a moment of unity and pride for us.”

Hamza’s visit coincides with an annual Urs at his family home, where his father initially came to perform his grandfather’s annual rites. However, his homecoming



is more than just a personal visit – it’s a momentous occasion for Bangladesh’s football scene.

Local resident Sajjad Mia expressed his pride: “It is an incredible feeling that a player from our village has played in the English league and will now represent Bangladesh. Hamza’s father often spoke of his son’s deep connection to Bangladesh, and now that love has turned into action.”

Hamza’s connection to his ancestral home goes beyond football. With his financial support, an orphanage, mosque,

and madrasa have been built, reinforcing his commitment to giving back to his roots. During his visit, Hamza is expected to meet and exchange greetings with orphaned students.

Among the many excited fans is Jadid Hasan, who travelled to his in-laws’ house just to catch a glimpse of Hamza. “I have never been this thrilled! Just the thought that a star player has roots here is amazing. I won’t leave until I see him.”

A grand reception has been arranged by the villagers, and Faizabad High School’s

former managing committee president, Shamiul Islam, believes Hamza’s decision to play for Bangladesh will inspire young footballers: “This is a moment of immense pride for us. His presence will elevate the status of Bangladeshi football, and his influence will be felt for years to come.”

Hamza’s father, Murshed Chowdhury, admitted feeling a mix of excitement and concern. “Everyone expects him to lead Bangladesh to victory, especially against India. While we dream big, our focus should be on long-term development. Hamza is here to contribute to Bangladesh’s football future.”

Security preparations for Hamza’s visit are in full swing. The local police, under the direction of Superintendent ANM Sajedur Rahman, have implemented high-level security measures to ensure his safety. “Five close-contact guards will be assigned, and real-time monitoring will be in place,” he assured.

As Hamza lands at Sylhet Osmani International Airport this morning, he will be welcomed not only by his family and football officials but by a nation that sees him as a beacon of hope. His visit marks the beginning of a new chapter in Bangladesh’s football history – one that promises inspiration, ambition, and a bright future ahead.



Bangladesh Football Federation president Tabith Awal (L) shakes hands with United Commercial Bank’s managing director and CEO Mohammad Mamdudur Rashid (R) as the bank’s chairman Sharif Zahir watches on during an MoU signing ceremony at the bank’s head office in Dhaka yesterday. Both parties hoped that the financial package would help improve the national men’s football team.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Sohan, Shadman tons keep Dhanmondi, Agrani on course



SPORTS REPORTER

Nurul Hasan Sohan hit an unbeaten 132 to ensure a 97-run win for Dhanmondi Sports Club against Shinepukur Cricket Club at BKSP-4 in the Dhaka Premier League yesterday.

Batting first, Habibur Rahman struck a 42-ball 45 at the top before Nurul took charge of the innings with his fifth List A ton. Nurul and Sunzamul (40) notched a 113-run fifth-wicket stand and the former remained unbeaten on 132 off 131 deliveries to take Dhanmondi to 277 for nine. In reply, Shinepukur were skittled out for 180 as pacer Kamrul bagged three for 23 while Sunzamul scalped four for 49 for Dhanmondi.

Agrani Bank picked up their third successive win, beating Rugganj Tigers Cricket Club by seven wickets, courtesy of Shadman Islam’s unbeaten 115.

Amit Majumder, who had been amongst the runs, hit 81 while Asadullah Galib managed 57 as Rugganj reached 260 all out. Ruyel Miah and Taibur Rahman both bagged three wickets each for Agrani.

In reply, Shadman’s 108-ball 115 and Imrul Kayes’ 58-ball 62 saw Agrani coast to win in 44.5 overs, keeping their fourth spot in the standings.

Gulshan Cricket Club enjoyed second successive win by beating Partex Sporting Club by 57 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur. Liton Das scored 22 on his return after being rested due to cramp in the earlier match while Azizul Hakim’s 62 at the top saw Gulshan reach 221 for nine.

Spinners Nihad Uzzaman and Naeem Islam bagged two wickets apiece as Gulshan maintained winning run.

With Abahani, Gazi Group, Mohammedan and Agrani at the top of the table with four wins each, the DPL standings look tight as the season wears on.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Who are the seniors in Bangladesh cricket?

Ask any avid Bangladesh cricket fan or expert this question at this moment, and the answer will likely include Mahmudullah Riyad, Mushfiqur Rahim, and Tamim Iqbal.

Interestingly, these three, alongside Shakib Al Hasan and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza – all part of Bangladesh’s ‘Big Five’ – have been the senior figures in Bangladesh cricket for decades. This raises a debate: Why hasn’t the batch that followed them been considered seniors, even after nearly a decade of international experience?

The answer lies in how this group was managed by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), particularly in ODIs.

When Mushfiqur started his career, his record was far from what it is today, with 7,795 ODI runs before retiring from the format. With 274 ODIs played, it may seem like there was no incubation period for him. However, the reality is that players

like Mushfiqur, who have long held the senior tag, were given time to develop early on.

This raises the question: Did the next generation receive the same patience from selectors?

In his first two years of ODIs, Mushfiqur averaged just above 20 in 29 innings, scoring 476 runs at a strike rate of 56.06. Comparatively, Towhid Hridoy, who debuted in 2023, accumulated 984 runs in two years at an average of 35.14 in 31 innings.

Even accounting for differences in eras and opposition strength, Mushfiqur required patience before his numbers improved. Three years into his ODI career, his stats surged. Between 2009 and 2011, he scored 1,270 runs in 36 innings at an average of over 35 and a strike rate of 94.5, with more significant contributions.

Soumya Sarkar, who debuted in 2014, made match-winning contributions early on. However, in 11 years, he has played only 76 ODIs – having been dropped mostly due to inconsistency. In his first

two years, Soumya scored 723 runs at an average of 42.52 and a strike rate of 100.4. Among top-order batters (positions 1-3) who played at least 10 matches in that period, Soumya had the sixth-best strike rate globally. He averaged more than Chris Gayle and Quinton de Kock, who had superior strike rates in that category.

In the case of Tamim, he played 53 innings during his initial years, scoring 1,370 runs at an average of just over 25. Tamim, Mushfiqur, and Shakib belonged to a transformative era in Bangladesh cricket, where the team was shedding its ‘minnows’ tag and competing against stronger sides. ODI cricket was also evolving, and Bangladesh’s current veterans grew with it with plenty of patience provided by selectors.

However, Bangladesh cricket did not afford the same caution or planning to the next batch, including Soumya, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Taskin Ahmed, and Liton Das.

Recently, Soumya remarked that, despite 11 years in international cricket, they haven’t been recognised as seniors.

Time for the experienced bunch to finally step up

As ODI cricket continues to evolve, this mixed batch of seniors and ‘to-be seniors’ has struggled to find consistency – one reason Bangladesh are yet to secure a major title.

Two days ago, Miraz stated that they are ready to take the next step, acknowledging that many of them have “7-8 years in international cricket.” However, it is not the first time that similar statements were made by Miraz, Taskin, Liton, and Soumya, indicating that they have yet to truly step up – a transition that, in an ideal cricketing culture, should have already occurred.

This failure could be attributed to the board’s inability to facilitate a seamless transition to seniority, as it did for the previous generation, and also to the way the likes of Miraz, Taskin, Liton, and Soumya failed to make the most of the chances they received.

Now, with Bangladesh cricket moving forward without most of its established seniors, will experienced players like Taskin, Miraz, and Soumya finally take the next step?

A major T20 league on the horizon!

AGENCIES

Saudi Arabia is secretly planning a new global T20 cricket league, which could mark one of the most significant changes in the sport for decades.

According to a report in the Sydney Morning Herald, the league has been in development for over a year and is the brainchild of former New South Wales and Victoria all-rounder Neil Maxwell, who also manages current Australian captain Pat Cummins.

Saudi Arabia’s SRJ Sports Investments will serve as the main financier of the yet-to-be-named T20 league, backing it with a substantial investment of \$500 million.

The report also highlights that discussions are already underway with the International Cricket Council (ICC), which is currently chaired by former BCCI secretary Jay Shah. If realized, this initiative would significantly bolster Saudi Arabia’s growing influence in global sports.

This latest move aligns with Saudi Arabia’s broader sports expansion strategy, which already includes investments in LIV Golf, a Formula 1 race, and hosting rights for the 2034 FIFA World Cup. The introduction of a

high-profile T20 cricket league would further cement Saudi Arabia’s status as a major player in international sports.

According to the report, the league will consist of eight teams and will be structured similarly to tennis Grand Slams. The matches will take place across four different locations throughout the year, ensuring a unique and dynamic competition format. This approach mimics tennis’s Grand Slam model, which includes the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, and US Open.

Recognizing the packed international cricket calendar, the league will be played during designated open windows to avoid clashes with international fixtures and established domestic T20 leagues such as the Indian Premier League (IPL) and Australia’s Big Bash League (BBL).

The teams will be new franchise entities, potentially representing different countries, including one from Australia. Additionally, the league will feature both men’s and women’s competitions, further enhancing its global appeal. The final showdown of the tournament will be hosted in Saudi Arabia, promising a grand spectacle for cricket enthusiasts worldwide.



Arsenal defeated London rivals Chelsea 1-0 for their first win in four Premier League games on Sunday as a headed goal by stand-in striker Mikel Merino boosted their faint hopes of catching up with runaway leaders Liverpool. The win left second-placed Arsenal 12 points behind Liverpool.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Mbappe dismisses ‘Ronaldo and Cristiano’ comparisons

AGENCIES

In a season filled with expectations, Kylian Mbappe continues to shatter records and silence doubters. His brace in Real Madrid’s 2-1 comeback victory over Villarreal on Saturday not only secured crucial points in the LaLiga title race but also cemented his place in Madrid’s rich footballing history.

With 31 goals across all competitions this season, Mbappe has now surpassed Brazilian icon Ronaldo’s tally from his debut campaign in 2002-03. Brazil’s Ronaldo scored 30 goals in 44 games in his debut season with Real Madrid in 2002-03.

The French forward is closing in on another milestone – the 33 goals scored by Cristiano Ronaldo in 35 games in his first season with Los Blancos in 2009-10. Yet, for Mbappe, who has played 44 games for Real Madrid so far, it’s not just about records – it’s about legacy.

“They are legends who have defined an era,” Mbappe told Real Madrid TV. “It’s important, but they are just numbers. If I score more than Ronaldo and Cristiano, it doesn’t mean I’m bigger – just that my first season is going well. The most important thing is to help the



team win titles.”

His determination was evident against Villarreal, especially after Madrid’s grueling 120-minute battle against Atletico Madrid. Despite exhaustion, the squad showed resilience, with Mbappe leading the charge.

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Yunus to discuss law and order with top cops today

Says press wing; CA will meet Xi on Mar 28 during China visit

AGENCIES

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will hold a special meeting today with senior police officers on law and order issues.

A total of 127 officers, including those holding the rank of superintendent of police, will attend the meeting at the Chief Adviser's Office in Tejgaon.

Yunus will listen to field-level officials and give necessary directives regarding law and order, CA's Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad Majumder said at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam will deliver a welcome speech while six field-level officers will speak on six focal points.

Speaking at the briefing, CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said Yunus' scheduled visit to China from March 26-29 would be the "most important visit" by a Bangladesh leader over the last 50 years as the two countries were eyeing to take the relations to a new height.

He said that Prof Yunus will address the Boao Forum for Asia conference, called the "Davos of the East", on March 27 with the focus on the changing role of Asia in



SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



A craftsman meticulously applies block printing patterns on fabric. Boutique artisans throughout the capital are working diligently, anticipating a surge in demand before Eid-ul-Fitr. The photo was taken recently in Dhaka's New Market area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Bangabandhu's 105th birthday today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 105th birthday of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On this day in 1920, the architect of the nation's independence was born in Tungipara under the then Gopalganj subdivision.

Through his astute leadership, Mujib mobilised the Bangalee nation to rise against exploitation and repression by the Pakistani rulers. This movement culminated in the creation of an independent Bangladesh after a nine-month-long bloody war in 1971.

Mujib's political journey

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Govt seeks to withdraw over 6,000 'political' cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has recommended withdrawal of 6,202 "politically motivated" cases filed to harass opposition leaders and activists during the Awami League government.

The home ministry disclosed the updates in a press release yesterday.

"The central committee formed by the home ministry has reviewed 6,295 cases submitted by field-level committees for evaluation. Of these, 6,202 were identified as politically motivated and recommended for withdrawal," read the release.

To assess the proposals received from the field-level committees, the central committee held eight meetings, presided over by the law adviser.

The senior secretary of the home ministry was also in the seven-member central committee, which was formed on September 22 last year.

A four-member committee, headed by the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Penalise wealthy tax dodgers

Economists urge govt at pre-budget talks, call for formulating law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Economists urged the government yesterday to introduce legislation targeting individuals capable of paying taxes but avoiding their obligations.

With a view to broadening the base of taxpayers and improving tax collection efficiency, this proposal was presented during the first pre-budget meeting for Fiscal Year 2025-26, which was held at the State Guest House Padma in the capital with Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed in attendance.

Salehuddin Ahmed, addressing reporters after the meeting, said, "I did not commit to it [enacting the law to punish tax dodgers] as there are legal implications. Such laws exist in other countries with provisions to sue tax dodgers."

At the meeting, he said the experts suggested the interim government devise a framework for future administrations to follow.

They recommended imposing higher tax rates on individuals owning multiple properties or vehicles and maintaining significant bank deposits.

Other recommendations include expanding the social safety net, prioritising allocation to more research-orientated universities, and ensuring proper utilisation of allocation to the primary education sector."

Regarding the size of the upcoming budget, Salehuddin said, "We have recommended avoiding an ambitious budget this time around."

The finance adviser said the government has plans to reduce inflation to 6.5 by next year.

At the meeting, Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), proposed a specific law to tackle tax evasion.

He also recommended a detailed evaluation of government expenditure to ensure efficiency and the introduction of impact-based budgeting.

Professor MM Akash advocated for the rationing of essential commodities for garment workers and recommended property taxes for those with extensive assets.

Economists further called for a shift

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

JULY MASSACRE Tarique promises trials if voted to power

UNB, Dhaka

If BNP is voted to power, the party would bring those responsible for the torture and killing during the anti-autocratic movement and the 2024 mass uprising under trial, said BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman today.

"We can firmly say if the people of Bangladesh give BNP the opportunity to govern in the future, we will ensure trials for all incidents of killings and repression," he said while addressing an iftar event virtually at a city hotel.

Tarique assured that the party would make every effort, alongside various political programmes, to ensure justice for those affected and for those subjected to repression and killings during the anti-autocratic movements and the July-August mass uprising.

Amra BNP Paribar organised the event at Lakeshore Hotel for the families of the victims of enforced disappearances and killings during the Awami League regime, as well as for the martyrs of the 2024 mass uprising.

Eid gifts were also distributed among the victim families at the event.

The BNP acting chief said both the party and the nation expect a fair and neutral

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



US strikes kill 31 in Yemen

101 people, mostly women and children, injured; Huthis vow retaliation

AFP, Sanaa

Yemen's Iran-backed Huthis yesterday vowed to meet "escalation with escalation" after a wave of deadly US air strikes, with witnesses to the bombing saying they were taken aback by its intensity, even after years of war.

US President Donald Trump said he had ordered the strikes and threatened more were to come if the rebels kept up their repeated attacks on shipping vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Attacks on the rebel-held capital Sanaa, as well as on areas in Saada, Al-Bayda and Radaa, killed at least 31 people and wounded 101, "most of whom were children and women", Huthi health ministry spokesperson Anis Al-Asbahi said.

An AFP photographer in Sanaa heard explosions and saw plumes of smoke rising Saturday night.

Footage on Huthi media showed children and a woman among those being treated in a hospital emergency room, including a dazed girl with blackened legs wrapped in bandages.

One father of two, who gave his name as Ahmed, told AFP his "house shook, the windows shattered, and my family and I were terrified".

"I've been living in Sanaa for 10 years, hearing shelling throughout the war. By God, I've never experienced anything like this before," he said.

Trump, in a post on social media, vowed to "use overwhelming lethal force" to end the Huthi attacks, which the rebels say are in solidarity with Palestinians amid the Gaza war.

"To all Houthi terrorists, YOUR TIME IS UP, AND YOUR ATTACKS MUST STOP, STARTING TODAY. IF THEY DON'T, HELL WILL RAIN DOWN UPON YOU LIKE NOTHING YOU HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE!" he said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

- » Trump warns Iran against backing the Yemeni group
- » Iran Guards vow to retaliate against any attack
- » Russia urges US not to 'use force' in Yemen and begin dialogue

Dhaka's Deadly Air: What we know and what we can do

P10



PRAYER TIMING MARCH 17					
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:50	12:45	4:30	6:09	7:45	
JAMAAT 5:00	1:15	4:45	6:24	8:15	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING			
RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
16	17		6:09
17	18	4:48	6:09
18	19	4:47	6:10



Illegal businesses selling refurbished second-hand furniture occupy pavements and spill over onto the street, causing inconvenience to pedestrians. The photo was taken yesterday near the Shilpakala Academy in the capital's Segunbagicha.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

3 months all alone on a wide wide sea!

AFP, Lima

A Peruvian fisherman was found alive after drifting at sea for 94 days, a navy official said Saturday, as he was discharged from hospital following his ordeal.

Maximo Napa, 61, was rescued in his small fishing boat on Tuesday after being spotted by an Ecuadorian vessel off the coast of Chimbote in northern Peru.

He told local media in a tearful interview that he survived at sea by eating cockroaches, birds and a turtle.

"I didn't want to die, for my mother. I have a two-month-old granddaughter -- I clung to that. Every day I thought about my mother," Napa said.

On Saturday, he was discharged from hospital in the coastal city of Paita.

"Mr Napa arrived in good physical condition. He could walk, wash himself. Shocked, but in good physical condition," said Peruvian Navy port captain Jorge Gonzalez.

The fisherman had set sail on December 7 from the port of San Juan de Marcona but bad weather conditions and the current caused him to lose course. His small boat, which had no radio beacon, ended up on the high seas.

"It is a miracle that my father has been found," his daughter Ines Napa told the RPP radio station.

