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Plus 8-page Independence Day Special

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sent journo  
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## Free, fair polls between Dec and June 2026

Prof Yunus reiterates in  
address to the nation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the next national election would be held between December this year and June 2025, and the government wants it to be the most free, fair, and acceptable election in history.

He also said rumours were spread to destabilise the country and confuse the people, and more misinformation would be spread as the election approached.

"You all know who is behind [the rumours]," he said in his last night's televised address, marking the Independence Day and Eid.

The National Consensus Commission is collecting the political parties' take on the reform proposals, he said.

The goal is to make a list of issues on which the parties agree with each other. Political parties will sign the list which will be the July Charter, he said.

"Our responsibility is to present the entire process



"Whenever  
you hear a  
rumour, make  
sure to find  
its source.  
Do not ignore it. Many  
experienced military  
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these rumors, and funds are poured  
[into the misinformation campaign]."



Chief Adviser

PROF MUHAMMAD YUNUS

transparently before the nation and hold the election once the process is complete," he said.

Regarding the spread of rumours, he said ever since the interim government took office, a misinformation campaign began on social media.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has assured the government that he would support Bangladesh in its fight against misinformation.

Regarding the July uprising, he said, "We must remember that we are in a state of war. Rumours are the biggest weapon of the defeated side.

"Whenever you hear a rumour, make sure to find its source. Do not ignore it. Many experienced military strategists are behind these rumors, and funds are poured [into the misinformation campaign]."

"Their main goal is to make the July Uprising fail. We will not let that happen. Our collective unity is making them desperate. They want to break our unity. They are cunning, and you may not even realise when you become their puppet."

He urged the people to make "fugitive forces" lose.

Prof Yunus remembered the martyrs of the Liberation War and July uprising.

### PRICES DURING RAMADAN

Major steps have been taken to control the prices of goods and keep electricity uninterrupted, he said, adding that there were reports that the prices had fallen.

Discipline has been restored in the banking sector, and various economic indicators are gradually improving.

He said corruption was the biggest problem. The

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Students light candles at an altar inside the Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University to commemorate the Dark Night of March 25, 1971, when Pakistani forces swooped on unarmed Bangalees to crush their struggle for freedom.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## INDEPENDENCE DAY TODAY

### THE LEGEND OF NADER 'GUNDA'

## A fearless freedom fighter of Old Dhaka

#### AHMAD ISTIAK

Faruq Hossain, an elderly resident of Hoseni Dalan area in Old Dhaka, furrowed his brow when we asked him if he heard about Nader Mia from Malitola.

"Are you asking about Nader gunda? He was killed by the Pakistan military during the Liberation War. He was a fearless man. But I never saw him in person," he said.

Mohammad Afzal, another elderly man in his 70s from Urdu Road in the capital, gave a similar response. "The very mention of Nader's name would scare people."

Back in those days, "Nader Gunda from Malitola" was widely known in Old Dhaka. Many of those who had never seen him were also familiar with his name, according to Faruk, Afzal, and several other elderly people in the old town.



This faded signboard in Malitola is the only record of Nader's legacy.

Ali Ahmad Ziauddin Bir Pratik, a freedom fighter from Crack Platoon, is also familiar with the heroic tales of Nader, who turned into a "freedom fighter from a street gangster" causing terror to the Pakistani army.

"After the crackdown, we went to India for training to join the war in the first week of April. Later, we returned and fought. But Nader and his gang

put up resistance right from the beginning. On March 25 and 26, it was the civilians who put up the primary resistance at three locations in Dhaka. Among them, Nader and his group organised resistance on English Road in Bangshal," he said.

The two other resistance points were near Dhaka Central Jail and behind the Iqbal Hall (present Shaheed Sergeant Zahirul Haq Hall of Dhaka University), said Ziauddin, who too never seen Nader but was familiar with Nader's valiant fights during the war.

#### A TALE OF VALOUR

On the dark night of March 25, 1971, when the Pakistan forces launched their brutal massacre on unarmed, sleeping Bangalees, many fled the city, but Nader did not, multiple elderly locals said.

Sensing the situation early in the night, Nader took position on the

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S Alam, wife  
sued over illegal  
assets worth  
over Tk 1,539cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti Corruption Commission has filed two cases accusing S Alam Group owner Mohammed Saiful Alam and his wife Farzana Parveen of amassing illegal wealth worth Tk 1,539.85 crore.

ACC Assistant Director Mahmudul Hasan filed the cases, ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain told reporters at his office yesterday.

Saiful has been accused of amassing illegal wealth worth Tk 796.28 crore while Farzana faces charges of having Tk 743.57 crore in undisclosed wealth.

The cases were filed under the Anti Corruption Commission Act, 2004, and Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947.

According to the complaints, Saiful and his wife own movable and immovable properties in Singapore, Cyprus, and the British Virgin Islands, and other places.



Students at the Fine Arts Faculty of Dhaka University are painting masks for the Mangal Shobhajatra, a procession traditionally taken out on Pahela Baishakh.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## AC BUS OPERATORS Overcharging rampant ahead of Eid

SAJJAD HOSSAIN and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Jannatul Ferdous usually travels to her village in Gaibandha in Al Hamra Paribahan from Dhaka. The AC bus operator charges Tk 1,200 per ticket.

However, with Eid approaching, the bus company has nearly doubled the fare. She had to pay Tk 2,200 for an advance ticket.

"Overcharging during the Eid rush has become normal, but paying an extra Tk 1,000 is simply ridiculous," she said.

"Besides, I thought things would be different this time, given that a new government came to power following a mass uprising. But nothing has changed here," Jannatul working at a private firm told The Daily Star.

Like Jannatul, hundreds of passengers travelling on AC buses -- except for those run by a few reputable companies -- were forced to pay extra during the Eid rush in the absence of a fixed fare for such services and proper monitoring.

Although the hike is not as steep for non-AC buses, most private operators, particularly lesser known companies -- are still overcharging passengers ahead of Eid.

Our correspondents visited Sayedabad Bus Terminal and various counters at Arambagh yesterday and spoke to at least 20 people, many of whom bought tickets from different counters across the capital, to know the extent of overcharging by bus operators.

Bus operators were found charging an extra Tk 200 to Tk 1,000.

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## MY DHAKA

# Glimpses of Dhaka's IFTAR HISTORY

RIDWAN AKRAM

Four centuries ago, the Muslim population of Dhaka was relatively small. However, the arrival of the Mughals precipitated a shift. These individuals brought their own culinary staff, ensuring the availability of familiar fare.

They would partake in various types of bread and kebabs. Naan-taftan, an almond-infused naan roti, was prevalent in the Mughal army camp in Dhaka. Another popular item was shirmal roti, introduced to Dhaka from Agra by Mughal subahdars.

During this period, shirmal was prepared with semolina. These rotis were likely staples of the iftar menu. During winter, Akbari Nankhatai was added to the selection, accompanied by diverse kebabs.

A notable kebab of the era was Parsand's sheek kebab, prepared with substantial portions of meat, later known as suti kebab. Other varieties included mosallam kebab, shami kebab, handi kebab, tika kebab, tash kebab, and various fish kebabs.

Wealthy Muslims of the time partook in approximately 50 distinct dishes!

In 1639, Shah Shuja assumed the position of subahdar of Bengal. During his tenure, 300



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Shia families arrived in Dhaka, introducing one Khorasan polao. The Mughals also prepared a dish akin to modern-day haleem -- incorporating meat, spices, lemon juice, and wheat.

Beyond savoury dishes, sweet preparations were also popular during the Mughal era.

In the mid-19th century, preparations for Ramadan commenced after Shab-e-Barat. Water vessels were cleaned, and new surahis, clay hookahs, and other items were procured.

These were brought home and scented with perfume.

During hot days, earthenware jugs were used to keep water cool, with rose and keora essences added for fragrance. At

that time, iftar was referred to as "roza khola", signifying the breaking of the fast with food.

Preparations for iftar began in every household after zuhr prayer.

Women would proceed to the kitchen, where pre-soaked chickpeas and moong dal were prepared. Phuluri was made from the chopped dal, with efforts made to ensure it was served hot during iftar.

There were shorbot mixed with Zamzam water. The shorbot menu included faluda, tokma shorbot, bel shorbot, pomegranate shorbot, and lemon and tamarind shorbot.

Takhise Raihan was a popular variant of tokma shorbot.

After shorbot and dates, the

main iftar meal would begin, with individuals of all ages gathering at the dastarkhan. Various homemade muri dishes, sweet and savoury samosas, raw and fried dals, fruits, onions, and phuluri were procured from the market.

A sweet mixed food called "Golapi Ukhre" was also present, alongside roasted chira, dobhabja, tepipuluri, large mashkalai dal-boot, bakarkhani, and kebabs.

While diverse iftar preparations were made at home, residents of Old Dhaka consistently acquired items from Chawk Bazar. Both the affluent and the less privileged frequented the Chawk. Even in the early 20th century, the notion of iftar market in Dhaka exclusively referred to Chawk Bazar.

However, in the 1940s, the situation began to evolve, with temporary iftar stalls emerging in neighbourhoods due to increased demand.

Following the Partition of 1947, the growth of the middle class in Dhaka led to the incorporation of pitha puli from rural Bengal into iftar.

After the independence of Bangladesh, the scale and diversity of Ramadan and iftar arrangements increased significantly.

## Free, fair polls

FROM PAGE 1

international community also wants Bangladesh to be free of corruption, as they want to invest here, he said.

The government is working to implement e-services and encourages citizens to send their suggestions on how the authorities can make online services simpler, he said.

During the AI regime, false cases were used as a weapon to suppress dissent, and the interim government has so far recommended withdrawal of 6,295 such cases.

In addition, 413 cases filed under the Cyber Security Act have been withdrawn. This law will be repealed, and a pro-people Cyber Protection Law is being formulated, he said.

The entire process of purchasing airline tickets has been moved online, leading to a reduction in ticket prices by 50 to 75 percent, he said, adding that this benefited expatriates in the middle east.

To make the experience of Hajj better, the interim government developed a mobile app to assist the pilgrims before, during, and after their journey, he said.

The government wants to uphold

## between Dec and June 2026

the rights of women and minority communities, including those who live in the hill tracts, he said.

Referring to the atrocities committed by the autocratic regime, he said, "I want to assure you that those involved in mass murder, those who have indiscriminately killed people, and those already recognised as killers by the world will be brought to justice on this land."

Yunus also spoke extensively about Bangladesh's relations with different countries and the Rohingya crisis.

The UN is preparing to hold a separate session on the Rohingya crisis at the UN General Assembly in September. Malaysia and Finland have stepped forward as co-hosts of the event, he said.

Prof Yunus said former Australian acting prime minister Julie Bishop had agreed to play a key role at the session.

Countries around the world have spontaneously extended their hands of friendship towards the interim government. He said during his visit to the UN, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates, various heads of state, ministers, and global trade

leaders expressed sincere interest in supporting Bangladesh.

The UAE previously suspended visas to Bangladeshis. "They have assured us that they will complete all the formalities and open their doors soon."

Bangladesh expressed interest in joining ASEAN as a member. Malaysia has assumed the chairmanship of ASEAN, and the country's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has expressed his support regarding the matter, he said.

Malaysia is working sincerely to resolve all the problems related to hiring Bangladesh workers, he added.

Nepal and Bhutan are very eager to provide Bangladesh with hydroelectric power, he said. "If we can bring hydroelectric power from Nepal, our reliance on fossil fuels will decrease."

In light of the country's growing electricity demand, the government emphasises completing the construction of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant on time. "The director-general of Rosatom has assured me that the power plant will soon begin trial runs."

As per the Road Transport Act 2018, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) is to determine fares for public transport following government permission.

But AC coaches and public transport with special amenities are not under its purview, according to section 34 (2) of the act.

However, the government or the BRTA could take steps to fix the fares if there are allegations of overpricing, says section 34 (2) of the law.

But the authorities never fixed the fare for AC buses.

Taking advantage of the situation, bus operators fix the rate for normal time, but the situation deteriorates during the Eid rush," a BRTA official said, wishing anonymity.

BRTA Chairman Mohammed Yasin neither responded to our phone calls nor text messages.

A press release by the Road Transport and Highways Division yesterday said that mobile courts are conducting drives to prevent overcharging.

"But when I went to buy a ticket from the Arambagh counter today [Tuesday], its employees demanded Tk 2,000 for the same route," he said.

"This is robbery! When I questioned them, they just shrugged and said, 'Take it or leave it.' Is this how passengers should be treated? There's no authority to check this, no one to hold them accountable."

"However, the complaints must be specific," he told The Daily Star last night.

This newspaper could not reach

the owners of Green Line Paribahan, Shyamoli NR Travels and Al Hamra for comments.

A top transport leader, wishing not to be named, said they have nothing to do with AC buses as there is no fixed fare for such services.

But when he visited the Sayedabad bus counter yesterday, he was asked to pay Tk 850 for the same trip, an increase of Tk 200.

"This is unfair! Why this sudden hike? They are simply taking advantage of passengers' demand," he said.

When asked about the fare increase, Khalilur Rahman, a staffer at Emad Paribahan counter, denied the allegation, saying, "The fare has always been the same."

Asif Uzzaman, who works for a firm, travelled to Cox's Bazar from the capital by an AC bus of Shyamoli NR Travels on March 18 paying Tk 1,700.

"But ahead of Eid, when I went to buy a return ticket from the same counter at Sayedabad, the counter staffers were asking for Tk 2,000! That's an increase of Tk 300 for no reason," he said.

Shakil Hossain said that he purchased a ticket at Tk 1,800 of an air conditioning Green Line Paribahan bus and made a trip to Cox's Bazar from Dhaka in the first week of December.

"But when I went to buy a ticket from the Arambagh counter today [Tuesday], its employees demanded Tk 2,000 for the same route," he said.

"This is robbery! When I questioned them, they just shrugged and said, 'Take it or leave it.' Is this how passengers should be treated? There's no authority to check this, no one to hold them accountable."

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## A fearless freedom fighter of Old Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1

rooftop of the Isha Brothers building in Bangshal with 8-10 of his associates, armed with a revolver and a double-barreled gun. He set up an ambush, waiting for the Pakistan forces, they said.

After midnight, Pakistani soldiers began torching the slums near the mosque at the Rai Sahib Bazar intersection. Then they moved on to set fire to the sawmills of Nayabazar. As soon as their jeeps came within Nader's ambush range, he and his companions opened fire, taking the enemy by surprise. Several Pakistani soldiers were killed in the sudden attack, they added.

However, as the Pakistani forces outnumbered them and were heavily armed, they quickly regained control. The soldiers retaliated with gunfire, but by then, Nader and his men had retreated.

The next morning, on March 26, Nader took his family to safety in Manikganj, and returned to Malitola, ready for the next fight.

No one among Nader's fellow freedom fighters is alive today. Elderly locals said they heard about Nader's incredible bravery from his fellow freedom fighters when they were alive.

Abdul Majid, a resident of Basabari Lane in Tanti Bazar, is one of them.

"At that time, a Bihari named 'Sangram' supplied weapons to Nader's group in exchange for a hefty sum of money. Initially, Nader purchased weapons using his own and his gang members' savings. But as their funds ran out, he started collecting donations from residents of different neighborhoods to buy weapons to fight Pakistani soldiers," he said.

By mid-April, as "Shanti Committees" started forming in various neighborhoods of Dhaka, Nader and his comrades had to restrict their movements for safety.

Several senior residents from Old Dhaka said that towards the end of May, the local Shanti Committee in Armanitola decided to hold a meeting where Khwaja Khair Uddin, the convenor of Dhaka's Shanti Committee, would be present.

Nader and his associates bought some weapons from Sangram and planned an attack on the meeting.

On the scheduled day and time, Nader and his gang members took position near the Armenian Church at Armanitola. However, Sangram and a notorious gangster from Malitola, known as Geda, had already informed the Pakistani army about Nader's plan.

To deceive Nader and his group, the Pakistani military arrived in Armanitola in several microbuses instead of a military jeep. Before Nader and his group could react, the Pakistani soldiers in plain clothes surrounded them from three sides and launched an attack, locals said, citing Nader's fellow freedom fighters.

Nader and his comrades retaliated, but by then, it was too late—the Pakistani soldiers had already surrounded them from all directions. Seeing this, Nader decided to retreat while firing back, along with his comrades. In the process, a bullet struck Nader's leg. By that time, most of his fellow freedom fighters had managed to reach safety.

After being shot in the right leg, Nader crawled into Shabistan Cinema



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus alongside family members of this year's Independence Award winners at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## 7 eminent individuals receive Independence Award 2025

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday conferred the Independence Award 2025 on seven individuals, recognising their glorious and outstanding contributions to the nation.

The chief adviser handed over the award at Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

Prof Jamal Nazrul Islam was given the award in science and technology category while Mir Abdus Shukur Al Mahmud (posthumously) in literature category, Novera Ahmed (posthumously) in culture, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed (posthumously) in social service, Mohammad Mahbubul Haque Khan alias Azam Khan (posthumously) in Liberation War and culture, Badruddin Mohammad Umar in education and research, and Abrar Fahad (posthumously) for his role as a young protester.

Interim government advisers, the chiefs of the army, navy, and air force, and senior government officials were present at the

ceremony conducted by Cabinet Secretary Sheikh Abdur Rashid.

Speaking at the function, Prof Yunus said, "The nation is proud today, but it is very painful that these people were not given this recognition when they were alive."

"We remember them today with gratitude," he said.

Nobel Laureate Yunus said the people of the country are delighted to honour them with this award despite it being late.

He said their works would inspire all.

The Independence Day Award or Swadhinata Padak, is the highest civilian award given by the government of Bangladesh.

Introduced in 1977, this award is bestowed upon Bangladeshi citizens or organisations in recognition of their substantial contributions to one of many fields, including the Liberation War, the Language Movement, education, literature, journalism, public service, science and technology, and medical science.



Monowara Akter

fear. He was then taken to the Dhaka Cantonment, Munna said.

"There, the Pakistan army tortured him and then killed him," he added, citing Nader's fellow freedom fighters.

These freedom fighters include Mohammad Ali from Alu Bazar, Sadek from Siddik Bazar, Chorui Saeed from Golok Pal Lane, Shamsi alias Cenghis Khan from Mirpur, Abdullah from Shyambazar, among others, locals said.

Recalling Nader's bravery, Nurul Mia, 90, a resident of Kulta Bazar, told The Daily Star, "I had a good acquaintance with a Pakistan army officer. He once



Abdullah Bulu

told me—'if they had four more boys like Nader, the country would have gained independence much earlier.'

The scene of Armanitola, where Nader fought his last battle and was eventually captured, has changed completely.

During a recent visit, The Daily Star found that the Bagh Bari no longer exists. Shabistan, the cinema hall, is also gone. In its place, several residential-cum-commercial buildings, including Prottyasha Plaza, now stand tall.

### RISE OF NADER

Nader Mia was born in Malitola in 1930s. His father was a court clerk, and Nader was his eldest son. He studied at Jagannath College and was involved with student politics.

RMG workers, cops clash near Secretariat  
Student orgs condemn police attack on protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A clash broke out between police and garment workers marching from Shrom Bhaban towards the Secretariat yesterday, as they protested for unpaid wages, Eid bonuses, and leave.

The confrontation occurred around 12:30pm in front of the Secretariat.

Protesters claimed police charged batons at their peaceful demonstration, injuring several.

Some, including Dilip Roy, president of Biplobi Chhatra Maitee, were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

"Dilip was badly beaten and dragged into custody," said a protester.

He was later released.

Meanwhile, in a Facebook post last night, Dilip said police beat him up twice.

"They kept on cursing

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Committee formed to review quota in govt jobs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Public Administration has formed an 11-member committee to review the implementation process of quotas in government jobs and make necessary recommendations.

The committee has been instructed to submit a report within 30 working days, according to an official order issued in this regard yesterday.

The committee is headed by the additional secretary (Regulations) of the Ministry of Public Administration, while the deputy secretary (Regulations-1) of the ministry will act as the member secretary.

The formation of the review committee comes seven months after the then government issued a notification determining the quota system in government jobs following a ruling by the Supreme Court on July 23 last year.

According to the notification, 93 percent of direct recruitment will be based on merit.

The remaining positions are allocated to following quotas: 5 percent for children of freedom fighters, martyrs, and war heroes; 1 percent for ethnic minorities; and 1 percent for persons with disabilities and third gender individuals.

According to sources from the Ministry of Public Administration, since there is no legal definition of the third gender in Bangladesh, there are no guidelines on how to implement the 1 percent quota for third gender individuals in job recruitment.

Meanwhile, various groups, including persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities, have raised objections to their

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Home adviser vows crackdown on criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Affairs Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday warned that those involved in criminal activities and inciting anti-state movements and gatherings will be arrested.

Addressing a press briefing after the eighth meeting of the Law and Order Advisory Council, he said discussions were held regarding the current law and order situation, with a focus on the Independence day, as well as the Eid celebrations.

Jahangir emphasised that law enforcement agencies would take strong measures to prevent any disruptions, including arresting those instigating anti-state movements and violent protests.

"The authorities will increase their presence and improve intelligence monitoring to ensure public safety during the festive season," he said.

Jahangir said the government has also

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A woman sprinkles rose petals as she walks on a street at Dhaka University as part of a procession. Prachyanan organised the march, from TSC to Fuller Road, to honour the martyrs of the Liberation War and July uprising. They also protested Israeli atrocities in Gaza.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

## EC to review nine key areas of electoral reform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has been asked to provide its opinion on the Electoral Reform Commission's recommendations, focusing on nine key areas of reform.

Speaking at the Election Bhaban in Argao yesterday, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said, "The Cabinet Division has sought our opinion on these nine issues, and we will respond as soon as possible."

The proposed reforms include amendments to the Representation of the People Order,

for the December elections."

### BCP challenges NCP's abbreviation

The Bangladesh Citizen Party (BCP) has objected to the abbreviation "NCP" used by the newly formed National Citizen Party, arguing that its correct short form should be "JNP" (Jatiya Nagarik Party).

BCP General Secretary Shahriar Khan Abir sent a letter to the EC on March 22, saying, "A party's name does not change regardless of the language it is written in."

EC Additional Secretary KM Ali Nawaz said the matter would be reviewed before a decision is made.

**The proposed reforms include amendments to the Representation of the People Order, changes to the Election Commission Secretariat Act, election officer regulations, election observation and media guidelines, political party and candidate codes of conduct, draft affidavits, voter registration (including expatriates), postal ballots, transparency in electoral financing, and governance measures**

changes to the Election Commission Secretariat Act, election officer regulations, election observation and media guidelines, political party and candidate codes of conduct, draft affidavits, voter registration (including expatriates), postal ballots, transparency in electoral financing, and governance measures.

Ahmed said the chief election commissioner and EC members had discussed the proposals but could not yet disclose their recommendations.

The Cabinet Division sent a letter on March 19 urging prompt action.

When asked about the impact on upcoming elections, Ahmed said, "The impact will depend on the proposals. Our priority is to resolve these issues quickly so we can prepare

BCP, founded in 2018, is yet to be registered with the EC, while NCP, formed on February 28 by leaders of the July uprising, is the newest political entrant.

Meanwhile, a faction of the Jatiyo Party (JP) loyal to Raushan Ershad has applied to the EC for recognition of Raushan as party chair and Kazi Mamunur Rashid as secretary general.

The faction claims that JP's former chairman, GM Quader, led the party into the 2024 elections despite opposition from many leaders. At a meeting on February 24, they decided to remove Quader and General Secretary Mujibul Haque Chunnu.

Their letter argues that the leadership change aligns with party regulations and seeks EC recognition.

India Today report of coup 'false, fabricated' says ISPR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement yesterday dismissed a report published by India Today, saying it was based on "false and fabricated" information.

The ISPR statement said it lacked credible sources or verifiable evidence.

The Bangladesh Army has strongly rejected the report that claimed that an emergency meeting was held amid an alleged possibility of a coup against Chief Adviser Prof Mohammad Yunus, it said.

The ISPR statement said, "The claims made in the article are entirely unfounded."

The army remains steadfast in its commitment to the service of the nation and will continue to uphold the principles of democracy and peace, the statement read.

According to the statement, the India Today report, titled "Bangladesh Army Holds Emergency Meeting Amid Possibility of Coup Against Chief Adviser Mohammad Yunus", was published yesterday, and the ISPR labeled it as "a glaring example of journalistic malpractice".

The statement further

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YUNUS-MODI MEETING  
Dhaka awaits Delhi's response



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka is awaiting a positive response from New Delhi regarding a meeting between Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bangkok.

"There is a possibility of overcoming the current impasse in Bangladesh-India relations," said Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin at a media briefing yesterday.

The BIMSTEC summit will be held in Bangkok from April 2-4, with Bangladesh set to take over as the next chair of the regional group.

Prof Yunus will attend, along with leaders from India, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

Earlier, Bangladesh sent a letter to India, seeking a meeting between Prof Yunus and Modi on the sidelines of the summit.

Last week, Indian Minister for External Affairs S

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2 new apex court judges sworn in



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two newly elevated judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court were sworn in yesterday.

The judges are Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Farah Mahbub.

Chief Justice Syed Reafat Ahmed administered the oath at the Supreme Court Judges' Lounge around 10:30am.

With their appointments, the number of judges at the Appellate Division now stands at seven.

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY  
Arrest warrants against Nowfel, AJM Nasir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday issued arrest warrants against former ministers Hasan Mahmud and Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel, former Chattogram mayor AJM Nasir Uddin and 12 others for their alleged involvement in crimes against humanity during July uprising.

Others facing the arrest warrants include Awami League and its associate organisations' leaders Helal Akbar Chowdhury Babor, Chattogram city BCL former general secretary Nurul Azim Rony, Chandaon thana Sweekhasebak League president Mohiuddin Farhad.



A woman casts a fishing net in a canal near the Sundarbans in Khulna. During low tide, many locals use small boats and nets to catch various native fish like bele and shrimp. They sell the fish in the local market, earning around Tk 300-500 a day. The photo was taken in the Dhangmari area of Dacope upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Says Tasnim Zara about Sarjis's motorcade funding; Sarjis claims family, well-wishers chipped in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tasnim Zara, senior joint member secretary of the National Citizen Party (NCP), has called for a "clear and credible" explanation regarding the financing and management of the large-scale event marking Sarjis Alam's visit to his hometown in Panchagarh, where he arrived with a convoy of more than 100 vehicles.

In a Facebook post, Zara directly addressed Sarjis Alam, the chief organiser (north) of the party, questioning how such an elaborate event was organised despite his previous statements about financial hardship.

"I am writing this as a political activist of our party, from the perspective of our party's principles and transparency," she said. "Recently, your entry into your home district with such a massive convoy has understandably raised legitimate questions among the public."

She recalled Sarjis' earlier remarks, "Not long ago, you publicly stated, 'I don't have any money right now. I'm living on borrowed funds. This is the reality. I don't even have a wallet in my pocket.' Your simple lifestyle had impressed us and made our struggle more relatable to the people."

Zara then questioned how such a large-scale event could have been arranged given his past statements about financial constraints.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6





Trump pushes  
US claims to  
Greenland  
Territory's leaders  
lambast US  
delegation trip

REUTERS, Washington

President Donald Trump on Monday doubled down on his suggestion that the US should take over Greenland as leaders from the semi-autonomous Danish territory criticized a planned trip there this week by a high-profile US delegation.

"I think Greenland is going to be something that maybe is in our future," Trump told reporters after a meeting with officials in his cabinet, saying it was important for US national security.

Greenland's outgoing Prime Minister Mute Egede called plans by the US delegation to visit an American military base and attend



a dog sled race a "provocation", and said his caretaker government would not meet with the group.

Trump said his administration was working with "people in Greenland" who want something to happen, but did not elaborate.

"They're calling us," he said. "We're not calling them."

The US visit, which runs from Thursday to Saturday, will be led by Usha Vance, wife of Vice President JD Vance, and include White House National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and Energy Secretary Chris Wright.

Trump has made US annexation of Greenland a major talking point since his eldest son, Donald Trump Jr, paid a private visit to the vast, mineral-rich island in January.

"Such interference is a breach of our democratic principles and shows a lack of respect for our self-determination," Egede told local broadcaster KNR, adding Greenland's allies needed to be more forceful in their statements.

A legacy of art and activism

FROM PAGE 1  
Sanjida's name was synonymous with Chhayanaut. Her death comes just weeks before her 92nd birthday and this year's Pahela Baishak celebrations. With her presence at Chhayanaut's Pahela Baishak celebrations and countless cultural programmes over the decades, she became a symbol of resilience and inspiration.

Even in the most turbulent times of Bangladesh's history, she ensured that Chhayanaut remained a sanctuary for artistic expression.

All her life, this remarkable cultural personality stood against injustice and spoke out during times of national crisis. As a student of Dhaka University, she became actively involved in the 1952 Language Movement and later in the 1971 Liberation War.

Sanjida Khatun began her professional career as a teacher. After her postgrad, she taught at Eden College, Carmichael College, and Dhaka University's Bangla department before retiring.

Sanjida was born on April 4, 1933. Her father,

National Professor Kazi Motahar Hossain, was a renowned academic and her mother, Sajeda Khatun, was a homemaker. Growing up in an environment steeped in literature, music, and progressive thought, she developed a deep connection with Bangalee culture from a young age.

She completed her undergraduate degree in Bangla Language and Literature at Dhaka University in 1954 before pursuing a master's degree at Visva-Bharati University in India.

In 1978, she earned a PhD from the same institution, advancing her status as a scholar in Bangla art and culture.

While academics was only one aspect of her illustrious life, music was her soul's calling. A disciple of legendary musicians such as Sohrab Hossain, Shailajaran Majumdar, Abdul Ahad, Kamika Bandyopadhyay, and Nilima Sen, she mastered Rabindra Sangeet, Nazrul Sangeet, and Bangla folk music.

Her passion led her to

co-found Chhayanaut in the early 1960s, an institution dedicated to preserving and promoting Bangalee music and cultural traditions.

During the 1971 Liberation War, she played a crucial role in forming Bangladesh Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Sangstha, using music as a tool of resistance against oppression. Throughout her life, she remained steadfast in her belief that culture was not merely an aesthetic pursuit but a medium for social change.

Honoured with numerous accolades, she received the Ekushey Padak, one of Bangladesh's highest civilian awards, for her outstanding contributions to music and culture. In 2021, her influence crossed borders as she was awarded India's Padma Shri, the country's fourth-highest civilian honour.

Yet, beyond the accolades and recognition, Sanjida Khatun was, at her core, a devoted teacher and mentor. She believed in nurturing young talent and ensuring that future generations carried forward the rich legacy

of Bangalee music and culture. "The joy of this movement exceeded all the demands of life," she once said about her work at Chhayanaut. "I am blessed and content with this simple life."

As the nation bids farewell to this luminary, her voice may have fallen silent, but her influence continues to resonate. Her work, her teachings, and her unwavering belief in the power of culture will live on in the hearts of those she inspired.

Today, as admirers gather to honour her memory, they will not only be saying goodbye to a beloved cultural icon but also celebrating a life that enriched the very soul of a nation.

"Ninety years of my life have passed, and today, I am thinking about what I wanted to achieve and how it actually went, and I am blessed and content with this simple life," she shared across a houseful auditorium of Chhayanaut on her 90th birthday in 2023.

Two years later, the nation mourns her passing, but her legacy remains untouched.



Rescuers and volunteers evacuate a wounded person from an apartment building damaged during a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Sumy, Ukraine. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Israeli strikes across Gaza kill 23

Military expands evacuation orders to tens of thousands of residents

REUTERS, Gaza

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 23 Palestinians yesterday, local health officials said, as the Israeli military expanded evacuation orders to tens of thousands of residents across the enclave.

The Israeli military resumed its campaign against Hamas in Gaza a week ago, shattering a two-month ceasefire. Since then, 792 people, mostly women and children, have been killed, Palestinian health officials said.

Most of Gaza's 2.3 million population has already been displaced by the fighting multiple times during nearly 18 months of offensive and is facing worsening shortages of food and water after Israel suspended aid deliveries earlier this month.

Yesterday, the Israeli army told residents in all northern border towns to evacuate, saying Palestinian rockets had been fired at Israel from the area.

The affected towns include Jabalia, Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun and Shejaia in Gaza City. Orders were also issued for areas in Khan Younis and Rafah in the south.

"For your safety, you must move immediately south to known shelters,"

Al Jazeera journalist killed in Israeli attack on Gaza

792 Palestinians have been killed since last week

the military said in its orders to residents in Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's historic refugee camps.

Palestinian and United Nations officials say there are no safe areas in the Gaza Strip, reports Reuters.

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu said

the renewed offensive aimed to pressure Hamas into releasing the remaining 59 hostages it is holding in Gaza. About 24 of them are believed to be still alive.

Gaza's civil defence agency said an Israeli drone strike on Monday afternoon killed Hussam Shabat, who was working with Al Jazeera, near a petrol station in Beit Lahia, reports AFP.

Mahmud Bassal, spokesman for the agency, said air strikes had targeted more than 10 cars, including Shabat's, in various parts of Gaza.

According to the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists, Israel's military in October accused Shabat and five other Palestinian journalists of being militants, which he denied.

The civil defence agency said a media worker from Islamic Jihad affiliated Palestine Today TV, Muhammad Mansour, was killed in a separate air strike in Gaza's south.

## TRUMP OIL TARIFF THREAT China slams US 'interference' in Venezuela

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday accused the United States of "interfering in Venezuela's internal affairs" after President Donald Trump announced 25 percent tariffs on imports from countries that bought oil and gas from the South American nation.

On Monday, Trump said the new levy, effective from April 2, would apply to all goods entering the United States from countries that buy Venezuelan oil. China is the largest importer of Venezuelan oil, while other buyers include India, Spain, and the United States itself.

### Voices of 1971 collaborators

FROM PAGE 1

Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, auditorium.

"I don't want to name anyone or create bitterness. History is history. No one can distort it."

"We can clearly understand the intentions of those who go on an election campaign with a fleet of 100 cars."

"That is why, from our party, we have responded to each of their questions related to reform proposals. We have provided complete answers to every single one. We have clearly stated which ones we agree with and which ones we do not."

Fakhru said that there is no alternative to elections because through the polls they must move towards democracy. That is the gateway to democracy.

"But today a new conspiracy has started so that this process can be made longer or delayed..."

Fakhru said that several so-called leaders have emerged on social media.

"I don't know where they want to take Bangladesh. Their language, words, sentences, and statements want to take Bangladesh towards anarchy. They don't want to move it towards democracy. So, we must be careful."

The BNP leader said that now a crisis has arisen again in the country.

"... Attempts continue to make our patriotic army controversial, which we cannot accept at all. We can never allow those who protect our country, those who stand by us in the time of crisis, to be controversial."



## China, India may seek to meddle in polls: Canada

REUTERS, Ottawa

China and India are likely to try to interfere in the Canadian general election on April 28, while Russia and Pakistan have the potential to do so, the country's spy service said on Monday.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service made its comments at a time when Ottawa's relations with both India and China are chilly.

Beijing and New Delhi have denied previous allegations of interference.

Canada was slow in responding to efforts by China and India to interfere in the 2019 and 2021 elections but their outcomes were unaffected by the meddling, an official probe concluded in a final report released in January.



An elderly woman reacts as Palestinians flee their homes after the Israeli army issued evacuation orders, in Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Trump backs national security adviser

White House promises to probe, criticises journo

REUTERS, Washington

President Donald Trump yesterday expressed support for his national security adviser, Michael Waltz, after a magazine journalist said on Monday that Waltz had accidentally included him in a discussion of highly sensitive war plans on the messaging app Signal.

"Michael Waltz has learned a lesson, and he's a good man," Trump told NBC News in a phone interview.

US senators were set to grill Trump's top intelligence officials on Tuesday about the apparent breach, which triggered outrage and disbelief among Democrats and national security experts.

Jeffrey Goldberg, editor-in-chief of The Atlantic, said in a report on Monday that Waltz unexpectedly added him on March 13 to an encrypted chat group on the Signal messaging app coordinating US action against the Yemen rebel group over its attacks on Red Sea shipping.

National Security Council spokesperson Brian Hughes said the chat group appeared to be authentic. The White House said it was looking into how Goldberg's number was added

to the thread.

Democrats - and some Republicans - called for an investigation of what appeared to be a major security breach. Classified and sensitive information is not supposed to be shared on commercial mobile phone apps, and unknown numbers should not be included.

Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee were to question two of the administration officials on the chat - Director of National Intelligence Tulsil Gabbard and CIA Director John Ratcliffe on Tuesday during the panel's annual hearing.

In his opening statement, Senator Mark Warner, the Democratic vice chairman of the intelligence committee, said a military or intelligence officer who took similar action would be fired.

"Yesterday, we stunningly learned that senior members of this administration, and according to reports, two of our witnesses here today, were members of a group chat that discussed highly sensitive and likely classified information that supposedly even included weapons packages, targets and timing and included the name of an active CIA agent," he said.

## CIVIL WAR ABUSES UK sanctions ex-Sri Lankan commanders

REUTERS, London

Britain on Monday imposed sanctions on three former senior Sri Lankan military commanders and one former Tamil Tiger rebel commander over human rights violations during a civil war that ended in 2009.

The measures, which include bans on travelling to Britain and asset freezes, target the former chief of staff of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, Shavendra Silva, former commander of the Navy Wasantha Karannagoda and former commander of the Army Jagath Jayasuriya.

Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, known as Karuna Amman, a former commander in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, was also sanctioned. Amman split from the LTTE before the war ended and later led a paramilitary group working for the Sri Lankan Army.

## Turkish court jails 7 journos after anti-Erdogan protests

AFP, Istanbul

A Turkish court yesterday remanded in custody seven journalists for covering the mass protests that erupted following the arrest of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's main political rival, in a crackdown that has now seen more than 1,400 people arrested.

Among the journalists placed under arrest by the Istanbul court was AFP photographer Yasin Akgul, who was seen being escorted away to jail.

Press freedom group Reporters Without Borders (RSF) denounced the move as "scandalous".

Vast crowds have hit the streets daily since the March 19 move against Istanbul's popular opposition mayor, Ekrem Imamoglu, prompting nightly clashes with riot police that have spread across the country.

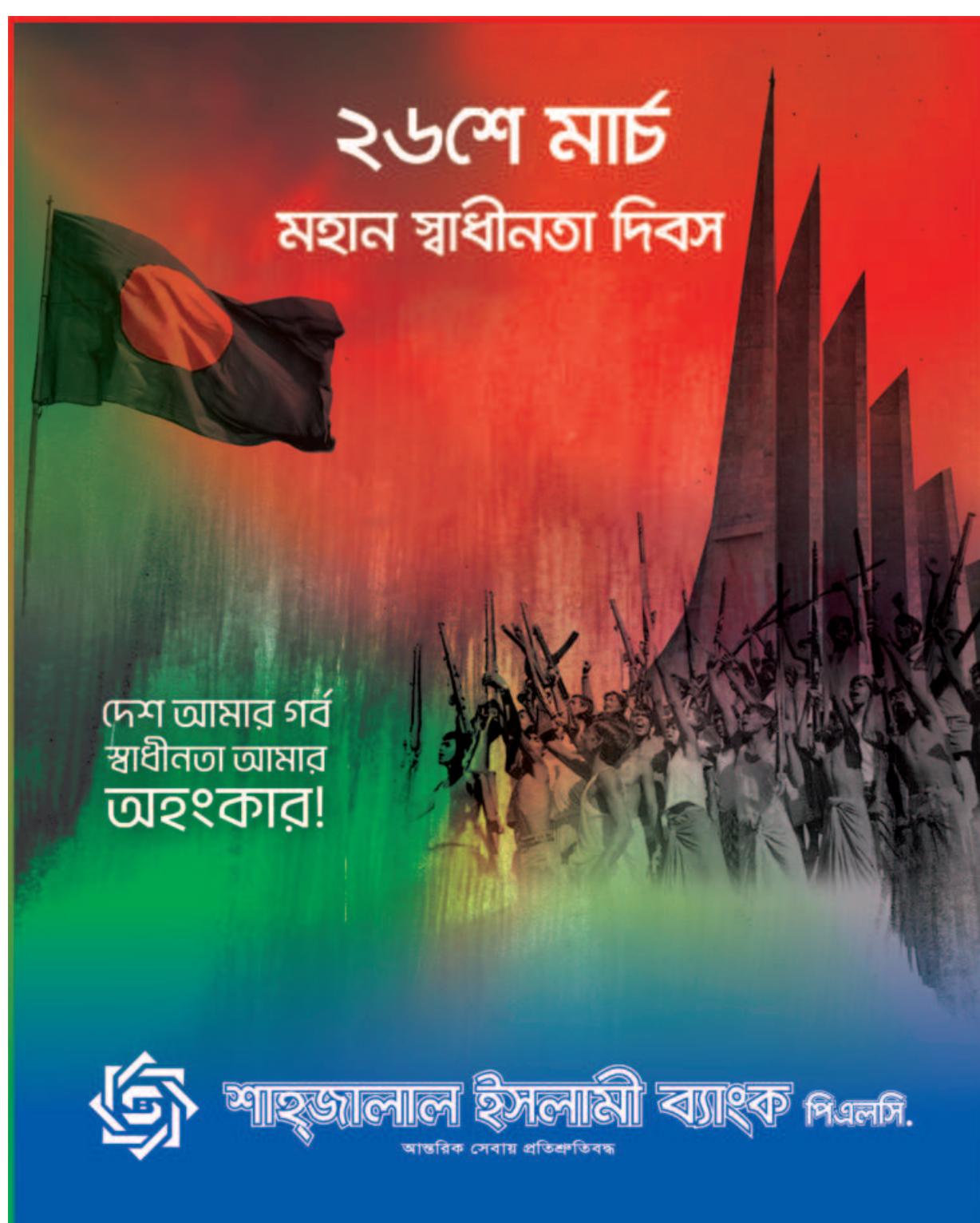


ঢাকা ব্যাংক এর পক্ষ থেকে  
সবাইকে জানাই মহান

ম্বাসীনগা  
দিবসের শুভেচ্ছা



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• Art &amp; Design : Department of Films &amp; Publications (DFP)

• Guidance : Press Information Department (PID), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting



PRESIDENT  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH  
DHAKA.  
12 Chaitra 1431  
26 March 2025

## Message

26th March- The great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh. On this auspicious occasion, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to my fellow Bangladeshis living at home and abroad.

On March 26, 1971, through the Declaration of Independence, an independent and sovereign Bangladesh was born. The final victory was achieved through a nine-month-long armed War of Independence. I recall with deep respect the millions of martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the liberation war.

To achieve the desired goal of independence, democracy must be strengthened, and forbearance, human rights, and the rule of law have to be consolidated. Equity, transparency, and accountability must be ensured in all spheres of the state and society. The young generation once again shed their blood in the July mass uprising to realise our unfulfilled dreams of independence. Building a safe, happy, beautiful, developed, and prosperous Bangladesh for the new generation is now our sacred duty.

Let us contribute more from our respective positions to build a society free from all forms of discrimination and exploitation in realising the goal of independence. Let us steer the country and the nation forward on the path of development and prosperity; let a new Bangladesh rise up before the world- this is my expectation on the great Independence Day.

*M. Shahabuddin*  
Mohammed Shahabuddin



## Independence Day 2025 : A Different Kind of Feeling

Farida Akhter

Bangladesh is an independent country. The people of this country have never condoned wrongs, injustices, and repression. Following the declaration of independence on 26 March 1971, the country achieved victory on 16 December after waging a 9-month-long blood-drenched liberation war. A long path has been traversed after that; the country has survived in the global arena after crossing half a century despite numerous obstacles. The people of the country have always sought a country that upholds justice and human dignity. Innumerable people have sacrificed their lives during different movements and struggles. However, the citizens celebrate the Independence Day together every year irrespective of their party or opinion with joy and festivity. They wear the red and green dresses. Flags of various sizes are seen flying atop the rickshaws, motor vehicles, and buildings. The flag is a symbol of our independence; therefore, the people harbour a different kind of love towards it.

I have a different kind of feeling this year on the occasion of Independence Day-2025. The July-2024 upsurge of the students and masses has freed the country again. The people of Bangladesh became independent once again on 5 August 2024 after 36 days of blood-drenched movement, because of the self-sacrifices of about 1,500 martyrs and over 23,000 injured activists. This is the view of almost all with the exception of members of ousted regime and its collaborators. Known as the 36-day movement, it was extended up to 5 August after crossing the month of July. It succeeded in bringing down a fascist regime that became entrenched over a period of 15 years. That was not an easy task. Young women and men were at the forefront of this mass upsurge. People were amazed when they saw that a new generation of citizens were spilling blood while protesting against discriminations; many chose a life of suffering when they lost their limbs or eyes while fighting for the country. When we listen to their stories now, we find that they went out of their homes despite the firing of bullets outside. They did not join the struggle out of any whim. Before going out, they said, "Mother, If I don't return..." Through their sacrifices, they saw a new dream – the dream of building a new Bangladesh. They, therefore, had no fear. People were oppressed by the fascist rulers for long 15 years, from which they have now been freed. The youths who belong to the age-group of 20-25 years, have witnessed only fascist rule since their adolescence. They could not see anything else except a particular profile and a specific narrative regarding the history of Bangladesh. We now want to see Bangladesh in a new shape on the occasion of 'Independence Day'-26 March 2025, in the light of the dreams of those youths.

Those of us who witnessed the liberation war in 1971 are getting the taste of becoming independent twice. But for those who have freed themselves on 5 August by waging a relentless

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## Independence, Sovereignty, and Freedom

Mohammad Azam

## Independence

Independence is a fascinating concept. It undoubtedly involves complexity. It is not at all easy to determine when or at what stage would a person consider himself to be independent, or when would the idea become meaningful. But when a man speaks about independence, he usually does not do that after a thorough review. Whether it is spoken in terms of individuals, groups, or the state, people usually use it in a lax sense. People seek the freedom of speech, liberty of behaviour, and freedom to work; above all, they seek a situation where they are not subjugated by others. There are also variations with regard to expectations based on culture, history, and class. In one situation, some people may feel they are enjoying the sweet nectar of independence; but that same situation may seem like imprisonment to others. For this reason, it is not very easy to arrive at a generalized definition of the term.

Philosophically speaking, the freedom of individuals is a very complex phenomenon. The individual is dependent on the collective for his existence. Humans live in languages, and an infinite web of connected signs and symbols. It can be said that with regard to existence, humans are not at all independent; rather, they are deeply dependent. If we raise the issue of a general reality above its deeper layer, even then we shall see that everything from the production system of man to the varied meshes of his relationships are adversarial to his 'independent' existence. At one time, it was considered that man is born free, but later becomes captive in a huge net. All philosophical schools that flourished during the 19<sup>th</sup> century tell us conclusively that man not only gets entangled in variegated and deceptive webs after his birth, he also gets covered by the impenetrable biological and cultural nets.

Even then, man seeks freedom. It can be said that the reason why this conscious or unconscious desire for freedom among people is so strong is because absolute freedom is an impossibility. It also has another practical aspect that should not be neglected. The web or framework that proposes a limit to people's possibilities is deterministic on the one hand, and remains captive to the immutability of habits on the other hand. This kind of situation opposes new ideas and initiatives. The main mantra of human development is the aspiration to surmount the present condition and status. New realizations and demands emerge from these aspirations. Therefore, in a deeper sense, the desire for individual freedom is the principal driving force for the advancement of civilization.

However, among the people who raise the demand for independence, even a quarter of them cannot attain the realization of this new aspiration. I have said earlier, the complexity of individual freedom is the main reason for this. Man, therefore, seeks freedom in the collective existence. Man seeks his country's independence; he satisfies his unmet desire for freedom by considering the country as sovereign.

## Sovereignty

We generally apply the term sovereignty in case of the state. There is an implicit hint of 'final authority' in the word. This meaning is very important for the workings of the state. If the state authority cannot take decisions and implement those without remaining free from internal and external prescriptions, then its workings are hampered. We tag a symbolic value to the head of state for evading that obstacle. In the past, people used to define kings and emperors in this way. The king was then viewed as a representative of the creator, or at least His nominated person. The king used to rule the kingdom by upholding the concept of sovereignty. Although the circumstances have changed completely, the idea has remained almost the same. Only the system of nominating individuals has changed.

Governance has to be conducted by at least maintaining the symbolic meaning of sovereignty and authority of the state. It is true inside the state as well. But we generally consider the word sovereignty in relation to another state. We assume that other states will not interfere in the internal affairs of a state; the authorities of a state



shall be able to take decisions and implement those on behalf of its people. But in reality, this kind of sovereignty exists nowhere. The ruling coterie has to run the country in the face of considerable opposition. And huge lists of prescriptions are sent from outside to the comparatively poorer and weaker states. In many cases, these countries have to carry out many tasks even by sidestepping their own wishes, or by harming themselves. It is not that this kind of happening does not occur in large and powerful countries. That definitely happens. The people of the world are so inter-connected with each other and their common interests are so intertwined, that the powerful countries also have to take many decisions by taking other countries into consideration.

Despite knowing all these, man aspires for sovereignty; he wants to imagine that his state is sovereign. This is important for mental peace. Man tries to compensate for the absence of individual freedom by imagining state sovereignty. However, this concept is important for good governance. Again, the mutual agreements and exchanges between the states are transacted mainly based on the concept of sovereignty. It can be

said, it is an urgent, but in real sense a non-existing concept. This concept can be explained only by accepting the importance of signs and symbols in people's lives.

## Freedom

It is clear from our short discussion on independence and sovereignty that these concepts are heavily abstract. The place of abstraction is very high in man's lives. But abstraction is not enough. It is necessary to comprehend the concepts in terms of relative manifestations and practical shapes. In that respect, the idea of 'freedom' or liberation is much clearer. It is easy to comprehend it as within our reach. For example, humans are freed from captivity and indebtedness. When there is specificity about getting freed from a particular condition, it becomes comparatively easy to bring the concept under comprehension.

The word 'freedom' is much more related to the general public for this reason. Or we can say, it becomes possible to consider it through inter-linkages and implement it with some clarity. But whether independence or sovereignty, the words do not mean much if those are not linked to the lives of the common people. It can be stated in another way. Man has identified some basic needs based on his experience of thousands of years. He needs food, clothing, housing. During comparatively modern times, healthcare and education have been added to this list. The issue of security is also spoken of now-a-days. The most significant aspect of these definitions is that they are all linked to the biological existence of man – and are minimum preconditions for his survival.

The truth is, humans possess sufficient resources today due to the progression of global production system through some astonishing phases, which are sufficient now to meet the biological needs of mankind. In the history of the world, human beings have achieved this success in production only during recent times. But it is also true that the fruits of these resources have remained outside the reach of a large segment of mankind because of distribution-related inequalities. Many people cannot cater to their minimum and urgent needs for survival even today.

It is in this context that the concept of freedom has assumed greater significance. Independence and sovereignty are no doubt important concepts. But they, on the one hand, entail the problem of additional abstraction; on the other hand, there is a deficit in their universality as they lack application in the lives of a majority of the population. The word 'freedom' is much more visible and universal. It is not that there is any essential conflict between the previous two concepts and 'freedom'. But there is a risk if attempt is made to arrive at the other two concepts without incorporating the concept of freedom. The risk is ethical or moral as well. Question must be urgently raised: can the abstraction of independence-sovereignty create an ethical condition without the pledge for meeting the basic needs of people? It is not very easy to provide an assured answer to this question.

## Our Independence

The people of Bangladesh sought independence. They snatched the crown of an independent country by fighting with all their might. They also played a valiant role in the fight for becoming the citizens of an

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## Special Supplement

## Independence and National Day of Bangladesh

Wednesday, 26th March 2025

## Independence Day 2025 : A Different Kind of Feeling

movement, it is their first independence. They were the citizens of a country called Bangladesh, but they were not independent. Let us have a look at their age. According to the Population and Housing Census 2024, the projected population of Bangladesh in January 2024 was over 170 million. The number of females was found to be higher than males by 3.19 million during this count. This was not observed during the previous censuses. Therefore, the share of females in the population is now more than half. Females were lagging behind quantitatively in the past, but that is no more the case now.



And another important feature is that, 60 percent of the 170 million population belong to the age-group of 0-25 years. Of them, 27 percent are below 15 years. Therefore, the remaining 33 percent are the youths belonging to the age-group of 16-25 years. What an amazing demographic attribute. The youths of this age can cause explosion. Those who were on the roads during the July upsurge had a similar age-tag. Most of them belonged to this very age-group. A large segment of those who embraced martyrdom and those who are still in hospitals with injuries were of this age. If we look back at history, those who went to the liberation war in 1971 were mostly youths of this age. Those who fought against the British colonial rule were also youths of this age. What was the age of Khudiram? He was only 18 years 7 months 11 days old at the time of his hanging. Preetilata was 21 years old during her martyrdom. We can see them if we look at old pictures. The youths have always brought about changes and transformations. They made the impossible possible. This is happening even now. History is bound to repeat itself.

Neither them, nor their parents had witnessed the liberation war of 1971. They learnt about the war of liberation and independence from the one-sided narratives in text-books and television channels. And they saw that the people did not have the right of free speech in real life. They could not demand the realization of their rights despite passing their days in agony. They were arrested, imprisoned, murdered, and subjected to enforced disappearances. The lives of those who did not support the Awami League were in peril. They have witnessed these injustices since their childhood. Those who became eligible for voting after crossing 18 years wanted to vote. But they could not cast their votes during the farcical elections of 2014, 2018, and 2024. They could never see democracy except in the pages of their text-books. Many had hoped that a fair election would be realized through rigorous movement of opposition parties. But that hope never materialized.

Many of these youths were not previously seen much in social movements. They were not visible in women's movement, or health-rights movement – no, they were not seen. The number of older people were more in those movements. Many people then lamented: where is the new generation? The society could not progress without their awareness. However, when these youths become angry about something, then the situation becomes different. When they descend on the streets, they come down in groups. Now they have mobile phones in their hands, and they have Facebook.

## Independence, Sovereignty, and Freedom

independent state by freeing themselves from colonial rule in 1947. They sought the happiness of freedom by forming party, casting vote, and spilling blood. However, the people of this land were deprived of their civic rights in the state of Pakistan. They fought for realizing the right of autonomy in order to bring their deprivations to an end. But even this meagre demand could not be elicited from the autocracy that emerged in Pakistan due to the collaboration of civil-military bureaucracy and the dominance of a feudal outlook. Even the acquiescence of the people ascertained through a democratic process could not ensure the right of autonomous rule. The people were therefore compelled to move towards the path of total independence.

Undoubtedly, the onus of responsibility for the breakup of Pakistan – the independence that was obtained in 1947 – falls squarely on the West Pakistani ruling coterie and their supporters in East Bengal. However, there are many people inside and outside Bangladesh who feel that the people of Bangladesh also had some liability there. But this claim is not correct. The independence of Bangladesh was not a purely political event, it was in large part a military event. The responsibility of transforming politics into a military discourse does not fall on the majority population of Bangladesh. The chronology of events in the annals of history shows without any doubt that the community of Pakistani elites bore this responsibility; they were joined by a very small fraction of Bangladeshi population. It needs some elaboration.

The nationalist movement of the decade of 1960s was a political event. Its cultural part was also a component of that political expression. There was no deviation even when the six-point demand for autonomy and the eleven-point demand for additional rights were made. The lobbies after election alongside blood-drenched roads also did not cross the level of political language. But all political decorums were violated and the political language was replaced by the language of war on the night of 25 March 1971, when the military tried to subjugate the civilian population by the language of arms. It would have been called a dreadful genocide even if that destructive assault was perpetrated on selected political cum ideological opponents. But nothing like that happened on that night. All data and statistics indicate that indiscriminate killings were resorted to on that night without caring about the massive presence of people. That genocide took the shape of ethnic killings.

Not only declaration of war, when war is waged through mass-killings, politics cannot remain alive anymore. Many people speak about the trend of prior politics when speaking about the declaration of independence and the liberation war of Bangladesh. Many people claimed that efforts should have been made for preserving Pakistan, as the people of East Bengal had elicited Pakistan through their struggles. Many also say that the historical enmity of the neighbouring country should have been kept under focus at



They can come whenever called. It is also very easy to pass on news to each other. We observed that during the movement for quota reforms and the safe road movement waged by students in 2018; they spread in all directions after swarming the city of Dhaka. All eyes were on them. They demonstrated exceptional courage and intelligence. As the fascist regime became fearful, they not only suppressed the movement with the help of police, they also deployed the Chhatra League cadres and the Helmut Bahini terrorists to remove the children from the roads by applying brute force. We were silenced. We protested, but nothing came out of that.

The reason why this Independence Day is all the more important to me is because the womenfolk were at the forefront of the July-movement. Not only were they present, they led the movement. The independence that I am speaking about has been an achievement of the womenfolk. When the university students waged the anti-quota movement in 2018, the females participated in that and the leadership was in the hands of the students. The participation of female students in anti-quota movement was significant, because the women were also getting the benefit of 5 percent quota reserved for women. It could be said that they were the beneficiaries of quota system. No doubt, maintaining this quota for women in government jobs was advantageous for many females. However, even then the womenfolk chanted the slogan: "Not quota, but talent, talent". They said, "We seek jobs on merit, not mercy of anyone". This firm stand of the womenfolk geared up the movement. When Sheikh Hasina called the protesters 'Razakar', it was the female students of Dhaka University and Eden Girls' College who started the protests at midnight. The male students later joined them. They stood like shields when the police tried to swoop on their male comrades.

It is almost eight months now. A new situation, a new condition prevails now. An interim government 'selected' by the students and masses after the upsurge has been constituted, of which they are also a part. This is a new experience. The common people have accepted this, and they are hoping that improvements would be made to the vulnerable economic condition of the country. They would get some relief. But this task has become very difficult due to economic devastations caused by corruption and looting of the deposed regime. Besides, although the fascist regime was ousted, much of their system still remains. Many of its collaborators also remain, who are still bent on creating problems. However, opportunities have been created for many jobs under the changed circumstances, attention to which was not paid by the ousted regime. The regime raised slogans of 'development', but those were mostly confined to constructing huge buildings, roads, bridges, etc. But they did not pay attention to improving the living standard of the people. All humans seek honour and prestige in their lives. Taka in billions need not be spent for that. Proper planning and reaching its fruits to the marginalised population can bring about a different kind of development. That is, development



human beings. They live in remote places, hills, or char-lands (shoals) of rivers; where development does not trickle down automatically. But now, that effort has to be made, so that people live in joyous and healthy circumstances.

Whether male or female, rich or poor, people belonging to all religions shall live together harmoniously in this new Bangladesh. The honour of all citizens will be protected; this is our little expectation.

Author: Adviser, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

the centre of political considerations. The logic of all these viewpoints is okay, but only when considered as part of the political language. There is also much scope to consider these as ideological standpoints. If the political language was not transformed into military language, then all these would have remained valid as cognizable logic. But just as politics became redundant through the declaration of war on 25 March, similarly these logics also became untenable. By then, the language of politics got transformed into the language of war.

The people of Bangladesh therefore pitched the historical justification of freedom by declaring independence while in the midst of an unjust situation. They fought back, sacrificed their lives, suffered indescribable pains, sorrow, and tortures. In the end, they earned their independence.

## Our Sovereignty

Behind the demand for independence remains the aspiration for sovereignty. It remains in considerable proportion. If independence is considered to be the realization of a map, then sovereignty is its life-spirit. People enjoy sovereignty by attaching priority to the collective, and by considering the individual self as its part. As pointed out earlier, there is complexity in this concept, in addition to the problems of abstractness and symbolism.

In our case, one of the probable problems is the idea of water rivalry on two sides of the border. It is difficult to say with certainty, but the experience of colonial rule, lack of faith arising out of that, and the sharing of borders amid lack of control can be the sources of that distrust. No country or population in the world enjoy an absolutely independent lifestyle that the word 'sovereignty' indicates. Apart from international politics and geo-political realities, people living on the borders have many mutualities. If these are not looked at in a more relaxed manner from the perspective of principle and law, then the lives of many people become complex. If the concept of sovereignty assumes a huge abstract shape, then this type of complexity undoubtedly increases!

Another big rival of the concept of sovereignty is financial poverty. It becomes very difficult for poor countries to maintain sovereignty. They have to borrow a lot, when they have to accept a package of conditionalities by suppressing their independent will. The financial transactions can be seen through the naked eye. But it becomes difficult to know about the known and unknown debts that remain invisible. These cultural, intellectual, and mental debts make us strangers in our own land. The domestic sovereignty then disappears. The feeling or display of self-control then becomes mere ostentations. In this situation, people focus more toward what lies beyond the border and the outside world instead of opting for self-actualisation.

The effective realization of sovereignty is not a simple event. We should rather focus more on the comparatively more tangible and realistic idea of freedom.

## Our Freedom

The people of Bangladesh have been fighting for collective freedom for a long time. There was poverty among the people of this region because of geographic location and features of production system. They also had to endure much exploitation owing to external parties. But if changes are observed over a long period, then it becomes apparent that the history of the people of this region is that of slow progress. These people identified themselves as a large Muslim-majority peasant population throughout the 19th century. This attribute started to find a different kind of direct political expression at the start of the 20th century. Through this, the aspiration for freedom through self-development can be identified as an unwavering objective.

The people of this region formed the Krishak-Praja Party during the third decade of the 20th century. This party received ultimate success overnight in the arena of political powerplay. During those days, parties having this kind of name or ideal were quite rare across the globe, with the exception of the communist parties. It was possible only because of the resolute aspiration for freedom of the peasant population. After finding a new direction for freedom in the Pakistan Movement, this very population-group reassembled under the shadow of the Muslim League. Their combined support snatched freedom from the clutches of colonial rulers in 1947.

Many people failed to get the message of worldy freedom through the independence of 1947. This failure was tantamount to a failure in reading history. The demand for Pakistan came about for attaining worldy freedom. An indirect proof of this was the support extended by the Communist Party and the scheduled castes to that movement. The fact that Jogen Mandol could not survive in Pakistan was a proof of the undemocratic and communal character of Pakistan; but that does not prove that the Pakistan Movement was unjustified. Similarly, categorizing the political settlement of Kolkata by citing the info that people like Syed Mujtaba Ali could not stay on in Kolkata is not fair.

## Prayer for Freedom

Hasan Robayet

Sweet river, sugary land, greenery galore  
Innocents of paddy and rice field oscillate.  
The peasants, fishermen and sailors beckon  
Betting their lives for the sake of children.  
Crops ripen, the seeds are burnt to ashes  
Fires reach the sky, cows and buffalo perish.  
The devil descends in the dark black night  
Demos of blood float on the boiled rice.  
The books are torn, the sermons of saint  
Rosaries of prophet are awash with blood.  
The friends of crematorium drift away, and  
Dirt piles up on the twisted rings of nose.  
The lines are occupied with resolute chests  
Farmers, workers and military men take oath.  
Let dawn descend with the colours of children  
O Almighty, please accept this prayer of mine.

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

## The Path to Freedom

Rumman Jannat

'One day this war will end, and I shall return to my poetry' – with this vision, I sit with a white paper before me. This is what my freedom is. When the Baksalite murderers were reddening the month of July – I used to think in the darkness of night: how were those days when our hearts longed for the radio? I cannot tread far by crossing the walls of dream. Reminds me of the halting of a river after coming near the bare feet of a man.

The moringa plant beside my home leans due to the weight of age, and a guava tree stands beside it like a brother; My grandma used to hide inside a hole dug in its middle along with her offspring. More than the darkness, human wants blackened their night. My mother does not recall a bigger war than that. Innumerable flowers have now blossomed on that moringa plant!

The distance between the homes of my maternal and paternal grandmas could be bridged by a run. The neighbourhood ended by crossing the very bamboo bush. Then there was the village of a different tradition after passing the mosque. On that path, my young father used to join the march of freedom with his double-barrelled gun. Telling this story, his face was moist with tears like the ripe fruit of fig!

Today, on this night of spring, we are carried away by the wind of crops, and the guava tree covers its own canvas with greenery –

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed



However, the people of Bangladesh searched for a new direction of freedom during the election of 1954 after observing their limited prospects for freedom in the post-1947 political arrangement. During this long journey, there were not much variations in their worldview. Those who discover secular spirit only in the nationalistic movement of the decade of 1960s actually embrace their failure in reading properly the names and signs of the time. It can be said that the intense nationalistic movement of the 1960s was an intoxicated phase of this long struggle for worldy freedom. A golden independence was achieved during that journey. It was a lofty moment for relying on the self for achieving collective freedom based on comparatively intimate state-boundary and map.

The independence of Bangladesh has been the most important achievement in the long quest of the people of this land for freedom over many generations.

It is for this reason that the trend of terming the War of Independence as Liberation War or Liberation Struggle was set in motion. This naming is very significant. It reminds us that an event cannot be realized fully with the abstract concepts of independence and sovereignty. The word 'independence' cannot be illuminated to its full glory without the complementarity of freedom or fundamental rights. It also reminds us that the fight for freedom has to be continued if we are to realize even partially the honour and prestige of sovereignty.

The people of Bangladesh have continued that struggle. Whenever the narrow interests or partisanship of the ruling coterie appeared as something bigger than the rights and honour of the masses, people came down to the streets collectively; they framed the manifesto of a new nation. The 2024 mass upsurge of the students and masses was the latest manifestation of that trend. This mass upsurge reminds us that appealing a particular group by ignoring the message of freedom of the masses is a huge hindrance on the path of overall freedom. Its political significance has been higher among the upsurges, because it could bring forward the newer proposition of building a political community of the masses as opposed to divisive politics. But we should remember that this event materialized under a human society, a flag, and a boundary, which were already achieved in independent Bangladesh.

Our resolve during the Independence Day this year should be to make progress in the task of building a new Bangladesh by accepting with humility the newly realized message on freedom's path; and in this way, we shall be able to construct the collective preconditions for enjoying in relative visibility the abstract concepts of 'independence' and 'sovereignty'.

Author: Director General, Bangla Academy

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## 'Rishka Festival 2025'

Get ready to step into a world where tradition meets creativity. *Rishka Festival 2025* returns to celebrate Pohela Boishakh in full festive flair. After the roaring success of *Rishka Fest 2024*, this year promises an even more vibrant experience – packed with music, art, food, and the spirit of Noboborsho 1432.

DATE: FRIDAY-MONDAY | APRIL 11-14  
TIME: 11AM-10PM DAILY  
VENUE: ALOKI, DHAKA



## 'No Other Land' director freed following detention by Israeli settlers

Hamdan Ballal, a Palestinian co-director of the Oscar winning documentary *No Other Land*, has been released after being and assaulted and arrested, as confirmed by the documentary's Israeli co-director, Yuval Abraham.

Ballal's release came after concerns grew over his well-being, following Abraham's report on Monday that he was attacked by Israeli settlers outside his West Bank home.

Ballal and two others were detained by Israeli soldiers in Susiya, after around two dozen armed, masked settlers attacked the village, according to witnesses including co-director Basel Adra.

*No Other Land*, a film documenting the destruction of Masaler Yatta by the Israeli military, has won multiple awards but faced backlash, including a brief proposal in Miami Beach to end the lease of a theatre screening it.



PHOTO: AP

## NEWS

## Yunus leaves for China today

FROM PAGE 16  
a speech at the opening plenary session of the Boao Forum for Asia Conference, popularly dubbed the Asian Davos, and hold separate meetings with China's Executive Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang and some business leaders.

Yunus, who last attended the conference in China's Hainan Province in 2007, will present his famous theory of Three Zeros and sustainable solutions to global problems.

On March 28, he will meet President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

He is likely to visit a high-tech enterprise under Huawei and give an interview with a leading Chinese media outlet. On March 29, he will be conferred with an honorary doctorate by Peking University, where he will also deliver a speech.

The two countries are likely to sign

a few agreements and memoranda of understanding on economic and technical assistance, support for human resources development, cooperation in disaster mitigation, the establishment of a Chinese book centre, translation and publication of Chinese classical literature, collaboration in the sports sector and cooperation between the state news agencies of the two countries.

Teesta river water management, the Rohingya crisis, development assistance, cooperation in the health sector and Bangladesh's position on various global issues will come up during Yunus's meeting with Xi.

Asked if the Teesta river water management project will be discussed, Jashim said the meeting with the Chinese president is not agenda-driven; rather the two sides will choose issues of their choice for discussion.

"However, there is interest from both sides to discuss the water management issue. Under that, there is a scope to discuss the Teesta issue as well," he said.

Asked if defence cooperation will take place, Jashim said this issue may come up during the discussions given the history of defence cooperation with China.

On the Rohingya issue, he said that Bangladesh has been trying for Rohingya repatriation for the last several years and China is also involved in an initiative.

"What we are expecting from this meeting is the Chinese views on the situation in Myanmar and share our views. Based on that, we can discuss the future course of action," he said.

There might be announcements on financial assistance, concessions in loans and a specialised hospital by China in Bangladesh.

first time the Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist Christian Unity Council has misreported such stories.

Time and again, the council has made controversial claims about the abuse of minorities in Bangladesh. Yet, when confronted with the facts, they persist in refusing to correct their misleading publications, the statement added.

The council acting general secretary, Monindra Kumar Nath, told The Daily Star, "The information we provided on March 12 is based on incidents reported in various national newspapers. At the same time, we have verified these facts on the ground. Therefore, all the information we have provided is entirely true."

He said, "Unfortunately, the government has opposed our findings. We expect the government to investigate our information, arrest those involved, and ensure justice."

These examples illustrate that the deaths were largely the result of personal disputes, criminal acts, or accidents, not communal violence as claimed by the council, the press wing statement read.

The statement claimed that unfortunately, this is not the

following a dispute over a goat, and Sree Palash, an auto-rickshaw driver in Chapainawabganj, was murdered by criminals attempting to steal his rickshaw. Sree Dipen Munda in Moulvibazar was killed as part of a long-standing dispute, while Kanai Shabdakar died after a family quarrel. Kanai Pashi was found dead under mysterious circumstances in a tea garden, and Arnab Kumar Sarker, a Khulna University student, was shot by unknown assailants over a previous conflict. Lastly, Utpal Roy in Narayanganj was killed during a robbery at his home.

On the afternoon of March 19, Hridoy's brother Jasim called the victim's brother on his phone and asked him to pick up his sister. Then, the girl was rescued from Hridoy's house in a critical condition by her relatives and admitted to the upazila health complex, according to the case statement.

Later, she was admitted to the Manikganj 250 bed District Hospital.

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
District: Thakurgaon.  
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.9400.000.14.001.24-788 Date: 25/03/2025

**e-Tender Notice-27/2024-25 (OTM)**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System of Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of under mentioned work FY 2024-2025.

Sl No	Tender ID	Works & Package No.	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing & Opening Date & time	Completion Time
1	1093464	Improvement of Jaborhat UP-Kanaria Clubhat Via Golongan Road at Ch.2500.00-5750.00m under Pirganj Upazila District Thakurgaon [Road ID: 194823099] Package No. GDDRIP/THK/PIR/UNR/148.	20.04.2025 14.00	21.04.2025 12.30	450 days

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 from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches up to 20.04.2025 14.00 For further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

(Mohammad Mamun Biswas)  
Executive Engineer  
LGED, Thakurgaon  
Mobile No: 01708-123243  
xen.thakurgaon@lged.gov.bd

GD-770

Dhaka South City Corporation  
Engineering Department  
Electrical Circle  
Tender Notice

Memo No.46.207.007.09.22.14.2025 Date-23/03/2025

Tender Notice is invited through e-GP Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, Electrical Circle, Dhaka South Corporation for the Procurement of following packages :-

Sl No	Tender ID	Description of Work	Last Selling (Date & time)	Closing (Date & time)
1	1085551	Supply & Installation of Required Equipment for Sub-Station & Generator in Adv. Kamrul Islam Community Center of Zone-3 under DSCC.	15-APR-2025 04.00 PM	16-APR-2025 02.00 PM
2	1060312	Repair & Renovation of Damaged Electrical Wiring & Fixtures and Installation of Air-Coolers at Paltan Community Center Under Zone-2 of DSCC.	21-APR-2025 12.00 AM	21-APR-2025 01.00 PM
3	1077160	Supply, Fitting & Fixing of Light Fitting, Fan, Air-Cooler and other Electrical Equipments for Renovation Works at Jamal Sorder Community Center under Zone-3 of DSCC	21-APR-2025 12.00 AM	21-APR-2025 02.30 PM

This is online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and hard copies/offline will not accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank Branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

If necessary, information please contact to the PE's Support Desk (02-223386009).

(Nur Mohammad)  
Executive Engineer  
Electrical Circle

Dhaka South City Corporation.  
Phone: 02-223386009

ডিএসসি/পিআরডি/২৬৮/২০২৪-২০২৫



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ  
পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়  
মানিকগঞ্জ  
“পন: দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি”  
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০৫/২০২৪-২৫ (রেশন স্টের)

“গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী প্রক্রিয়া একাডেমি প্রক্রিয়া/২০২৪-২৫ ও পার্সনেল প্রক্রিয়া প্রক্রিয়া/২০২৪-২৫ (সেপ্টেম্বর/২০২৪-২৫ মে থেকে জুন/২৫) অন্যান্যের জন্যে প্রক্রিয়া একাডেমি প্রক্রিয়া/২০২৪-২৫ থেকে জুন/২৫) অন্য বিভিন্ন বেশন শামীল কর্তৃ/অন্যান্য সেবা কাজের লক্ষ্যে নিম্ন বর্তিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে ক্ষিতিজ্ঞান প্রক্রিয়া থাকে সিল্বারেড পুরুষ দরপত্র আছান করা যাচ্ছে।

১.	মার্যাদাপ্রাপ্তির বিভাগ	বাস্তু মার্যাদাপ্রাপ্তি।
২.	সংস্থা	জন নির্বাচন বিভাগ।
৩.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	পুলিশ সুপার, মানিকগঞ্জ।
৪.	কি কাজের দরপত্র আছান	জেলা পুলিশ, মানিকগঞ্জ এর বেশনের বিভিন্ন বেশন কর্তৃ এবং সেবা কাজ।
৫.	দরপত্র স্থু নং	১২২৪/ই
৬.	তারিখ	তারিখ- ২৫/০৫/২৫ ত্রিঃ।

কাজের বিবরণ -

৭.	দরপত্রের প্রকৃতি	উন্নত দরপত্র (OTM)।
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অর্জনের উপর-

৮.	বাজেট ও অর্জনের প্রার্থনা	বাজেট প্রার্থনা।
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অর্জনের উপর-

৯.	অর্জনের প্রার্থনা	২৫.০৩.২০২৫ ত্রিঃ।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১০.	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রক্রিয়া প্রার্থনা	১০.০৪.২০২৫ ত্রিঃ, ১৪.৩০ ঘটিকা প্রার্থনা।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১১.	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রক্রিয়া প্রার্থনা	১০.০৪.২০২৫ ত্রিঃ, ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১২.	দরপত্র প্রোক্রিয়া প্রার্থনা	১০.০৪.২০২৫ ত্রিঃ, ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১৩.	অফিসের স্থান ও ঠিকানা	দরপত্র নিউটিল প্রার্থনার হুকুম।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১৪.	দরপত্রের বেশ্যতা	১। হাল বালান প্রেত শাস্তিরে ২। আচার সনদ ৩। ভাট্ট প্রেতিশ্রেণী সনদ ৪। ব্যাক স্পেসেল সনদ (হল নাম) ৫। আচার প্রেতিশ্রেণী ৬। অন্যান্য বেশ্যতা যাত্রা প্রেত ভাট্ট প্রেত প্রক্রিয়া প্রক্রিয়া।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১৫.	আইটেম নং	আইটেম প্রক্রিয়া প্রক্রিয়া।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১৬.	দরপত্র আছানকারী কর্মকর্তা	জেলা মার্যাদাপ্রাপ্তি।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১৭.	দরপত্র আছানকারী কর্মকর্তা	পুলিশ সুপার।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১৮.	দরপত্র আছানকারী কর্মকর্তা	পুলিশ সুপার, মানিকগঞ্জ।
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অর্জনের উপর-

১৯.	দরপত্র আছানকারী কর্মকর্তা	ফোন-০২-৯৬৬১০৮০০ ফ্যাক্স-০২-৯৬৬১০৩০৬
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অর্জনের উপর-

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## A day of unparalleled significance

Let 1971 continue to guide our path as a nation

Today marks the 54th anniversary of our nation's independence. Every year, we commemorate this day with solemn reflection and deep gratitude for the enormous sacrifices of our valiant freedom fighters. This year holds special significance, however, coming as it does in the wake of another historic moment: the overthrow of an autocratic regime through a student-led mass uprising. These occasions—over half a century apart—demonstrate the continuity of people's unwavering resolve against oppression and injustice.

While this is reassuring, in recent months, we have seen some misguided efforts to compare these two events as if they were equal in nature or importance. Equally worryingly, amendments proposed by the Constitution Reform Commission also appeared to equate the two as if they belonged on the same pedestal. All this is quite unfortunate. There is no denying the importance of the 2024 uprising, but it cannot be compared to our independence struggle as doing so risks reducing its unparalleled significance to just another political struggle. The fact is, the Liberation War is much more than that. It is the singular most defining moment of our existence, a fully fledged war fought against an external oppressor—Pakistan—after decades of economic, political and cultural subjugation. The sacrifices made during those nine months, culminating in the birth of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971, reshaped the destiny of an entire people.

On the other hand, the 2024 uprising was a movement to reclaim our political space and fundamental rights—but not a war of liberation. While we take immense pride in people's resistance against Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian rule, we must not blur the lines here and allow historical distortions to serve political narratives. Equally importantly, the constitution must not be changed in ways that permit such distortions. The Liberation War remains unique and sacred—it should never be trivialised or repurposed to suit contemporary interests.

Instead, what we should focus on is building the nation anew, in line with citizens' aspirations for a society free of discrimination and inequality, just as we sought to do after 1971. While efforts are currently underway to initiate reforms through the collaboration of political parties and the interim government, citizens too must engage in the collective effort of nation-building with a clear understanding of our history and a commitment to democratic values. Just as the sacrifices of 1971 laid the foundation of an independent country, the recent uprising has created an opportunity to turn it into a just and equitable one. Let us not squander this opportunity.

## Implement holistic policies for trade

Assess failure to fully utilise zero-duty trade benefits from China

Bangladesh's failure to fully utilise the zero-duty trade benefits it enjoys from China is quite disappointing. Despite gaining this duty holiday in 2020, we have not been able to increase our exports to China compared to our imports from the country of 1.4 billion people. Initially, duty-free access to Chinese markets was offered to 8,547 Bangladeshi products; later, 100 percent duty-free access was given to all products from Bangladesh. Yet, during the July–December period of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh only exported \$0.46 billion worth of goods to China while importing \$8.89 billion worth of goods. In the last six fiscal years, trade differences with China, in fact, went up.

In the past, we received zero-tariff benefits from India. There too, we failed to take full advantage of the benefit, and our trade imbalance with the country remained high. Both these instances point to our lack of productivity, failure to increase industrial capacity, and inability to attract investment in our export-oriented businesses (other than ready-made garments). Interestingly, Bangladesh's main export to China is garments, even though China itself is the world's largest apparel exporter. According to a report in this daily, Bangladesh does not have much scope to increase apparel exports to China beyond what is currently being done. This shows a lack of vision regarding product diversification, and the fact that we have been stuck in RMG for so long.

Experts told this daily that we should have pursued Chinese investments in products such as man-made fibre, leather, leather goods, solar panels, semiconductors, and microchips, which could be exported back to China. However, our policies often lack comprehensive implementation plans. Moreover, corruption and negligence often derail implementation. Inconsistent policies, high energy prices, and lack of political stability also drive away foreign investors.

As Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus is set to visit China, we must assess our performance in taking comprehensive steps to increase our export basket and attract Chinese investment. US President Donald Trump's trade war against several countries, including China, has opened some doors of opportunity for Bangladesh. Chinese investors are showing interest, and we must hit the iron while it's hot. We cannot let this opportunity slip because of our internal problems, low productivity, and lack of political consensus needed for urgent reforms that can support a trade-conducive and investment-friendly environment.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY



### Mike Tyson sent to prison

On this day in 1992, heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson was sentenced to six years in prison following a rape conviction in Indianapolis, Indiana.

# EDITORIAL

## Why we need competitive salaries in academia



Dr Kamrul Hassan Mamun is professor of physics at Dhaka University. He can be reached at [khassan@du.ac.bd](mailto:khassan@du.ac.bd)

KAMRUL HASSAN MAMUN

A recent report by The New Indian Express highlighted that the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi (IIIT-Delhi) has raised its PhD fellowship to 60,000 rupees per month, which amounts to over Tk 83,000, making it the highest PhD fellowship in India. Previously set at 50,000 rupees, this increase is a testament to India's commitment to fostering research and innovation. Additionally, PhD students at IIIT-Delhi also receive a studio apartment as part of their benefits package, further improving their standard of living.

However, the financial support for researchers in India does not stop there. They are also provided 150,000 rupees for international lab visits, enabling researchers to

**No institution, including DU, has a structured system for postdoctoral fellowships. This is unimaginable in today's academic world. Without such opportunities, universities cannot attract high-calibre researchers from abroad, nor can they retain homegrown talent.**

gain global exposure and collaborate with leading experts. Furthermore, a professional development allowance (PDA) of 250,000 rupees is allocated for attending prestigious conferences and workshops, ensuring that scholars can present their work on global platforms. To further enhance research capabilities, a research contingency grant is provided to cover essential research expenses, along with a one-time laptop grant to equip researchers with the necessary tools for advanced study. Additionally, newly recruited faculty members in reputed Indian



Bangladesh cannot keep its brightest minds to remain in the country with such low salaries.

FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

institutes such as IITs, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and the Indian Institute of Education and Research receive a research startup fund ranging from 25 lakh to 30 lakh rupees, equivalent to approximately Tk 35–40 lakh.

In stark contrast, how much do PhD students in Bangladesh receive? Most universities and the University Grants Commission (UGC) offer only Tk 15,000–25,000 per month. Even the highest PhD fellowship in the country, offered by the Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU) very recently, offers Tk 40,000—only half of what our neighbouring country provides to its PhD students. Meanwhile, a lecturer at a Bangladeshi university earns around Tk 35,000, and an associate professor makes approximately Tk 80,000 per month. This means that a PhD student in India now earns more than an experienced university faculty member in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh offering PhD students a mere Tk 15,000–25,000 per month raises fundamental questions about the broader academic salary structure. The current salary framework fails to recognise the academic qualifications and contributions of university faculty, leading to frustration and dissatisfaction of the community.

A salary of Tk 20,000–50,000 is

more than a Bangladeshi professor, even before adjusting for purchasing power.

How can Bangladesh expect its brightest minds to remain in the country under such conditions? Low salaries may force faculty members to take up multiple part-time jobs, which inevitably affects their ability to focus on research and teaching. Many faculty members from Dhaka University (DU) and other prestigious institutions teach part-time at private universities or engage in consultancy work to supplement their income. No one willingly endures Dhaka's traffic and additional workload unless they have no other choice.

Moreover, inadequate salaries create an environment where unethical practices can take root. Another alarming issue is the complete absence of postdoctoral research programmes in Bangladeshi universities. No institution, including DU, has a structured system for postdoctoral fellowships. This is unimaginable in today's academic world. Without such opportunities, universities cannot attract high-calibre researchers from abroad, nor can they retain homegrown talent. Competitive fellowships are essential for building a strong research ecosystem, which naturally requires an increase in faculty salaries as well.

Investing in higher education is investing in the future, and without competitive salaries, the country's academic institutions will struggle to maintain their relevance on the global stage.

If Bangladesh is serious about fostering high-quality research and world-class PhD programmes, it must provide competitive fellowships that attract both local and international scholars. PhD fellowships should be set at a minimum of Tk 70,000–80,000 per month to allow research students to dedicate themselves fully to academic excellence. In line with this, postdoctoral fellows should receive at least Tk 100,000, while an assistant professor with a PhD should earn no less than Tk 120,000. Furthermore, a full professor should not be paid less than Tk 300,000, as many private universities already offer salaries in this range. The disparity between public and private university salaries is unjustified and must be eliminated immediately.

Bangladesh needs a separate, well-structured salary scale for university teachers. Without this, the country will continue to experience brain drain, a decline in research quality, and stagnation in higher education. Recognising and addressing this issue is crucial not just for the future of academia but for the nation's overall progress in an increasingly knowledge-driven world.

The case for reverse brain drain is of significance for Bangladesh. Recently, top academics are returning to their countries as part of the global trend of reverse brain drain. Several top Indian scientists have left prestigious positions abroad to join leading Indian institutions. This is a sign that countries are making real progress by offering competitive research environments that attract their own intellectual diaspora.

Now, imagine if a Bangladeshi scholar from Princeton University decided to return to the country. The likely outcome? His research career would be doomed. He might not even secure a position, and if he did, he would receive minimal research funding, making it impossible to sustain high-level research or mentor PhD and postdoctoral fellows. This tragic reality highlights the urgency of reforming Bangladesh's research ecosystem and salary structures.

If Bangladesh is truly committed to progress, it must act now by prioritising higher education, increasing research funding, and ensuring that academia remains a viable career path for its best and brightest minds.

## Could Starlink solve the connectivity challenges in Bangladesh?



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SABBIR AHMAD

Recently, I went on a business trip to Cox's Bazar, where I had to attend several meetings virtually. Unfortunately, I could not complete any of those meetings due to weak internet connectivity there. A few months earlier, I was visiting the Sundarbans area where I wanted to connect with friends and family, but there was no connection. In Bangladesh, while urban regions enjoy relatively good internet and mobile network coverage, vast parts of the country, especially in rural, hilly and coastal areas, struggle with limited or no connectivity, with some places still relying on 2G networks only. The prohibitive cost and complexity of building mobile phone towers and other infrastructure in sparsely populated regions make it difficult to improve coverage in these areas. According to the preliminary report of the Population and Housing Census 2022, approximately 6.5 crore people aged 18 and above in Bangladesh do not have internet access. This indicates a significant digital divide in the country.

To address the connectivity issue, the efforts to bring Non-Geostationary Satellite Orbit (NGSO) networks, such as Starlink, in Bangladesh is a bold step by the government. Starlink, the satellite internet service developed

by SpaceX, is becoming increasingly popular across the globe for providing connectivity, especially in remote or underserved regions where traditional ground-based networks are not available. Starlink, with its constellation of low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites, can provide internet connectivity directly to users in these areas without relying on ground-based infrastructure. It is kind of a plug and play kit that includes a dish (user terminal) and a router. The dish connects to the Starlink satellites while the router connects to the dish and provides wi-fi in a home, community facility or business.

In regions with hilly or mountainous terrain, laying cables is difficult and expensive, as transporting construction equipment to remote sites can be challenging. Meanwhile, coastal regions and low-lying areas are vulnerable to flooding, and underground cables there need frequent maintenance and repair. In such areas, Starlink can provide a cost-effective satellite backhaul, ensuring that mobile networks stay connected. Through satellite backhaul, mobile operators can expand their network reach and provide better services in remote areas. Starlink can partner with telecom operators in Bangladesh to provide satellite backhaul for mobile towers.

We remember what happened when Cyclone Remal struck Bangladesh's southern coastal regions in May 2024. The cyclone's impact was particularly severe on the nation's telecommunications infrastructure. As the storm approached, power outages became widespread, with the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) reducing electricity generation by more than half to prevent accidents during the cyclone. This led to at least 10,000 mobile towers, or base transceiver stations (BTS), to go out of service. Millions of people were affected by this disruption in mobile and internet services. The widespread loss of connectivity severely hampered communication and coordination efforts during the disaster response. Relief operations faced challenges in reaching the affected communities, and people struggled to contact emergency services or inform relatives of their safety.

This situation underscored the vulnerability of essential communication infrastructure to natural disasters and highlighted the need for more resilient systems to ensure continuous connectivity during emergencies. In such circumstances, Starlink could play a critical role in mitigating communication disruptions as it doesn't rely on ground-based infrastructure and could continue to provide internet access even if local mobile towers or fibre connections were down. Starlink terminals can be quickly set up and deployed in emergency response zones as they are portable and can be activated with minimal effort.

The Internet of Things (IoT) is rapidly gaining importance in Bangladesh, with applications in agriculture, healthcare, and smart

city development. However, the coverage of IoT networks largely depends on the existing 3G and 4G mobile infrastructure, which remains limited in rural and remote regions. Expanding IoT applications requires better connectivity, especially outside urban areas. Mobile phone networks and NGSOs can work together to offer reliable connectivity for IoT devices in Bangladesh. While mobile networks are ideal for dense, urban environments, Starlink can provide connectivity for IoT devices in remote or rural areas.

However, Starlink networks face several technical challenges that include latency and handover. More importantly, the cost of Starlink service is a significant barrier for widespread adoption in countries like Bangladesh, where economic challenges persist for many people. A Starlink kit costs around \$549 to \$599. The cost for the monthly internet service varies based on location and specific plan, but generally it ranges between \$110 and \$120 per month. This is much higher than local data and broadband costs.

The government needs to be proactive in eliminating this cost barrier. A business model is required to reduce the cost of initial setup and monthly subscription fee of Starlink services. One possible solution is to offer monthly rental of devices with long-term contracts. The government can also establish community-based models, where people can pool their resources to share a single Starlink connection. In some cases, businesses may subsidise the cost of Starlink internet to provide connectivity in underserved areas. This could enable affordable internet access where other solutions are economically unfeasible.

## 54 YEARS OF BANGLADESH'S INDEPENDENCE

## March 1971 and the years that led to it

Anu Muhammad  
is former professor of economics from Jahangirnagar University.

ANU MUHAMMAD

The Liberation War of Bangladesh, which officially began in March 1971, had its roots in events that unfolded many years earlier. The people of what is now Bangladesh played a key role in the establishment of Pakistan, primarily through their votes. They joined the Pakistan movement with the hope that the new state, founded on religious lines, would rise above communal conflicts and emerge as a true democracy.

However, the reality after Pakistan's formation gradually disillusioned the people in the erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). It became increasingly clear that the state structure was deeply flawed, especially for Pakistan's eastern wing. A powerful alliance took control at the centre, consisting of big business groups, the military and civil bureaucracy ("overdeveloped" as Pakistani social scientist Hamza Alavi termed it), and racially biased politicians. This triad consolidated power and blocked any meaningful democratic progress. When the military regime took over in 1958, it became the primary tool for these ruling forces to maintain control. Authoritarian rule was their chosen path.

In the 1954 provincial elections, the Muslim League suffered a decisive defeat. The United Front, led by three secular leaders—AK Fazlul Huq, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy—emerged victorious. Their 21-point programme called for greater provincial autonomy, land reform, public education rights, democratic rights, autonomy to universities, nationalisation of jute business, and scrapping of repressive laws. These demands laid the groundwork for future movements in the 1960s.

Even before martial law, and especially under it, regional and ethnic discrimination against East Pakistan worsened. Class inequality also deepened. In response, the people of East Pakistan resisted oppression, military dictatorship, and systemic injustice. Despite severe repression, the democratic

movement in East Pakistan gained momentum, and secular political aspirations took shape. The struggle against Pakistan's authoritarian rule strengthened both democratic and secular ideals among the people. One key example was the evolution of the Muslim League into the Awami Muslim League, and eventually the Awami League, under the leadership of Maulana Bhashani. Later, Bhashani established another all-Pakistan party, National Awami Party (NAP), to advance the anti-imperialist struggle. Through this transformation, people's aspirations for democracy and secularism found expression. This resistance was not confined to East Pakistan alone. Democratic forces in West Pakistan also joined hands with those in the east. In the 1960s, workers and peasants' organisations flourished, especially under left leadership.

Two political figures played pivotal roles during this time: Maulana Bhashani and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Although Bhashani was a religious leader by title,

**The 1971 Liberation War was the culmination of a long struggle for a democratic, secular, and egalitarian society—free from discrimination based on religion, caste or ethnicity. It marked a crucial phase in that journey, though not its conclusion.**

he never engaged in communal politics. Instead, he always stood for workers' and peasants' rights, opposed imperialism, and supported socialist ideals. He was a key figure in the 1969 Mass Uprising and played a crucial role in securing Sheikh Mujib's release from prison.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Mujib's Six-Point Movement demanded autonomy and stood against ethnic discrimination. The 11-point movement by the student alliance, in addition, raised issues against imperialism and class exploitation. The Pakistani establishment-dominated by powerful business families (including the Adamjees and Bawans), the military-civil bureaucracy, and authoritarian, racially

negotiations, culminating in the horrific events of March 25.

Until that night, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League's elected representatives continued negotiations with President Yahya Khan. However, threats from Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, fears among military generals of losing power, and anxieties of the big business families pushed the regime towards a catastrophic decision.



A child carries the flag of the newly born Bangladesh as he moves with his family during the Liberation War in 1971.

PHOTO: COLLECTED FROM ARCHIVE

biased politicians—was determined to retain control at all costs.

This ruling alliance consistently undermined democratic processes. However, the 1969 Mass Uprising challenged and ultimately broke their grip on power, leading to the fall of Gen Ayub Khan. The 1970 general election became Pakistan's final opportunity to remain united under a democratic framework. The Awami League's landslide victory opened the door for a new democratic leadership for all of Pakistan.

But the ruling triad refused to accept the election results. Their rejection effectively sealed Pakistan's fate. From March 1, 1971, instead of respecting the democratic mandate, the regime secretly prepared for military action under the guise of

On the night of March 25, the Pakistani military launched a brutal crackdown in Dhaka. Their primary targets included police and East Pakistan Rifles (EPR) headquarters, student dormitories at Dhaka University, slum areas, teachers, intellectuals, and journalists. Estimates suggest that over 25,000 people were killed in a single night.

The Pakistan Army believed this operation would crush all resistance within days. They arrested Sheikh Mujib and imposed a curfew on March 26. By March 27, large numbers of people had begun fleeing Dhaka. But the events of March 25 made one thing clear: Bangladesh could no longer remain a part of Pakistan. What began on March 25 quickly escalated into a full-scale national armed struggle for liberation.

The massacre turned the people's long-standing desire for independence into an unstoppable determination for freedom. There is some debate regarding the formal declaration of independence. Maj Ziaur Rahman, on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, made a radio proclamation referring to Mujib as the president. Similar declarations were also made by other Awami League leaders.

Actually, people did not wait for a formal announcement. Resistance erupted spontaneously across the country. The Pakistani military's assumptions were shattered as people from all walks of life—students, workers, peasants, and the general public—rose in what became a people's war. Except for a few war criminals, the whole population of the country participated in this war. Countless lives were lost, rape and the abuse of women reached horrific levels. Few events in world history compare to the scale of the genocide committed in such a short time and also the intensity of the resistance.

The 1971 Liberation War was the culmination of a long struggle for a democratic, secular, and egalitarian society—free from discrimination based on religion, caste or ethnicity. It marked a crucial phase in that journey, though not its conclusion.

However, in the years following the victory, people's expectations were steadily betrayed. Over the past 54 years, there have been severe deviations from the spirit of the Liberation War. Successive governments have failed to realise the dreams that fuelled the war. The Awami League, throughout its unelected ruling period (2014-2024), harmed the ideals of Liberation War more than any previous record.

Nevertheless, this war remains the most glorious chapter in Bangladesh's history. The people did not submit; against one of the world's most brutal and well-trained military forces, they showed extraordinary courage, dignity, and determination. As we stand at a new phase of political awakening, sparked by recent mass uprisings, we must remember that the Liberation War of 1971 laid the strongest foundation for a democratic, inclusive, secular, and just Bangladesh. Progress cannot be achieved by ignoring or diminishing the legacy of 1971.

The Liberation War must always remain our guiding light, our enduring source of strength as we move forward.

## Would I be the kind of person to forget history?

Emran Mahfuz  
is a poet and convenor of Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad.

EMRAN MAHFUZ

Breaking the chains of years of subjugation, we gained independence in 1971. March 26, our Independence Day, is marked by the sacrifice and blood of our martyrs. Our founding aspirations were rooted in equality, human dignity, and social justice. In 1971, democracy was at the core of the spirit of the Liberation War. Similarly, in the 1990s, democratic values were behind the fall of autocratic ruler HM Ershad. Unfortunately, the spirit of democracy and social dignity was sidelined in the following years, which led to public grievances, culminating in the mass uprising of July 2024, which claimed at least 1,400 lives.

The greatest achievement of Bangalees is our independence achieved in 1971. But its backdrop is not limited to 1971. The uprising of 1969, 1990, and 2024—each struggle revolved around the question of our rights and deprivation. Driven by aspirations for democracy, ordinary people shed their blood and endured imprisonment. Yet, like a fleeting mirage, democracy slipped through our grasp.

Our struggle has always been against political domination and social inequality, spanning from British rule to the Pakistani regime. At the core of every struggle was the unwavering desire to live with dignity. Yet, those who rose to power repeatedly neglected the sacrifices of Shaheed Asad, Shamsuzzoha, Noor Hossain, Dr Milon, and Raufun Basunia. In the anti-discrimination movement, martyrs like Abu Sayeed and Mir Mugdha embodied the dreams of democracy and social dignity. To forget these heroes is to forsake the spirit of patriotism, an act that undermines the very essence of 1971.

In this regard, Rabindranath Tagore's poignant words come to mind. He did not see us merely as human beings but as Bangalees—whom he could not fully trust. Perhaps from this anguish, he lamented, "O enchanted mother, you have made seventy million of your children Bangalees, but not made them humans." For the poet, Bangalees lacked the essence of true humanity; they were consumed by self-interest and betrayed public trust. Forgetting history and dismissing sacrifices seemed ingrained in their nature.

I am reminded of the deeply reflective poem "Amar Porichoy" by poet Syed Shamsul Haque, which resonates with Kazi Nazrul Islam's "Samyobadi." Nazrul wrote, "I sing the song of equality, where all barriers and distances have dissolved into one." In Haque's poem, the thousand-year history and heritage of the country are invoked. He begins by touching upon that vast history, then speaks of the river-encircled land of Bangla. At the end of the first stanza, he poignantly asks, "Thirteen hundred rivers ask me, 'Where have you come from?'"

The poet responds to his own question by reflecting on generational legacies, rulers' legacies, religious traditions, and a heritage of revolution. He includes Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam as integral parts of this inheritance. His narrative of

this history? Am I such a person?"

In today's context, this line carries profound significance. The truth is, we forget history—we have already forgotten much of it. At times, we have even erased it in our fixation on the present, and this has come at a great cost. Politicians have spent years mired in futile disputes, neglecting to honour those who fought and sacrificed for our nation. Their achievements have not been preserved or passed down to the next generation, which stands as a national disgrace.

If we too forget history, the future will be bleak. Forgetting history is a symptom of fascism. Sheikh Hasina has been labelled a fascist for disregarding the sacrifices that shaped this nation. Yet, there was a time when the nation was united to overthrow Ershad's autocratic rule. Over the years, however, the ruling class has steadily drifted away from the ideals of the Liberation War. They have manipulated the constitution at will and deviated from accurate historical narratives. They followed the paths of post-'72 Sheikh Mujib and Ershad.

Even if we set aside the struggles of the British era, our fight after the Lahore Resolution and the Partition has been ceaseless. The efforts of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani,

War transformed into a people's war. We cannot forget them. But our politicians forgot them so easily.

In independent Bangladesh, poet Abul Hasan published his collection *Raja Jay Raja Ase* in December 1972. In the dedication, he wrote, "My mother/ as helpless as my motherland." From his socio-political experiences, he declared, "This king comes, that king goes / only the colour of

**The reality is, we have shamelessly ignored the contributions and aspirations of ordinary people in the Liberation War and belittled our citizens. As a result, true social emancipation has not arrived yet. Over the 54 years of independence, politically marginalising ordinary people has become a hallmark of the powerful. The social dignity of individuals has also been harmed.**



history and tradition culminates in the figure of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Through his words, the poet unveils Bangalees' dreams and unyielding spirit. He expresses hope with these lines, "We are together, we live together, and together we shall remain. Erasing all lines of division, we shall paint the image of equality." Finally, he poses a poignant question, "Shall I forget

clothes changes... / but the days do not. How effortlessly he presented such complex truths. He painted our collective sorrow, vulnerability, and solemn immersion.

From the Kagmari Conference, Maulana Bhashani offered the people of Bangladesh a direct vision of independence. He bid "Assalamu Alaikum" to the West Pakistani rulers. A simple religious greeting became synonymous with the cry for independence. Through that conference began the movements for autonomy and self-determination in what was then East Pakistan. In uniting and awakening the people of this region against imperialist and hegemonic forces, that conference played a profoundly significant role.

Then came the historic March 7 speech, when Bangabandhu called out, "Turn every house into a fortress; resist the enemy with whatever you have." That call mentally prepared most of the people for war. In various places, many ordinary people participated in training. These unarmed civilians remained engaged in war efforts throughout. And finally, victory came to us.

The reality is, we have shamelessly ignored the contributions and aspirations of ordinary people in the Liberation War and belittled our citizens. As a result, true social emancipation has not arrived yet. Over the 54 years of independence, politically

marginalising ordinary people has become a hallmark of the powerful. The social dignity of individuals has also been harmed.

Neglecting the people, Ayub Khan used to say, "Development first, then democracy." He implemented development projects: roads, the national mosque Baitul Mukarram, and more. But development could not save him. Ayub Khan's fall sparked the first unified movement by people from both wings of Pakistan. From the very birth of the Pakistani state, East Pakistan endured ethnic oppression, exploitation, and discrimination. Eventually, the people rose.

"The death of a revolutionary does not mean the death of the revolution"—this is a timeless quote by Che Guevara. In the same spirit of 1971, Noor Hossain declared in 1990, "Down with autocracy, let democracy be free." That mass movement succeeded in toppling the military junta, but the trail of autocracy in the country's politics did not change. Initially, the uprising restored democracy, established the rule of law, ensured freedom of speech, expression and the press, the right to vote, and security—five vital wins. But now, none of these remain. Many of those who led the 1990 movement have since changed their principles and beliefs.

History suggests that, had there been a national government instead of a partisan one after 1971, it might have met the people's hopes and aspirations in line with the spirit of the Liberation War. But under successive partisan governments, those were trampled time and again.

We continue to fail the ideals of 1971. Autocratic laws and regulations have been used to keep people confined time and again. Economic, political, social and cultural disparities reached their peak, and in response, the youth rose. And they say, "A storm rages inside my chest, I've bared it—shoot if you must." In that rebellion, they took bullets to the chest in the hope of human liberation. Victory was achieved, but how long can we hold it? Our history is grim. We have a persistent tendency to ignore its lessons. Again and again, we stray from the ideals of the Liberation War. Restlessness cannot lead us to our destination.

I will end with a quote from Serajul Islam Choudhury, "Can we forget 1971 just because we want to?" The Liberation War continues to flow through us.

We have two tasks to undertake. First, we must develop the positive aspects that existed in the past. We must foster the democratic elements, the unity, and the spirit of struggles from the past. Second, we must eliminate the negative aspects—the narrowness, the backwardness—and build a secular, democratic state and society.



APNIC Director General Jia Rong Low

## Bangladesh's internet growth 'just the beginning', says APNIC chief

APNIC Director General discusses IPv6 adoption, policy engagement and internet growth in Bangladesh

**Our aim is to build a more vibrant, multi-stakeholder community where policymakers, startups and regulators can interact with technical experts. For Bangladesh, this means moving beyond traditional training to better support IPv6 and RPKI adoption.**

MOHAMMA KAWSAR UDDIN

Jia Rong Low, the newly appointed Director General of the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), believes Bangladesh is on the cusp of significant digital transformation. Speaking during the APRICOT 2025 & APNIC 59 conference in Malaysia, Low outlined the country's progress and challenges in areas ranging from IPv6 deployment to policy participation and internet community engagement.

In an exclusive interview, he shared his thoughts on how Bangladesh can sustain its internet development momentum.

**Q: How do you view the current state of Bangladesh's internet infrastructure and its operational community?**

Bangladesh ranks second among APNIC's direct membership economies and is also the fastest growing. This reflects a robust increase in local internet operator activity. Over the past four years, APNIC has conducted 27 training workshops in Bangladesh—a significant figure that highlights both demand and engagement. This growth contributes not only to the country's digital ecosystem but also to broader economic development. I see this as just the beginning.

**Q: What is your view on participation from non-technical actors—such as policymakers and journalists—in technical events like APNIC and APRICOT?**

The landscape is shifting. At ICANN, we've seen increasing engagement from policymakers. APNIC has followed a similar trajectory—transitioning from purely technical conversations to a more inclusive environment where community members with policy

interests are contributing. A notable example is Shaila Sharmin from Bangladesh, co-chair of the Policy SIG. We're also seeing greater interest from regional regulators and journalists, though participation often depends on the relevance of the topic. For instance, a discussion on WHOIS policy might seem dry, but when privacy and legal frameworks enter the debate, it becomes widely engaging.

**Q: With significant membership in Bangladesh, what are APNIC's regular activities for local members? How might this support evolve?**

We've focused heavily on training—those 27 workshops I mentioned are part of a broader strategy. We also work with local Network Operator Groups (NOGs), providing a platform for ongoing engagement. I recently updated our strategic plan with three main pillars, one of which is creating a knowledge exchange space. This means unifying various platforms—our blog, podcast, mailing lists, and conferences—to foster more cohesive dialogue.

Our aim is to build a more vibrant, multi-stakeholder community where policymakers, startups and regulators can interact with technical experts. For Bangladesh, this means moving beyond traditional training to better support IPv6 and RPKI adoption. For example,

IPv6 deployment has risen from 2% to 19%, largely driven by big players. But smaller operators lag behind. The challenge is to identify whether more training is the answer, or if other incentives or interventions are needed. We're committed to working with the community to find out.

**Q: Bangladeshi members currently benefit from a discounted fee as an LDC. With graduation forecast for 2027, what's APNIC's**

**plan regarding membership fees?**

APNIC's policy grants a 50% discount for members from least developed countries (LDCs). If Bangladesh graduates from LDC status, the discount would no longer apply. This policy isn't determined by us—it's tied to UN classifications. Graduation would reflect Bangladesh's economic progress, which should be celebrated. However, we recognise that some smaller members may face challenges. In such cases, we're open to working with them on adjusted payment schedules.

**Q: Are you satisfied with Bangladesh's IPv6 progress? What more can APNIC do?**

The growth is encouraging, but there's a long way to go. Different economies adopt IPv6 in different ways. In India, Reliance Jio's decision to move to IPv6 created a ripple effect. In other cases, government policy plays a major role. We're ready to support in whichever way helps—be it more training, awareness for C-level executives, or policy engagement. The key is identifying which levers will move the adoption needle.

**Q: Is APNIC currently engaging with the Bangladeshi government on IPv6 deployment within public organisations?**

I'm planning to visit Bangladesh, hopefully during bdNOG in May, and I look forward to meeting with government officials. This engagement will help us align resources with national priorities. Governments across the region are generally supportive of IPv6, and with global adoption crossing the 50% mark this year, we have compelling data to support our advocacy. We hope to collaborate more closely with the government and other stakeholders in Bangladesh during this visit.

## E-commerce marketing 101: Turning browsers into buyers

K.M. IFTESHAM ISLAM

Imagine waking up to find your favourite online store offering the exact product you've been searching for—at a discounted price. Ever wondered how that happens? That's the magic of e-commerce marketing, where businesses use innovative strategies to reach customers at the right time.

In today's digital age, simply having an online store isn't enough. Understanding how to market products effectively is the key to standing out in the crowded e-commerce world. Whether you're a beginner stepping into this field or a business owner aiming to boost sales, mastering e-commerce marketing can open doors to endless opportunities.

**Understanding e-commerce marketing for beginners**

Dr Md. Iftekharul Amin, an academician and professor at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka, explains the term: "E-commerce stands for electronic commerce, which is all about driving people to an online store and converting them into customers by promoting an online store to increase sales. It involves various tactics to attract visitors and convert them into customers."

M M Rizvi Khan, Founder & CEO of the digital marketing firm Rocket Rocker, says, "The first and foremost criterion for success in e-commerce marketing is having basic IT skills. Entrepreneurs should develop skills like website development and SEO

and even data analytics. These tools empower beginners to navigate the digital landscape effectively."

**Required key skills**

A successful e-commerce marketer must first and foremost understand their target audience. It's about more than just demographics; it's about grasping customer needs, challenges, and expectations. Understanding the

marketing, as they are crucial for establishing a strong foundation." Rizvi continues, "Another essential skill is market and product research. Identifying reliable sources for products and analysing market demand is vital for success in e-commerce marketing."

Combining social media marketing and SEO

like blogs and product guides, helps drive organic traffic while social media amplifies reach and engagement. Data-driven insights from both channels help refine strategies based on user behaviour. Beginners who focus on meaningful engagement, clear communication, and continuous learning will see steady growth," he adds.

Md Ashaduzzaman Nour, Digital Marketing & SEO Expert at Daffodil Family, says, "When a customer searches for something online, the first website that appears is likely the one they'll visit. There's a 95% chance they will purchase from that site. The primary goal of an e-commerce site should be to sell products using SEO and social media marketing."

**Preparing for the future**

The e-commerce landscape is rapidly evolving. Trends like AI, machine learning, personalisation, and voice search are shaping the future. New entrepreneurs need to stay ahead of the curve.

Dr Iftekharul advises, "New entrepreneurs should prioritise customer centric innovation, leverage scalable tools, and build authentic relationships. Staying agile and data-informed will be critical in navigating the dynamic e-commerce landscape."

E-commerce marketing is an exciting and ever-changing field. By mastering its fundamentals, gaining hands-on experience, and staying informed about new trends, beginners can find success in this thriving industry."

right product for the right customer is key to satisfaction. Sajedur adds, "E-commerce marketers must focus on learning to make data driven decisions and conduct result-oriented experiments to optimise their strategies."

M M Rizvi Khan, Founder & CEO of the digital marketing firm Rocket Rocker, says, "The first and foremost criterion for success in e-commerce marketing is having basic IT skills. Entrepreneurs should develop skills like website development and SEO

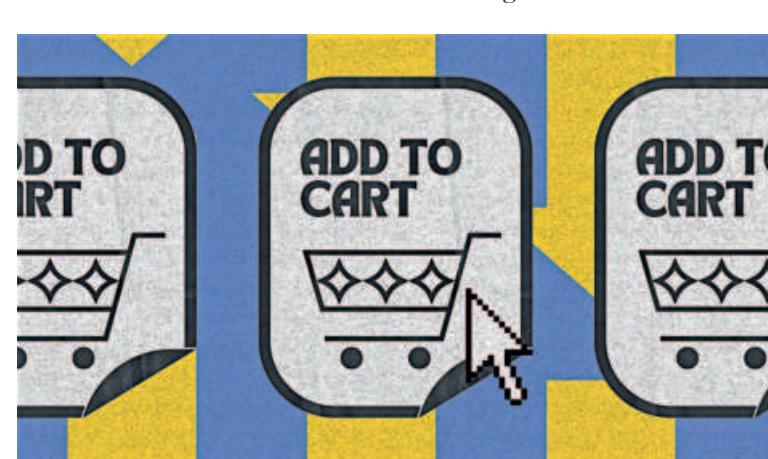


ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

## What to expect at the Bangladesh Investment Summit

MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

The Bangladesh Investment Summit, set to take place from 7 to 10 April at Hotel InterContinental Dhaka, aims to strengthen investment opportunities in the country.

**Who's attending?**

Over 550 foreign investors from 50 countries have registered to participate, alongside more than 2,300 Bangladeshi investors, according to BIDA.

The event will focus on networking and direct engagement between investors and key government bodies, including the NBR and the Ministry of Commerce. Representatives from political parties will also have the opportunity to interact with investors separately.

Top officials of Meta, Uber, Zara Group, DP World, Giordano, Telenor, Excelerate Energy, and Samsung are scheduled to participate in the investment summit, among others.

Additionally, leading venture capital firms such as B Capital, Gobi, Conjunction, Marubeni, and GFR will take part, focusing on startup investments and the expansion of the

digital economy.

**What's in the plans?**

As part of the summit's activities, foreign investors will visit key industrial zones, including the Japanese Economic Zone in Narayanganj and the Korean EPZ in Chattogram. The programme will also feature sessions on renewable energy, agriculture, and healthcare, with support from organisations such as the UNDP, HSBC, and the World Bank.

The Chief Advisor to the Government of Bangladesh will officially inaugurate the summit on 9 April, joined by diplomats, policymakers, and business leaders.

**Is Starlink coming?**

Starlink, the satellite internet service operated by Elon Musk's SpaceX, will conduct a demonstration of its connectivity services on 9 April at the Bangladesh Investment Summit, according to the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA).

However, this will not mark the commercial launch of Starlink in the country, as further regulatory and logistical steps are required before its official rollout.

## JOBS SPOTLIGHT

**Optimizely**

Senior Staff Software Engineer (Frontend)



Deadline: N/A

**Eligibility:**

• Bachelor's degree in computer science or a related field, or equivalent experience, with prior experience in React and TypeScript.

Minimum experience: 3-8 years

**University of Asia Pacific**

Deputy Registrar



Deadline: April 10

**Eligibility:**

• Master's degree in any discipline with a good academic background, and progressively relevant experience in academic administration or university governance.

Minimum experience: 7 years

**Akij Venture Limited**



Manager Export, Sales & Marketing (Malaysia & UAE)

Deadline: April 20

**Eligibility:**

• Masters'/MBA in any discipline from a reputed university. Major in Marketing is preferable.

Minimum experience: 5-10 years

**WaterAid Bangladesh**



Hygiene Behaviour Change Communication Expert

Deadline: April 5

**Eligibility:**

• Master's in social science or relevant field, with prior experience in a development organisation, preferably in an international organisation and in the Health, Hygiene, and Gender fields.

Minimum experience: 5 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



**"Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far they can go."**



T.S. Eliot

## Bangladesh fail to earn full points despite Hamza's impressive debut

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh wasted a host of early chances in a goalless draw against India in their first AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture in Shillong on a historic night which saw Leicester City midfielder Hamza Choudhury make his debut for the men in red and green.

Hamza, who joined the team only six days ago, made his mark with a dominant display in defensive midfield, nullifying much of India's attacking threats, but it was the glaring missed chances missed that would disappoint the visitors.

Javier Cabrera, who opted for a 4-2-3-1 formation with Jamal Bhuiyan on bench, fielded Hamza and Mohammad Hridoy as double pivot in front of four defenders -- Saad Uddin, Tapu Barman, Tariq Kazi and Shakil Ahad Topu.

In front of Hamza and Hridoy were Shahriar Emon, Sheikh Morsalin and Mojibur Rahman Jonny. Rakib Hossain played as a lone striker while Mitul Marma stood between the sticks.

Bangladesh's high pressing football helped keep control of the game to the visitors, however, glaring misses by Jonny,



Emon and Hridoy meant the men in red and green could not reap the rewards.

India goalkeeper Vishal Kaith made a terrible start as he gifted two scoring opportunities to Bangladesh -- first in the opening minute when his shot went straight to Jonny, who failed to hit the target from an acute angle.

Ten minutes later, Kaith's goal kick came straight off the back of Shakil Ahad Topu and dropped inside the box, but Hridoy's weak attempt was cleared off the line by Subhashish Bose.

Emon then failed to keep a free header

on target from a superb cross by Sheikh Morsalin seven minutes later before Topu Barman, who was wearing the captain's armband, had to limp off following an injury after 21 minutes, with Rahmat Mia replacing him as the coach switched the four-man backline.

Bangladesh had another excellent opportunity in the 41st minute when Jonny ran on to a through-ball inside the box but his heavy first touch allowed Kaith to clear the danger.

India's only real effort of the first half came in the 30th minute when Liston

Colaco's cross was headed towards goal by Udanta Singh, cleared in front of goal by Rahmat Mia. Farukh Chowdhury's shot on the rebound was easily grasped by Mitul.

Cabrera made a double substitution on the hour mark, with Faysal Ahmed Fahim and Chandon Roy replacing Shahriar Emon and Mojibur Rahman Jonny. Later, Sohel Rana and Mohammad Sohel Rana came in for Sheikh Morsalin and Hridoy but India were the dominant force in the second half as Bangladesh players started to tire.

Hamza played the full 90 minutes and impressed with his authoritative presence in the middle of the park, helping the visitors scrape through some nervy moments.

Fahim, against the run of play, unleashed a powerful shot which was well kept out by Kaith in the 88th minute as Bangladesh had to be content with a point away from home in the first match of the Group C fixture.

Cabrera's men will host Singapore, who too were held to a goalless draw at home by Hong Kong, in their second match of the campaign in Dhaka on June 10.

## Doctors optimistic about Tamim's return to cricket

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Tamim Iqbal was transferred to Evercare Hospital in Dhaka yesterday, a day after surviving a major heart attack during a Dhaka Premier League match at the BKSP in Savar.

Doctors at KPJ Specialised Hospital in Savar, where Tamim had undergone stenting surgery, confirmed the former Bangladeshi captain had passed the most critical phase and shown significant improvement over the last 36 hours. While they initially advised him to remain hospitalised for at least a day, Tamim and his family opted to shift to the capital.

According to hospital officials, Tamim may still seek further medical care abroad.

"Tamim's family would later decide whether to take him abroad or continue treatment in Dhaka," said Dr Rajib Hasan, media director at KPJ Specialised Hospital.

"As he is doing well, it will be wise not to move him much," he suggested.

With Tamim recovering, the question arises: will he return to the field? Although he retired from international cricket earlier this year, the 36-year-old remains active in domestic competitions, recently leading Fortune Barishal to the Bangladesh Premier League title and



captaining Mohammedan SC in the ongoing DPL.

Dr Rajib, who has been monitoring Tamim's condition since his admission, believes a return to cricket is possible but contingent on medical clearance.

"Usually, everyone returns to normal activities after such surgery... But if he wants to return to sporting activities, he must take consultation from a medical board after three months. If everything goes accordingly, then there is no reason for him not making a return to the field."

"If there is damage to his heart, then there can be a concern regarding his comeback. But several tests have shown he has no heart damage," he further informed.

Dr Rajib also noted that Tamim's fitness played a key role in his resilience.

"He is very strong. It's an advantage of being a sportsperson. If the same happened to me, my bones could be broken into pieces," he explained.

Tamim earlier in the day shared his gratitude in an emotional social media post, reflecting on the fragility of life and the support he received.

"I was fortunate to have some incredible people around me during this crisis. Because of their prudence and endless efforts, I have overcome this danger and come back," he wrote.

"Some incidents remind us of reality, remind us of how short life really is. In this brief life, if nothing else, we should all stand by each other during crises -- that is my request to you all," he added.

For now, Tamim's health remains the priority, with his future in cricket resting in the hands of time and medical assessments.

## BCB extends Simmons' contract till 2027

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced that it has retained the services of former West Indies batter Phil Simmons as their head coach until the ICC ODI World Cup in October-November 2027.

Simmons, who had been under contract with the BCB up to the end of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, had his initial stint with the Bangladesh team between October 2024 and February 2025.

"I am delighted to be given the opportunity to work with Bangladesh cricket on a long term basis. The talent within this team is undeniable, and I believe we have the potential to achieve great things together," Simmons was quoted in a press release.

"Having worked with some exceptional players already, I can see the immense promise in this squad. Their skill and passion for the game inspire me daily."

"My time with the Bangladesh team over the past few months has been incredibly rewarding. The energy, commitment, and ability within this group have been nothing short of impressive. I'm excited to continue helping these players reach their full potential," he added.

Other than the Champions Trophy where Bangladesh went winless, Simmons served as Bangladesh's head coach in series against South Africa, Afghanistan, the West Indies in his first stint with his most notable triumph being winning an away Test against the Caribbean side and winning the T20I series 3-0 against the same opponents.



ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh head coach Javier Cabrera expressed satisfaction with his team's goalless draw against India in the Asian Cup qualifiers in Shillong yesterday, hailing debutant Hamza Choudhury as the standout performer.

Reflecting on the match, Cabrera felt Bangladesh could have taken the lead in the first half but he remained upbeat despite missed chances.

"There were 4-5 clear chances we had. But unfortunately, we could not take those. However, we have to stay positive that we created this many chances against India away from home. India is the strongest team in the group. But we have to believe that we are contenders to qualify for the Asian Cup; that is what we have to believe now," said the 40-year-old Spaniard.

English Premier League-bred Hamza's much-anticipated debut for Bangladesh had naturally generated significant excitement, and the 27-year-old defensive midfielder made his presence felt in the high-voltage encounter. Cabrera praised Hamza's influence, highlighting his composure and intelligence on the field.

"More than his quality as a player, his quality as a team player and as a person is what gives confidence to the rest of the team... We have never felt at any moment that we were not on par with India. We even felt that we could have won the game. And for me, someone watching the game from



**"From the moment we saw the group, we realised that we would have to battle till the end... Now with Hamza, the way he played and the mentality we had today [yesterday], we should target winning the next game against Singapore."**

Bangladesh coach  
Javier Cabrera

outside, I felt Hamza's influence was huge," Cabrera said.

"Having him play next to you makes you more confident and feel safe... Sometimes he drops in between the centre-backs -- he has that quality to make such decisions."

With Hamza in the squad, Cabrera believes Bangladesh have grown stronger and must build on their performance, step by step.

"From the moment we saw the group, we realised that we would have to battle till the end... I think the team have taken two more steps forward. Now, we have to go ahead step by step. But we need to become very strong at home -- we have been very strong at home from before we had Hamza. Now, with Hamza, the way he played and the mentality we had today [yesterday], we should target winning the next game against Singapore," Cabrera said.

Despite the positive outlook, Cabrera acknowledged Bangladesh's struggles in front of goal. "We need to be more clinical... If we want to win, we have to improve our finishing. Singapore, Hong Kong, and India are all similar in quality, so converting our chances will be key."

Addressing the exclusion of Jamal Bhuiyan from the starting eleven, Cabrera explained it was a tactical decision. "His personality and quality as a captain -- even though Jamal did not play, he is crucial for us. But as we needed more strength and physicality, we decided to put [Sohel] Rana in that position."

With their home clash against Singapore approaching on June 10, Cabrera remains focused on sharpening the team's attacking edge while preserving the defensive resilience that ensured a clean sheet against India.

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Liton Das raged with a 62-ball 83 for Gulshan Cricket Club but his knock was trumped by Gazi Group Cricketers' skipper Anamul Haque Bijoy who hit a 144 off 142 balls to help Gazi to a four-wicket win at BKSP as the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) goes into a break before Eid festivities.

This year's DPL has been competitive so far with Gazi and Mohammedan Sporting Club just one win behind league leaders Abahani while Prime Bank Cricket Club and Agrani Bank Cricket Club having five wins each, positioning themselves at fourth and fifth respectively.

There have also been some high scores this season with Prime Bank breaching the 400-run mark and the top five run-getters striking at more than 90.

Yet, the current DPL is being played under a cloud of concerns regarding reduced salaries. Players have had to unwillingly remain content with the developments as clubs talked about economic downturn. Some national team players have cut adjusted deals, reducing the number of games they feature in to match the reduced budget.

"Payment is a big issue since in Bangladesh this [DPL] is the biggest tournament," Dharmonti Sports Club's Nurul Hasan Sohan,



fifth amongst the highest run-getters, told The Daily Star.

"Salaries were cut by around 50-60 percent. Obviously, it doesn't affect the players in terms of performance but it's a big issue for the players considering everything. Then again, from another point of view, the more mentally

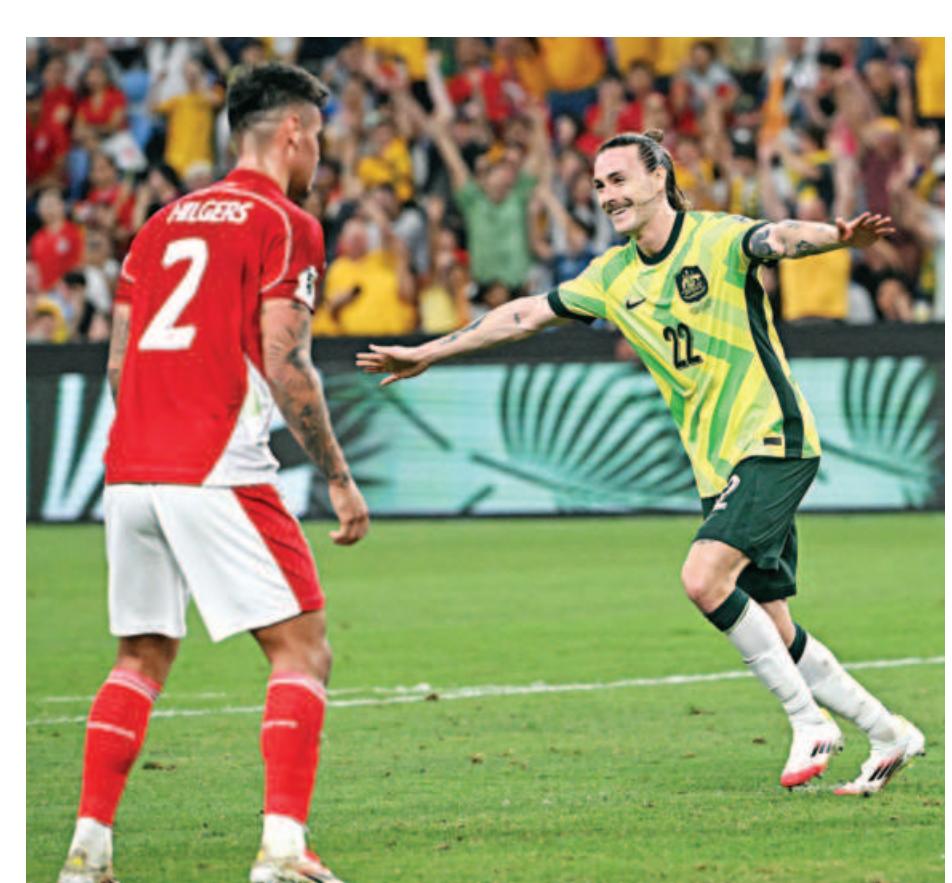
fresh you are, without having to think about other things, the better your performances will get," he added.

After the break, the league will commence in April when heat will also become another worrying factor.

In the last few years, playing under the April heat has been particularly difficult for the players. With some players nursing injuries, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is also trying to manage the workload of national team players and in this year's reduced budget DPL, players of higher categories are likely to seek breaks enabled by workload management.

"Premier League's second phase will be more challenging due to heat. We are going to provide CCDM a guideline on managing through extreme heat. If the heat index is in the red zone then playing is difficult. But right now, although heat is there, the humidity is not prominent," BCB chief physician Dr. Debashish Chowdhury said on DPL's heat issue.

Yet performances are being carved out, as youngster Samiun Basir Ratul, making his DPL debut, picked up a fifer for 27 runs in Legends of Rupganj's 172-run win over Rupganj Tigers in Mirpur yesterday. Meanwhile, Brothers Union carved out a 29-run win over Partex Sporting Club at BKSP.



Jackson Irvine celebrates with teammates after he curled home in the 16th minute to give Australia the lead in their 2026 World Cup qualifier against China in Hangzhou on Tuesday. Another first-half goal from Nishan Velupillay ensured Australia a step closer to automatic World Cup qualification with a comfortable 2-0 victory in the contest. The away win, hot on the heels of their 5-1 win over Indonesia last week, leaves the Socceroos second in Group C on 13 points with two to play, three points ahead of Saudi Arabia with a much better goal difference.

PHOTO: AFP

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Liton Das raged with a 62-ball 83 for Gulshan Cricket Club but his knock was trumped by Gazi Group Cricketers' skipper Anamul Haque Bijoy who hit a 144 off 142 balls to help Gazi to a four-wicket win at BKSP as the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) goes into a break before Eid festivities.

This year's DPL has been competitive so far with Gazi and Mohammedan Sporting Club just one win behind league leaders Abahani while Prime Bank Cricket Club and Agrani Bank Cricket Club having five wins each, positioning themselves at fourth and fifth respectively.

There have also been some high scores this season with Prime Bank breaching the 400-run mark and the top five run-getters striking at more than 90.

Yet, the current DPL is being played under a cloud of concerns regarding reduced salaries. Players have had to unwillingly remain content with the developments as clubs talked about economic downturn. Some national team players have cut adjusted deals, reducing the number of games they feature in to match the reduced budget.

"Payment is a big issue since in Bangladesh this [DPL] is the biggest tournament," Dharmonti Sports Club's Nurul Hasan Sohan,

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## Yunus leaves for China today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus is set to leave for a four-day visit to China this afternoon, his first bilateral visit after taking charge of the government on August 8 last year.

"His choice for his first bilateral visit is sending out a message. We consider China to be our very important friend. China holds the same sentiment," Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin told a media briefing at the foreign ministry yesterday.

Yunus will lead a 57-member delegation including Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain, officials and security personnel in a flight dispatched by the Chinese government.

The visit marks the 50 years of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and China.

"China is one of the countries that quickly committed to working with the interim government of Bangladesh. A Chinese delegation of physicians visited Bangladesh and extended support to the injured of the July uprising," Jashim said.

On March 27, he will deliver

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People taking an injured worker to the hospital after a clash erupted between garment workers and police when the workers were marching towards the Bangladesh Secretariat demanding arrears and Eid bonuses.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

**SALARY, BONUS**  
Travel ban on  
12 RMG factory  
owners for  
non-payment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has imposed a travel ban on 12 garment factory owners as they could not pay their workers' salaries and bonuses before Eid holidays, said M Sakhawat Hossain, labour and employment adviser.

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**PRAYER TIMING**  
MARCH 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:41 12:45 4:45 6:12 7:45  
JAMAAT 4:51 1:15 5:00 6:27 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING**  
RAMADAN MARCH SEHRI IFTAR  
25 26 6:12  
26 27 4:39 6:13  
27 28 4:38 6:13

## Kyiv, Moscow agree sea, energy truce: US

Russia ties Black Sea truce to lifting of some sanctions

AGENCIES

The United States yesterday reached deals with Ukraine and Russia on a truce in the Black Sea and a pause in attacks on energy facilities, with Washington also pledging to push for the lifting of some financial sanctions against Moscow.

The separate agreements are the first formal commitments by the warring sides since Donald Trump's inauguration. Trump is pushing for an end to the war and a rapid rapprochement with Moscow, which has alarmed Kyiv and European countries.

The US agreement with Russia goes further than the agreement with Ukraine, with Washington committing to help seek the lifting of international sanctions on Russian agriculture and fertiliser exports, long a persistent Russian demand.

The Kremlin said this would mean restoring links between some Russian banks to the international financial system.

Kyiv and Moscow both said they would rely on Washington to enforce the deals.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said the truce agreements would take effect immediately and that if Russia violated them, he would ask Trump to impose additional sanctions on Moscow and provide more weapons for

Ukraine.

"We have no faith in the Russians, but we will be constructive," he said.

He also said Ukraine had not signed on to the US offer to help relieve sanctions on Russia, which was in the US-Russia statement but not in the separate statement agreed with Ukraine.

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lifting sanctions in its statement, only that it would help restore "access to the world market" for Russia's agricultural and fertiliser exports.

The Kremlin said the truce would "enter into force after the lifting of sanctions on Rosselkhozbank (Russia's state-owned agricultural lender) and other financial institutions involved in providing international trade operations in food and fertilisers."

It also called for those institutions to be re-connected to the SWIFT network, an international payment system that some Russian banks have been blocked from using.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said, "We will need clear guarantees. And given the sad experience of agreements with just Kyiv, the guarantees can only be the result of an order from Washington to Zelensky and his team to do one thing and not the other."

The talks in Saudi Arabia followed separate phone calls last week between Trump and the two presidents, Zelenskiy and Vladimir Putin.

Putin rejected Trump's proposal for a full ceasefire lasting 30 days, which Ukraine had previously endorsed.

But Washington has nevertheless softened its rhetoric

The US side did not mention

"We believe that this is a weakening of position and sanctions," he said.

However, Russia said that the agreement to halt military activity in the Black Sea would only take effect once certain sanctions were lifted, including those targeting its state-owned agricultural lender.

But Washington has nevertheless softened its rhetoric

The US side did not mention

Unite for a  
prosperous  
Bangladesh

Army chief tells event  
to honour families of  
July victims



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday expressed confidence that a nation united by patriotism, nationalism, integrity, humanitarianism, and discipline will lead Bangladesh to the peak of prosperity, ultimately becoming a happy and prosperous country.

He urged everyone to work together to realise this vision for the nation, according to a press release from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The army chief was addressing a special ceremony at the Army Multipurpose Complex in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday, to honour the families of injured or martyred during the July uprising.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Oikya Parishad  
report misleading  
CA press wing on violence  
against minorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Adviser's Press Wing yesterday said that the recent report of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, which claims that violence against religious and ethnic minorities continues to persist unabated in Bangladesh, misrepresents the actual situation.

On March 12, the Oikya Parishad released a report saying that in January and February of this year, a total of 92 incidents of violence were recorded, including 11 murders, three incidents of rape, 25 attacks on temples, an accusation of blasphemy, six attacks on indigenous communities, 38 cases of attacks, vandalism, and looting of homes and businesses, two cases of job terminations, and six other forms of attacks.

In a rejoinder, the CA Press Wing stated yesterday that these incidents were not connected

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## Ha-Meem Group GM's body found in Uttara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Two days after his disappearance, police yesterday recovered the body of General Manager of Ha-Meem Group Md Ahsan Ullah from a roadside in the capital's Diabari area.

The body was recovered from Road 3 of Sector 16, Diabari, around 12 noon.

Turag Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Rahat Khan confirmed the matter to The Daily Star around 10:30pm.

He said the body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

A case was filed with the police station, said the OC, adding that they are looking into the matter.

Ahsan Ullah had been missing since Sunday. His family filed a general diary with the police station the same day.

## 18-yr-old abducted, raped for a week

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A 25-year-old man was yesterday arrested in a case filed over the abduction and rape of an 18-year-old girl in Manikganj's Shibalaya upazila.

Hridoy Hossain, a local, allegedly confined her for a week.

The victim has been admitted to the Manikganj 250-bed District Hospital.

Later, doctors referred her to the National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital in Dhaka, as she suffered severe mental trauma.

The victim's brother filed a case with the Manikganj Women and Child Repression Prevention Tribunal on Sunday accusing Hridoy, and his two brothers -- Jasim Uddin, 33, and Sujon Mia, 30.

The tribunal later directed the Shibalaya police to record it as a case.

Shibalaya Police Station Officer-in-Charge Kamal Hossain said Hridoy was arrested yesterday morning. The two other accused are absconding.

According to the case and the victim's family, Hridoy, who is married, used to harass the victim

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Bangladesh midfielder Hamza Choudhury fights for possession against India's Liston Colaco in a highly anticipated AFC Asian Cup qualifying fixture, which ended goalless in Shillong yesterday. Hamza, in his debut match for Bangladesh, inspired his side to put forth a spirited display but the visitors will be disappointed with the outcome after having squandered several goalscoring opportunities.

