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REFORM PROPOSALS BNP opposes two-term cap on prime minister

Suggests one cannot be PM for three consecutive terms, submits feedback to consensus commission

WASIM BIN HABIB, MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP does not agree with the reform proposal that an individual cannot be the prime minister more than twice.

In the comment section of the spreadsheet provided by the National Consensus Commission, the party wrote, "We disagree. Regarding the prime minister's tenure, it would be enough to have a rule stipulating that one person will not be deemed eligible to be the prime minister for three consecutive times."

The proposal sent by the commission says, "An individual can be the prime minister two times at most. Consecutively or through any other means, the individual cannot be the prime minister more than twice."

The BNP's reply seems to imply that a person can serve more than two terms as the PM, as long as there is a break after two consecutive terms.

It also disagrees with the commission's proposal that one cannot be the PM, leader of house, and the chief of a political party at the same time. It says this matter is something for the party concerned to decide.

"Imposing constitutional restrictions on political parties is contrary to the core essence of parliamentary democracy," reads the party's feedback on the reform proposals.

The consensus commission on March 6 wrote to the BNP and 36 other parties, seeking their feedback on 166 key reform proposals relating to

THE FEEDBACK	
1	No need for National Constitution Commission
1	Agrees with proposal for bicameral legislature
1	Agrees with increasing women's reserved seat to 100
1	Disagrees with lowering minimum age to run for office
1	Disagrees with proposed fundamental principles

the constitution, election system, public administration, Anti-Corruption Commission, and judiciary.

The parties were asked to come up with their feedback by March 13.

The BNP submitted its feedback yesterday. So far, 15 other parties have submitted theirs.

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed handed over the feedback to Prof Ali Riaz, co-chairman of the National Consensus Commission, at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Salahuddin afterwards told reporters that BNP submitted its feedback as well as detailed opinions on five reform commission's proposals. "We will submit detailed feedback on the remaining reform proposals in a few days," he said.

The party does not deem it necessary to form a National Constitutional Council to handle the appointments to the Anti-Corruption Commission and Election Commission, and the posts of the chiefs of the army, navy, and air force.

It agrees with the reform commission's proposal for an interim government and its tenure, opining that an elected parliament should make amendments to the constitution to this end.

In principle, the BNP also agrees with the recommendation for a bicameral legislature with a 400-seat lower house, or the National Assembly, and a 105-seat upper house or Senate, and the four-year tenure of both houses. But this matter too must be discussed by elected MPs.

The BNP also supports the proposal for increasing reserved seats for

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Dhaka police began installing wheel-locking traps at entry points of key roads yesterday to stop rickshaws from causing traffic jams on major thoroughfares. The photo shows a rickshaw stuck on one such trap installed near Ramma Police Station on Shaheed Captain Mansur Ali Sarani.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Dejected Palestinians amid the rubble and debris at the site of Israeli strikes in the previous night at the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. Story on page 14.

PHOTO: AFP

UNEASE AT NCP OVER HASNAT, SARJIS'S POSTS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A sense of unease prevails within the National Citizen Party (NCP) over the differing statements coming from its leaders regarding a meeting with the army chief on March 11.

The disclosure of such "confidential" matters on social media without prior discussion at party forum has irked many leaders, while some view the Facebook posts as attempts to gain "personal popularity", said insiders.

In a Facebook post early Friday, NCP leader Hasnat Abdullah alleged a conspiracy was afoot to bring the Awami League back into politics at the behest of India. A proposal for accommodating a "refined" AL was pitched to them at a meeting in the cantonment.

Hasnat's remarks touched off an intense political debate and also demonstrations for a ban on the AL.

Against this backdrop, NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary at an event in Sylhet on Saturday said Hasnat's statement should not have appeared on social media, saying it was "inappropriate".

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CONSENSUS COMMISSION NCP presses on for constituent assembly

Agrees with 113 of 166 proposals; CPB objects to changes in preamble

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party (NCP) has agreed to 113 of the 166 key reform proposals that the National Consensus Commission has collated from various reform commissions.

The newly formed party stated that recommendations unrelated to the constitution could be implemented through ordinances, while constitutional matters would require a constituent assembly election.

Around 2:00pm yesterday, the party submitted its written opinions to the consensus commission at the LD Hall inside the parliament. Sarwar Tushar, NCP joint convener and coordinator of its reform coordination committee, later briefed

journalists.

The NCP partially agreed with 29 proposals, recording their opinions in the consensus commission's spreadsheet and providing explanations on their disagreements.

Speaking to journalists, Tushar raised three key questions.

"A July charter will be prepared based on consensus. However, some vital proposals will be excluded. Our question is, what will the commission's stance be on those proposals?"

-- NCP Joint Convener
Sarwar Tushar

classified by the government as not requiring dialogue. "On what basis was this determined?" he asked.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

India knew of anti-Hasina wave but could not interfere
Says Jaishankar

STAR DESK

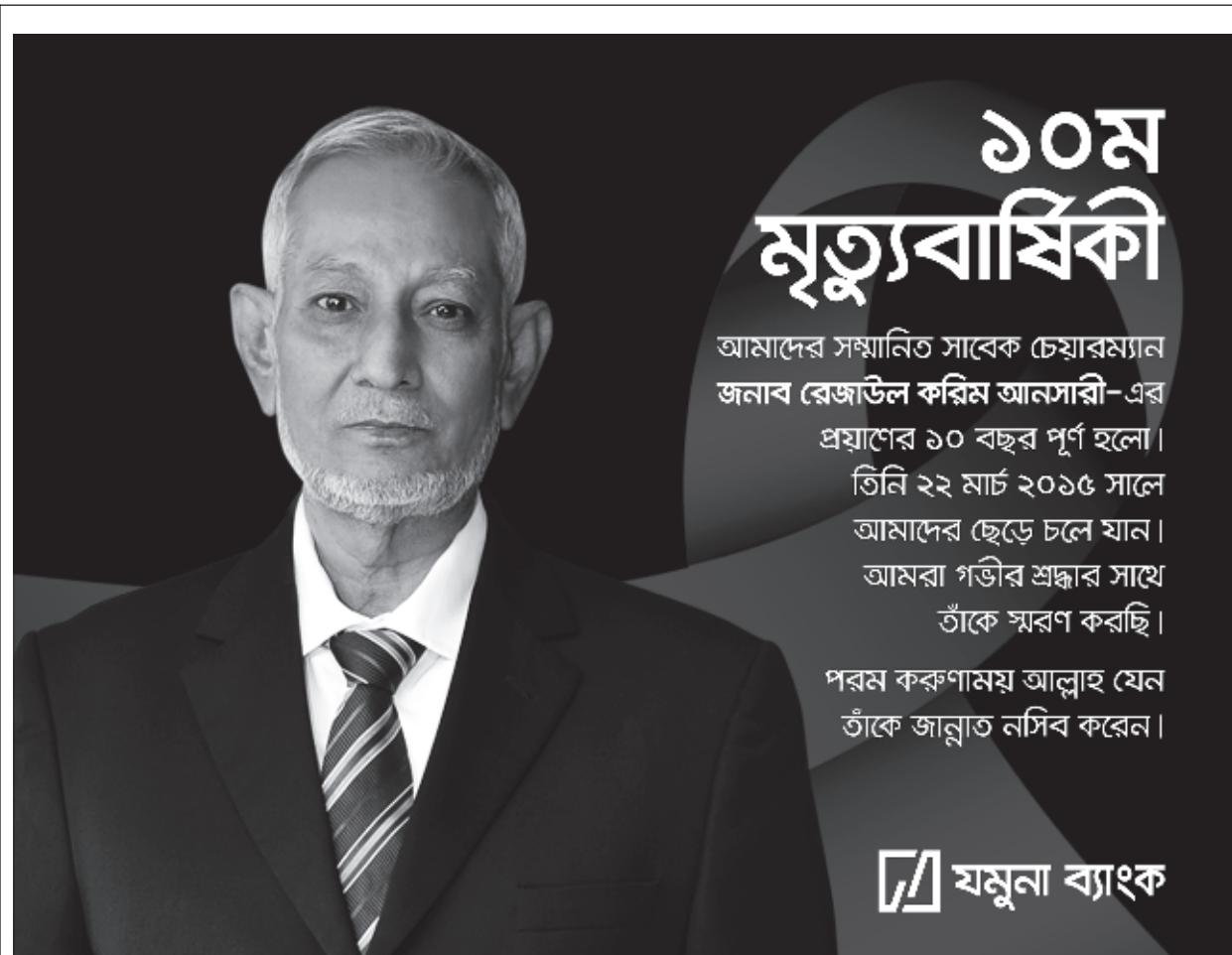


India was aware of an anti-Hasina wave building up in Bangladesh ahead of the overthrow of her government on August 5, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told the Consultative Committee on External Affairs.

But India was not in a position to do much as it lacked the necessary leverage over Hasina, who could only be "advised", he told members of parliament on Saturday, reports The Hindu.

Jaishankar cited the UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk's recent remarks about the UN warning the Bangladesh army against a confrontation with unarmed protesters during

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



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মুনা ব্যাংক

We will always stand by you

Army chief tells students injured in July uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Addressing the students injured during the July uprising, Chief of Army Staff General Waker Uz Zaman yesterday assured them that the army would always be by their side and advised them never to lose morale.

The army chief made this remark while speaking at an iftar event organised by the Bangladesh Army at Sena Malancha in Dhaka Cantonment in honour of the students injured during the July uprising.

Waker exchanged greetings with the injured students and inquired about their well-being.

During his address, he emphasised that the primary purpose of the event was to remind the injured individuals that the army would always stand by them.

"Many of them are severely injured, some cannot move, and some have lost their eyesight. I assure you that we will always be by your side," said the army chief.

He further mentioned that financial aid and other forms of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman shakes hands with one of the students injured during the July uprising at an iftar event held in their honour at the Sena Malancha in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

PHOTO: ISPR

Unease at NCP over Hasnat, Sarjis's posts

FROM PAGE 1

Sarjis Alam, NCP's chief organiser (north), then fuelled the debate further with a statement on Facebook just after noon yesterday.

While reaffirming solidarity with Hasnat as a fellow activist, Sarjis warned that publicly disclosing details of such discussion "might create trust issues in future critical dialogues with any stakeholder".

Clarifying that they were not summoned, Sarjis said they went to the cantonment to discuss with army chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman whether his National Martyred Army Day speech signalled any concerning developments. In the speech, Gen Waker warned against "mudslinging and fighting".

"Regarding the subject of exerting 'pressure' on a refined Awami League, I did not sense that there was any pressure. Instead, the army chief confidently said that if a refined version of the Awami League didn't emerge, it would create long-term issues for the country and political parties," Sarjis said.

The tone portrayed in Hasnat's post seemed more extreme than the actual conversation, though certainly more straightforward and so confident than usual. It was clearly stated that the participation of a refined Awami League in elections is essential for national stability.

"I didn't feel the chief was angry; rather, he spoke from the perspective of someone senior, emphasising his long experience compared to us juniors."

He also criticised attempts to

endorse any narrative pitting the army chief against Hasnat. "Their positions and contexts are entirely different ... Also, statements in some quarters calling for the army chief's resignation do not reflect our position."

Meanwhile, Abdul Hannan Masud, senior joint chief coordinator of NCP, slammed both Hasnat and Sarjis in the comment section of Sarjis's post on Facebook. Their actions were "dragging the NCP into controversy," Hannan wrote.

"What is this, brother!! I'm saying this publicly—one of you is lying. This cannot continue," he added.

At least three NCP leaders told The Daily Star that Hasnat and Sarjis's Facebook posts, along with Hannan's comments, caused discomfort within the party.

Many central committee members have expressed their resentment in the party's internal social media group, criticising the practice of holding meetings with various figures and publicly disclosing those without consulting the NCP leadership.

"Majority of the NCP leaders were unaware of Hasnat and Sarjis's meeting with the army chief. When Hasnat publicly revealed on Facebook that the army had proposed rehabilitating the Awami League, reactions within the party were mixed. While many praised Hasnat for his firm stance against the Awami League, questions arose after Sarjis's post that disclosed further details of the meeting," an NCP leader told The Daily Star.

Requesting anonymity, the leader also said that as a newly formed political party, the NCP would likely have to engage in both formal and News report.

informal discussions with various figures in the future.

"However, Hasnat and Sarjis's decision to disclose details of an informal conversation on Facebook may discourage others from engaging in off-the-record discussions with NCP leaders, which could harm the party."

Another senior leader pointed out that many within the NCP were still involved in social media activism, and they were yet to fully embrace the political identity.

"The party forum would soon discuss the issue of leaders making political statements on Facebook and work toward establishing internal discipline on such matters," he said.

The party's Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin denied any "distance or a lack of understanding" among the leaders. "Many students involved in the uprising are transitioning into the political sphere. If any mistakes have occurred in this process, I urge the people to view them with a forgiving attitude," he said at a programme in the capital yesterday.

He also said the party would soon address the matter in a press release. Sweden-based Netra News early yesterday reported that the army, in response to its query, confirmed the March 11 meeting. The report said the army dismissed Hasnat's claims as "absolutely laughable", calling his post "nothing but a complete political stunt".

Contacted by The Daily Star yesterday, the Inter Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) said that they were not aware of the Army Headquarters comment and Netra News report.

However, it supports the recommendation of having two deputy speakers, one of whom will be from the opposition.

The BNP disagrees with the proposal of constitutional amendments based on two thirds majority in both lower and upper houses followed by a referendum.

It is not realistic to make all constitutional amendments through referendums, says the party. The BNP thinks it is unnecessary to change the name, The People's Republic of Bangladesh.

It disagrees with the commission's recommendation to adopt -- equality, human dignity, social justice, pluralism and democracy -- as fundamental principles; and rejects the proposal that the state must

BNP opposes two-term cap on PM

FROM PAGE 1

women to 100 but sees no need to change the current election system for women candidates.

The party rejects the proposal of nominating 10 percent youth candidates in the lower house, saying choosing candidates should be up to the parties.

It also rejected the proposal to nominate the PM by the majority of the lower house members.

The BNP dismisses the proposal to lower the minimum age to run for office to 21 years.

However, it supports the recommendation of having two deputy speakers, one of whom will be from the opposition.

The BNP disagrees with the proposal of constitutional amendments based on two thirds majority in both lower and upper houses followed by a referendum.

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It disagrees with the commission's recommendation to adopt -- equality, human dignity, social justice, pluralism and democracy -- as fundamental principles; and rejects the proposal that the state must

ensure pluralism, multiple religions, multiple languages and multiple cultures and the coexistence of all communities.

The party suggests that the articles of the constitution that outline the fundamental principles of nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism, should be restored to the pre-15th amendment form.

BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed told reporters that it was not right to equate the 1971 Liberation War and the 2024 mass uprising.

"One of the most important parts of the constitution, which appears on the very first page, is the preamble. There is a proposal to completely change it... In this, the 1971 Liberation War has been equated with the mass uprising of 2024, which we do not consider appropriate," he said.

The preamble is a vital part of the constitution and the commission's suggestion to completely alter or revise it is akin to rewriting it.

PROPOSALS ON OTHER REFORMS

The BNP thinks the independence of the Election Commission will be harmed if some of the recommendations of the Electoral Reform Commission are implemented.

The BNP believes that the power to draw the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies and the national identity card service should remain

with the EC.

If the NID is handed over to a separate independent institution, then the EC will have to rely on that institution repeatedly, said Salahuddin.

About public administration reform, Salahuddin said there were 26 proposals. "We agree with nearly half of them, and for the remaining half, we have our opinions and comments. Through detailed discussions, we can reach a consensus on these matters."

About the Judiciary Reform Commission's proposals, he said their party agreed with almost all the proposals.

The BNP does not agree with the proposal to grant the parliamentary standing committee the power to hold the EC accountable, he said.

Answering a question, he said the interim government should focus on the national election, not a referendum.

"We think the national parliamentary election should be held first."

The BNP does not believe a constituent assembly is necessary for the extensive reform of the constitution.

Regarding the Anti-Corruption Commission reforms, he said there were about 20 proposals, of which the party agreed with 11.

NCP presses on for constituent assembly

FROM PAGE 1

"The third issue concerns two significant reform proposals by the Police Reform Commission and the Local Government Reform Commission. We were unable to give opinions on these [as they were not in the spreadsheet]. We want to know the commission's stance in this regard."

Tushar added that the NCP wants Bangla recognised as the official language, and constitutional recognition for all communities.

The party also believes the protection of life and nature should be a fundamental right.

It said that since a deputy speaker would be from the opposition, there would now be no need for two.

Tushar said that aside from the finance bill, MPs should be restricted from voting against a no-confidence motion against their own parties.

The NCP supports a bicameral parliament and suggests political parties announce their upper house candidates before elections.

"Since voters will cast only one vote, they have the right to know who will be appointed to the upper house," Tushar said.

The party opposed dividing the country into provinces and the educational qualification

requirement for Senate candidates, arguing it would exclude marginalised communities.

It proposed that while the prime minister could advise the president, it should not be mandatory.

Regarding the interim government, the NCP said it should function as an election time government for 70-75 days.

"Eventually, such a government may no longer be necessary, and the proposed Constitutional Council could take over," Tushar added.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of Bangladesh opposed certain constitutional reform proposals, such as removing fundamental principles from the constitution's preamble and changing the country's name.

"After reviewing the proposed preamble, it seems there is an attempt to equate the great Liberation War with the recent mass uprising. A dialogue among parties is needed," said CPB General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince after submitting his party's opinions.

The CPB also criticised the commission's spreadsheet, saying most questions were unclear, incomplete, and one-sided, requiring further explanation.

"Simply marking responses without discussions would not be

India knew of anti-Hasina wave

FROM PAGE 1

the uprising, as such an action would prompt the UN to ban the army from peacekeeping operations, the report said.

The Consultative Committee on External Affairs members met Jaishankar for a discussion on India's foreign policy where Bangladesh, Myanmar, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Pakistan issues dominated.

Meanwhile, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, who has hosted a series of international dignitaries, is scheduled to visit China, where the two countries are expected to sign multiple agreements, including ones

on aviation links that will increase connectivity between Chittagong and Dhaka and Chinese destinations.

Jaishankar highlighted the role of "external actors" in Bangladesh and mentioned that China was "not an adversary but a competitor".

He also discussed the future of Saarc, which has not met since November 2014, The Hindu report said.

Islamabad was supposed to host the 19th Saarc summit in November 2016, but the event was called off after India withdrew its participation following the terror attack on its military installation in Uri on

September 18, 2016.

Since then, India has supported the cooperation at the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), raising questions about the scope of Saarc's revival.

However, Jaishankar hinted that "Saarc is not off the table" and that the regional grouping has been "paused".

The MPs also sought an explanation about India's move to counter China's growing influence in the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal, added the report.

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Π

NID CORRECTION

EC fails to meet three-month target

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has failed to complete National Identity Card (NID) corrections within the promised three-month timeframe, with officials now stating that the backlog of applications will take at least another six months to clear.

Last December, ASM Humayun Kabir, director general of the National Identity Registration Wing at the EC, had assured that all correction applications would be resolved within three months.

However, after three months and five days, he admitted that the process has not been completed on time.

Speaking to reporters at the EC headquarters in Dhaka yesterday, he cited the ongoing voter list update as the primary reason for the delay.

Currently, 4 lakh

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DGHS former driver Malek jailed for 13yrs in graft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Malek, a former driver of Directorate General of Health Service, was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment yesterday for amassing wealth worth Tk 1.5 crore illegally and concealing wealth statement of Tk 93 lakh to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Judge Md Jakaria Hossain of Dhaka Special Judge's Court 6 handed down the sentence in presence of Malek, the lone accused.

The judge also fined him Tk 20,000, in default of which he will have to stay one more year in jail.

In the judgement, the judge said the prosecution was able to prove the charges brought against the convict undoubtedly and he was given the

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PHOTO: STAR

Families of the nine female martyrs hold portraits of their loved ones lost in the July uprising, at an event at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The newspaper organised the event to honour the martyrs, marking International Women's Day. At the event, Adviser to the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock Farida Akhter and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam handed over the portraits to the families.

Remembering the women who fought for change

Families share stories of loved ones martyred in July uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They were shot dead on the streets. Some took their last breaths in makeshift clinics, their bloodied bodies carried by strangers. Others called home in their final moments, whispering words of love and fear before falling silent.

They were young, hopeful, and defiant -- demanding

would not have been possible without them.

Today, the families of these women struggle to survive in a country that still refuses them justice. Cases remain stalled in many instances.

The family members of the nine female martyrs of the July uprising gathered at The Daily Star Centre yesterday to share their grief.

However, she continued to participate in demonstrations there.

On August 5, Nafisa joined a long march towards Dhaka. At around 2:30pm, she called her father, overjoyed, saying, "Hasina has fled." Moments later, she was shot.

"She called me, saying she was dying and to come and take her body. I started from Tongi, 35km

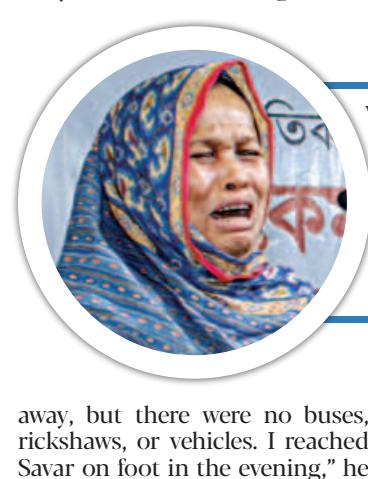
These martyrs are not just numbers. They were daughters, wives, and sisters.

Shahid Meherun Nesa Tanha, a university student, loved eating pulao and meat. Since her death, her mother has not cooked those dishes again. "Without my daughter, my house is dark," said Asma Akter, tears in her eyes. "During Eid, she would cook everything herself. She would



She called me, saying she was dying and to come and take her body. I started from Tongi, 35km away, but there were no buses, rickshaws, or vehicles. I reached Savar on foot in the evening.

Abul Hossen
Father of Nafisa Hossen Marwa



Without my daughter, my house is dark. During Eid, she would cook everything herself. She would prepare the semai the night before. But now my daughter is gone. What Eid do we have left?

Asma Akter
Mother of Meherun Nesa Tanha

change in a country that had long crushed dissent. When the bullets came, they did not discriminate between men and women.

Yet the stories of the fallen women -- who stood shoulder to shoulder with men in the fight for freedom -- have been overlooked.

The regime fell, but their names are already fading. And yet, toppling a regressive regime

The event -- How are the families of female martyrs of July uprising doing? -- was organised marking International Women's Day.

Abul Hossen, father of martyr Nafisa Hossen Marwa, who ran a tea shop in Tongi, said he had sent his daughter to his in-laws' home in Savar on July 28 after learning she had been regularly joining protests.

away, but there were no buses, rickshaws, or vehicles. I reached Savar on foot in the evening," he said.

Abul Hossen filed a case in Savar after several days of struggle. However, police removed the names of certain officials and Awami League leaders, he alleged. "As I live in Tongi, I have no updates on the case," he added.

prepare the semai the night before. But now my daughter is gone. What Eid do we have left?"

Naima Sultana, a 16-year-old schoolgirl, used to wake her mother up every Eid morning with a hug. "Ma, you look beautiful. I love you so much," she would say. Her mother, Ainur Nahar, now dreads the silence that awaits her this Eid morning.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



A craftsman busy embroidery a Benarasi saree with colourful patterns, beads, and stones on a wooden frame. As Eid draws closer, artisans are working day and night to deliver their products, which are currently in high demand. The photo was taken at Ambagan Bihari Colony of Chattogram city recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Mid-day meal in primary schools returns in April

35 lakh students to get dry food instead of cooked meals; project to cost Tk 5,552cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After more than two years, the government is going to reintroduce the feeding programme for students of all government primary schools in 150 poverty-ridden upazilas by next month with an aim to increase school attendance and reduce the dropout rate.

Yesterday, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) at a meeting approved a project proposal of Tk 5,552 crore under which various dry food including breads, bananas and eggs will be given to the students instead of cooked meals.

Over 35 lakh students of about 20,000 government primary schools, mostly from poverty-prone areas, are likely to get the mid-day meals, according to the planning ministry documents.

Earlier, the government provided cooked meals to the students under the school feeding programme but closed it in 2022.

After the Ecne meeting held at the Planning Commission in the capital, Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Ahmed said, "The government has plans to introduce the programme at all government primary schools gradually."

Explaining the reason behind providing dry food instead of cooked meals, the adviser said previously

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Govt to tackle misinfo with own narrative

Rizwana tells seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will combat misinformation and disinformation through its actions and by establishing its own narrative, said Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan.

Simply enacting laws will not stop the spread of false information, she said, adding that people must reflect on their role, and media outlets must determine how to channel their efforts effectively.

Rizwana made these remarks at a programme titled "Media in the Age of Misinformation and Disinformation -- Challenges, Responsibilities, and the Path Forward for Development," organised by the Press Institute Bangladesh (PIB) and Oxfam in Bangladesh.

The event was held at PIB office in the capital. The adviser stressed the media's responsibility to present accurate information. However, she pointed out that in many cases, misleading information is being spread, which creates misconceptions in society. She said, some news outlets publish stories just to increase views, often hiding the truth in the process.

Rizwana said over the past 20-25 years, the media landscape has changed dramatically. "If we

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

'A threat to travel sector'

Travel agents protest draft law banning ticket sales between agencies

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Civil Aviation Ministry's draft directive prohibiting travel agencies from buying or selling tickets through other agencies has sparked criticism, with industry leaders warning of severe business disruptions.

The Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB), which represents around 4,000 travel agencies, has strongly opposed the move, calling it a threat to the sector.

"If the ministry enforces this anti-business decision, we will not accept it," ATAB President Abdus Salam Aref told The Daily Star.

The ministry recently drafted guidelines aimed at enhancing transparency and preventing customer harassment in the travel agency sector.

However, a clause of the draft, which states, "A travel agency shall not buy or sell tickets through another travel agency," has drawn opposition from stakeholders.

Industry leaders argue that such a restriction would force thousands of agencies out of business and increase

difficulties for customers.

SN Manzur Murshed, former ATAB president, said it undermines the globally accepted agent-to-agent (B2B) model.

"If Bangladesh deviates from this norm, local agencies will struggle to compete internationally, impacting millions of people," he said. "If the ministry approves this draft, it will mark a black chapter for the industry."

Murshed also highlighted the impracticality of the clause, pointing out that General Sales Agents (GSAs) of airlines, which function as travel agencies, would be unable to sell tickets to other agencies.

Currently, Bangladesh has around 5,700 licensed travel agencies, but only 970 are accredited by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Among these, just 350 agencies have ticket-selling authorisation for major airlines such as Emirates, Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, and Saudi Arabian Airlines.

As a result, over 5,000 licensed agencies rely on these 350 for ticket procurement.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

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ABDUS SALAM AREF
ATAB President

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MOHAMMAD ATAUR RAHMAN
Joint Secretary
Civil Aviation Ministry

authorisation for major airlines such as Emirates, Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, and Saudi Arabian Airlines.

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SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Parveen
Mahmud new
chair of MJF
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parveen Mahmud has been elected as the chairperson of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), a leading organisation dedicated to promoting human rights and good governance.

Parveen, a trailblazer in financial and development sectors, assumed office on March 23. Earlier, she served as member of the MJF governing body. She will succeed industrialist Syed Manzur Elahi, who served as the chairperson of MJF for a long time. He passed away on March 12.

Children sift through the muddy waters, trying to catch fish. This waterbody is home to a variety of local fish, including koi, shing, tengra, and taki. The photo was taken in the Kuriana area of Swarupkathi upazila in Pirojpur yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Remembering the women who fought

FROM PAGE 3

Eighteen-year-old Mosammam Liza worked as a house help in Dhaka's Shantinagar and taught Arabic at a madrasa to support her ailing parents. She was shot while working, dying three days later in hospital. Her father, Md Zaynal, could barely speak through his tears.

Md Solaiman, brother of martyr Nasima Akter, recounted how a helicopter gunshot pierced his son's chest before hitting Nasima in the neck. "My sister is gone, but my son survived. We couldn't even file a case, fearing the consequences."

His son still wakes up screaming from pain.

At yesterday's event, Farida Akhter, adviser to the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, and Mahfuz

managed to get to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"There was an ICU shortage," she continued.

"After four days of pleading, they arranged one. But in the end, we couldn't save my mother."

For Shahina's children and grandchildren, Eid is incomplete.

Shahina Begum, a fish seller in Jatrabari, was raising her children alone. When she was shot, an unknown man used her phone to call her family, desperately trying to reach someone.

Her daughter, Mosammam Hafiza, was in their village. "When I found out, I ran into the street. I had no money. Someone gave me Tk 500, and I

Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, handed the family members portraits of their loved ones. The newspaper also gave each family a cheque for Tk 50,000.

Speaking at the programme, Farida Akhter said, "We consider the martyrs of the July uprising our greatest assets. Without them, we have no value. We will never betray their sacrifices."

She condemned the fallen regime, saying that while most fascist rulers are men, Bangladesh's tragedy was that this dictator was a woman. "It was her will that led to the deaths of so many people, just to stay in power," she said. "The killers must face justice."

Prof Sayeed Ferdous, vice-

chancellor of Bangladesh Open University, questioned why so many families still cannot file cases. "How can this be possible?" he asked, criticising political parties for prioritising power struggles over justice.

Assistant Attorney General Arif Khan assured the families that investigations into the killings are ongoing.

"The lesson of civilisation is that murder cannot be avenged by more murder," he said. "The killer may take a life in an instant, but justice requires many steps."

Hosted by journalist Emran Mahfuz, the event concluded with performances by Amirul Momenin Manik, who sang self-composed songs honouring the fallen.

are based in Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, Feni, Noakhali, and Rajshahi.

In other cities, licensed agencies rely on buying and selling tickets through one another.

If IATA accreditation becomes mandatory, 4,470 agencies in smaller towns and remote areas will be forced to shut down, forcing passengers to travel to district headquarters for tickets, increasing costs and inconvenience.

Stakeholders urged the ministry to consult industry representatives before finalising the draft.

When asked, Mohammad Ataur Rahman, joint secretary at the Civil Aviation Ministry, said, "The ministry will not take any measures that create difficulties for travel agencies."

Discussions with travel agencies reveal that all IATA-accredited agencies

A threat to travel sector

FROM PAGE 3

If the government enforces this restriction, smaller and mid-sized agencies will be forced to shut down, stakeholders warn.

Aref stressed that travel agencies often buy tickets from each other when facing temporary cash flow issues. "If this proposal is approved, it will create chaos in the sector," he said.

A travel agency owner, speaking anonymously, said airlines refuse to grant ticket-selling authority to smaller agencies due to lower bank guarantees.

"If this circular is enforced, we will have no choice but to shut down," he said.

He further warned that such restrictions would

allow large agencies to monopolise the market.

Another contentious clause mandates that travel agencies obtain IATA accreditation and membership to operate.

Industry experts argue that IATA is merely a ticket-selling platform and making its membership mandatory is unprecedented.

Globally, travel agencies operate under two models -- those affiliated with IATA and non-IATA agencies.

Typically, larger agencies obtain IATA accreditation, as it requires a substantial bank guarantee and a waiting period of several years.

To apply for IATA membership, an agency must operate for at least six months and submit various documents, including a bank guarantee of Tk 3 million. However, even with all documents in order, this guarantee allows the agency to sell tickets for only 3-4 airlines. Moreover, agencies can only use 70 percent of their guarantee amount -- Tk 2.1 million -- for ticket purchases.

According to the Civil Aviation Ministry, 4,470 out of 5,700 registered travel agencies (about 83 percent) do not have IATA accreditation.

If the proposed regulation is implemented, these agencies will be unable to sell tickets, leading to a ticket shortage and significant passenger inconvenience.

Discussions with travel agencies reveal that all IATA-accredited agencies

are based in Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, Feni, Noakhali, and Rajshahi.

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Discussions with travel agencies reveal that all IATA-accredited agencies

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Contact-01711531948

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Public Health Engineering
Office of the Executive Engineer
Sunamganj District, Sunamganj
E-mail: ee_sunamganj@dphe.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.03.9000.000.14.061.20-306

Date: 23.03.2025

Invitation for e-Tender Notice

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2	Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering
3	Project name	Project for Safe Water Supply Throughout the Country.
4	e-Tender IDs	1088608, 1088609, 1088610, 1088611, 1088612, 1088613, 1088614, 1088615, 1088616, 1088617, 1088618, 1088619
5	Description of works	Installation of Water Point at Different Upazilla in Sunamganj district.
6	This is online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hardcopies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd	
7	Tel: 2996600757 e-mail: ee_sunamganj@dphe.gov.bd	

GD-733

পাওয়ার শ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলজি
POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212
www.powergrid.gov.bd
তারিখ: ২০/০৩/২০২৫

e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার শিতের জিএমডি, ঢাকা (দক্ষিণ) দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিয়ন্ত্রিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টেলে প্রক্ষেপিত হয়েছে।

ID	Package	Title of Works	Closing & Opening Date and Time
1086487	GMDD: 2024-2025/15	Repair and Maintenance of Barbed Wire at Hasnabad 230/132 kV Grid Substation under GMD, Dhaka-South, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC.	09 Apr 2025 at 12:30

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

মোঃ মোঃ ফিজুল রহমান
নির্বাচিত প্রক্রিয়ার অঞ্চল, জিএমডি, ঢাকা (দক্ষিণ)

পাওয়ার শিতের জিএমডি, ঢাকা (দক্ষিণ)

পাওয়ার শিতের জিএমডি, ঢাকা (দক্ষিণ)

EC fails

FROM PAGE 3

Pending NID correction applications remain unresolved, with a new target set for completion by September.

On December 19 last year, the NID director general had told journalists that 3,75,000 pending correction applications would be processed within three months.

However, during a briefing yesterday, he said although the crash programme was planned for an early January start, actual processing did not start until December 29, leading to further delays.

"As of March 16, we have completed 2,78,000 applications, but an additional 3,02,000 new applications have been submitted in the meantime," Humayun said.

He said voter registration is currently the EC's priority, with 47,54,000 new voters registered as of March 22.

Due to this, officials have been unable to focus on processing NID applications.

"The voter registration process will continue until May 5. Once the workload decreases, we will be able to prioritise NID corrections," he said.

Protect

FROM PAGE 5

mishandlement, public suffering, casualties, and corruption linked to the expressway project. They also urged a review of the contract to ensure national interests were protected.

Professor Anu Muhammad, chairing the event, criticised the government's reliance on costly, foreign loan-driven projects, advocating for sustainable, public transport focused solutions instead. Professor Adil Muhammad Khan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, highlighted that modern cities have moved away from flyovers as a solution to urban transport issues, especially those centred on private vehicles. However, Bangladesh still follows a flyover-focused approach, which encourages private car dependency.

Amirul Rajiv, the movement's coordinator, urged authorities to publicly disclose the project's technical design, feasibility reports, and environmental and social impact assessments.

If the proposed regulation is implemented, these agencies will be unable to sell tickets, leading to a ticket shortage and significant passenger inconvenience.

Stakeholders urged the ministry to consult industry representatives before finalising the draft.

When asked, Mohammad Ataur Rahman, joint secretary at the Civil Aviation Ministry, said, "The ministry will not take any measures that create difficulties for travel agencies."

Discussions with travel agencies reveal that all IATA-accredited agencies

DGHS former driver

FROM PAGE 3

highest punishment for committing such offences.

The judge ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate his Tk 1,50,31,810 earned illegally in favour of the state.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 16 prosecution witnesses.

The court framed charges against Malek on May 11, 2022.

Malek was arrested on

September 20, 2020 along with a foreign-made pistol, a magazine, five rounds of bullets, Tk 1.5 lakh in fake currency, a laptop and a mobile phone.

Later, two cases -- one for possessing arms and ammunition and the other for fake currencies -- were filed against him with Turag Police Station.

On September 20 of 2021, Malek was sentenced to 30 years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing firearms and ammunition.

He was arrested on

September 20, 2020 along with a foreign-made pistol, a magazine, five rounds of bullets, Tk 1.5 lakh in fake currency, a laptop and a mobile phone.

PIB's Director-General Faruk Wasif said during the previous government's tenure, misinformation or exaggerated information was provided on every issue, especially regarding the country's progress toward becoming a middle-income nation.

"However, the real state of the economy is now becoming clear, which will pose a problem for us, and we are heading into difficulties because of it," he said.

Prof Rashed Al Mahmud from Dhaka University echoed the need for political action to address misinformation.

Firdous Azim, chairperson of PIB; Mohammad Azaz, administrator of DNCC; Ashish Damble of Oxfam Bangladesh; Kabita Bose of Plan International; Suman Rahman of FactWatch; Fahim Ahmed, CEO of Jamuna TV; spoke, among others, while Sariful Islam moderated the event.

Mid-day meal

FROM PAGE 3

it was difficult for management to arrange cooked meals.

He said the government will make sure that the provided dry food ensures enough protein for half a day for a student as per Unicef standards.

He said UNOs and upazila education officers will be asked to monitor the programme to ensure transparency in the distribution of food items.

The planning adviser said once the programme is launched, he will visit the field level to ensure whether it is running properly.

<div

Protect
Hatrjheel,
Panthalakunja
Demand activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Tree Protection Movement yesterday demanded the immediate cancellation of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway's link road from FDC to Palash, citing severe environmental damage.

At a press conference marking 100 days of protests, held at the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, activists and professionals warned that the project had already harmed Hatrjheel reservoir and Panthalakunja park.

They argued that its continuation would create an environmental and transport crisis in areas such as Kathalgan, Katabon, Nilkhel, Dhaka University, and Buet.

The movement called for an independent commission to investigate irregularities, SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Fire breaks out in Sundarbans again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Another fire broke out in the Teisher Chila-Shaplar Beel area of the Chandpai Range under the Eastern Sundarbans Forest Division, hours after the fire near Tepar Beel area under Kolomteji Camp had been brought under control.

Kazi Mohammad Nurul Karim, divisional forest officer (DFO) of the Eastern Sundarbans Division, said through a drone survey, a team of forest officials from the Kolomteji patrol outpost detected thick plumes of smoke rising from the new location yesterday morning.

Later, forest officials and local volunteers rushed to the site and began creating a fire line from 1:00pm.

This is the second fire that originated in the forest in two days, several kilometres away from Kolomteji where a fire broke out around 9:00pm on Saturday.

Zakaria Haider, deputy assistant director (DAD) of the Bagerhat Fire Service, said after receiving information, a total of five firefighting units from Bagerhat, Sharankhola, and Moreganj

are stationed on the banks of the Bhola River near the Sundarbans.

Once all preparations are complete, water spraying will begin as soon as possible, he said.

DFO Kazi Mohammad Nurul Karim also said, "With efforts from our forest staff and support from locals, we have successfully extinguished the fire in Kolomteji."

"Now, our teams have reached the newly affected site and are working on fire line cutting. Water spraying will commence as soon as possible using pumps," he added.

Earlier, a fire that broke out in Kolomteji Camp in Dhansagar forest station of the Sundarbans East Division was brought under control yesterday morning.

More than 100 local volunteers, along with forest guards and officials, worked through the night to contain the blaze, said Dhansagar Fire Station's Officer Bipuleswar Debnath.

Fire service teams returned to the site around 8:00am yesterday, while forest officials and local volunteers continued monitoring the area for any lingering embers to prevent reignition.



This area under the Tejgaon flyover has been turned into a warehouse where people from nearby areas store a variety of items including drums and jars. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

TB prevalence high in Sylhet

Tea workers, children particularly affected

MINTUDESWARA, Moulvibazar

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a major public health concern in Sylhet, with an alarming rise in cases among children, particularly in tea plantation areas, experts have warned.

According to the National Tuberculosis Control Programme's (NTP) Sylhet divisional office, child TB cases have surged in recent years, rising from 3.98 percent in 2021 to 8.66 percent in 2024.

Experts attribute this increase to overcrowding, poor sanitation, malnutrition, drug addiction, inadequate healthcare facilities, and a lack of awareness among underprivileged communities - factors that are especially prevalent in tea garden areas.

Dr Mohammad Noore Alom Shamim, assistant director (disease control) at the Sylhet divisional office of the Directorate General of Health Services, highlighted the severe overcrowding in tea worker settlements.

Some five to eight workers often share a single room, accelerating the spread of TB, said Nipen Paul, general secretary of the Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union's central committee.

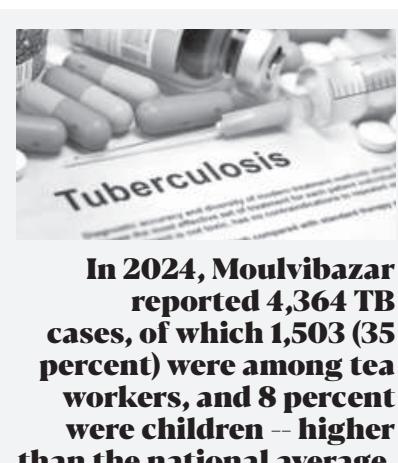
Dr Ratnajit Biswas, civil surgeon of Habiganj, said tea garden residents are particularly vulnerable to TB due to their living conditions. Special focus is being given to tea gardens under the TB control programme, with government and non-government organisations conducting door-to-door awareness campaigns.

He urged individuals to seek immediate medical attention if they experience TB symptoms such as a prolonged cough, coughing up blood, chest pain, shortness of breath, weight loss, fever, or night sweats. Poor living environments and malnutrition, resulting from economic hardships, are key contributors to TB among tea workers, he said.

Dr Md. Mamunur Rahman, civil surgeon of Moulvibazar, said TB testing and treatment services are being provided free of charge in the district, with X-ray screenings conducted five days a week.

Despite these efforts, TB remains highly prevalent, particularly among children. He noted that as TB spreads through the air, complete eradication is challenging.

Raihan Ahmed, acting project director of the HEED TB Control Programme-GFATM for Sylhet Division, identified Moulvibazar as one of the country's most vulnerable areas for TB, especially within tea gardens. Late diagnosis is a significant issue, with 65 percent of TB patients in Sreemangal, Kamalganj, and Kulaura upazilas being tea garden workers.



In 2024, Moulvibazar reported 4,364 TB cases, of which 1,503 (35 percent) were among tea workers, and 8 percent were children -- higher than the national average.

In 2024, Moulvibazar reported 4,364 TB cases, of which 1,503 (35 percent) were among tea workers, and 8 percent were children -- higher than the national average.

Shahid Anwar, Sylhet divisional consultant for the NTP, said around 8 percent of diagnosed TB patients in the division are under 14. Children's lower immunity and close contact with infected adults make them more susceptible, he added, noting the difficulties in diagnosing TB in young children.

To improve detection, authorities plan to introduce portable X-ray machines in tea gardens, reducing the need for workers to travel to health complexes for screenings.

NCP IFTAR ROW SAD's Sylhet convener gets bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Sylhet

Akhtar Hossain, convener of the Sylhet district unit of the Students Against Discrimination, got bail yesterday, hours after he was sent to jail over an alleged attack on an iftar party organised by the National Citizen Party in Sylhet.

Judge Sagir Ahmed of Sylhet Metropolitan Magistrate Court granted the bail, said his lawyer Obaidur Rahman Fahmi.

Police arrested Akhtar from Ausha in Sadar upazila, said OC Monir Hossain of Shahporan Police Station.

Monir said Mahbubur Rahman Shanto, who was injured in the incident, filed a case on Saturday, against nine individuals and several unidentified persons. Following the complaint, police conducted a raid and arrested Akhtar Hossain as the prime accused.

The iftar event was held at a convention hall in the Arambagh area in Sylhet on Saturday where NCP central leaders were present.

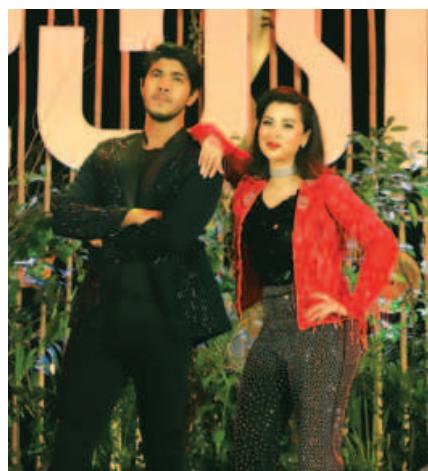
The incident unfolded when Tasmin Zara, senior joint member secretary of the party, was delivering her speech on stage. At that moment, a group of SAD activists engaged in a heated exchange with NCP members.

While recording the scuffle, journalists faced resistance from party activists.

After the iftar, SAD activists again locked into a scuffle followed by a clash with NCP members where Shanto was injured.

A fire broke out around 9:00pm on Saturday near Kolomteji Camp in the Sundarbans East Division and was brought under control yesterday morning after an overnight effort by forest officials and over 100 local volunteers. Fire service teams and forest staff remained on-site to monitor for possible reignition.

BANGLADESH RURAL ELECTRIFICATION BOARD POWER DIVISION, MINISTRY OF POWER, ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES. GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH				Date: 17-03-2025
e-Tender Notice (LTM)				
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for Procurement of following Electrical Line Construction/ Up-gradation Works. Tender submission deadlines are mentioned below:				
e-Tender ID	Description of Works	Online (e-GP System) Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Document Last Selling Date and Time	Tender Closing Date and Time
1086424	Installation of 9.76 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 5.140 KM LT to HT & 5.355 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Dhaka PBS-4 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-196-3-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1P-3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 09:00
1086423	Installation of 9.79 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 5.06 KM LT to HT & 5.402 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Dhaka PBS-4 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-196-4-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1P-3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 09:15
1086422	Installation of 8.417 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 6.921 KM LT to HT & 4.930 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Dhaka PBS-4 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD/W-195-1-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1P-3Ph	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 09:30
1086421	Installation of 7.353 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.100 KM LT to HT & 5.608 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Dhaka PBS-4 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD/W-195-2-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1P-3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 09:45
1086420	Installation of 7.613 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.006 KM LT to HT & 5.728 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/W-260-3-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1P-3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 10:00
1086419	Installation of 7.60 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.199 KM LT to HT & 6.029 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD/W-259-5-Ins-LT-HT and HT 1P-3Ph	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 10:30
1086417	Installation of 6.179 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 8.244 KM LT to HT & 5.970 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD/W-262-2-INS-LT-HT and HT 1P-3Ph	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 11:00
1086415	Installation of 7.012 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.378 KM LT to HT & 5.947 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD/W-262-1-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1P-3Ph	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 11:30
1086414	Installation of 7.826 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 5.752 KM LT to HT & 6.556 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-261-1-INS-LT-HT and HT 1P-3Ph	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 12:00
1086412	Installation of 7.735 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 6.987 KM LT to HT & 5.750 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-261-2-INS-LT-HT and HT 1P-3Ph	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 12:30
1086411	Installation of 7.526 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.159 KM LT to HT & 6.061 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD/W-260-5-Ins-LT-HT and HT 1P to 3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 13:00
1086410	Installation of 6.769 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.843 KM LT to HT & 5.646 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-260-2-INS-LT to HT and HT 1P to 3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	15-Apr-2025 15:00	16-Apr-2025 13:30
1086409	Installation of 7.697 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.168 KM LT to HT & 5.384 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-260-4-INS-LT to HT and HT 1P to 3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	16-Apr-2025 15:00	17-Apr-2025 09:00
1086408	Installation of 7.18 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.46 KM LT to HT & 6.252 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-259-4-Ins-LT to HT and HT-1P to 3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	16-Apr-2025 15:00	17-Apr-2025 09:15
1086407	Installation of 7.221 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.215 KM LT to HT & 5.739 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-260-1-Ins-LT to HT and HT 1P to 3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	16-Apr-2025 15:00	17-Apr-2025 09:30
1086406	Installation of 7.039 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.393 KM LT to HT & 6.046 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-259-3-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1P-3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	16-Apr-2025 15:00	17-Apr-2025 09:45
1086405	Installation of 6.554 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 4.659 KM LT to HT & 5.387 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD-W-262-5-Ins-LT-HT and HT 1P to 3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	16-Apr-2025 15:00	17-Apr-2025 10:00
1086404	Installation of 5.802 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 7.539 KM LT to HT & 5.413 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project. Sub-Package: MCEP/BREB/DMD/W-262-4-Ins-LT-HT and HT 1P to 3P	25-Mar-2025 15:00 (BST)	16-Apr-2025 15:00	17-Apr-2025 10:30
1086403	Installation of 5.796 KM Insulated Conductor, Conversion of 6.099 KM LT to HT & 6.204 KM HT 1ph to 3ph line along with testing commissioning etc. at Narayanganj PBS-1 under MCE(DMD) Project			



Tawsif-Bubly will perform together in 'Ityadi'

The magazine show *Ityadi* highlights various social irregularities and inconsistencies. This time, the theme of the group song revolves around the concept of seeing through one's eyes and conscience. Our culture is our roots, yet many things are now being distorted and accepted as the norm. This group song has been created to address such issues.

This episode features popular television actor Tawsif Mathbub and well-known film actress Shobnom Bubly. They will be accompanied by *Ityadi*'s regular dance troupe. The song's lyrics were penned by renowned lyricist Mohammad Rafiquzzaman, with musical arrangement by Mehedi. It is performed by vocalists Tanzina Ruma, Rajib, and Kheya. The dance is performed by *Ityadi*'s regular dance group and choreographed by its dance director Mamun.

The special *Ityadi* episode for Eid will be aired on Bangladesh Television on the night following Eid day, right after the 8pm Bengali news. *Ityadi* is written, directed, and hosted by Hanif Sanket and produced by Fagun Audio Vision.

Runa Laila to return for Eid Anondomela

Legendary singer Runa Laila will be performing on Bangladesh Television's (BTV) magazine programme *Eid Anondomela* for the second consecutive year.

Last year, Runa Laila made her debut on the show and was accompanied by four contemporary singers – Dilshad Nahar Kona, Imran Mahmudul, Zanita Ahmed Zhilik, and Sabbir Zaman.

However, this time, she will perform solo, singing the popular song *Shilpi Ami Tomader Gaan Shonabo*.

According to a source, the recording for *Anondomela* will take place today (March 24) at BTV's own auditorium.

It has been reported that this year's programme will be hosted by Masuma Rahman Nabila and Mammun Emon. *Eid Anondomela* will be aired on Eid day.



Taylor Swift breaks Instagram silence to praise Selena Gomez's new album



After a 100 day break from Instagram, Taylor Swift returned online to show support for her friend Selena Gomez's new album *I Said I Love You First*.

Swift shared her excitement on Instagram Stories, praising Gomez and fiancé Benny Blanco for their work on the project.

"I love this album so much oh my God," Swift wrote, linking to the album.

This marked Swift's first post since December when she celebrated the conclusion of her record-breaking *Eras Tour*.

I Said I Love You First features collaborations with GloRilla, J Balvin, Tainy, and others, and marks Gomez's first major release since *Rare* in 2020.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'A Place of Stories: Designing The Stall'

The exhibition *A Place of Stories: Designing The Stall* is all set to showcase reimaginations of the traditional tea stall, transforming it into a dynamic community hub and cultural icon.

The selected 30 designs for this event were shortlisted from over 400 entries submitted worldwide, with participation from more than 1,000 individuals.

Visit to explore this creative evolution of a cherished space.

Date: Monday-Thursday | March 24-27, 2025

Time: 12pm-9pm

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi



Pakistani singer Aima Baig to perform in Bangladesh for the first time

Renowned Pakistani singer Aima Baig is set to perform in Bangladesh for the first time at the *One True Sound Grand* concert, scheduled for April 12 at Sena Malancha, Dhaka.

The concert, organised by Yamaha Music Bangladesh, was officially announced on their Facebook page yesterday.

According to Al Shahriar, senior executive at the organisation, the event will feature Aima Baig alongside prominent Bangladeshi musicians.

Baig, known for her hit songs in films like *Lahore Se Aagey* and *Baaazi*, has also gained fame for her performances on Coke Studio Pakistan.

Further event details, including ticket information, will be released soon.

CBI closes investigation into Sushant Singh Rajput's death



The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has officially closed its investigation into the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, confirming no foul play was involved.

Rajput was found dead in his Mumbai apartment on June 14, 2020, sparking widespread speculation. After four years of forensic analysis and expert consultations, the CBI ruled the actor died by suicide.

The probe also cleared actress Rhea Chakraborty and her family of accusations made by Rajput's father, including embezzlement and abetment to suicide.

The investigation, which involved technical data and consultations with a medical board, found no evidence to support conspiracy claims. Rajput's family has yet to comment on the closure.

NEWS

WHO's 2025 targets remain a far cry

FROM PAGE 14

case notifications has risen over the years.

"But still, we need to intensify efforts to detect the missing cases, and to do so, the government must invest more. Unless the missing cases are detected, they will continue to spread the disease among others," he added.

The expert said the estimation process of WHO also should be reviewed to get the actual picture.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration's abrupt suspension of the USAID programme in January has dealt a blow to Bangladesh's efforts to stave off tuberculosis.

For instance, the icddr,b's Alliance for Combating Tuberculosis, aimed at improving tuberculosis case detection by strengthening the health system, has ground to a halt after USAID stopped funding the programme.

Initiated in March 2020 with a \$30 million grant, the project received a three-year extension to March 2027 with a total of \$74.9 million, shows icddr,b's annual report for 2023.

The project's focus was to increase

TB MORTALITY TREND
per 1 lakh populations

Year	Ratio
2023	26
2022	25
2021	25
2020	26
2019	24
2015	42

SOURCE: NTP

tuberculosis detection among children, drug-resistant tuberculosis patients and high-risk groups.

In 2023, ultra-portable X-ray machines with AI were introduced in remote areas under the programme with the view to enhancing tuberculosis diagnosis. A total of 47,845 individuals were screened, of which 226 were detected with tuberculosis.

The USAID funding was used for accelerating the work of the National Tuberculosis Control Programme

(NTP), so the abrupt suspension is posing a major challenge, said two of its officials.

However, Nasreen begged to differ. "It would pose a little bit of challenge for them, but the impact won't be that much," she said.

Currently, the NTP operates under the health ministry and is primarily funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

A network of 17 non-governmental organisations led by BRAC also collaborates on the programme with the Global Fund.

While the tuberculosis mortality rate has decreased, socio-economic conditions such as malnutrition, poverty, climate change and population density have seen little improvement, leaving room for the further spread of the disease, said Akramul Islam, senior director of Brac Health Programme.

Improving these socio-economic indicators remains a major challenge, he said.

"Therefore, the number of tests and the coverage of preventive measures must be expanded," he added.

and assure you that we will always be there for you," he said.

Senior army officials, distinguished civilians, and directors of various government hospitals attended the event.

After the programme, Eid gifts were distributed to injured students on behalf of the army, according to a release from Inter-Services Public Relations.

campaign is to force the group to give up remaining hostages.

Israel's security cabinet approved a plan to separate 13 Jewish settlements in the Israeli-occupied West Bank from their neighbouring communities, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said yesterday.

The settlements will ultimately be recognised as independent, he posted on X about the move, which follows the approval of tens of thousands of housing units across the West Bank.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said the main aim of the war is to destroy Hamas as a military and governing entity. He has said the aim of the new

Tarique urges parties to prioritise public issues

FROM PAGE 14

said, if people have the scope and power to determine who should run the country then political parties must focus on the hopes and expectations of the public.

He said Bangladesh gained independence through the sacrifices of millions, but the country's democracy has been hindered on different occasions, including the introduction of the one-party Baksal rule and the establishment of autocratic rule over the past 15 years.

The BNP leader said the July-August mass uprising succeeded because the people stood by the

political parties with their support.

"A mafia-like autocrat [Sheikh Hasina] could be driven out of the country, as people from all walks of life took to the streets and stood by the political parties with an expectation for change. People must have had an expectation for seeking change... I think people's desire for the political parties is to start working for them and address their issues," he observed.

"But what are our thoughts on the people, who are our main capital in politics? Shouldn't we talk about and think about their issues? Of course, we should, because it's

our politics, and the people are our greatest capital," Tarique said.

"Why did we present the 31-point proposal? The reason was simple. We saw how the fleeing autocrat destroyed every institution in the country. Whether it's the education system, healthcare, employment, judiciary, civil administration, police administration, or the power sector, they destroyed every institution," he said.

The BNP leader said the first institution the previous autocratic regime destroyed was Bangladesh's electoral system, which they made controversial and destroyed.

He acknowledged the lack of expert investigators, noting that police officials had no prior experience conducting such inquiries.

"They needed time to gain the necessary expertise."

ICT investigators submit report

FROM PAGE 2

"This was one of the most heinous crimes in history," he remarked.

In connection to the incident, two separate complaints were filed with the ICT on September 11, 2024. One case was filed over the two complaints since they were identical.

An arrest warrant was issued against former local MP Saiful Islam and several others in this case on December 24, 2024. Saiful remains absconding in the case.

However, Abdullahil Kafi, former

additional superintendent of police (crime and ops) of Dhaka district, Shahidul Islam, former additional superintendent of police, Dhaka district (Savar circle), AFM Sayed, then officer in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, Arafat Hossain, an inspector in the detective branch of police, SI Malek, and Constable Mukul were arrested in the case, reports BSS.

Tajul denied claims that their investigations were moving at a slow pace, claiming that they finished their work in a tenth of the time

typically needed to look into a crime against humanity case.

"Six months is, by no means, a sufficient time to investigate such cases. However, as part of our commitment to the nation, our investigation agency has been working tirelessly to complete the probes."

He acknowledged the lack of expert investigators, noting that police officials had no prior experience conducting such inquiries.

"They needed time to gain the necessary expertise."

Iran unveils missile systems

FROM PAGE 14

described Trump's letter as "more of a threat" but said it appeared to offer opportunities and noted that Tehran would respond "in the coming days".

In remarks broadcast on Friday, US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff said Trump was trying to head off armed conflict with Iran by building trust with Tehran.

He said the president's letter was not intended as a threat.

Iran has controlled the three Gulf islands since 1971, despite their sovereignty being disputed with the United Arab Emirates for decades.

In September, Tangsiri said Iran was "expanding" its defence capabilities on the islands.

We will always stand by you

FROM PAGE 2

assistance would continue in the future.

"Today's iftar arrangement and financial support will not be a one-time initiative. Business entrepreneurs, bankers, and other contributors have come together to make this happen. The Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), Special Security Force (SSF), and

banks have also provided financial contributions. The army has already spent significant funds on treatment, and to date, we have provided medical care to over 4,200 injured individuals," he said.

Waker reaffirmed efforts toward the rehabilitation of the injured.

"You are the nation's pride. You have sacrificed a lot for the country and the people. I congratulate you

who it said was praying along with his wife when an Israeli missile struck their tent shelter in Khan Younis.

His blood, that of his wife and martyrs, will remain fuelling the battle of liberation and independence. The criminal enemy will not break our determination and will," said the group.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said the main aim of the war is to destroy Hamas as a military and governing entity. He has said the aim of the new

campaign is to force the group to give up remaining hostages.

Israel's security cabinet approved a plan to separate 13 Jewish settlements in the Israeli-occupied West Bank from their neighbouring communities, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said yesterday.

The settlements will ultimately be recognised as independent, he posted on X about the move, which follows the approval of tens of thousands of housing units across the West Bank.

In a statement, Hamas accused

Israel of assassinating Bardawee,

emergency over the earlier spill in the northwest, which polluted several rivers and left hundreds of thousands without clean drinking water.

Authorities also denounced that spill as being an act of sabotage.

The energy ministry did not report the size of the new spill nor say whether it extended to the Coca River, where the country's main hydroelectric plant is located.

In a statement, the ministry said "a leak of oil derivatives" had happened in the eastern province of Napo. It attributed the leak to sabotage.

On Tuesday, the country's state-owned oil company declared an

onslaught there to eradicate "terrorist organizations".

In a statement, Hamas accused

Houthi accuse US of attacking airport

Israel intercepts missile launched from Yemen

AFP, Sanaa

Houthi rebel media in Yemen accused the United States Saturday of attacking the airport in Hodeida, the latest such claim since Washington announced heavy strikes against the rebels one week ago.

Al-Masirah TV, blaming "American aggression," said three attacks had targeted the airport in Hodeida on the Red Sea coast.

Meanwhile, Israel said yesterday it had intercepted a missile launched from Yemen after air raid sirens sounded in several areas across the country.

The Houthi's fresh attacks come under a pledge to expand their range of targets in retaliation for renewed Israeli strikes in Gaza that killed hundreds after weeks of relative calm.

GRAFT INVESTIGATION

Turkish court jails Istanbul mayor pending trial

REUTERS, Istanbul

A Turkish court yesterday jailed President Tayyip Erdogan's main political rival, Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, pending trial on graft charges, in a move likely to stoke the country's biggest protests against the government in more than a decade.

The decision to send Imamoglu to jail comes after the main opposition party, European leaders and tens of thousands of protesters criticised the actions against him as politicised and undemocratic.

Imamoglu has denied the charges, calling them "unimaginable accusations and slanders".

"I am standing tall, I will never bow down," Imamoglu said on X, calling on supporters not to lose hope. "We will rip away this coup, this dark stain on our democracy all together."

The government denies that investigations are politically motivated and says courts are independent. Interior Ministry said that Istanbul Imamoglu has been removed from duty after the court formally arrested him on graft charges.

As the courtroom developments unfolded early yesterday, members of Imamoglu's Republican People's Party (CHP), the main opposition against Erdogan's ruling alliance, were preparing to anoint Imamoglu as its candidate for the next presidential election.

He is the only nominee and hundreds of people had flocked to polling stations for the election to show support after the court ruling, and skirmishes with police continued through the night in major cities.

No general election is scheduled until 2028. But if Erdogan is to run again, parliament would need to back an earlier election since the president will have reached his limit by that date. Imamoglu is leading Erdogan in some opinion polls.



A protester flashes a victory sign as pro-Palestinian demonstrators participate in a rally against Israel's operations in Gaza and Lebanon, outside the Israeli embassy in Athens, Greece, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Put fresh pressure on Moscow to end war

Zelensky urges allies as Russian strikes on Kyiv kill three people; Ukraine, US teams to hold talks in KSA



AFP, Kyiv

President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday urged Ukraine's allies to put fresh pressure on Moscow to end the war, after Russian drones targeted Kyiv overnight, killing at least three people, according to local authorities.

"New decisions and new pressure on Moscow are needed to bring an end to these strikes and this war," Zelensky posted on social media on the eve of parallel talks between the two sides with US officials on a partial truce.

"According to the available information, three people died, including a five-year-old child. Another 10 people were wounded," the Kyiv city military administration said on Telegram.

Among the wounded, "the youngest victim was... only 11 months old," it said.

The drones targeted several districts of Kyiv, mainly hitting residential buildings and causing large fires, according to footage circulating on social media.

Ukraine's air force also said Russia had launched 147 drones overnight targeting several parts of the country. The military

said air defence units had destroyed 97 of the drones, with 25 failing to reach their targets.

Russian and Ukrainian delegations are to hold parallel ceasefire talks with US representatives in Saudi Arabia today.

Moscow is hoping to achieve "some progress" at the talks, a Russian negotiator told state media before the United States meets Ukrainian and Russian delegations separately in a bid to halt the three-year conflict.

US envoy Keith Kellogg described the effort as "shuttle diplomacy" between hotel rooms.

Ukraine will meet the US mediators first, with Zelensky saying he was "prepared" for yesterday's talks.

Moscow has rejected a joint US-Ukraine proposal for a full and unconditional 30-day ceasefire, countering with a suggested pause on aerial attacks on energy facilities.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said US President Donald Trump has a point that European countries must bear a greater burden for their collective self-defence, the New York Times said yesterday. "We need to think about defence and security in a more immediate way," he told the newspaper.

SOUTH LEBANON

One dead as Israel resumes drone strike

AFP, Beirut

Lebanon's health ministry said one person was killed yesterday in an Israeli drone strike, a day after the most intense escalation since a November ceasefire in the war with Hezbollah.

"The Israeli enemy raid with a drone on a car in Aita al-Shaab led to the death of one citizen," the health ministry said, after the official National News Agency (NNA) had reported the strike on the southern village.

The NNA also reported separate Israeli strikes yesterday on Naqurah, Shihin and Labbounah in the south, near the Israeli border.

The Lebanese health ministry said seven people were killed on Saturday, including in an attack on Tyre which a security source told AFP targeted a Hezbollah official.

Pakistan army kills 16 militants on Afghan border

AGENCIES

Pakistan's army has killed 16 Islamist militants along the country's western border with Afghanistan, a statement said yesterday.

It said border troops killed all the militants in an exchange of fire during the night between March 22 and 23 in North Waziristan district. "Our troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate," the army statement said.

Islamabad says that Islamist militants who attack inside Pakistan, and against the army have safe havens in Afghanistan, a charge Kabul denies, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, gunmen shot dead four ethnic Punjabi labourers and four policemen in southwestern Pakistan on Saturday, officials said.

Attacks on labourers from other parts of the country have increased in Balochistan, with militants accusing them of profiting from the region, reports AFP.

The incident took place in Mangocher town of Kalat district in Balochistan province, which borders Afghanistan and Iran.

"The militants arriving on motorcycles shot dead four Punjabi labourers who were operators of borewell drilling equipment," Ali Gul Imrani, a local administration official, told AFP.

A local police official, Muhammad Asghar, also confirmed the details to AFP.

In a separate incident, four policemen were killed in an ambush in Nushki district of the same province.

MEET WITH US SENATOR

Chinese premier calls for 'dialogue' with Washington

AFP, Beijing



China's number two leader yesterday called for "dialogue" with Washington, during a meeting in Beijing attended by prominent US business executives and a key congressional ally of President Donald Trump.

Relations between the world's two largest economies have plunged in recent weeks, as blanket tariffs imposed by Trump threaten China's trade prospects.

Premier Li Qiang's comments came during a meeting with Trump supporter Steve Daines, a Republican senator from Montana.

His visit has been viewed as a bid to ease strained relations, with an eye toward setting up a summit between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"Our two sides need to choose dialogue over confrontation, win-win cooperation over zero-sum competition," Li told Daines.

CEOs of major firms including FedEx, Pfizer and Qualcomm were also present.

Li said he hoped Washington would "work together with China to promote the steady, sound and sustainable development" of relations.

Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Chief Controller of Stores

Bangladesh Railway
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No. CCS/eGP Notice/2025

Date: 20/03/2025

e-Tender Notice

Notice No. 2025/07

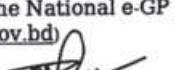
e-Tender is invited in the National eGP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chittagong for the Procurement of Goods as stated below:

SL No	Tender/Proposal ID	Tender/Proposal Package No. and Description	Procurement Nature, Type & Method	Tender/Proposal Closing Date & Time
1.	1081880	54.01.1543.331.23.008.25 Procurement of Industrial Paint Jie Wild Lilac Finishing.	Goods NCT OTM	15-Apr-2025 12:00
2.	1075881	54.01.1543.335.10.001.25 Procurement of Electrodes Rods Class 'M-8 SWG (Curtins) & Electrodes Rods Class 'B-12 SWG	Goods NCT OTM	16-Apr-2025 12:00
3.	1081984	54.01.1543.335.08.001.25 Procurement of Hose Sleeve Size: (As100-200), Main Lock Bolt With bush and lever (Twist) & Brake Beam Hanger.	Goods NCT OTM	24-Apr-2025 13:00
4.	1081780	54.01.1543.331.23.009.25 Procurement of Paint Enamel Red Post Office.	Goods NCT OTM	23-Apr-2025 13:00
5.	1081891	54.01.1543.331.23.001.25 Procurement of Industrial Paint Jie Wild Lilac Under Coat.	Goods NCT OTM	21-Apr-2025 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents for the National eGP System Portal have to be deposited online branches of any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from eGP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)



(Md. Mizanur Rahman)
Assistant Controller of Stores/P1
On the behalf of CCS/PHC

এস(২৫)(৩৬৭)

GD-746

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Principal
Bhola Govt. Technical School and College
Bhola
Website: www.tsc_bhola.gov.bd
E-mail: tsc_bhola@gmail.com

Date: 23/03/2025

e-GP Tender Notice

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

Tender ID	Package No.	Name of package description	Tender publishing date & time	Last selling date & time	Closing and opening date & time
1089119	Bhola/TSC/2024-25/Raw/GR1	Supply of Raw Materials and Spare parts	24-Mar-2025 17:00	09-Apr-2025 17:00	10-Apr-2025 11:00
1089633	Bhola/TSC/2024-25/Eng/GR2	Supply of Engineering Equipment	24-Mar-2025 17:00	09-Apr-2025 17:00	10-Apr-2025 11:05
1089636	Bhola/TSC/2024-25/Teach/GR3	Supply of Teaching Materials	24-Mar-2025 17:00	09-Apr-2025 17:00	10-Apr-2025 11:15
1089640	Bhola/TSC/2024-25/Office/GR4	Supply of Office Equipment	24-Mar-2025 17:00	09-Apr-2025 17:00	10-Apr-2025 11:20
1089644	Bhola/TSC/2024-25/Fur/GR5	Supply of Furniture	24-Mar-2025 17:00	09-Apr-2025 17:00	10-Apr-2025 11:25
1089647	Bhola/TSC/2024-25/Clean/GR6	Supply of Cleaning Materials	24-Mar-2025 17:00	09-Apr-2025 17:00	10-Apr-2025 11:30
1089649	Bhola/TSC/2024-25/Mono/GR7	Supply of Monohary Materials for office	24-Mar-2025 17:00	09-Apr-2025 17:00	10-Apr-2025 11:35

These are online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Sufiyan Rahman
Principal (In Charge)
Bhola Govt. Technical School & College
Bhola

GD- 744

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www.brdb.gov.bd

নং-৪৭, ৬২, ০০০০, ২০৫, ১১, ০০৮, ২৪, ২৯৫৪

তারিখ: ০৯ তেজু ১৪৩১

২৩ মার্চ ২০২৫

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ পল্লী উন্নয়ন বোর্ডের রাজ্য বাজেটভুক্ত শূন্য পদে অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে বিধি মোতাবেক সরাসরি জনবল নিয়োগের জন্য নিয়ন্ত্রিত পদসমূহে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে নিয়োজিত শর্তে <http://brdb.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে অনলাইনে (online) আবেদন আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। অনলাইন ব্যাতীত কোনো প্রকার আবেদন শুরু করা হবে না।

ক্র. নং	পদের নাম	প্রেত ও বেস্তন ক্ষেত্র	পদ সংখ্যা	নৃনত্ব শিক্ষাপত্র যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১	২	৩	৪	৫
০১	হিসাবরক্ষক	১১ প্রেত ১২৫০০-৩০২৩০/-	১৭৭	২টি দ্বিতীয় বিভাগসহ বিকম পাশ।
০২	সহকারী আর্টিচ	১১ প্রেত ১২৫০০-৩০২৩০/-	০১	শিল্পকলায় মাত্রক ডিপ্রি।
০৩	স্টেমোগ্রাফার-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	১০ প্রেত ১১০০০-২৬৫৯০/-	০৫	কম্পিউটার ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত ওয়ার্ড প্রসেসিং, ডাটা এন্ট্রি ও টাইপিং ইত্যাদির সর্বনিম্ন গতি ইংরেজি ও বাংলায় যথাক্রমে প্রতি মিনিটে ৩০ ও ২৫ শব্দ এবং চাকরির ১ (এক) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট পরীক্ষায় পাশ।
০৪	অফিস সহকারী/ উচ্চমান সহকারী	১০ প্রেত ১১০০০-২৬৫৯০/-	০৬	২টি দ্বিতীয় বিভাগসহ মাত্রক ডিপ্রি।
০৫	গবেষণা অনুসন্ধানকারী	১০ প্রেত ১১০০০-২৬৫৯০/-	০৩	অর্থনৈতিক পরিসংখ্যানসহ ২টি ২য় বিভাগসহ মাত্রক ডিপ্রি।
০৬	পরিসংখ্যান সহকারী	১০ প্রেত ১১০০০-২৬৫৯০/-	০২	অর্থনৈতিক পরিসংখ্যানসহ ২টি ২য় বিভাগসহ মাত্রক ডিপ্রি।
০৭	নিরীক্ষা সহকারী	১০ প্রেত ১১০০০-২৬৫৯০/-	০৭	২টি দ্বিতীয় বিভাগসহ বিকম পাশ।
০৮	হিসাব সহকারী	১০ প্রেত ১১০০০-২৬৫৯০/-	৩৬	২টি দ্বিতীয় বিভাগসহ বিকম পাশ।
০৯	ক্যাশিয়ার	১০ প্রেত ১১০০০-২৬৫৯০/-	০২	২টি দ্বিতীয় বিভাগসহ বিকম পাশ।
১০	স্টেমোটাইপিষ্ট-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	১৪ প্রেত ১০২০০-২৪৮৬০/-	০৭	কম্পিউটার ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত ওয়ার্ড প্রসেসিং, ডাটা এন্ট্রি ও টাইপিং ইত্যাদির সর্বনিম্ন গতি ইংরেজি ও বাংলায় যথাক্রমে প্রতি মিনিটে ৩০ ও ২৫ শব্দসহ উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সহমান পরীক্ষায় পাশ।
১১	প্রশিক্ষক	১৫ প্রেত ৯৭০০-২৩৪৯০/-	০১	উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সহমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ এবং সংক্ষিপ্ত ট্রেড কোর্সে ০২ বছরের ডিপ্লোমা সার্টিফিকেট।
১২	ডাফটসম্যান	১৫ প্রেত ৯৭০০-২৩৪৯০/-	০১	ডাফটসম্যানশীপ এ সার্টিফিকেটসহ উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট পাশ।
১৩	অফিসেট প্রিন্টিং অপারেটর	১৫ প্রেত ৯৭০০-২৩৪৯০/-	০১	অপসেট লিপো ইলেক্ট্রিক স্টেনসিল কাটা ও ড্রিপ্টিং মেশিন চালনায় ০২ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট পাশ।
১৪	অফিস সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	১৬ প্রেত ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/-	৩০	এসএসসি পাশ। কম্পিউটার ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত ওয়ার্ড প্রসেসিং, ডাটা এন্ট্রি ও টাইপিং ইত্যাদির সর্বনিম্ন গতি ইংরেজি ও বাংলায় প্রতি মিনিটে ৩০ ও ২৫ শব্দ।
১৫	ডাটা এন্ট্রি অপারেটর	১৬ প্রেত ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/-	০৩	(ক) কোনো স্থীরূপ বোর্ড হতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সহমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষে প্রতি মিনিটে বাংলায় ২০ শব্দ এবং ইংরেজিতে ২০ শব্দের গতিসূচি সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে Standard Aptitude Test উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে।
১৬	পুরুষভার্ডার	১৬ প্রেত ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/-	০১	পুরুষভার্ডিং এ ০২ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ এসএসসি পাশ।
১৭	স্টের কিপার	১৬ প্রেত ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/-	০১	স্টের কিপার হিসেবে ০২ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ এসএসসি পাশ।
১৮	অফিস সহায়ক	২০ প্রেত ৮২৫০-২০১০/-	৫০	অটম শ্রেণি পাশ।

শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলি:

০১। অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ এবং পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান পদ্ধতি:

ক. আবেদন <http://brdb.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি দাখিল করতে হবে। আবেদনের সময়সীমা নিয়মোৰূপঃ
i) Online-এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও ফি জমাদান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়: ২৫.০৩.২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ, সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা।
ii) Online-এ আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ০৪.০৪.২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ, বিকাল ০৫:০০ ঘটিকা।
iii) আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ অর্থাৎ ০৪.০৪.২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ, বিকাল ০৫:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে কেবল User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ উচ্চ সময়ের পরবর্তী ৭২ (বাহ্যিক) ফটোর মধ্যে SMS এর মাধ্যমে বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বর্ণিত নির্ধারিত পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে পারবেন। নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ের পর কোনো আবেদনপত্র গৃহীত হবে।

iv) শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে পর্যাপ্ত সময় নিয়ে আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে প্রার্থীগণকে পরামর্শ প্রদান করা হচ্ছে।

খ. Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী তার রেজিস্ট্রেশন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০x প্রশ্ন ৩০০ Pixel) ও স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০x প্রশ্ন ৮০ Pixel) স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করতে। ছবির সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ ১০০ KB ও স্বাক্ষরের সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ ৬ KB হতে হবে।

গ. Online আবেদনপত্রে পৃষ্ঠাগুরুত্ব তথ্য যে হেচেন্ট প্রবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে, সেহেতু Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit করার পৃষ্ঠাগুরুত্ব তথ্যের স্থিতিক তাপ্তি নির্ধারণ করা হবে।

ঘ. প্রার্থী Online-এ পৃষ্ঠাগুরুত্ব আবেদনপত্রের একটি রেজিস্ট্রেশন প্রিন্ট কপি পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোনো প্রয়োজনে সহায়ক হিসেবে সংরক্ষণ করবেন এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় এক কপি জমা দিবেন।

ঙ. SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলি ও পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদান:

i) Online-এ আবেদনপত্র (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নির্দেশনা মোতাবেক ছবি এবং Signature Upload করে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। আবেদনপত্র প্রেরণ প্রার্থী একটি User ID, ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত একটি Applicant's Copy পাবেন। যদি Applicant's Copy-তে কোনো তথ্য ভুল থাবে বা অস্পষ্ট ছবি (সম্পূর্ণ কালো/সম্পূর্ণ সাদা/দোলা) বা ছবি/স্বাক্ষর সঠিক না থাকে তাহলে পুনরাবৃত্ত আবেদন করতে পারবেন। তবে আবেদন ফি জমাদানের পরে আর কোনো পরিবর্তন/পরিমার্জিত/পরিবর্তন গ্রহণযোগ্য নয় বিধায় আবেদন ফি জমাদানের পূর্বে প্রার্থী অবশ্যই উচ্চ Applicant's Copy-তে তার সম্পত্তিক তোলা রাখিন হবি, নিম্নল তথ্য ও স্বাক্ষর সংযুক্ত থাকা ও এর সঠিকতার বিষয়টি PDF ডাউনলোডপূর্বক নিশ্চিত হয়ে রেজিস্ট্রেশন প্রিন্ট করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন।

ii) Applicant's Copy-তে একটি User ID থাকবে এবং User ID ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নির্দেশনা মোতাবেক বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে যে কোনো Teletalk pre-paid mobile সময়ের মাধ্যমে দুটি SMS করে নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির ০১ ও ০২ নং ক্রমে কর্তৃত পদ্ধতি পদের জন্য পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ১৫০ টাকা এবং অনলাইন ফি বা Teletalk এর সার্টিস চার্জ বাবদ ১৮ টাকাসহ অফেরতযোগ্য সর্বমোট ১৬৮ (একশত আঠাব্দি) টাকা, ০৩ থেকে ১৭ নং ২৫ ক্রমে কর্তৃত পদের জন্য পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ১০০ টাকা এবং অনলাইন ফি বা Teletalk এর সার্টিস চার্জ বাবদ ১২ টাকাসহ অফেরতযোগ্য সর্বমোট ১২৮ (একশত আঠাব্দি) টাকা, ০৩ থেকে ১৭ নং ২৫ ক্রমে কর্তৃত পদের জন্য পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ১০০ টাকা এবং অনলাইন ফি বা Teletalk এর সার্টিস চার্জ বাবদ ১২ টাকাসহ অফেরতযোগ্য সর্বমোট ১২৮ (একশত আঠাব্দি) টাকা, ০৩ থেকে ১৭ নং ২৫ ক্রমে কর্তৃত পদের জন্য পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ১০০ টাকা এবং অনলাইন ফি বা Teletalk এর সার্টিস চার্জ ব

An unfortunate turn of events

Questions over Awami League's future must not lead to fresh chaos

Ever since the July uprising, the nation has been rocked by wave after wave of protests, both online and offline, over various issues and developments. While this is but a natural consequence of the heightened exposure to, and awareness of, long-festering injustices and divisions, the recent flare-up over the question of Awami League's rehabilitation following alleged exchanges between some leaders of the National Citizen Party (NCP) and the army chief has the potential to plunge the country into fresh chaos, if not properly addressed. The explosiveness of the situation owes as much to the alleged content of said exchanges, and the manner in which they were revealed, as to the sway involved parties hold over the post-uprising society.

On the assumption that these developments are known to all, we are not delving into details. To sum up, in a Facebook post on Friday, NCP leader Hasnat Abdullah claimed that he had been presented with an "Indian plan" at the cantonment to rehabilitate Awami League. It involves a "refined" version of the party, led by leaders without questionable reputations, which would publicly renounce Sheikh Hasina's legacy and pledge to restore the ideals of "Bangabandhu's Awami League." In exchange, Hasnat wrote, politicians who endorse this new faction would receive parliamentary seats and other concessions. The justification for the move, he added, was that "it is better to have several opposition parties, including a weak Awami League, than just one party in opposition."

After the post went viral, it caused heated debate and also demonstrations. Later, the veracity of Hasnat's version of the event was contested by his NCP colleague Sarjis Alam, who accompanied him during the meeting with army chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman, while another, Nasiruddin Patwary, called the post "inappropriate". Meanwhile, the army called it "laughable" and "immature" in comments shared with the Netra News. However, what's clear from these statements is that said meeting did take place, whether pre-planned or not, and Awami League's rehabilitation was indeed discussed, even if its intent and other relevant details remain disputed. This development brings to the fore the critical importance of transparency in any process involving the future of Awami League to prevent confusion, foul play, or politicisation. It also shows, once again, the significance of Sheikh Hasina and other leaders facing accountability for the atrocities they committed before a new chapter can be opened.

The potential for chaos is real if this issue is mishandled. The people are still grappling with the consequences of the ousted regime that left deep scars in society. The last thing we need now is further instability. We agree with the NCP that political decisions should be left to the political entities. But the need for broader consensus in such matters cannot be ruled out either. At the same time, we must be careful that the army is not pulled into any controversies that do not concern it. The chief adviser has already said that the interim government had no plan to ban the AL—that doesn't mean AL's future is decided. As the trial process for its crimes continues, politicians may, and should, continue to engage in discussions about it but this must not lead to further turmoil. All stakeholders of the July uprising must act with greater caution and restraint.

Eid journeys should be safe and easy

Take steps to increase highway safety, minimise gridlocks

With the Eid holidays around the corner, more than one crore people are reportedly preparing to travel back home to spend time with their families. Like every other year, this journey is not expected to be smooth this time either, given our inadequate transport system, dilapidated road conditions, and rising instances of highway robberies of late.

According to a 2022 survey, 1.18 crore people leave Dhaka during the last four days before Eid using road, river, and rail transport. Due to the inadequacy of trains and launches, most people travel by road in buses, private cars, trucks, motorcycles, and even autorickshaws. This year, despite the government holiday extending over nine days, the strain of road journeys is unlikely to lessen much, according to a *Prothom Alo* report. One reason behind this forewarning is the condition of highways, particularly the ongoing expansion work on two major routes—Dhaka-Sylhet and Tangail-Rangpur—used for travel to at least 30 districts.

The four-lane expansion work currently taking place between Narayanganj and Narsingdi on the Dhaka-Sylhet route has already become a nuisance for commuters due to dust, large potholes on roads, and a total disregard for traffic rules. Travel time on this route is already twice the normal, and one can only imagine what the gridlock would look like in the days before Eid. Illegal autorickshaw stands and hawkers occupying both sides of major intersections on highways are another set of problems that should be addressed for uninterrupted traffic flow.

Another major concern is the increase in highway robberies. Compared to last year's figures, highway robberies during the January-February period have more than doubled. In response, the government has promised to install CCTV cameras in all bus, rail, and launch terminals and increase police presence on highways. We sincerely hope such moves will curb the threat of robberies as well as help control road rage and traffic violations. However, strict monitoring of vehicle overcapacity and road rules must be enforced, with increased supervision by patrol teams. This should include checking the number of trips by transport drivers and restricting the entry of slow-moving vehicles like *Nasim* on highways. Such pre-emptive actions can also prevent the loss of lives. Also, temporarily halting road work several days before and after Eid may help ease gridlocks.

EDITORIAL

The more BNP talks about reforms, the less interested it seems in them



OF MAGIC & MADNESS

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BADIUZZAMAN BAY

Going solely by its public statements, an interesting aspect of BNP's activities since the July uprising has been its search for—and interaction with—new adversaries, in the absence of the one it fought against for so long. As new forces emerge on the scene, BNP, driven partly by post-uprising realities and partly by an abiding sense of victimhood, has increasingly found itself at odds with former allies, new parties, student leaders, the chief adviser and his cabinet colleagues, and even media voices critical of its unruly activists. And it has sought to use these moments to come out stronger. What's interesting about it is how unchanged BNP's manner of engagement has remained despite the political changeover in August, often adopting an adversarial tone that feels too eager at times.

In his seminal work on the politics of enemies, Canadian historian Michael Ignatieff explains that when politicians target their adversaries using inflammatory rhetoric, it is not necessarily true that they are merely representing their constituents' feelings or responding to injustices and societal divisions. "The truth may be darker: it may be a language game not to represent grievance, but to create it, and to polarise for the sake of political advantage." However, as the largest party at present—and one many expect to win the next national election—BNP's adversarial politics hurts more because it was expected to lead a new culture of politics, with a new political language that seeks mediation rather than confrontation.

Be that as it may, where it gets particularly disturbing is when BNP brings its combative approach to the state reform drive, which the nation hopes will be the catalyst for transformational change in the country. BNP's stance on reforms has long been one of confusion and mixed messages. On March 16, however, it seemed to take it a step too far. Speaking at an iftar programme at Dhaka Medical College, senior BNP leader Mirza Abbas said, rather ominously, "We will not easily accept any reforms dictated by their [interim government's] hands or pens. If they carry out reforms, we will make corrections. BNP, in collaboration with



other political parties, will determine those corrections and present them to the nation. We will not accept the so-called reforms led by the so-called intellectuals who are not even citizens of this country."

This statement is striking for two reasons. First, it outright dismisses the proposals from various reform commissions which, by the way, are with the political parties for review. Second, it openly questions the legitimacy of those who prepared the proposals and are in talks with stakeholders, including the BNP, to achieve consensus on the nature and extent of reforms. But if this is how BNP wants to navigate this crucial phase—by pre-emptively rejecting expert proposals, disparaging those involved, or accusing the "unelected" government of trying to favour certain parties—what was the point of all the efforts over the last seven months? The non-citizen jibe, likely aimed at the National Consensus Commission Vice Chairman Ali Riaz, who also heads the Constitution Reform Commission, was particularly insensitive. Despite BNP being very much on the inside and having the ability to impact outcome through

documented. The party has itself complained that its commitment to reforms is being unfairly questioned, but stopped short of considering whether it is somehow contributing to this perception. Instead, it appears more interested in its own 31-point charter, which largely consists of broad visions. All this suggests BNP's growing alienation from the aspirations for structural change through the ongoing reform drive. While acting chairman Tarique Rahman's statement on Wednesday—warning that extremists and fascists could again "bury democracy" and expressing BNP's commitment to maintaining the country's secular character—is laudable, it's the grunt work of reform-making where its commitment, and support, are most needed. Right now, its critical stance isn't helping. Ali Riaz appeared to hint as much on Thursday when he stated that both internal and external forces are trying to "obstruct the reform process."

BNP must recognise that, besides electoral changes, there are other reforms that deserve equal priority. Our painful history of political violence and corruption demands

that some key changes be made—at least in the judiciary and police force—to ensure Bangladesh doesn't return to the pre-July status quo after elections. The idea that this may not happen is both naïve and dangerous. To expect a political government to honour its commitment to reforms is like expecting it to honour its election manifesto, and we all know how

faithful past ruling parties were to their manifestos. There must be at least some binding mechanisms or safeguards in place to ensure that the reform drive does not derail after elections. One way, as suggested by a columnist in this daily, would be for political parties to "thrash out a common minimum reform programme (CMRP)—a set of core reforms based on the maximum principle, where the maximum number of parties agree on a minimum set of urgent measures." This is precisely what the National Consensus Commission can help achieve, if given proper support.

If the BNP really wants to be seen as a pro-reform force, it should engage in these discussions with greater sincerity, sending an undiluted message of solidarity with whatever outcome this process yields. At the same time, it should balance its political aspirations with the broader national interest. That goes for all other parties as well. Any attempt to politicise the reform drive—whether by questioning and obstructing the process or by selectively endorsing reforms that suit their interests—will serve neither the parties nor the country in the long run.

Let women thrive both online and offline



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PROMITI PROVA CHOWDHURY

The world celebrated this year's International Women's Day (IWD) with the theme "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment." While the global message envisions a future where women and girls lead as changemakers, our nation's reality remains far from this vision. The promise of equality is overshadowed by the harsh realities on the ground. Our governance and law and order systems are in a state of constant disruption, increasingly influenced by violent groups who see women as easy targets—both online and offline.

The recent spate of crimes against women has been more than troubling. Digital space has become a breeding ground for gendered violence which is not contained within the digital sphere. It is affecting women and adolescent girls in offline spaces. It seeps into their daily lives, affecting their psychological and physical well-being and resulting in paranoia, shame, isolation, and even death. Take the tragic example of a 17-year-old girl who died by suicide after her ex-husband circulated private photos of her online. When the images spread, she faced immense social pressure and shame, ultimately leading to her death.

Even accomplished and well-known women are not spared. National-level footballer Matsushima Sumaya received rape and death threats after speaking out against the team coach.

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan and well-known actress Mehazabien Chowdhury were targeted with AI-generated images.

Similarly, a video was falsely linked to Nusrat Tabassum, a Dhaka University student and a central executive committee member of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement. The daughter of Shafiqul Alam, chief adviser's press secretary, also became a victim of deepfake images.

Hate speech targeting women and marginalised communities in Bangladesh is now a pervasive issue. Social media spaces often serve as breeding grounds for misogynistic content. For instance, there are Facebook groups which actively spread misogynistic messages aimed at undermining feminist movements and silencing women's voices.

Women professionals also face relentless character assassinations. Many incidents illustrate how irresponsible reporting fuels misogyny and shifts focus away from professional allegations to personal slander, amplifying gender stereotypes.

Poromoni, a popular Bangladeshi actress, often faces online harassment rooted in deep-seated sexism. The abusive comments reflect a broader cultural problem where women in the public eye are judged harshly for their

personal lives and professional choices. This pattern of online abuse highlights the widespread misogyny female public figures encounter, exposing the challenges they face in maintaining their presence and voice in a hostile digital environment.

Such behaviour underscores the urgent need for enhanced media literacy, accountability, and measures to curb online harassment, especially

Digital space has become a breeding ground for gendered violence which is not contained within the digital sphere. It is affecting women and adolescent girls in offline spaces. It seeps into their daily lives, affecting their psychological and physical well-being and resulting in paranoia, shame, isolation, and even death.

in Bangladesh's social media landscape.

Addressing this crisis requires immediate and comprehensive action. The government must enforce clear and robust regulations to combat cyber harassment and digital violence. Legal provisions should address online sexual exploitation, image-based abuse, and misinformation, ensuring swift judicial processes and strict penalties for offenders.

Protecting victims must be a priority, with legal assistance, counselling, and financial support readily available.

Law enforcement agencies also need targeted training on digital rights, cybercrime, and gender sensitivity. Specialised cybercrime units focused on technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TGBV) should be established to handle these cases with the urgency and expertise they require. Teachers should be trained to educate students about digital ethics and responsible online behaviour, equipping them to navigate the digital world safely and respectfully.

Moreover, fostering a culture of respect and empathy must begin in childhood. Schools should incorporate lessons on digital manners and ethics alongside traditional moral education. Children must learn that online behaviour carries real-world consequences and that respect for others extends beyond face-to-face interactions. Parents and educators should work together to instil values of kindness, accountability, and digital responsibility.

Addressing TGBV is not just about protecting women—it's about upholding human rights and fostering just, inclusive societies. This fight aligns directly with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 16.10 (Ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms). By creating safe digital spaces where women and marginalised communities can express themselves freely and participate fully in society, we move closer to a more equitable and peaceful world.

Let us remember that the journey towards equality requires collective effort. We must challenge patriarchal norms, demand responsible media practices, and push for stronger legal protections. Only then can we ensure a future where every woman and girl can thrive, both online and offline.

Netanyahu's war and the human cost



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SARZAH YEASMIN

It is clear as daylight that Benjamin Netanyahu never wanted the war in Gaza to stop. This is the highlight of his career as a politician, a star on his resume. The ceasefire was never a real one, and his government had no intention of keeping it. A continued genocide, the killing of women and children—unfortunately, we are witnessing a classic case of striking a Faustian bargain in real time. The Netanyahu government spent approximately \$31 billion on the war in Gaza (and Lebanon) in 2024. Additionally, the country has received substantial military aid and grants from its biggest ally, the United States. Despite the massive support received, Israel's budget deficit and defence expenditure are on the rise. Is this a war against Hamas, or is this a well-funded war against humanity, with the most vulnerable—children and women—overwhelmingly represented in the number of deaths?

We have heard about the vision of beachfront villas and real estate in Gaza, turning the rubble into a "paradise" for whoever can afford to go on a holiday on the strip. Perhaps ethnic cleansing is more economic than forced relocation and displacement of people. This barbaric modern-day, high-tech genocide has capitalistic goals. Policymakers and deal-breakers are already counting their return on investment. There are talks about moving Palestinians to Sudan and other countries, but this has not materialised. That begs

the question: should Israel be moved elsewhere, perhaps to a country with more land mass? Since its "modern democracy" is such an anomaly in the Middle East, perhaps a safer continent would reduce the need for so much defence expenditure and chaos.

Now let's look at the legal basis for breaking a ceasefire. A ceasefire can be broken if one party is acting in self-defence. Under international law, specifically under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, a state has the right to defend itself against armed attacks. A party may decide to unilaterally break a ceasefire if they feel that the other side is not adhering to its commitments, such as stopping hostilities, allowing humanitarian aid or returning prisoners. This decision may lead to the breakdown of the ceasefire agreement, depending on the circumstances. In some cases, a party may break a ceasefire due to the need to address urgent humanitarian concerns or violations of human rights. For instance, if one side is blocking essential humanitarian aid or committing atrocities, the other side may decide to act in response, breaking the ceasefire in the process.

The problem with such broad strokes within international law is that the country breaking the ceasefire can act based on "feelings" and hunches—much like a false alarm that is allowed to echo through the halls of diplomacy unchecked. Why did Israel cry wolf this time, raising

the spectre of a threat so vast that it justified the resumption of violence? Was it truly a threat, or was it merely the latest note in a symphony of pretext, a calculated narrative spun to justify what was already in motion? We may never know, not until the real intelligence is laid bare, if it ever is. This ongoing barbarism has shown us that international law and UN bodies

world. B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organisation, reported that at the end of December 2024, the Israel Prison Service was holding 9,619 Palestinians on "security" grounds. Following the Hamas-led attack on October 7, 2023, approximately 251 individuals, including Israelis, were taken hostage to Gaza. As of

approximately 59 hostages still held in Gaza, according to Israeli sources. Hamas's refusal to release hostages was cited by Israeli officials as a contributing factor to the collapse of the two-month truce. Netanyahu declared that Israel had "resumed combat in full force" against Hamas, with the March 18 strikes described as "just the beginning." How many

be postponed; interestingly, it was scheduled for the same day as the attack. The question is: who is trying to hide under the rubble of the war to escape the hearing? The Israeli prime minister is undergoing a corruption trial involving charges of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust. His scheduled testimony was cancelled due to the Israeli military's "surprise" attack on Gaza, which ended the ceasefire. Strategic and well-thought-out decisions and their implementations are not surprises. If this is just the beginning, as Netanyahu declares, then it will only get worse from what has happened so far.

There are no human rights violations that have not happened in this genocide, and nothing comes as a surprise. What is surprising is that no international pressure has been enough to put a stop to this mayhem. In fact, human rights violations from this genocide have spilled over the borders of Gaza to the neighbouring countries and across oceans and continents, where fear has been steered in marginalised communities for speaking out for human rights. A shadow keeps looming over people just for exercising their basic human right of speech.

What can global citizens do? We can continue to advocate, provide essential aid, and support Palestinians in writing their own history, in building their own capacity—whether it's through education, arts or innovation. We keep sharing across borders. Let's also not forget the routine human rights violations that occur in Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem, and Nablus. If the US is wise enough, it will also recognise that the return on the investment in death machines won't be much, and that losing its foreign policy acumen to a foreign power won't bode well in the long run.



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a residential building in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on March 18, 2025.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

are mere tools of aspiration; there is much less accountability if it's the very powerful against the powerless because the arbiters operate within the colonial framework. International law's role, unfortunately, is only limited to diplomacy. It can only penalise countries in the subaltern

late February 2025, as many as 147 hostages have been returned alive to Israel, with 105 released in a prisoner exchange in 2023, four unilaterally by Hamas, eight rescued by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and 30 in a 2025 exchange. Bodies of 44 hostages have also been repatriated. This leaves

Hamas members were actually killed out of the many women and children brutally maimed, already worn out from war, loss and hunger?

Let's take a sneak peek inside Israel. There are protests outside of Netanyahu's house. The court hearing on his corruption had to

Potato farmers' plight needs long-term solutions



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GAWHER NAYEEM WAHRA

While living in the cities, attending rallies and back-to-back meetings on "sangskar" (reform), it is hard to feel the heat of the ongoing crisis potato farmers are facing. Moreover, we, the self-declared "opinion builders," can't see any immediate change in potato prices, as they remain very low at present.

Potatoes are Bangladesh's second-biggest crop after rice. They are regarded as a safe crop in our low-lying South Asian country as it is planted in October and harvested by the end of February when the land is still dry.

It also contributes to our food security basket. Experts see potatoes as a potential antidote to hunger caused by higher food prices, global population growth rate, climbing costs of fertiliser, and reduced cropland. United Nations termed potatoes a "hidden treasure" and proclaimed 2008 the "International Year of the Potato." Asian countries are seeing potatoes as a possible salvation as they scramble to feed their people at reasonable prices in the near future.

The per person annual consumption of potatoes has increased in Bangladesh also, although it is still consumed as a side dish or just a vegetable. According to agriculture officials, the consumption of potatoes has risen from an average of seven kilos per capita in 1991 to 24 kilos in 2007 and 53 kilos in 2022.

In April 2008, the then army chief General Moeen U Ahmed, started preaching—"think potato, grow potato and eat potato." With his patronage and enthusiasm Dhaka experienced a grand three days' potato festival.

Bangladesh experienced crop failure that year and rice prices went up every day if not every hour. A significant number of people had to skip one or two meals a day because they could



Potato farmers can build their storages if they get loans on easy terms.

PHOTO: COURTESY

not afford to buy rice which forms the bulk of their diet.

So, he and his civilian entourage started a potato campaign. The aim of the campaign was to convince millions of Bangladeshis to embrace potatoes as a staple food instead of high-priced rice and wheat. Fortunately, that year we had an unusually good crop of potatoes, which needed to be eaten quickly before they rot.

This year Bangladesh is facing almost the same scenario. Rice prices are going "up above the world so high" and the crop is gradually becoming the "diamond in the sky." In recent weeks, the price of the most popular rice (Miniket) has increased by about Tk 5 per kg. In Kushtia, the price

embargos. According to the Agricultural Marketing Act, 2018, the rent of cold storage must be increased or determined through a government gazette in consultation with the director general of the Department of Agricultural Marketing. However, the BCSA announced an increase in potato storage fees in a press conference on February 8 without any gazette. The storage fee was set at Tk 8 per kg, up from Tk 5. Farmers also have been asked to keep the sacks at a maximum of 50 kg. Earlier, farmers used to keep 70 kg sacks in cold storage for Tk 350.

The cold storage owners are also giving priority to businessmen

over farmers when it comes to storing. Farmers are harassed when it comes to obtaining so-called booking slips which are permits to store potatoes. Most farmers are worried about how much produce can ultimately be saved from rotting by storing potatoes in cold storage. Farmers are now selling their potatoes right from the field at a low price due to a lack of storage opportunities. While farmers spent Tk 22 to 25 on producing one kg of potatoes, now they have to sell the crop for just Tk 14 per kg or less directly from the fields. If the government does not anticipate the *ashoni songket* (bad news) i.e. the imminent danger to the food security situation and the farmers' losses in one crop after another, the nation will head nowhere. Should thousands of farmers face losses due to the syndicate of cold storage owners?

In several countries of Southeast Asia and different states of India, special types of houses are built in farmers' homes to store potatoes for long periods. With the active interest of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the Department of Agricultural Marketing built several such houses in the potato-producing areas in the 2023-24 fiscal year. According to the department, it is a scientific mini-cold storage. Storing 25 to 30 metric tonnes of potatoes in such houses will save the farmers about Tk 1.5 lakh per year. I have visited and talked with some users and found that these houses serve as dependable alternatives.

If you build such a storehouse, you can use it for up to 15 years. Each house costs Tk 1.5 lakh to build. Potatoes can be stored in these houses for four to six months. If the government doesn't have money, FAO can invest more in this successful project. The farmers said that if they get loans on easy terms, they will build their own houses. Can microfinance organisations not come forward?

The Indian state of West Bengal also faces a similar crisis but they have taken several initiatives to protect the farmers. We need to examine those initiatives for the sake of our food security.

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	33	Costume	7	"Paradise Lost"
1	Barbershop needs	34	Jacket flap	figure
7	Tater	35	Seize	8 Mundane
11	Brewing need	36	Harry Potter, for	9 Open, as a gate
12	Florence's river	one	one	10 First lady of 1812
13	Blood line	37	Pot starter	16 Wanderer
14	Bridge fee	38	Come into view	18 Dismay
15	Peace goddess	39	Old World deer	20 Rig
16	Said with a twang	40	Fragrance	22 Italian port
17	Be bold	counter	bottle	23 Stir up
18	Give	19	Paper pack	24 Yellow gems
19	Paper pack	21	Quite cold	25 Handout seeker
21	Quite cold	22	Yeti's cousin	28 Dice, e.g.
22	26	25	Chips buy	30 Set off
24	18	26	Take apart	31 Brink
25	19	27	Draw out	32 Church leader
27	20	28	29	34 Green hue
33	17	30	31	36 Soaked
35	22	31	32	
37	23	33	34	
39	24	35	36	
	25	37	38	
	26	39	40	

5-20

SATURDAY'S ANSWERS

A	P	A	R	T	W	E	L	D	S
S	O	N	A	R	O	V	E	R	T
S	I	G	M	A	M	E	T	O	O
E	R	E		P	T	A	I	N	K
S	O	L		P	U	N	T	E	E
S	T	A	T	E	N	G	I	R	D
B	A	R	I	S	T	A			
A	R	A	B	S	H	O	W	M	E
P	O	S		P	I	E	R	A	N
L	O	S		H	A	L	I	N	C
O	M	E	G	A	V	I	G	G	O
M	I	T	E	S	E	T	H	E	R
B	E	T	T	E	D	E	T	R	E

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THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION

How Bangladesh gained GLOBAL LEGITIMACY

The fact that Bangladesh gained international recognition at all is remarkable. In modern times, it is rare for a secessionist state to achieve international legitimacy without the assent of the home state. In fact, it has happened only twice in the past three hundred years.

RACHEL STEVENS

When Bangladesh defeated Pakistan on 16 December 1971, one could be forgiven for assuming that the international community automatically recognised Bangladesh's independence. However, my current research into how Western states responded reveals that this assumption could not be further from the truth.

A brief history of recognition practices

The fact that Bangladesh gained international recognition at all is remarkable. In modern times, it is rare for a secessionist state to achieve international legitimacy without the assent of the home state. In fact, it has happened only twice in the past three hundred years: Belgium, which began its secessionist movement in 1830, waited nine years for recognition, and Ireland, which began its independence war from the UK in 1919 but was not recognised as a republic until 1949. Generally, unilateral acts of secession without support from the home state



Figure 4. After presenting his credentials to Australian Governor-General Sir Paul Hasluck, High Commissioner Ali enjoys a formal reception at Government House, Canberra. Source: NAA. A6180, 12/5/72/93.



Figure 3. Hossain Ali, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Australia, inspects a guard of honour, Canberra, 18 April 1972. Source: NAA. A6180, 12/5/72/88.

6 Dec. 1971	India, Bhutan
10 Jan. 1972	East Germany
11 Jan. 1972	Poland, Bulgaria, Mongolia
13 Jan. 1972	Myanmar
16 Jan. 1972	Nepal
20 Jan. 1972	Barbados
22 Jan. 1972	Yugoslavia
25 Jan. 1972	USSR
26 Jan. 1972	Czechoslovakia, Hungary
31 Jan. 1972	Australia, New Zealand, Fiji
1 Feb. 1972	Senegal
4 Feb. 1972	UK, West Germany, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Austria
7 Feb. 1972	Israel
10 Feb. 1972	Japan
11 Feb. 1972	Luxembourg, Belgium, Netherlands, Ireland
12 Feb. 1972	Italy
14 Feb. 1972	France, Canada
16 Feb. 1972	Singapore
4 Apr. 1972	United States

Figure 1. Timeline of recognition.

SOURCE: CREATED BY THE AUTHOR.

Arguably, Australian diplomats had been preparing for an independent Bangladesh throughout 1971, even if they never publicly declared it. With few exceptions, the Australian government sided with Bangladesh's aspirations for statehood.

result in international silence if not explicit condemnation.

Why is it so difficult for secessionist movements to gain international recognition?

The main reason is states fear setting a precedent for other disgruntled minority groups within their midst to declare independence. Globally, states are comprised of multi-ethnic populations, some of which have made claims for secession. From Quebec in Canada to Transnistria in Moldova, such calls for independence undermine state authority. It is therefore in the interests of governments to dissuade independence movements as they pose an existential threat.

There are other, more practical, reasons to deny statehood to secessionist groups. Economic factors loom large. As was the case with East Timor, home states can use the presence of natural resources as a bargaining chip to secure international support. The international community oftentimes expresses concern that supporting one secessionist group could trigger regional conflicts and undo accepted international borders, as is the case with Kurdistan.

Legally, the issue of international recognition of breakaway states is unclear. The United Nations (UN) is often lauded for spearheading decolonisation. This is true. But what is also true is that the UN applies a "decolonisation only once" principle.

On the surface, this timeline suggests that the western world was slow to recognise Bangladesh. However, Australian archival evidence indicates a more complicated story.

It is true that the United States, under the leadership of Richard Nixon, delayed recognition of Bangladesh until April, if only to punish India for a perceived lack of gratitude for American aid. At the same time, the Nixon Administration was planning its historic visit to the People's Republic of China in February 1972 to normalise relations between the two adversaries. Pakistan was a crucial intermediary in this process and the US was loth to insult its ally so close to the Beijing trip.

The other great power, the UK, was torn on multiple fronts: it feared that recognising Bangladesh may trigger Pakistan to withdraw from the Commonwealth yet failure to recognise Bangladesh could jeopardise access to a profitable trading partner. With memories of British imperialism still fresh, the UK government was reluctant to intervene in its former colony.

For many western and Asian nations, the second option was most appealing as it offered the least risk in the short-term. Figure 2 shows the positions of the UK, Singapore, New Zealand, Malaysia and Canada. All Commonwealth countries shared the

same Nazrul Islam, wrote to the Australian government. In his letter, Nazrul Islam attached the Bangladeshi Proclamation of Independence and asserted, "the people of Bangladesh, by their heroism, bravery and revolutionary fervour have established effective control over the territories of Bangladesh". The Australian government did not respond to this letter as it would have been deemed inappropriate to communicate directly with the government-in-exile. However, unofficially, as early as June 1971 the Australian Prime Minister William McMahon lobbied for the release of Mujib from Pakistani custody as a first step to a political solution to the conflict and a step towards autonomy.

By December 1971, it was clear to Australians that a ceasefire was imminent, and they needed to determine their allegiance: to recognise Bangladesh early and risk a severance of diplomatic relations with Pakistan, or to acquiesce to Pakistani demands and refrain from formal recognition of Bangladesh.

For many western and Asian nations, the second option was most appealing as it offered the least risk in the short-term. Figure 2 shows the positions of the UK, Singapore, New Zealand, Malaysia and Canada. All Commonwealth countries shared the

"I agree with Shaw too that we should not create obstacles to our establishing some relationship with Bangladesh before too long". These opinions informed the position of the DFA, which urged the Australian Foreign Minister Nigel Bowen on 13 December: "Australia should move to recognise Bangladesh as soon as practicable after the installation of a new government in Dhaka".

With the ceasefire on 16 December, Australian deliberations shifted from whether to how to recognise Bangladesh. The Australian government employed multilateral diplomacy to persuade like-minded nations to join Australia and recognise Bangladeshi independence quickly and as a bloc. The reasons for wanting to recognise Bangladesh collectively were based on practical advantages. Oftentimes, acts of contemporaneous state recognition create momentum and stimulate other nations to follow suit. When a group of nations act simultaneously, it bestows greater legitimacy on the country being recognised.

From 24 December, Australian diplomats across the globe were instructed by the DFA to "sound out" western and Asian governments on their willingness to recognise Bangladesh. While the response was positive, none was ready to act.

After the release of Mujib from Pakistani custody on 8 January 1972 and his arrival in Dhaka on 10 January, the Australian government commenced a second round of negotiations. From 11 to 17 January, Australian diplomats sought to persuade other governments to recognise collectively on 19 January. Although Bangladesh had demonstrated it fulfilled all criteria for recognition, some states were still hesitant. Typically, each state that Australia approached may have supported in principle recognition of Bangladesh yet opposed to acting early for fear of retaliation from Pakistan or offending Muslims in the Middle East. Indeed, in January Saudi Arabia warned the international community that recognition of Bangladesh would be viewed as a "hostile act", a threat that spooked Western Europe.

Like its December effort, Australia's endeavour in mid-January to secure a coalition to recognise Bangladesh was unsuccessful. But the Australian government remained undeterred and continued negotiations through January. Socialist Yugoslavia proved an unlikely ally, and in the end it recognised Bangladesh on 22 January, before Australia. In the third round of negotiations, Australia continued to lobby south-east Asian nations, Japan, Canada and western European states. Australian diplomats in Latin America contacted their counterparts in Argentina and Mexico, although these approaches failed completely.

In the final week of January, Western European governments agreed they would recognise Bangladesh at some point. But by now, the Australian government was unwilling to wait, having had their plans thwarted twice within four weeks. In the end, Australia recognised Bangladesh on 31 January, one week after Australian Cabinet approval and five weeks since Australian diplomats began mobilising western support for recognition. On 14 April 1972, the Australian government accredited Hossain Ali as Bangladesh's High Commissioner—the first OECD country to open a diplomatic mission. See Figures 3 and 4.

Australia's position on recognition of Bangladesh was unusual in that it was not entirely focused on self-interest, such as trade implications. Australian diplomats believed that early recognition was important to "help Bangladesh get on its feet" and show "that the communists are not its only friends". Numerous Australian diplomats argued that early recognition was vital to cement the leadership of Mujib and foster moderate politics. Peculiarly, Australian diplomats viewed Bangladesh as a Southeast Asian nation. While geographically inaccurate, the fact that they situated Bangladesh within Australia's neighbourhood reveals an imagined closeness between the two nations.

That Australia was the first Western nation to recognise Bangladesh, and that its diplomats lobbied both Western and Asian governments to do the same, represents a rare moment in Australian foreign policy that was independent of the UK. It also demonstrates the potential of middle-power diplomacy to offset American obstinacy, offering a pathway to help Bangladesh realise its aspirations of independence.

Rachel Stevens is a Lecturer in History at the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, Australian Catholic University in Melbourne.

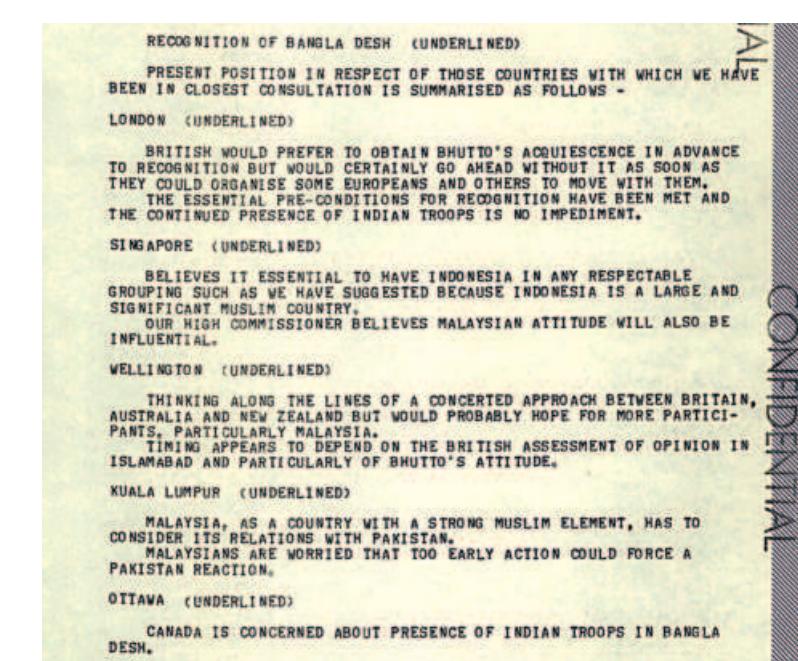


Figure 2. Cable from Australian Department of Foreign Affairs to Australian embassies and High Commissions, summarising state of thinking among its allies, 18 January 1972. Source: NAA: A1838, 144/10/1/PART3.

Hamza's role in Bangladesh's TACTICAL REBIRTH

RIFAT MASUD

In a national team ranked 185th in the world, the arrival of a midfielder with Premier League experience doesn't merely represent a symbolic gesture -- it marks a fundamental reorientation of the team's tactical approach and identity. Hamza Choudhury's integration into the Bangladesh national team isn't about star power or reputation; it's about the system-wide evolution his presence enables.

Hamza is not a traditional midfielder, nor is he merely a destroyer of opposition attacks. He occupies a hybrid role -- part defensive anchor, part deep-lying playmaker.

In early training sessions -- ahead of Bangladesh's Asian Cup qualifiers fixture against India in Shillong on March 25 -- he has displayed a keen understanding of responsibilities that transcend simple defensive duties. Hamza appears to be adept at reading the game, identifying probable passing lanes, stepping into space to disrupt attacking movements, and communicating proactively to ensure defensive cohesion. His positional awareness and discipline provide



PHOTO: BFF

Bangladesh's midfield with a level of structure rarely seen.

Without possession, his focus shifts to anticipation and spatial control. Against a player like India's Sunil Chhetri, who thrives in the half-spaces and operates between the lines, Hamza's role will be to not just shield the defence but also enable them to maintain their shape. It's this

quality, more than any individual flair, that will elevate Bangladesh's defensive organisation.

Hamza's tactical freedom within the team structure is perhaps the most striking aspect of his role. While comparisons with players like Lionel Messi are often emotionally charged and tactically misguided, a more fitting

comparison might be someone like Spain's Sergio Busquets or Joshua Kimmich of Germany. These are players who don't seek the spotlight but dominate through their understanding of structure, their anticipation, and their ability to dictate tempo.

This is not a story of one player single-handedly transforming a team; it is about one player providing a blueprint for tactical evolution. Hamza's true impact will not be measured in goals or assists but in his ability to shape the team's rhythm, structure, and control of the game.

If those around him can rise to the tactical demands his presence implies -- if the federation, coaches, and supporters understand the potential now within their grasp -- then Bangladesh football could embark on a new era. Not one of sudden miracles, but one of steady, mature growth.

The real question is not whether Hamza can carry this team forward. The question is whether the team is prepared to move forward with him -- tactically, intelligently, and with renewed purpose.

Rifat Masud is a sports journalist, currently working for T Sports

Piastri hails 'mega' McLaren

AFP, Shanghai

Oscar Piastri hailed his "mega" McLaren after winning a Chinese Grand Prix on Sunday later overshadowed by the disqualifications of Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc for technical infringements.

Alpine's Pierre Gasly was also kicked out after Piastri led a McLaren one-two from pole position with Lando Norris second.

Almost three hours after the chequered flag, stewards ruled that Leclerc and Gasly had cars that weighed less than the 800 kilogram minimum, while Hamilton was found to have excessive plank wear underneath his car.

Leclerc had finished fifth and Hamilton sixth. Their points have been stripped with all the drivers below them gaining places. It was a disastrous end to a weekend that had started so brilliantly for Ferrari when Hamilton took his maiden win for his new team in Saturday's sprint.

On the other hand, it was McLaren's 50th one-two finish in their long history.

"It's been an incredible weekend, the car has been pretty mega," said Piastri, 23, after McLaren made a one-stop strategy work to perfection. "Very, very happy. The hard was a much better tyre than everyone expected so to go all the way to the end was a bit of a surprise, but a happy surprise."

Red Bull's world champion Max Verstappen snatched fourth place after a thrilling late pass on Leclerc.



NZ hand Pakistan biggest defeat

New Zealand clinched the five-match T20I series 3-1, with a game in hand, against Pakistan in style after thrashing the visitors by a record margin at Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui yesterday. Having posted a mammoth total of 220 for six, New Zealand bundled out Pakistan for just 105 in 16.2 overs.

The 115-run defeat for Pakistan is their biggest loss in terms of runs in the format, eclipsing a 95-run defeat, also against New Zealand in Wellington nine years ago.

It was New Zealand's second biggest T20I win by runs, nearly surpassing their 119-run drubbing of the West Indies in 2018 at the same Bay Oval venue.

New Zealand pacer Jacob Duffy claimed 4-20 and fellow seamer Zak Foulkes ended with figures of 3-25 to dismantle the Pakistan lineup.

BCB to hold key meeting today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will sit down for a meeting today with several immediate agendas, particularly those related to the coach and captaincy.

Taskin Ahmed and Liton Das were the names being considered for the T20I captaincy once speculation regarding Najmul Hossain Shanto started to gain ground. Liton, too, had claimed, after the 3-0 series sweep in the West Indies, that he was ready to take over if BCB wanted.

As it stands, Liton -- who was left out of the Champions Trophy -- is the front-runner to take over the T20I captaincy, sources inside the board have claimed. The national team has been without a selector since Hannan Sarkar's resignation; thus, the vacant spot on the selection panel is also on the agenda.

"Some proposals will be made, and they will be discussed. Shifon [Sazzad Ahmed] is being considered as one of the proposed names," a BCB source informed.

BCB has been positive about head coach Phil Simmons, and while the official decision to extend his contract has not been announced, the board is likely to finalise the matter in the coming days.

"Simmons has already been confirmed, according to information in the board, but the decision would be discussed in the board meeting," a source said.

CWAB ad-hoc committee brings new hope for players

SPORTS REPORTER

Past and present cricketers gathered in Mirpur yesterday to hold a Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) meeting and after 11 years, CWAB's leadership changed with president Naimur Rahman and general secretary Debobroto Paul stepping down.

CWAB formed an ad-hoc committee of 13 members with former cricketer Saleem Shahed as the convener during the meeting attended by around 50 players.

Cricketers such as national team captain Najmul Hossain have been named in the committee as representatives of divisions. The committee will now consider the organisation's constitution amendments and form an election commission for upcoming elections, slated to take place tentatively within three months' time.

In 2019, cricketers of the country went on strike, feeling undermined by the board and unrepresented by the cricketers' welfare organisation. In 2023, in CWAB's first Annual General Meeting in 10 years, no other candidates challenged the leadership even as it did not mean cricketers had been happy with all that had gone on.

This DPL is being played on reduced budget with CWAB not having any say over the players' plight. Sources informed that one national team player is playing for a newly promoted club where his contractual salary has been halved from previous years for participating in seven games.

When asked whether CWAB has done anything to fulfil players' wishes in recent years, one cricketer pointed out that DPL



was being played under reduced salaries.

"I have seen nothing of that sort [positive changes to help players]. At least 50-60 percent of the payment has been reduced this DPL from previous years," he said.

The cricketers have requested that first class contracts and match fees be improved. Currently, there are three categories (A, B, C) receiving monthly salaries of Tk 35,000, Tk 25,000 and Tk 15,000 respectively. A discussion took place yesterday to bump those figures up to Tk 100,000, Tk 80,000 and Tk 60,000 respectively.

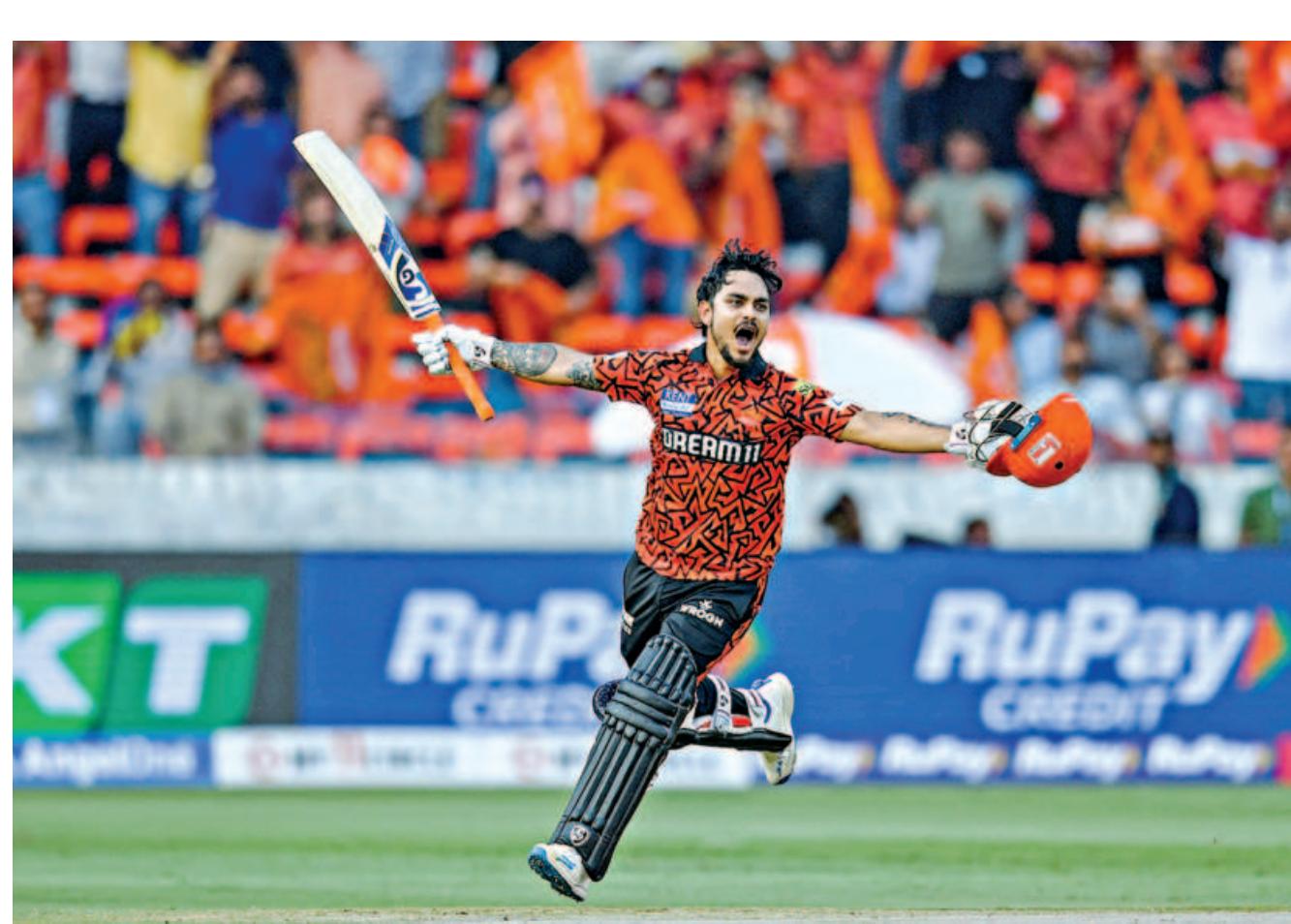
"For 15 years, there has been no real activities seen in CWAB," another cricketer said.

"Since everything has started afresh, let's see what happens. Now the players representing the divisions will sit down

with players from their respective divisions and discuss the changes in rules and regulations (proposed by the ad-hoc committee)," he added.

Avoiding conflicts of interest has also been on the agenda in forming the ad-hoc committee. Those representing the board as directors were not named in the committee and once the ad-hoc committee completes its work in forming election commission, members can also partake in elections.

"We will consider these issues [conflict of interest] in a more complete manner so that a transparent system grows. We have to keep in mind that those that are players, are directly or indirectly involved with the board. So we will try to formulate the policy and then abide by it," Saleem, convener of the committee, told reporters.



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Ishan Kishan celebrates after scoring his maiden Indian Premier League century against Rajasthan Royals in Hyderabad yesterday. Hyderabad piled up 286 for six -- just a run short of the best-ever tournament total of 287 for three, also scored by Hyderabad in a game against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the previous edition. Kishan remained unbeaten for a 47-ball 106 in a game that saw England and Rajasthan fast bowler Jofra Archer return figures of none for 76 in four overs -- the most expensive bowling figures in IPL history.

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

Bangladesh women set sights on uncharted territory

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team are gearing up for the AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers, with preparations set to begin on April 6.

The qualifiers will take place from June 23 to July 5, marking a historic opportunity for Bangladesh to compete on Asia's biggest stage for the first time.

A revamped format for the tournament's 21st edition has opened the door for their long-awaited debut. A total of 34 nations, divided into eight groups, will battle for eight spots in the 12-team final round, set to be held in Australia in 2026.

The draw for the qualifying round is scheduled for March 27, with matches to be played across eight host nations -- Vietnam, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Myanmar, Jordan, Indonesia, Cambodia and Tajikistan.

Placed in the third pot, Bangladesh will likely face some of Asia's strongest sides such as Philippines, Chinese Taipei, and Iran.

To stand a chance, the women in red and green will need rigorous training and a unified squad, putting past disputes between senior players and the coach behind them.



Head coach Peter Butler, who is returning to Dhaka from England on April 6, had a bitter experience in the last training camp. Eighteen senior players refused to train under the British coach, citing various concerns, which led to the formation of a probe committee to resolve the issue.

Bangladesh Football Federation's women's committee chairman, Mahfuz Aker Kiran, informed yesterday: "We have called up nearly 50 players, including 18 who weren't part of the squad for our last two FIFA friendlies against the United Arab Emirates, as well as U-20 players."

"This is because we have two major commitments coming up -- the AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers and the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship [from July 1 to 11]."

Before departing for Dubai for two matches with a squad of junior players, those 18 senior players were released from camp with instructions to rejoin after the Eid break.

Asked about the situation, Kiran remained optimistic. "We haven't spoken to Peter yet, but we're hopeful that everything will be fine. Let's get the camp started."

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Tarique urges parties to prioritise public issues

UNB, Dhaka

Stating that people are the "real capital of politicians", BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday urged political parties to focus on public issues and demands alongside state reforms.

"The people of Bangladesh have many expectations from political parties and politicians. We are discussing various issues of reform, including who should hold what authority. Alongside this, let us begin discussions on what the people's expectations, demands, and key goals are," he said while virtually addressing an iftar party.

Jatiyatabadi Somonoma Jote hosted the programme in honour of politicians and prominent citizens of the country at a city hotel.

In a democratic state or system, Tarique

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Fishermen catching jatka (hilsa fry) using nets at Tulatoli point in the Meghna sanctuary in Bhola Sadar upazila although a two-month ban on fishing, which began from March 1, is on. The ban is imposed to increase the production of hilsa. Those who violate the ban can be sentenced to a maximum of two years imprisonment and fined Tk 5,000. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

Astronomers find 128 new moons orbiting Saturn

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Earlier this week, Saturn gained a whopping 128 new official moons, as the International Astronomical Union recognised discoveries from a team of astronomers led by Edward Ashton at the Academia Sinica in Taiwan.

The sixth planet from the Sun now has a grand total of 274 moons, the most of any planet in the Solar System.

The discovery has raised a lot of questions. How do you spot moons, and why hadn't anybody seen these ones already? Doesn't Jupiter have the most moons? What are they going to call all these moons? Are there more out there? And what exactly makes something a moon, anyway?

These new discoveries cement Saturn's place as the winner of the Solar System's moon competition, with more confirmed moons than all of the other planets combined. But it hasn't always been this way.

Jupiter's four largest moons – Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto – were the first ever discovered orbiting another planet. They were spotted by Galileo Galilei more than 400 years ago, in 1610. Saturn's first known moon, Titan, was discovered by Dutch astronomer Christaan Huygens 45 years later.

The new batch of 128 moons was discovered by stacking images from the Canada France Hawaii telescope. Some of Saturn's other moons were discovered by space voyages, and some during what are called "ring-plane crossings".



Iran unveils missile systems on Gulf islands

AFP, Tehran

Iran's Revolutionary Guards have unveiled new missile systems on three strategic islands in the Gulf, saying they can target nearby "enemy bases, vessels, and assets", state media reported Saturday.

The weapons were deployed on Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb, and Abu Musa near the Strait of Hormuz, a globally vital shipping lane.

The Guards recently held military manoeuvres in the area.

Saturday's announcement comes with Iran poised to respond to a letter from US President Donald Trump urging a resumption of nuclear talks and warning of possible military action if Iran refuses.

"We have a tactic that we must arm" the island group "and make it operative", said Alireza Tangsiri, naval commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the ideological branch of Iran's military.

"We are capable of attacking enemy bases, vessels, and assets in the region," he told state television.

The new systems "can completely destroy any target within 600 kilometres (370 miles)".

On Friday, supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said US threats against Iran "will get them nowhere", and warned that "if they do anything malign to the Iranian nation, they will get a hard slap".

On Thursday, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi

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TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY



Bangladesh is unlikely to meet its 2025 targets adopted under the WHO's End TB Strategy in 2015 as the country is struggling to reduce the incidence rate of the contagious bacterial disease, said officials and experts.

TB incidence rate is the number of new and relapse tuberculosis cases arising in a year, expressed as a rate per 1 lakh population.

The target for 2025 is a 50 percent reduction in tuberculosis incidence rate compared to that of 2015.

In 2015, the World Health Organisation's estimated incidence rate for all forms of tuberculosis in Bangladesh was 225 per 1 lakh population. In 2023, the estimated incidence rate was 221 per 1 lakh population, indicating very little progress here.

Surprisingly, the incidence rate (221 per 1 lakh population) remained same for six years from 2018.

Bangladesh was also supposed to reduce tuberculosis deaths by 75 percent from its 2015 number. In 2023, 44,000 died from tuberculosis, reflecting around a 60

percent decrease in the death rate.

The number of tuberculosis deaths was 73,000 in 2015.

While the authorities are yet to disclose the death toll for 2024, Bangladesh needs to bring down the deaths by at least 15 percent from its 2023 fatality tally by this year.

However, data from the National

TUBERCULOSIS Case notification trend	Year	Number
	2024	3.13 lakh
	2023	3.01 lakh
	2022	2.61 lakh
	2021	3.06 lakh
	2020	2.30 lakh
SOURCE: NTP	2015	2.09 lakh

Tuberculosis Control Programme shows that the number of people detected with the disease last year increased compared to the previous year.

According to NTP, 3.13 lakh people tested positive for TB last year after around 30 lakh people with tuberculosis symptoms underwent the test. The number of patients detected in 2023 was 3.01

lakh, the data shows.

Against this backdrop, Bangladesh, one of the 30 countries with a high number of tuberculosis patients, is observing World Tuberculosis Day today. This year's theme is "A TB-free Bangladesh can be achieved through commitment, investment, and service delivery".

"We are hopeful of meeting the target regarding reducing mortality rate," said Zubaida Nasreen, line director for Tuberculosis-Leprosy and AIDS STD Programme.

She said they have started Tuberculosis Preventive Therapy from 2022. Last year, 1.77 lakh people were given the therapy.

"However, we are lagging in terms of reducing the rate. It's not possible to say now when we can achieve the target," Nasreen added.

The incidence rate is unlikely to decrease until the country can reduce the number of missing cases (undetected tuberculosis patients), said a public health expert, who asked not to be named.

The WHO estimated the number of patients to be 3.79 lakh in 2023, while 3.01 lakh patients were detected, meaning around 78,000 cases remained undetected, he said.

Once the number of missing cases is addressed, the incidence rate would start to decrease, he said.

He, however, said the number of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Workers of Apparel Plus Eco Ltd in Gazipur demonstrating in front of Labour Bhaban in the capital's Bijaynagar yesterday, demanding payment of three-month arrears and Eid bonus.

YUNUS' CHINA TOUR

Trade and investment top priority

Rohingya repatriation also on agenda

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh is expecting to boost exports and bring investment and development support from China during Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' first bilateral visit that will be watched closely by regional powers in the light of the changed Indo-Bangla ties.



Yunus' visit to China this year, which marks the 50th anniversary of China-Bangladesh diplomatic relations, was due and has symbolic significance, said Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director for Centre for Alternatives.

"There is no doubt that many would be watching Yunus' China visit from a geopolitical perspective, but we should look at it through the lens of our national

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 30 Palestinians

Top Hamas official among dead

REUTERS, Cairo

An Israeli airstrike in southern Gaza killed Hamas political leader Salah al-Bardawil yesterday, officials of the group said, as residents reported an escalation in Israel's six-day-old military campaign.

At least 30 Palestinians had been killed in Israeli strikes on Rafah and Khan Younis so far, health authorities said. Those killed included three municipal employees, medics said.

At least 50,021 Palestinians have been killed and 113,274 wounded since the beginning of the war, the health ministry said in a statement yesterday.

- Gaza residents report escalation in Israel's campaign
- Israeli official orders evacuation in Rafah
- Death toll in Gaza surpasses 50,000

Taher Al-Nono, the media adviser of the Hamas leadership, mourned Bardawil's death in a post on his Facebook page.

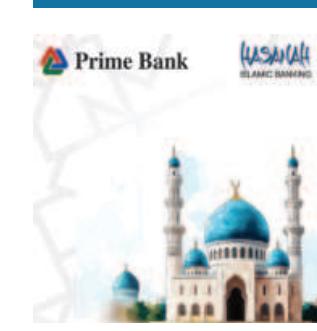
After two months of relative calm in the offensive that began more than 17 months ago, Gaza civilians were again fleeing for their lives after Israel effectively abandoned a ceasefire, launching a new all-out air and ground campaign on Tuesday against Hamas.

Explosions echoed throughout the north, central and southern Gaza Strip early yesterday, as Israeli planes hit

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

The more BNP talks about reforms, the less interested it seems in them

P8



PRAYER TIMING MARCH 24

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:43 12:45 4:45 6:11 7:45

JAMAAT 4:53 1:15 5:00 6:26 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN MARCH SEHRI IFTAR

23 24 4:41 6:11

24 25 4:41 6:12

25 26 4:40 6:12

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS