

DHAKA SATURDAY MARCH 29, 2025

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 74

CHAITRA 15, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

RAMADAN 28, 1446 HIJRI

16 PAGES: TK 15.00



A shopper's  
guide to Dhaka

WR1



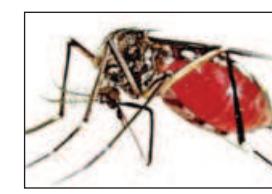
Eid in a time of  
uncertainty and  
change

P9



BIMSTEC must  
adapt to global  
shifts and future  
challenges

P8



Dengue surge  
feared as  
millions leave  
Dhaka

P3

## China pledges \$2.1b in loans, investment

Yunus, Xi Jinping hold bilateral meeting; Dhaka welcomes Beijing's interest in Teesta water management project

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Chinese government and businesses committed \$2.1 billion in loans, investments, and grants to Bangladesh during Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus's visit to China.

Prof Yunus and Chinese President Xi Jinping met at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday morning.

After the bilateral meeting, a joint statement was issued, highlighting the cooperation between the two countries.

President Xi promised to encourage Chinese firms to relocate their manufacturing plants to Bangladesh as they look to diversify their production destination, said Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority and Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority.

Nearly 30 Chinese companies have pledged to invest \$1 billion for the establishment of a Chinese Industrial Economic Zone in Chattogram as Prof Yunus urged them to invest in manufacturing in Bangladesh, CA's Press Wing said in a statement.

SEE PAGE 2 COL. 2

### CHINESE GOVT TO LEND

- \$400m for Mongla Port modernisation
- \$350m for China Industrial Economic Zone
- \$150m as technical assistance

30 Chinese companies pledge to invest \$1b

One agreement, 8 MoUs signed

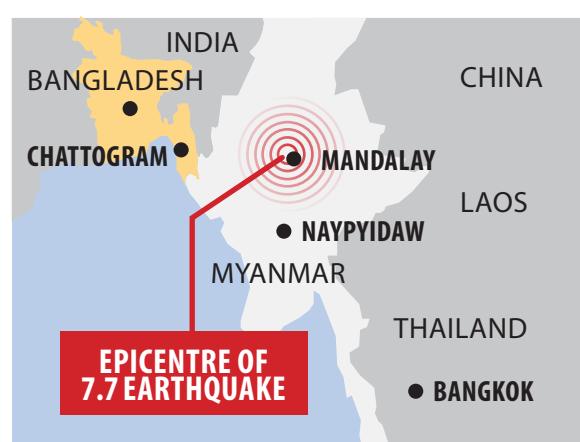


Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus meets Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday -- the third day of his four-day visit to China.

PHOTO: PID



Rescue workers walk past the debris of an under-construction building that crumbled in Bangkok yesterday. Bottom left, a collapsed building in Mandalay, Myanmar. A powerful earthquake, originating in central Myanmar, rocked the region, buckling roads, and destroying buildings.



## Eid travel mostly smooth so far

STAR REPORT

Thousands of Eid holidaymakers hit the road yesterday, leading to a surge in traffic on highways. However, there were no reports of major gridlocks, mainly due to the extended nine-day holiday.

Meanwhile, another rush is expected today as garment factories and other businesses will be closed for Eid celebrations.

Traffic on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway slowed to a crawl along a 10km stretch from Tongi to Chandana intersection yesterday morning. However, conditions improved as the day progressed, reports our Gazipur correspondent.

Rafiqul Islam, a passenger stuck in the congestion, told The Daily Star around 10:00am, "I left Mohakhali for Tongi, but I have been stranded here for two hours. The bus moves a little, then stops again. I haven't even reached the intersection yet."

Ashok Kumar Pal, additional deputy commissioner (traffic) of Gazipur Metropolitan Police, attributed the slowdown to the early exodus of garment workers and the reckless movement of battery-run rickshaws. "We lack



Hundreds of people travelling to their village homes crowd onto launches, filling every inch of available space, including the roof, as the nine-day Eid vacation began yesterday. The photo was taken from Postogola Bridge in Dhaka.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SEE PAGE 2 COL. 5

## NCP pushes for grassroots support amid Eid holiday

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Key leaders of the recently launched National Citizen Party (NCP) are actively engaging in mass contact in their respective areas, capitalising on the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation.

As they prepare to contest the upcoming national election, many have travelled to their parliamentary constituencies to celebrate Eid and connect with local voters.

In the days leading up to Eid, NCP leaders conducted extensive outreach activities, including attending community iftar events and visiting villages, neighbourhoods, and local communities to interact with people.

Several key leaders told The Daily Star they aim to solidify their grassroots support ahead of the election, utilising the holiday period when people return home to celebrate Eid.

Party leaders said they would prioritise door-to-door campaigns over large scale rallies and planned to meet families of those killed and injured during the July

SEE PAGE 2 COL. 5

## Chuadanga records highest temperature of the season at 39.8°C

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Chuadanga yesterday recorded a temperature of 39.8°C, the highest in the country this season.

"The heat is being felt more as the humidity of the air is high. A heatwave has been blowing over the district for the past few days," said Rakibul Hasan, the district's senior weather observer.

He went on to say that the temperature may rise to 41°C within a week.

Nasir Uddin, a resident, said, "It is becoming difficult to bear this heat. I cannot go out after noon."

Abdus Samad, a rickshaw puller, said, "If I don't work, I won't have enough money to buy food. But it's very difficult to pull a rickshaw in this heat while fasting."

Meanwhile, the town's roads have been relatively empty due to the heat. Most people have not been venturing out unless necessary. However, daily wage workers, labourers, and small traders said they had no option but to work.

## S Korea contains blazes after battling wildfires

REUTERS, Andong

South Korean authorities have contained the main blazes in the country's largest forest fire on record, a minister said yesterday, as rain and better weather allowed more helicopters to fly and dump water, dousing the flames.

Spread by strong winds in bone-dry conditions, the wildfires have killed at least 28 people and charred more than 45,000 hectares (111,000 acres) in the southeastern region.

The main fires in five regions were under control by 5:00 pm (0800 GMT), said Lim Sang-seop, the minister of the Korea Forest Service.

## A wake-up call for Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1

we anticipate a strong earthquake of up to magnitude 9 could take place there," said Prof Syed Humayun Akhter, an eminent geologist.

"If it happens, it would be catastrophic for Bangladesh," he said.

Bangladesh escaped unharmed from yesterday's tremors, as they originated on the Burma Plate, he added.

Md Rubayet Kabir, the acting officer of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department's Earthquake Observation and Research Centre, said that in recent years, they have observed many minor and major earthquakes occurring around Bangladesh -- in Nepal, Myanmar, and Tibet.

According to his research, in 2017, 28 earthquakes shook Bangladesh and its surroundings. In 2023, the number was 41, and in 2024, it increased to 54.

A number of tremors have been registered in the first quarter of this year.

"Our capacity to monitor earthquakes has increased in recent years. However, data shows that the frequency of earthquakes has also increased," he said.

He noted that very mild tremors occur regularly in this region. However, the worrying sign is that 550 earthquakes with a magnitude of four or above have struck within 300 km of Bangladesh in the past decade.

Experts say the pattern of these seismic events could be a warning sign of a major earthquake in a country with active faults like the Dauli fault in the Indo-Burma subduction zone.

Prof Mehedi Ahmed Ansary, a teacher at Buet's Civil Engineering Department, said the return period for a 7-magnitude earthquake is 125 to 175 years, and the return period for an 8-magnitude earthquake is 250 to 300 years.

The 8.5-magnitude Chittagong earthquake took place in 1762, the 7.5-magnitude Cachar earthquake occurred in 1869, the 7-magnitude Bengal earthquake struck in 1885, the great Indian 8.7-magnitude hit in 1897, the 7.6-magnitude Srimangal earthquake occurred in 1918, the 7.1-magnitude Durgapur earthquake hit in 1923, and the 7.1-magnitude Dhurbi earthquake struck in 1930.

"So now we should be ready for a major quake," he said.

Dhaka is more vulnerable to earthquakes due to its geological location, as well as its human and economic exposure. According to the earthquake disaster risk index, the capital tops the list of the 20 most vulnerable cities in the world.



A rescue worker tries to extract a mother and her child from a collapsed building in Naypyidaw yesterday. A powerful earthquake rocked central Myanmar yesterday, buckling roads, destroying buildings and forcing people to flee into the streets.

PHOTO: AFP

## China pledges \$2.1b in loans, investment

FROM PAGE 1

"It is a milestone visit," Chinese Ambassador to Dhaka Yao Wen said.

Prof Yunus left for China on March 26 at the invitation of the East Asian country. Yesterday was the third day of his four-day visit.

He delivered a speech at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in Hainan and met Vice-Premier of China Ding Xuexiang and other dignitaries.

Han Zheng, vice-president of China, also met the CA yesterday.

Yunus met Chinese business leaders at three high-level dialogues on trade, investment, and social business.

Prof Yunus addressed officials of more than 100 Chinese firms and urged them to invest in advanced textiles, pharmaceuticals, light engineering, renewables and other sectors in Bangladesh.

"This visit will play a major role in persuading a lot of Chinese companies to invest in Bangladesh. It is just a matter of time," CA's Press Wing quoted Ashik as saying.

"China has planned to lend some \$400 million for the Mongla port modernisation project, \$350 million for the development of the China Industrial Economic Zone, and \$150 million as technical assistance. The rest of the amount would come as grants and other forms of loans," reads the press wing statement.

### WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

At separate meetings with President Xi and Chinese Water Resources Minister Li Guoying, the CA sought a 50-year masterplan from China to manage Bangladesh's river system.

The CA said China had done wonders in managing some of the intractable water issues.

"We have the same problems you have. So, we will be happy if you share your experiences," the CA told the water resources minister.

Due to rising population and the demand for development, people encroach upon rivers, Prof Yunus said, adding that siltation was another challenge.

Bangladesh may need help in cleaning the polluted rivers surrounding Dhaka. The Chinese minister then promised technical support.

During his meeting with President Xi, Prof Yunus urged Chinese companies to participate in the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project.

China earlier conducted a feasibility study on the project after the Awami League government approached it in 2023. China said at the time that it was ready to support the project in phases, but the AL regime did not proceed further.

Asked about the geopolitical implication of the Teesta project, former ambassador to China Munshi Faiz Ahmad said the project was more of a concept than reality.

Dhaka and Beijing also spoke positively of the signing of the Implementation Plan of the MoU on Exchange of Hydrological Information of the Yarlung Zanbo

Jamuna River.

China has plans for a hydro electricity project over the Yarlung Zanbo river, which flows through Bangladesh, and is called the Jamuna.

Experts say the project will affect the water flow of the Jamuna.

### YUNUS-XI STATEMENT

According to the joint statement released after the bilateral meeting, the two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in hydrological forecasting, flood prevention, disaster reduction, river dredging, integrated management of water resources, and related technology sharing.

They also agreed to make concerted efforts to tackle climate change, tap the potential for a blue economy, strengthen exchanges on maritime affairs, and hold a new round of Dialogue on Maritime Cooperation.

Apart from signing a deal, eight MoUs, the two countries also announced the

### AGREEMENTS

- Economic and technical cooperation
- Cultural exchange and cooperation
- MoUs on translation, production of classics
- Exchanges in media, sports and health

signing of a commercial agreement for modernising and expanding the Mongla port, building a robot physiotherapy and rehabilitation centre, and donating a mobile cardiac surgery unit.

At the bilateral meeting, the Chinese side said it supported the interim government in effectively exercising governance, preserving unity and stability, and leading Bangladesh onto a path of development and prosperity.

The Bangladesh side thanked China for the support and extended support to carry forward the bilateral ties. Both sides reconfirmed equal commitment to nurturing the Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership with utmost importance.

Bangladesh sought to lower the interest rate on Chinese loans from 3 percent to between 1 and 2 percent. It also requested a waiver of the commitment fees on the Chinese-funded projects.

President Xi said China would consider reducing the interest rates, CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam wrote on Facebook.

China announced it would build a specialised hospital in Bangladesh.

Prof Yunus invited Beijing to set up a China cultural centre in Bangladesh.

The two leaders also discussed the purchase of multiple role combat aircraft and multimodal transport connectivity linking the southern Chinese city of Kunming with Bangladeshi ports.

Chinese foreign minister Wang

Yi, Chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission Zheng Shanjie, and vice foreign minister Sun Weidong were among senior Chinese officials who were present at the meeting.

From the Bangladesh side, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain, Energy and Transport Adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan and CA's High Representative Dr Khalilur Rahman attended the meeting.

### BRI COOPERATION

The two sides agreed to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, strengthen international cooperation on industrial and supply chains, improve infrastructure, and advance industrialisation.

Bangladesh welcomes Chinese companies' participation in the Mongla Port Facilities Modernization and Expansion Project, and stands ready to work with the Chinese side to develop the Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone in Chattogram.

The two sides underscored the importance to initiate negotiations on the China-Bangladesh Free Trade Agreement and officially start negotiations on optimising the China-Bangladesh Investment Agreement.

They agreed to implement the export of fresh mangoes and other agricultural and aquatic produce from Bangladesh to China. The current bilateral trade stands at \$25 billion, with Bangladesh exporting less than \$1 billion.

China welcomed Bangladesh to make full use of platforms such as the China International Import Expo, China South Asia Expo, and China International Supply Chain Expo to expand cooperation with China, while reaffirming readiness to create a favourable investment environment for Chinese companies.

### POLITICAL COMMITMENT

The two sides agreed to hold fast to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, carry forward their traditional friendship, deepen political mutual trust and synergy between development strategies, while reaffirming mutual support on issues involving each other's core interests and major concerns.

The joint statement said China consistently adheres to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, respects Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the development path independently chosen by the people of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh reiterated its firm commitment to the One-China principle and its position that China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory.

The statement says Bangladesh opposes the "Taiwan independence" and supports China on issues pertaining to China's core interests and China's efforts to safeguard its national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Asked about this particular statement, Faiz said the previous government also maintained this policy.

carried out.

An emergency zone was declared in Bangkok, where some metro and light rail services were suspended.

The streets of the capital were full of commuters attempting to walk home or simply taking refuge in the entrances of malls and office buildings.

City authorities said parks would stay open overnight for those unable to sleep at home.

Strong quakes are extremely rare in Thailand, and across Bangkok and the northern tourist destination of Chiang Mai, stunned residents hurried outside, unsure of how to respond.

"This is the strongest tremor I've experienced in my life," said Sal, 76, who rushed out of a minimart in Chiang Mai when it started to shake.

The quake was felt across the region, with China, Cambodia, Bangladesh and India all reporting tremors.

India, France and the European Union offered to provide assistance, while the WHO said it was mobilising to prepare trauma injury supplies.

## NCP pushes for grassroots support amid Eid holiday

FROM PAGE 1

uprising on Eid day, presenting Eid gifts to them.

Several top NCP leaders have drawn attention for their contrasting campaign approaches.

The grand entry of Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam into Panchagarh last Monday, with a procession of motorcades, has stirred the political waters, drawing both attention and criticism. Given that Panchagarh is his ancestral home, his arrival was not just a return but a statement -- an orchestrated display of influence that many see as a power move in Bangladesh's politics.

On the second day of his visit, he toured several villages in Alowakhoya Union of Atwari upazila, including Rakhaldeb, Bamankumar, Balia, and Laxmikanth, speaking with people from various professions at their homes and workplaces. Sarjis intends to contest the election from the Panchagarh-1 constituency.

"Whenever we visited people, they spoke to us spontaneously. We discussed their expectations from the new party and various issues in my area," Sarjis told The Daily Star.

Member Secretary Akhter Hossen conducted a large-scale campaign in his parliamentary constituency, Rangpur with over 200 vans on Thursday. The procession started from Mahiganj Satmatha and travelled through Deuti, Kadamtali, Kaliganj, and Pautana in Pirogacha before moving through different roads in Kauna.

Akhter engaged in mass contact across various areas of Pirogacha and Kauna upazilas, meeting with locals.

"Instead of grand rallies, we have prioritised door-to-door campaigns. We aim to connect with the grassroots and understand their aspirations for the future of Bangladesh," Akhter told this newspaper.

## Eid travel mostly smooth so far

FROM PAGE 1

on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway slowed down significantly in Munshiganj's Gazaria area from Thursday midnight to Friday afternoon due to the growing number of vehicles and multiple accidents.

Anwar Alam Azad, officer-in-charge of Gazaria Police Station, said crashes at Baulakandi, Anarpura, and Bausia disrupted the vehicular movement.

Traffic flow was normal at Amin Bazar, Hemayetpur, and Savar Bazar bus stands areas on the Dhaka-Aricha highway, and at Nabinagar, Baipail, and Balibhadra on the Nabinagar Chandra highway.

Savar Highway Police OC Saugatul Alam said, "The road situation is normal. But traffic flow may rise tomorrow [Saturday]."

North-bound people mostly experienced hassle free travels this time compared to previous years.

"I left Dhaka at 8:00am and reached Pabna by 1:30pm, which is unimaginable during the Eid rush," said Rupunul Hasan, a government employee.

Ahsanul, executive engineer at the Jamuna Bridge site office, credited this to the expansion of northern highways. "Despite ongoing construction, a 190km stretch from Feni to Rangpur now has four lanes. Several new bridges and flyovers have also been opened, helping the smooth flow of traffic."

Authorities have beefed up efforts to ensure smooth travel. Around 700 police personnel have been deployed on the key highways in Sirajganj. Over 100 army personnel are also assisting in managing the traffic.

[Our correspondents in Tangail, Munshiganj, Savar, and Pabna also contributed to this report.]

'Dec, June or March? Be specific'

Rizvi asks interim govt over polls date

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday said the interim government was creating uncertainty regarding the announcement of the national election date.

"There is a lot of confusion -- December, June, or March? Different times, different statements. There are similarities here with some of Sheikh Hasina's words. Why is this happening?" he questioned.

He made these remarks at an event at BNP's central office in Naya Paltan yesterday morning.

Rizvi said the government must announce a clear and specific date to ensure a fair electoral process.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

## A narrow escape in Bangkok

Bangladeshi journalist and daughter survive earthquake



PORIMOL PALMA

"It all happened in about one and a half minutes. It was just like a movie.. how earthquakes are portrayed. Rupkotha and I experienced it live!"

Tanvir Sohel and his nine-year-old daughter narrowly escaped a potentially fatal incident in Bangkok when a powerful earthquake rocked Thailand and Myanmar, destroying buildings and killing more than 150 people in the two Southeast Asian countries.

Tanvir, chief news editor at Digital Media of independent24.tv, and his daughter Ariana Rupkotha were on the 24th floor of the 32-storey Bumrungrad International Hospital located in the Sukhumvit area of Bangkok, where at least 10 people died and a high-rise under construction collapsed.

Sohel, who travelled to Thailand on March 27, said he checked into the hospital for his daughter's treatment around 9:45am local time yesterday.

"We were almost done. We consulted the doctor and got some tests done on Ariana. Then, I had a plan to get a test for myself, and a nurse was taking me to a CT scan room on the 24th floor," Tanvir told The Daily Star last night over the phone, sharing his experience during the earthquake.

He said around 1:22pm he felt the building sway. At first, he thought he was feeling dizzy, but then



A severe gridlock on the Dhaka-Tangail Highway at the Chandra intersection in Gazipur disrupts the journey of thousands leaving Dhaka to celebrate Eid with their loved ones. With overcrowded buses and scarce tickets, many are forced to walk to their destinations, while others risk climbing onto trucks for a ride home. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## EID HOLIDAYS

# Dengue surge feared as millions leave Dhaka

HELEMUL ALAM

As millions have started to leave Dhaka ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations, experts have raised concerns over a potential spike in dengue cases unless preventive measures are taken timely.

With government officials and employees set to enjoy an extended holiday spanning from March 26 till April 5, entomologists fear that empty homes and unchecked water sources may become breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, advised city dwellers to take necessary precautions before leaving their homes.

"Residents should cover toilet commodes, be mindful of plant tubs, and ensure that any containers storing water are properly sealed," he said, warning that Aedes mosquitoes thrive in stagnant water.

He also suggested turning buckets and containers upside down to prevent water accumulation. "We are seeing a high number of mosquitoes in basements where stagnant water can be found due to leaks of pipes or from car washing. Residents should use bleaching powder or salt in these areas to curb mosquito breeding," he said.

Prof Bashar further advised homeowners to check their yards and rooftops for discarded containers that could collect rainwater.

He also urged people to inspect

their homes upon their return for potential breeding grounds and to open doors and windows to let mosquitoes out and flush toilet commodes, which can harbor Aedes larvae.

"If mosquitoes can breed during the vacation, they will become matured by the time residents return," he warned. The risk



- 1 Empty homes, stagnant water boost mosquito growth
- 2 Leaks, car wash water attract Aedes mosquitoes
- 3 Experts urge use of eco-friendly insecticides
- 4 Authorities improving efforts but need stronger measures
- 5 Even light rain can worsen the situation

increases significantly if there is rainfall during the holidays, he added.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman stressed the need for proactive measures. "Authorities should use BTI like insecticides to control Aedes mosquitoes as these are environmentally safe.

However, their application remains

neglected," he said. BTI is a naturally occurring soil bacterium used as a microbial insecticide to control mosquito larvae and other insects.

Saifur warned that even a little rain could trigger a surge in dengue cases.

"The first generation of mosquitoes maturing after rain helps in population growth. If the authorities take immediate steps to apply BTI early, we can prevent their spread," he said.

City corporations, which were uncoordinated last year, have shown better discipline this time, though on a small scale, he observed. He, however, stressed the need for local administration to stay vigilant and for mosquito control cells to be established nationwide.

"Pre-investigation is crucial to identify Aedes mosquito clusters. Once the first rains arrive, authorities must launch drives to destroy breeding sources and larvae. Early preventive measures are of utmost importance to keep the outbreak under control," Saifur added.

Md Emdadul Hoque, deputy chief health officer of Dhaka North City Corporation, said preparations are already in place ahead of the upcoming dengue season.

"Besides regular drives, our mosquito control workers will continue anti-mosquito operations during the Eid vacation," he said.

A Dhaka South City Corporation official echoed him.

## 'Make TNZ pay our wages'

RMG workers hold hunger protest

MD ABBAS and MASHFIQ MIZAN

Emotions ran high. Exhaustion was evident on their faces.

Yet, with clay pots symbolising empty plates in their households, garment workers from three factories under TNZ Group -- Apparel Plus Eco Ltd, TNZ Apparel Ltd, and Apparel Art Ltd -- took to Dhaka streets yesterday.

They staged a "Bhukha Michhil" (hunger procession), demanding three months' unpaid wages and Eid bonuses.

For five days, they had staged a sit-in at Shromo Bhaban (Department of Labour), but no government official had met them.

Desperate, the workers carried empty plates and placards bearing the message "Pay Our Wages," urging international brands to intervene.

One placard read, "Dear Zara, make TNZ pay our wages."

"Even a single jacket I make retails for more than my entire month's salary, yet we're not being paid for months," said garment worker Rina Akter.

RMG workers protesting for rights is nothing new, but many had hoped things would be different this time.

However, a placard reading, "What do you mean by a new political settlement if we have to take to the streets for arrears as before?" summed up how those hopes quickly turned into frustration.

"We've had no sleep, food, or showers for days. Our families are waiting for us. If we receive our wages and bonuses, we can return home and celebrate Eid," said Shefali Akhter, a worker at TNZ Group.

Rekha Akter Tinni and Md Shahin Alam echoed similar sentiments, saying they had exhausted their savings.

"If the factory does not pay our wages and Eid bonuses now, how will I return to my family? How will I face my children? What will I tell them if they ask for new clothes for Eid?" asked Tinni.

Many broke down in tears.

The hunger procession began at 4:00pm from Shromo Bhaban, moving through Paltan, circling Nightingale Junction, and returning.

Their slogans echoed through the streets

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

**'If there's no change, what's the purpose of sacrifices?'**

**Nahid urges all to unite for reforms**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Nahid Islam, convenor of National Citizen Party, yesterday stressed the need for systemic reform and fundamental changes in the state to honour the sacrifices of July martyrs.

"People shed blood for reforms, and that is precisely why the country witnessed a mass uprising. If there is no change, what was the purpose of the sacrifices made by so many?" he said at an iftar virtually in Sirajganj.

Nahid said, "The kind of injustice, repression, and torture that has been going on in the last 15

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## Swechchhasebak Dal leader caught with rice 'meant for the poor'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A leader of Swechchhasebak Dal was caught with 69 sacks of rice, reportedly meant for the poor under the Food-Friendly Programme at Begunbari Rajapur village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila early yesterday.

He was allegedly attempting to smuggle them out of the union.

The detainee, Aminul Islam, 40, is from Begunbari Sarcarpura village. He is the president of Begunbari union unit of Jatiyatatabadi Swechchhasebak Dal.

Quoting locals, Sub-inspector Sumon Roy of Thakurgaon Police Station said a group of villagers intercepted a tractor that Aminul was using to carry the sacks of rice around 2:00am.

However, Aminul's accomplices, including Wadud Hasan, president of BNP's Ward No. 9 unit, Nurul Amin, a secretary of the same unit, and Kamal Hossain, organising secretary of the union unit of Krishak Dal, managed to flee.

Meanwhile, Abdul Hamid, president of Thakurgaon upazila BNP, announced the expulsion of Aminul and Wadud through a Facebook post for violating organisational discipline.

Locals said incidents of rice theft meant for the poor are not new, but previous offenders faced no action due to their political influence.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## The slow death of DSAC's homeopathy clinics

DIPAN NANDY

The walls of the dilapidated single-storey building are crumbling, with plaster peeling away. The floor has worn down, exposing bricks and sand beneath. A rusted signboard, corroded in several places, hangs above the entrance. Inside, a doctor continues to treat patients and dispense medicine despite the deteriorating conditions.

This is the state of the Farashganj Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary, one of the homeopathy clinics run by the Dhaka South City Corporation, located at Dalpatti Mor in Sutrapur.

A visitor is met with a collection of old furniture -- an empty, dust-covered wooden showcase, four worn-out chairs, a table, a steel cabinet, and a single patient bench.

The cabinet holds DSAC provided medicines and essential documents.

Despite its dilapidated state, patients continue to visit the dispensary regularly.

"We once had a compounder and an assistant (aya), but now only a security guard remains. Once I retire, this clinic will close, as no new doctors will be

appointed," Dr Farzana Begum, the clinic's physician, told The Daily Star.

Farzana, who joined DSAC's health department in 2005 and was assigned to this dispensary, said she had treated and prescribed medicines for over 500 patients in just the first two months of this year.

"There is no publicity for these

charitable homeopathy centres. If there were, more patients would visit," she added.

Another DSAC homeopathy centre, Roknpur Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary, has changed its original location and now operates from the third floor of the DIT Market in Lakshimbazar, Old Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Finding this clinic amidst a cluster of coaching centres is a challenge in itself. Two more charitable homeopathy clinics exist under DSAC -- Katara Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary in Chawkbazar and Sat Shahid Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary in Lalbagh.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## Anchored launch gutted in fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Barishal

A fire broke out on board the MV Saimun-1, a local launch, while it was anchored at Patarhat Launch Terminal in Mehendiganj, Barishal early yesterday.

"The vessel has been completely gutted. Fortunately, there were no casualties. The cause of the fire remains unclear," said Md Jahangir Alam, officer-in-charge of Mehendiganj Police Station, confirming the incident.

The launch, which operated on the Barishal-Mehendiganj route, caught fire around 3:00am.

Firefighters, along with locals, managed to bring the blaze under control after a prolonged effort.

A preliminary investigation by the Fire Service and Civil Defence suggests that the fire was likely caused by a mosquito coil, said Selim Reza, an official of Barishal River Port.



Sylhet's renowned Bholaganj Sadapather tourist spot now stands deserted as tourist numbers dwindle during Ramadan. Traders, hoping for a post-Eid surge, eagerly await the holiday season to revive their businesses. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Lemon prices soar amid Ramadan demand

S DILIP ROY

Since the beginning of Ramadan, the price of lemons has soared in the market, bringing unexpected profits for farmers. Farmers and vegetable sellers predict that prices will remain high until the first week of April due to strong market demand.

Currently, small sized lemons are selling for Tk 14-15 each, medium-sized ones for Tk 16-17, and large ones for Tk 18-20 in the local market. Farmers are selling lemons directly from the fields for Tk 10-12 apiece.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), there are 2.25 lakh lemon trees in 650 gardens covering around 900 bighas of land across five districts in the Rangpur region – Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Nilphamari, and Gaibandha.

These gardens produce lemons commercially, while most rural farmers also grow four to ten trees in their homesteads. Each tree yields 400-1,000 lemons, with production continuing year-round. Lemons reach maturity within three months



of budding.

Ahsanul Kabir Bulu, a farmer from Kashipur village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said he has been harvesting 350-400 lemons daily since the beginning of Ramadan.

Vegetable sellers from various areas are purchasing lemons from his garden at Tk 10-12 each, he said.

Badiar Rahman, a farmer from Singardabri village in Rajarhat upazila of Kurigram, said the lemon yield is lower in March, with only 20-25 percent of the usual harvest available. He is earning Tk 4,000-5,000 daily from his one-and-a-half bigha orchard.

In previous years, prices were much lower. The full lemon season will begin in April, when prices are expected to drop to Tk 2-3 per piece.

Chandramohan Das, a farmer from Tepa Madhupur village in Kaunia upazila of Rangpur, has six

lemon trees in his homestead, which usually meet his family's needs.

However, with the high prices this year, he has started selling his lemons and plans to cultivate them commercially on 20 decimals of land.

Abdus Salam, a vegetable seller at Goshala Bazaar in Lalmonirhat town, said market supply remains low while demand is high, causing prices to rise.

However, the availability of local lemons is expected to improve within a week.

Shafiqul Islam, additional director of the Rangpur Regional DAE, said demand for lemons has increased for Ramadan. Since there is a year-round demand, farmers face no difficulties in selling their produce.

However, the low yield in March has reduced supply, leading to the current price surge, he added.

**Currently, small-sized lemons are selling for Tk 14-15 each, medium-sized ones for Tk 16-17, and large ones for Tk 18-20 in the local market. Farmers are selling lemons directly from the fields for Tk 10-12 apiece.**

## Make TNZ pay our wages

FROM PAGE 3

-- "Some will eat while others starve; this can't happen" and "Three months' wages unpaid, yet the government remains silent."

Before the march, workers held a press conference in front of Shromo Bhaban, revealing they were owed Tk 17.78 crore in unpaid wages, bonuses, and allowances. Only Tk 1.05 crore had been paid on March 27.

They accused Labour Adviser M Sakhawat Hossain of spreading misinformation.

On March 27, Sakhawat claimed that owner Shariful Islam Shahid had sold his car to pay off the arrears. A statement was also circulated to journalists by the Information Directorate.

However, workers said only half of one month's salary had been paid, while they were still owed three months' wages, Eid bonuses, and holiday allowances.

"There are over four thousand workers whose wages are due. Is it possible to pay all of it just by selling a car? Do they think us poor workers to be fools?" said worker Sharif.

On March 23, after demonstrating in front of their factories in Gazipur,

workers moved to the BGMEA office in Dhaka and then to the Department of Labour. They have been lying on the ground in front of the main gate, denied even basic washroom facilities.

These workers have endured blistering summer heat during the day, and at night, mosquito infestations have left them sleep-deprived.

Many have collapsed from dehydration and exhaustion. After yesterday's procession, one worker was rushed to DMCH after fainting.

Female workers, in particular, have faced dire conditions.

With no access to toilets, they have been forced to limit their food and water intake, worsening their health.

Most are fasting during Ramadan, breaking their fast with whatever little they can – often just puffed rice and chickpeas donated by sympathisers.

Shefali Akter shared her distress -- "I have two children. Their education has stopped. I can't even buy food for them. Starvation is looming."

On March 25, police charged batons at workers as they attempted to march

towards the Secretariat.

Yesterday evening, factory owners communicated that all arrears would be paid by today, claimed workers. However, workers refused to end their movement without receiving actual payments.

"They gave us similar dates before. They said our arrears would be paid by March 27. Now they say it will be paid tomorrow [today]. We don't believe them. We'll leave only after we get full payment," said Md Shahidul Islam, a protesting worker.

If their demands remain unmet, workers plan to submit a memorandum to the chief adviser.

With no access to toilets, they have been forced to limit their food and water intake, worsening their health.

Most are fasting during Ramadan, breaking their fast with whatever little they can – often just puffed rice and chickpeas donated by sympathisers.

Shefali Akter shared her distress -- "I have two children. Their education has stopped. I can't even buy food for them. Starvation is looming."

On March 25, police charged batons at workers as they attempted to march

## 3 cops detained

FROM PAGE 5

of Tk 20 lakh, later settling for Tk 10 lakh, of which Tk 4 lakh was paid to them through mobile banking.

When the kidnappers reached Damudya Bus Stand to collect the remaining Tk 6 lakh, the victims started screaming for help.

Hearing their screams, locals intervened, detained some of the abductors, and beat them.

Later, Damudya Police arrived and rescued the perpetrators. Four of the kidnappers, including one police officer named Joy Poddar, managed to

seized rice was indeed under the Food-Friendly Programme," he said.

"Sometime, beneficiaries sell the rice after receiving it," he added. "If the local dealer is found guilty, the department will take legal action."

SI Sumon Roy said police have asked the people who detained Aminul to file a case. "If they do not agree, we will submit the matter before the court. The next course of action will be taken as per the court's instructions," he added.

escape, while the rest were detained.

The detainees are Koushik Ahmed Setu, 30, Kawsar Talukder, 29, Rubayet Mir, 27, and Sharif Hossain, 35.

Shariatpur Police Superintendent Mohammad Nazrul Islam confirmed the arrests. The four injured kidnappers are being treated at Shariatpur Sadar Hospital under police supervision.

After the arrest, one of the detainees, Rubayet Mir, said Kawsar Talukder led the operation and the ransom money was handed over to him.

**Swechchhasebak Dal**

FROM PAGE 3

"Since the people caught one of the criminals red-handed this time, we demand justice after a proper investigation," they said.

Upazila Food Controller Khandaker Abul Kalam said a total of 550 sacks, each containing 30kg of rice, were allocated under the Food-Friendly Programme at Tk 15 per kg for distribution among the poor. Of these, 69 sacks were reportedly seized.

"We are first investigating whether the

## The slow death

FROM PAGE 3

Meanwhile, the Nazirabazar Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary has already shut down following the retirement of both its doctor and compounder. The remaining four clinics are expected to meet the same fate.

## GRADUAL DECLINE IN SUPPORT

Following the 2011 division of Dhaka City Corporation, these homeopathy dispensaries came under DSCC's jurisdiction, while Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) has none.

Despite serving approximately 20,000 patients annually, DSCC's health department has done little to promote them.

These centres provide treatment for a wide range of ailments through homeopathic medicine -- except for surgeries.

Each clinic operates with one homeopathy doctor and one compounder (doctor's assistant). DSCC supplies 28 types of medicines, but budget shortages prevent adequate stock. As a result, patients often have to purchase additional medicines externally.

In 2016, DSCC eliminated all positions related to homeopathy clinics under its new health department structure. Doctors and compounders were informed that their clinics would operate only until their retirement, with no new hires to replace them.

Tanvir said despite the horrors, he was impressed by the integrity of the nurses at the hospital who were supporting the patients, especially the children, with utmost care.

"One of the nurses said they as nurses have a responsibility to save the children first," Tanvir recalled. He spoke to some Bangladeshis after returning to his hotel but found no information on whether any Bangladeshis were hurt.

"We also came out of the hospital amid the earthquake the way people survive earthquakes in the movies. Believe it or not..."

He saw many patients stranded in the lifts and had no idea if rescuers could reach all of them.

"I talked to many Thai people here, but they said they had never experienced such a powerful earthquake," Tanvir said.

Bangkok city authorities reported that 10 people were killed, 16 injured, and 101 were missing from three construction sites, including the high-rise.

The 7.7 magnitude quake struck at midday, with its epicentre near Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city. Aftershocks followed, one of which measured a strong 6.4 magnitude.

Thailand is a popular tourist destination for many Bangladeshis, who often go there for medical treatment, and the number of patients

including the high-rise.

"We want to proceed with the trial process within a quick time and then move forward. We are already witnessing attempts to sideline discussions on reforms. On behalf of NCP, we call upon everyone to unite in support of reforms," he said.

"As of now, the Thai

authorities said 90 people

were missing. We have

no idea if there are any

Bangladeshis among them," he told this correspondent.

"I talked to many Thai

people here, but they said

they had never experienced

such a powerful

earthquake," Tanvir said.

Bangkok city authorities reported that 10 people were killed, 16 injured, and 101 were missing from three construction sites, including the high-rise.

The 7.7 magnitude quake struck at midday, with its epicentre near Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city. Aftershocks followed, one of which measured a strong 6.4 magnitude.

Thailand is a popular

tourist destination for many

Bangladeshis, who often go

there for medical treatment,

and the number of patients

including the high-rise.

"We want to proceed

with the trial process within

a quick time and then move

forward. We are already

witnessing attempts to

sideline discussions on

reforms. On behalf of NCP,

we call upon everyone to

unite in support of

reforms," he said.

The BNPs leader also

raised concerns about

garment workers' unpaid

wages.

"Why have workers from

122 garment factories still

not received their salaries?

It's a big question. And why

they simply lack the

necessary information," he

said.

Speaking at the same

event, BNP leader Ishraque

Hossain said, "After nearly

five years of legal battle, I

have finally received the

verdict. This brought me

justice. Some people, due

to a lack of understanding,

are reacting negatively on

social media and elsewhere.

They simply lack the

necessary information," he

said.

</



## Bagerhat canals in death throes

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, Bagerhat

The five recorded canals of Bagerhat municipality have been encroached upon, with illegal permanent structures erected along their banks.

Once navigable and vital for drainage, these canals are now nearly dead due to encroachment, obstruction of tidal flows, and indiscriminate dumping of waste.

Residents are demanding the canals' reclamation and excavation to alleviate the suffering caused by waterlogging.

Municipal authorities admitted that over 500 illegal structures have been built along these canals, and assured that a project is in place to restore them through eviction and re-excavation.

Bagerhat municipality, spanning 15.88 square kilometres, was established on April 1, 1958 and is home to over 125,000 residents.

Situated along the Bhairab river, the municipality consists of nine wards and five recorded canals. These waterways once accommodated large boats but have now turned into waste dumps.

In several areas, illegal occupiers have constructed buildings, making it impossible to recognise them as canals anymore.

The canals in question include Harikhali Canal, Harinkhana Canal, Badar Canal, Nagerbazar Canal, and Wapda Canal.

Residents allege that influential individuals have illegally occupied the canals and built multi-story structures, leading to severe waterlogging during the monsoon. Many locals struggle to rent out their homes as streets remain submerged for weeks after rainfall, with no effective drainage system in place.

Habib Sheikh, a resident of Basabati, recalled a time when large boats traversed these canals, and locals would swim and bathe in them.

Now, the canals are all but extinct. He lamented that the inability of the canals to drain away rainwater causes severe waterlogging during the monsoon, leading to immense hardship.

Abdur Rahman of Nagerbazar said the canals have been filled up due to encroachment and indiscriminate dumping of waste, causing waterlogging in roads and houses during the rainy season.

Assistant Engineer of Bagerhat Municipality, TM Rezaul Haque Rizvi, said the municipality has five canals, many of which have been illegally occupied, with more than 500 structures built along them.

Due to the accumulation of waste, water drainage has become severely obstructed.

Rezaul said, the five canals, stretching approximately 23 kilometres, are set to be excavated under the Coastal Towns Infrastructure Improvement Project. The tendering process will soon commence to restore these canals and eliminate prolonged waterlogging.

This project is expected to cost over Tk 7.5 crore. Once implemented, it is anticipated to alleviate the suffering of municipal residents, he added.



Farmers clear weeds from the base of watermelon seedlings despite the scorching sun to ensure faster growth and better yields in Khulna. This year, watermelon cultivation covered 2,700 hectares in the region, according to the Department of Agricultural Extension. The photo was taken at Katianangla village in Batiyaghata recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Marigold farmers stare at losses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Flower farmers in Kotchandpur upazila of Jhenaidah are facing severe losses as marigold prices have plummeted.

Many farmers are picking flowers from their gardens and giving them away to pedestrians for free, unable to secure any market value.

In this upazila, marigolds are cultivated extensively, particularly in Kushna union, where 45 hectares of land are dedicated to the crop. While the flowers have thrived, farmers have not received the expected prices and are worried about their cultivation costs.

Milan Hossain, a flower farmer from Narayan Bariya village, has been cultivating marigolds for 12-15 years and has invested Tk 60,000 on two bighas of land this year.

He said he sees no signs of an increase in prices. In hopes of salvaging their trees, he and other farmers are removing flowers

despite the losses.

Farmers Amirul Islam, Abdul Hannan, and Abdul Malek are in similar situations, also clearing flowers from their plants to save them.

They mentioned that if they could sell flowers throughout the



season, they could make Tk 2.3 lakh in profit. Typically, they pick flowers and send them to Shahibah Market via Dhaka-bound buses for sale.

Rubel Hossain expressed concern about this being the first major loss

in flower farming, questioning the viability of continuing cultivation in the future.

Abdur Rahim, president of Jashore District Flower Production and Marketing Cooperative Society Ltd, stated that marigolds are currently selling for only Tk 100 per thousand, a significant drop from Tk 800 in February.

Many farmers are giving away flowers for free due to the lack of market price.

Zahid Hossain, the Kotchandpur Upazila Agriculture Officer, said all unions in the upazila cultivate flowers to varying extents, with Kushna Union being the most prominent for marigold production.

He said the actual flower season is in January-February, when prices tend to be higher due to increased demand.

The current low demand has resulted in decreased prices for the flowers.

**In this upazila, marigolds are cultivated extensively, particularly in Kushna union, where 45 hectares of land are dedicated to the crop. While the flowers have thrived, farmers have not received the expected prices and are worried about their cultivation costs.**



### AHQ, E in C's BRANCH, WORKS DIRECTORATE, DHAKA CANTONMENT

#### INVITATION FOR TENDERS

Notice no. 300/Ad/68/E-3/19

Dated: 24 March 2025.

#### MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence			
2.	Agency	Military Engineer Services			
3.	Procuring Entity Name	E in C			
4.	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
5.	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)			
6.	Budget and source of Funds	GOB			
7.	Development Partners (if applicable)	None			
8.	Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	Construction of Cancer Center at Dhaka (2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase)			
9.	Selling of tender will commence from	06 April 2025 (During Office hour).			
10.	Selling of tender will Close on	17 April 2025 (During Office hour).			
11.	Last date & time of submission of Tender	20 April 2025 at 1200 hours.			
12.	Date & time of opening of Tender	20 April 2025 at 1230 hours.			
13.	Name & Address of the Office(s)				
	- Selling Tender Document	Tender Selling & Information Centre at GE (Army) Central Dhaka & AHQ, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment.			
	- Receiving Tender Document	Tender Selling & Information Centre at GE (Army) Central Dhaka			
	- Opening Tender Document	Tender Selling & Information Centre at GE (Army) Central Dhaka			
14.	Eligibility of Tenderer	a. On receipt of security clearance, MES approved cement manufacturer organization may apply for tender. b. Having experience of similar work mentioned in Lot No 15(a) amounting Tk. 43,00,000.00 in a single tender during last 05 (Five) years.			
15.	Brief Description of Works				
Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Price of Tender Document (Non Refundable)	Tender Security in the form of Bank Draft/ Pay order in favour of AHQ, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantt. (Taka)	Completion Time in weeks/ Months
1	2	3	4	5	6
a.	Supply of 275.00 Metric tons cement in Bulk (OPC) & 328.75 Metric tons cement in Bag (PCC) including loading, unloading, carrying & stacking at construction site and SDO F/S store yard under GE (Army) CMH (2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase)	Cancer Center Dhaka CMH	2000.00	1,80,000.00	06 (Six) Months
16.	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Director of Works			
17.	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director of Works			
18.	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Army Headquarters, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment. Web address : <a href="http://www.army.mil.bd">www.army.mil.bd</a>			
19.	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel No. 9832870 Fax No. 9832882 e-mail- wksdte@army.mil.bd			
20.	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders				

আই এস পি আর /সেনা/২৬৯

XEN E/M  
For Director of Works  
Works Directorate  
Engineer in Chief's Branch  
Dhaka Cantonment  
Tel: Mili: 8711111 Ext: 2874  
Civil: 9832874

GD-815

## Woman dies by suicide after poisoning daughter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A woman allegedly took her own life after poisoning her six-year-old daughter to death following a family dispute in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur on Thursday night.

The deceased are Bobita Rani Roy, 28, and her daughter Toni Rani Roy. Bobita was wife of Ratan Chandra Roy from Durlabpur village.

Siddique Hossain, a member of Moricha Union Parishad, said an altercation broke out between Bobita and her in-laws on Thursday night. Following the argument, she allegedly fed her daughter a rat-poison tablet before consuming it herself.

Upon discovering the incident, family members rushed them to Birganj Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared them both dead.

Abdul Gafur, officer-in-charge of Birganj Police Station, said police sent the bodies to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

## 3 cops detained over abduction charges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sharaiptur

Three police personnel and another individual have been detained for allegedly kidnapping two cloth traders in Damudya upazila of Sharaiptur early yesterday.

Mohammad Jewel Sardar, 32, and Faisal Sardar, 24, were reportedly abducted by a group of eight, including police members.

A case was filed in this regard at Damudya Police Station by Faisal's brother Swadhin Sardar yesterday.

According to the victims, around 9:30pm on Thursday, a microbus and a motorcycle blocked their way in Darul Amal Bazaar. Four men forced them into the vehicle and demanded a ransom

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Elephant rescued from mud dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

An elephant died yesterday, 22 days after being rescued from a mud trap inside the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary in Banshkhali upazila of Chattogram.

The 40-year-old female elephant had been stuck in the mud for 22 hours before being rescued on March 6 by the Forest Department with help from around 35 villagers.

Severely weakened by malnutrition, the elephant also suffered from paralysis in her left leg.

Dipannita Bhattacharya, wildlife officer of the Chattogram Wildlife Division, confirmed that the elephant passed away around 11:00am while receiving treatment.

ARMY HEADQUARTERS E IN C'S BRANCH, WORKS DIRECTORATE DHAKA CANTONMENT INVITATION FOR TENDER					
Notice no. 600/15/76/2024-2025/E-6					
Dated: 23 March 2025.					
<b>MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES</b>					
1.	Sponsoring Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence	2.	Executing Agency	Military Engineer Services
3.	Procuring Entity Name	E in C	4.	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
5.	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)	6.	Budget and source of Funds	GOB, Revenue Budget
7.	Development Partners (if applicable)	None	8.	Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	Construction of Office bldg including ancillary works (14 storey with 14 storied Foundation) for DGFI Office bldg at Kakrail Dhaka (2nd Floor Structure and Basement to 2nd Floor Finishing only- 3rd Phase).
9.	Selling of Tender will commence from	07 April 2025 (from 1200 hours to 1400 hours in Office Time).	10.	Selling of Tender will close on	05 May 2025 (from 1200 hours to 1400 hours in Office Time).
11.	Last date and time of submission of Tender	06 May 2025 upto 1200 hours.	12.	Date and time of opening of Tender	06 May 2025 at 1230 hours.
13.	Name & Address of the Office(s)				
	- Selling Tender Document	Tender Selling & Information Centre of Works Directorate at GE (Army) Central Dhaka & AHQ, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantt.			
	- Receiving Tender Document	Tender Selling & Information Centre at GE (Army) Central Dhaka			
	- Opening Tender Document	Tender Selling & Information Centre at GE (Army) Central Dhaka			-Do-
14.	Eligibility of Tenderer		a.	MiS enlisted contractors Class - 'A' & 'B'	
			b.	Contractors enlisted in other Govt, Semi Government & Autonomous Organization of similar capacity may also participate in tenders having security clearance from DGFI.	
15.	Brief Description of Works				
Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Price of Tender Document (Taka)	Tender Security Amount in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank Guarantee in favour of AHQ, E in C's Br, Wks Dte, Dhaka Cantt (Taka)	Completion Time in weeks/ months
a.	Construction of Office bldg including ancillary works (14 storey with 14 storied Foundation) for DGFI Office bldg at Kakrail Dhaka (2nd Floor Structure and Basement to 2nd Floor Finishing only- 3rd Phase).	Kakrail, Dhaka.	10,000.00	18,46,000.00	12 (Twelve) Months
16.	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Director of Works			
17.	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director of Works			
18.	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Army Headquarters, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment Web address : <a href="http://www.arm			

## US plan to take over Greenland 'serious': Putin

AFP, Murmansk

Russia considers US plans to annex Greenland "serious" and worries the West could use the Arctic as a springboard for future conflicts, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday.

US President Donald Trump has pushed to take control of the autonomous Danish island since taking office in January, saying Washington needs to have it for "international security".

"It is a deep mistake to think that this is some extravagant talk from the new American administration. It is nothing of the sort," Putin told an Arctic forum in the city of Murmansk.

"We are talking about serious plans on the American side with regard to Greenland. These plans have long-standing historical roots," he added.

He said that while Russia was not directly involved in the question of Greenland's ownership, Moscow was concerned that "Nato countries, in general, are increasingly designating the far north as a springboard for possible conflicts".

**Modi to kick off construction of India-Sri Lanka solar plant**

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the construction of a long-delayed solar power project during his upcoming visit to Sri Lanka, an official said yesterday.

Vikram Misri, the secretary of India's foreign ministry, said Modi and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake will witness a virtual groundbreaking ceremony for their joint venture solar power project in the island's northeast on April 5.

The proposed 120-megawatt venture in the coastal district of Trincomalee has stalled for years, but New Delhi backed it as a joint project between the neighbouring nations.

"This, in many senses, is going to be a milestone in the bilateral partnership," Misri told reporters.

## 'We're up against time to find stolen billions'

FROM PAGE 12

Mansur said the UK is his starting point. He is now in talks with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and London law firms in a bid to trace and seize approximately \$25 billion laundered from Bangladesh.

"Many of these families have their assets... in London in particular, so we think we will find a lot of assets here," Mansur said.

"Our whole purpose is at least [to] create awareness that the UK is a favourite destination of stolen assets all over the world, and Bangladesh is one of those countries," he said.

A person of interest for Bangladesh is its former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed. Earlier, the Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit (I-Unit) unravelled that he owns more than \$500 million of real estate -- primarily in London and Dubai.

Last year, in an undercover operation the I-Unit revealed that Javed's family had purchased over 360 luxury apartments in the UK,



Pro-monarchist protesters run for cover as riot police fire tear gas shells to disperse the crowd during a demonstration in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday. The protesters were demanding the restoration of Nepal's monarchy, which was abolished in 2008, arguing that successive governments have failed to bring about significant changes. At least two people were killed in the violence, police said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Israeli actions in Gaza resemble 'atrocities crimes'

Warns UN aid agency; Palestinian sources claim Hamas, mediators in new talks to revive truce

### AGENCIES

Israeli actions in Gaza, including strikes on populated areas in which civilians have been killed, "bear the hallmarks" of atrocities, the United Nations' aid agency warned yesterday.

"There is a callous disregard for human life and dignity. The acts of war that we see bear the hallmarks of atrocity crimes," Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the OCHA aid agency, said in Geneva.

He also noted the resumption of rocket fire from Palestinian factions in Gaza, reports Reuters.

In more than a week of resumed Israeli strikes in Gaza, 855 people have been killed, according to the territory's health ministry.

Meanwhile, Palestinian sources close to Hamas told AFP that talks were underway

between the Palestinian group and mediators from Egypt and Qatar Thursday to revive a ceasefire and hostage release deal for Gaza.

"A meeting began this evening between the Egyptian delegation responsible for negotiations in Doha and a Hamas

### Talks are focusing on possibility of implementing a truce during Eid al-Fitr

delegation in an effort to solidify a ceasefire," said a source who requested anonymity because he was not authorised to speak publicly on the issue.

Mediators from Qatar were also involved in the discussions, the source added.

Talks are focusing on the possibility of implementing a truce during the Eid al-Fitr and Jewish Passover holidays, as well as ensuring the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, the source said.

"Mediators are engaging in intensive discussions with all parties to cement the ceasefire and move toward the second phase of the agreement," he added.

He said Hamas had expressed a willingness to respond "positively" to any proposal that halts the fighting.

Another Palestinian source close to Hamas said that despite the discussions, "no breakthrough" had been achieved so far. "A prisoner exchange and ceasefire agreement are possible, but their success depends on (Israel's) approval and its willingness not to obstruct the process," the source said.

## Election is your duty, not reforms

FROM PAGE 12

Khasru said the struggle to restore democracy is not over yet. It will only be fulfilled when ownership is returned to the people.

He emphasised that the only way to restore this ownership is by forming a government elected by the people.

He warned that people will not accept any conspiracies to manipulate the electoral process.

He said, "I see signs of Hasina's rhetoric in statements like 'we are

most of which were in London.

The Anti-Corruption Commission in Bangladesh froze nearly 40 of his bank accounts and the court placed him under a travel ban, but the BB is seeking to freeze his overseas properties as soon as possible, in case they are sold off.

Javed claimed that he was the victim of a politically motivated "witch hunt" against people associated with the previous regime and said that "his wealth was earned legitimately".

While the central bank is focused on freezing assets, Mansur also wants the authorities in the UK and elsewhere to investigate the lawyers, bankers and estate agents who helped move billions of dollars for the "oligarch families", said the report.

Estimating that it may take up to five years to regain control of the funds, Mansur said the progress has been slow as authorities grapple with the scale and complexity of the task.

However, he said that the UK

government is helping.

He is considering to offer plea bargains to those who helped move money offshore in return for evidence against the kingpins, or even some form of amnesty scheme to bring the missing money back to Bangladesh, said the report.

Another key issue is that the complex task of tracking billions of dollars across multiple jurisdictions has been made harder following the change of government in the US.

A team of investigators from the US, who were due to start work in Bangladesh this year, was called off after President Donald Trump froze funding to the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in the early days of his new term.

"They were supposed to be in Dhaka in full force, but it had to be cancelled... a number of our experts... had been funded by USAID, but it was stopped," Mansur says.

"That's unfortunate for us, but that's the way it is."

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

from the

again, suggesting that we are doing this and that; if we leave, politicians will not carry out these tasks, and they must be completed fully..."

"Sorry, this is not your responsibility. It will be the responsibility of those whom the people of Bangladesh elect. Don't forget that your duty is to hold a fair election," he said.

The BNP leader said, "Restore democracy. Restore voting rights. Announce the dates for elections quickly."

"It seems that narrative is emerging

Era of close ties with US 'is over'  
Says Canada PM, vows to respond to Trump auto tariffs with its own trade actions

AFP, Ottawa

The era of deep economic, security and military ties between Canada and the United States "is over," Prime Minister Mark Carney said Thursday, after President Donald Trump announced steep auto tariffs.

Trump's planned 25 percent levy on vehicle imports to the United States is to come into force next week and could be devastating for a Canadian auto industry that supports an estimated 500,000 jobs.

After Trump's announcement, Carney paused his campaign ahead of Canada's April



28 election to return to Ottawa for a meeting of cabinet members working on tactics in the trade war with the United States.

He called Trump's auto tariffs "unjustified," and said they were in breach of existing trade deals between the countries. He vowed to respond with unspecified trade actions if Trump imposes new auto tariffs that have expanded a global trade war and hammered stocks.

He also warned Canadians that Trump had permanently altered relations with the United States and that, regardless of any future trade deals, there would be "no turning back."

"The old relationship we had with the United States based on deepening integration of our economies and tight security and military cooperation is over," Carney said.

He said Canada would retaliate against the auto tariffs.



People watch beside a collapsed building in Mandalay yesterday, following an earthquake in central Myanmar. Inset, earthquake survivors await medical attention in the compound of a hospital in Naypyidaw.

PHOTO: AFP

## Putin calls for removal of Ukraine's Zelensky

Suggests transitional govt for Kyiv under UN

AFP, Murmansk

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday called for a "transitional administration" to be put in place in Ukraine and vowed his army would "finish off" Ukrainian troops, in hardline remarks as US President Donald Trump pushes for a ceasefire.



A rapprochement between Washington and Moscow since Trump's return to office and the US leader's threats to stop supporting Kyiv have bolstered Putin's confidence more than three years into an offensive that has killed tens of thousands on both sides.

Ukraine fears it could be forced to accept a final peace deal on terms that are favourable to Moscow if it loses the support of

its most important backer.

The renewed call to essentially topple Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky was the latest demonstration of Putin's long-standing desire to install a more Moscow-friendly regime in Kyiv.

"We could, of course, discuss with the United States, even with European countries, and of course with our partners and friends, under the auspices of the UN, the possibility of establishing a transitional administration in Ukraine," Putin said on the sidelines of an Arctic forum.

"What for? To organise a democratic presidential election that would result in the coming to power of a competent government, and Zelensky's major domestic opponents have all said elections should not be held until after the conflict.

negotiations with these authorities on a peace agreement and sign legitimate documents," he said.

When launching its offensive in 2022, Moscow aimed to take Kyiv in a matter of days, but was instead repulsed by a smaller Ukrainian army.

In the first days of the offensive, Putin issued a public call for Ukraine's generals to topple Zelensky, whom Putin has repeatedly denigrated, without providing any evidence, as a neo-Nazi and drug addict.

Moscow has also repeatedly questioned Zelensky's "legitimacy" as Ukrainian president, after his initial five-year mandate ended in May 2024.

Under Ukrainian law, elections are suspended during times of martial law and military conflict, and Zelensky's major domestic opponents have all said elections should not be held until after the conflict.

Under Ukrainian law, elections are suspended during times of martial law and military conflict, and Zelensky's major domestic opponents have all said elections should not be held until after the conflict.

A health ministry spokesman said seven people, including two children, were wounded.

On Thursday, the

Houthi said similar strikes killed two people and wounded two.

Yemen rebels report strikes blamed on US

AFP, Sanaa

Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen yesterday reported dozens of overnight air strikes they blamed on the United States, including in the capital Sanaa, saying several people were wounded.

In Sanaa, which the Houthi seized in 2014, "American aggression" targeted the international airport and part of the city centre, "damaging houses and businesses", the rebel TV station Al-Masirah said.

It also reported strikes in the Amran, Saada and Jawf regions of the north, as well as in Hodeida in the west and Marib in the east.

A health ministry spokesman said seven people, including two children, were wounded.

On Thursday, the Houthi said similar strikes killed two people and wounded two.

## ANTI-GOVT PROTESTS

### More arrests as Turkey escalates crackdown

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey yesterday intensified its crackdown over ongoing anti-government protests, arresting the lawyer of the jailed Istanbul mayor and two more journalists in connection with the country's biggest wave of unrest since 2013.

Nine days after the arrest and subsequent jailing of Istanbul's popular opposition mayor, Ekrem Imamoglu, thousands of demonstrators protested on the streets on Thursday night, despite a growing sense of fear.

Overnight, police raided more homes, with Imamoglu saying his lawyer Mehmet Pehlivan had been "detained on fictitious grounds," in a post on X published via the mayor's legal team.

"As if the coup against democracy was not enough, they cannot tolerate the victims defending themselves. The evil that a handful of incompetent people are inflicting on our country is growing," he wrote.

"Release my lawyer immediately!"

It was not immediately clear on what grounds Pehlivan had been detained but opposition broadcaster Hall TV said it was linked to allegations of "laundering assets originating from a crime".

The Istanbul Bar Association meanwhile said 20 minors had been arrested between March 22-25 on charges of violating a ban on protests.

## India criticises X for calling website a censorship tool

REUTERS, New Delhi



India has criticised Elon Musk's X for wrongly labelling as a "censorship portal" an official website that allows tech companies to be notified about harmful online content, court papers reviewed by Reuters showed yesterday.

The lawsuit marks an escalation in a legal dispute between X and the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi over how it orders content to be taken down, at a time when Musk nears the launch in India of his other key ventures, Starlink and Tesla.

The comments came in a rejoinder to X's new lawsuit filed on March 5 in the southern state of Karnataka seeking to quash the government's website initiative.

"The use of the said terminology by a worldwide portal like X is unfortunate and condemnable," the information technology ministry told the court, adding that the company was raising a "groundless concern of censorship".



Indian security force personnel patrol near the site of a gun battle with suspected militants in a forested area of Kathua district, Jammu and Kashmir, India, yesterday. At least four police personnel and two militants were killed in the gun battle, an official said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
গাজীপুর।					
<a href="http://www.stamc.edu.bd">www.stamc.edu.bd</a>					
তারিখ: ১৩ চৈত্র ১৪৩১					
তারিখ: ২৭মার্চ ২০২৫					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
গাজীপুর।					
<a href="http://www.stamc.edu.bd">www.stamc.edu.bd</a>					
তারিখ: ১৩ চৈত্র ১৪৩১					
তারিখ: ২৭মার্চ ২০২৫					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
গাজীপুর।					
<a href="http://www.stamc.edu.bd">www.stamc.edu.bd</a>					
তারিখ: ১৩ চৈত্র ১৪৩১					
তারিখ: ২৭মার্চ ২০২৫					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
গাজীপুর।					
<a href="http://www.stamc.edu.bd">www.stamc.edu.bd</a>					
তারিখ: ১৩ চৈত্র ১৪৩১					
তারিখ: ২৭মার্চ ২০২৫					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
গাজীপুর।					
<a href="http://www.stamc.edu.bd">www.stamc.edu.bd</a>					
তারিখ: ১৩ চৈত্র ১৪৩১					
তারিখ: ২৭মার্চ ২০২৫					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
গাজীপুর।					
<a href="http://www.stamc.edu.bd">www.stamc.edu.bd</a>					
তারিখ: ১৩ চৈত্র ১৪৩১					
তারিখ: ২৭মার্চ ২০২৫					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
গাজীপুর।					
<a href="http://www.stamc.edu.bd">www.stamc.edu.bd</a>					
তারিখ: ১৩ চৈত্র ১৪৩১					
তারিখ: ২৭মার্চ ২০২৫					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
গাজীপুর।					
<a href="http://www.stamc.edu.bd">www.stamc.edu.bd</a>					
তারিখ: ১৩ চৈত্র ১৪৩১					
তারিখ: ২৭মার্চ ২০২৫					
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ					
গাজীপুর।					
<a href="http://www.stamc.edu.bd">www.stamc.edu.bd</a>					

## In revising DAP, resist real-estate pressure

Proposed amendments will worsen Dhaka's liveability, experts say

At a time when the capital is already struggling with overpopulation and congestion, experts have reacted with scepticism to the move to revise the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) of Dhaka—saying it will worsen the city's liveability rather than improve it. The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) drafted the amendment proposal after real estate developers intensified protests against DAP-2022 following last year's political changeover. And it has been recently discussed at the first meeting of a high-powered evaluation committee that decided to seek stakeholders' input before any decision.

While talking to this daily, several urban planners said the proposed amendments, driven largely by demands from real estate developers, would further increase the city's population density and aggravate its living conditions. If approved, it will allow developers to increase building heights by two to four stories as well as floor area in most neighbourhoods. As a result, some areas could see their population rise to an alarming 50,000 per square kilometre. Experts particularly objected to the proposed change to the Floor-Area Ratio (FAR). The DAP currently has an area-based FAR system to ensure a gradual decrease in FAR from central to peripheral areas, maintaining some balance in urban expansion. Although it had been relaxed in 2023, under pressure from real estate businesses, the new draft now suggests changing the FAR approval system to a uniform plot-and-road-based one, making way for indiscriminate high-rise construction. Such modifications, argues one expert, will "undermine the unique character of different neighbourhoods, disrupt urban balance, and risk the destruction of residential communities in Dhaka."

These warnings deserve to be taken seriously for the sake of the safety and wellbeing of residents. Allowing more high-rises without proper planning may not only worsen traffic congestion and overstretch public utilities, but also increase environmental hazards in a city already seeing the worst of them. The risk of fire hazards in high rises along narrow roads is another serious concern, especially with the current lack of fire prevention measures. As urban planners have pointed out, it is also essential that setback distances between buildings are strictly enforced to ensure proper sunlight, ventilation, and overall safety.

We, therefore, urge the interim government to resist the pressure from real estate developers. As the city expands, so too must its planning standards, supporting infrastructure, and regulatory enforcement to ensure a liveable Dhaka. While the existing DAP is far from ideal, any changes to it should be guided by established urban planning principles, not the profit motives of a few. Given the state it has reached, we should also focus on reducing pressure on Dhaka by decentralising development.

## Sundarbans' climate migrants need help

They must not be left to suffer at home or abroad

We are concerned about the plight of climate migrants who are forced to seek livelihoods abroad, particularly in the Gulf countries, owing to poverty, debt, and persistent threats of climate-induced disasters in Bangladesh. Far from delivering desired relief, their desperate attempts often turn into another harsh ordeal, as many are forced to return after enduring wage theft, exploitative working conditions, and even deprivation of basic necessities like food in host countries. A significant number of such migrants are from climate-vulnerable regions such as the Sundarbans, Satkhira, and Khulna.

Reportedly, climate-related disasters in Bangladesh have nearly doubled over the past six decades, increasing from four per year before 1990 to seven per year after. The frequency and severity of such calamities have further increased after cyclones Sidr in 2007 and Aila in 2009, intensifying migration both within the country and beyond. According to BMET data, international migration from the Sundarbans region increased by 65 percent in a single year, with 786 people moving abroad for work between October 2022 and September 2023, compared to 477 the previous year. Despite that, their financial conditions have remained unchanged.

The picture that emerges from a study by the Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP)—highlighting the experience of returnee migrants belonging to the Sundarbans region—is quite depressing even if familiar. Many have reported suffering withheld salaries, excessive work hours, restricted movement due to confiscation of passports or lack of work permits, and exorbitant recruitment fees. Many were detained by police and deported directly from jail. Their unexpected return without adequate earnings has only deepened their debt burdens instead of easing them. Another recent survey found that nearly every migrant from Bangladesh's climate-affected regions has experienced some form of modern slavery while abroad. This alarming situation demands immediate government interventions, including the creation of adequate local jobs and other income-generating opportunities for climate-vulnerable communities.

The rights and well-being of these inherently vulnerable individuals deserve priority from the authorities. They must actively engage with foreign embassies to safeguard our migrant workers and ensure they are not subjected to exploitation. Also, the authorities must better regulate migration costs and crack down on unscrupulous recruitment agencies preying on desperate job seekers. Over the years, countless workers have faced abuse while abroad, many even losing their lives. This, too, needs to change. The government must take decisive action to address these interlinked issues and uphold the rights of our migrant workers.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Dominion of Canada created

On this day in 1867, with the British North America Act, the British colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada were united as the Dominion of Canada, and the province of Canada was separated into Quebec and Ontario.

# BIMSTEC must adapt to global shifts and future challenges



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

SELIM RAIHAN

The sixth Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from April 2-4. The New World Order, which denotes an evolving geopolitical landscape characterised by shifting power dynamics, technological advancements, and interconnectedness, necessitates BIMSTEC to adopt a novel approach to regional cooperation.

One major challenge is the escalation of uncertainty, a notable trend in the global trade regime. The undermining of multilateralism poses a significant threat to the WTO's rule-based system, creating an unpredictable environment for international trade. Additionally, geopolitical realignments, such as the US-China and US-Canada trade wars, alongside Trump's reciprocal tariff, highlight the shifting dynamics and rivalries in global trade. These developments drive trade diversification and regionalisation, exemplified by the "China+" strategy.

Protectionism is on the rise, too, with tariffs, non-tariff measures, and trade restrictions becoming increasingly prevalent. Supply chain innovation is also transforming global trade as automation, AI, and ethical supply chains gain prominence. The rise of the Global South signifies another important trend, with India, ASEAN, and Africa assuming an increasingly vital role in the global economy.

Furthermore, digital commerce is experiencing substantial growth, driven by the expansion of e-commerce, blockchain technology, and AI-enabled logistics. Additionally, the green trade agenda is gaining momentum, with a focus on climate and renewable energy trade, reflecting a growing commitment to sustainability within global trade practices.

Meanwhile, conflicts, terrorism, and cyber threats across national boundaries are making international cooperation essential. Furthermore, rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and digital infrastructure present significant opportunities alongside ethical, security, and regulatory challenges.

Rising sea levels, extreme weather, and resource shortages are also impacting all countries, including

those in the BIMSTEC region. Besides, the Covid pandemic has underscored the vulnerability of health systems worldwide, highlighting the need for preparedness, equitable vaccine distribution, and coordinated pandemic response—areas where many BIMSTEC nations fall short. Despite economic progress, poverty remains a challenge in many regions within BIMSTEC countries. Bridging economic disparities and fostering inclusive growth are crucial for both global stability and regional prosperity.

Moreover, macroeconomic instability in several BIMSTEC nations hinders efforts to reduce poverty and build resilience.

as it emphasises physical, digital, and interpersonal connectivity. By enhancing transport links, energy grids, digital infrastructure, and technological partnerships, BIMSTEC can drive economic growth and resilience.

BIMSTEC can also bolster health systems, facilitate the exchange of best practices, and improve preparedness. Additionally, collaborative efforts within the organisation can effectively tackle climate change, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable resource management.

Despite numerous promises and its 27 years of existence, BIMSTEC's progress toward deeper regional integration has remained limited. Several factors continue to hinder its advancement.

One significant obstacle is the lack of political commitment from the leaders of member countries. Larger nations have not consistently demonstrated the political will required to push the agenda forward, while smaller nations have not prioritised BIMSTEC sufficiently. For instance, it took 25

boosting investments are vital for improving economic integration within the BIMSTEC region. Although physical connectivity and trade volumes have improved, intra-regional trade remains limited (around seven percent). While this outpaces the performance of SAARC countries, it lags significantly behind ASEAN (approximately 25 percent). Additionally, the region suffers from a substantial infrastructure investment gap (estimated at \$120 billion annually), hindering smooth economic collaboration.

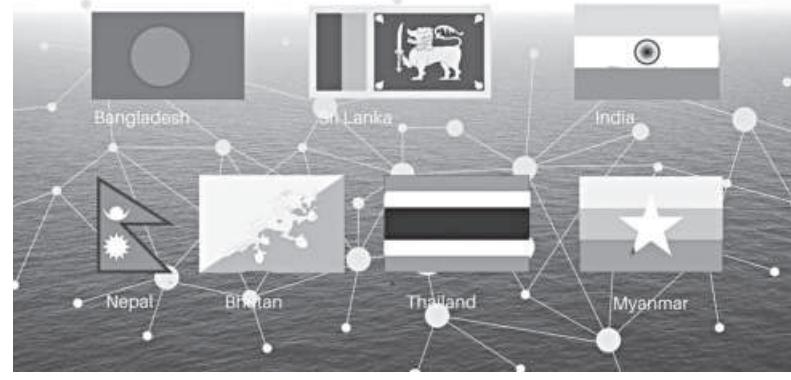
Although the framework agreement was signed in 2004, BIMSTEC has yet to establish a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA). Instead, member countries have individually entered into numerous bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, resulting in fragmented trade arrangements.

Scepticism about the FTA among larger BIMSTEC nations raises doubts about its future progress. Historically, disputes over sensitive lists, reluctance to fully open economies, and non-tariff issues have impeded FTA prospects. Furthermore, bilateral tensions, such as those between Bangladesh and Myanmar, negatively affect BIMSTEC's effectiveness. Additionally, nations like Thailand and Myanmar often prioritise ASEAN over BIMSTEC due to ASEAN's advanced integration framework.

The BIMSTEC Secretariat operates with limited financial resources, severely curtailing its ability to implement projects, organise events, and facilitate effective cooperation among member countries. Inadequate funding also constrains its capacity to attract skilled personnel, affecting overall efficiency. Resource shortages further undermine the Secretariat's visibility both regionally and globally, impeding advocacy, outreach, and communication of BIMSTEC's goals.

Despite its potential, BIMSTEC faces challenges in fostering stronger people-to-people interactions among its member countries. To address these issues, initiatives such as educating youth about BIMSTEC's significance, investing in cross-border infrastructure, and enhancing digital connectivity are essential. These efforts can help build closer ties, encourage mutual understanding, and promote trust—ultimately strengthening regional cooperation.

In conclusion, BIMSTEC holds immense potential to shape the New World Order by fostering cooperation, building resilience, and advancing sustainable development in the Bay of Bengal region. However, its effectiveness depends on collective commitment, practical initiatives, and the flexibility to adapt to evolving global challenges.



VISUAL: MONOROM POLOK

BIMSTEC, comprising seven countries around the Bay of Bengal (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand), holds immense potential for addressing modern challenges through effective regional cooperation. The region's geographical proximity and historical ties provide a unique platform for collaboration, bridging South Asia and Southeast Asia. BIMSTEC prioritises areas such as trade, investment, connectivity, and cooperation to strengthen economic ties, alleviate poverty, and promote sustainable development.

Recognising the threats of terrorism and transnational organised crime, BIMSTEC member states can collaborate through coordinated efforts and information sharing

years for BIMSTEC to adopt a formal Charter, delaying institutionalisation and slowing decision-making processes. Furthermore, translating commitments into tangible actions demands sustained effort. BIMSTEC must focus on implementing projects and diligently monitoring their outcomes.

Creating a unified security framework is crucial, particularly in addressing unconventional threats such as cyber-attacks and climate-induced migration. BIMSTEC should involve civil society, academic institutions, and the private sector to adopt a holistic approach. Integrating gender perspectives and actively engaging youth are equally important.

Enhancing trade facilitation, reducing non-tariff barriers, and

# Our coastal communities need a climate justice plan



Md. Al-Mamun  
is researcher and social scientist at the Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD).

MD. AL-MAMUN

Last year, the United Nations issued a "red alert" for the future of the world due to the escalating impacts of climate change. The "red alert" highlighted the unprecedented record-breaking heat and extreme weather events, signalling the urgency of addressing the climate crisis. Bangladesh, being one of the most vulnerable countries, is facing the brunt of this crisis, with rising sea levels and extreme weather events threatening its coastal communities. Coastal areas are not only at risk of disappearing beneath rising seas but are also witnessing an acceleration of cyclonic activity, salinity intrusion, and the collapse of vital ecosystems. It is high time that the world, particularly the developed nations most responsible for climate emissions, recognise the necessity of climate justice for the vulnerable communities whose homes are under threat.

Bangladesh's coastal areas are particularly susceptible to the consequences of climate change. According to the Bangladesh Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Fund (BCCARF), sea level rise could displace up to 20 million people by 2050, primarily from Bangladesh's coastal zones. The World Bank's projections paint a similarly grim

picture, stating that Bangladesh's coastline, home to some of the most impoverished and marginalised populations, faces devastating threats from climate-related disasters.

This catastrophe is made even more unfair by the fact that Bangladesh, with its negligible contribution to global carbon emissions, bears the heaviest toll. The irony is palpable: countries like the United States, China, and members of the European Union, who are the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, are largely unaffected by the climate disasters wreaking havoc in Bangladesh's coastal regions.

Climate justice is not just an ethical concept; it's a necessity for the survival of the most vulnerable populations. In Bangladesh, it means ensuring that those most affected by climate change, who have contributed the least to its cause, receive the support they need to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of the crisis.

Climate justice must be seen as both distributive and procedural. Distributive justice refers to the fair allocation of resources to those most in need. In the case of Bangladesh, this means ensuring that the country receives adequate climate finance to implement adaptive measures, build

resilient infrastructure, and protect vulnerable populations from the escalating impacts of climate change. This financial support should be sourced from countries historically responsible for the majority of carbon emissions. These nations must not only reduce their emissions but also provide the necessary compensation to protect vulnerable nations like Bangladesh.

Procedural justice, on the other hand, demands that those most affected by climate change—especially marginalised communities, have a say in the decision-making processes surrounding climate action. In Bangladesh, women, indigenous groups, and low-income communities must be included in climate discussions at all levels, from local to international. Their voices and local knowledge are vital in creating solutions that are both effective and culturally appropriate.

To truly achieve climate justice for Bangladesh's coastal communities, we need both global and local action. At the international level, countries responsible for high emissions must fulfil their financial commitments under the Paris Agreement, ensuring that Bangladesh receives sufficient climate financing to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The funds allocated should be directed toward the most vulnerable regions, focusing on projects that prioritise both resilience and equity.

At the national level, Bangladesh must continue to strengthen its disaster management systems and promote policies that prioritise climate resilience for marginalised communities. But it is equally important to ensure that local communities are not just recipients

of aid but active participants in the solution. Local adaptation strategies, such as eco-friendly agricultural practices, disaster-resilient infrastructure, and capacity-building for women and youth must be supported through targeted funding and policy interventions.

Furthermore, Bangladesh's voice must be amplified on the global stage, demanding accountability from those who have contributed the most to climate change. The country's leaders must continue to advocate for compensation and financial support, ensuring that climate justice is integrated into international climate agreements.

The urgency of climate justice for Bangladesh cannot be overstated. As one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, Bangladesh needs not just global solidarity but a fair distribution of resources to protect its people from the worst effects of climate change. It is not enough for the world to acknowledge the problem; it must take concrete action. By ensuring that climate justice is grounded in both distributive and procedural justice, we can create a future where Bangladesh's coastal communities have the resources, support, and voice they need to navigate the stormy waters ahead.

The "red alert" is a wake-up call for the world. It is time for countries responsible for the climate crisis to honour their commitments and provide the necessary support to nations like Bangladesh. Climate justice is not just a moral obligation; it is a lifeline for the millions at risk in the most vulnerable corners of the planet.

# Eid in a time of uncertainty and change



## BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza  
is professor of English at Dhaka University.

### SHAMSAD MORTUZA

For those who have fasted for a month, the morning breakfast before heading for the Eid-ul-Fitr jamaat feels slightly odd. The otherwise familiar mealtime feels unfamiliar, and the body hesitates to consume food at an "untimely" hour. The return to the usual meal schedule is not only of joy but also of a spiritual solace that has been achieved through a month-long disciplining of the body and mind. We fast to experience hunger, to feel empathy for those who go hungry throughout the year for various reasons.

The process of experiencing hunger is completed through mandatory acts of charity (*zakat al-fitr*). It is designed to spread the joy of Eid. The small gestures of those who "have" allow those who "have not" to partake in the joy of Eid. The *fitra* is more than a monetary contribution. It is an act of solidarity informed by the divine will: end class barriers and don't let anyone feel excluded. For Swiss Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan, Eid is about "reasserting the ethical imperative to build a just society". He writes in *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, "Eid is not merely an event but a reminder that our collective duty is to create spaces where no individual is discriminated against based on poverty, ethnicity, or gender."

Often, we tend to narrow down this brotherhood as a homogenous entity. But Allah (SWT) reminds us of this diversity in one of the verses in Quran: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous" (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13). Being righteous is not an inherited legacy of being born into the right religion; it is the responsibility of practising righteous acts in everyday life.

As we stand on the cusp of a new era, there are lessons to be learnt from Eid. After all, the fall of the old regime has created possibilities for something new for the nation. Lest we forget, the call for ending all forms of discrimination led to the fall of the old regime. The fall happened due to the pride and stubbornness of the ruler. It happened because of the insistence on

violence to prove that might makes right. However, some old fear overshadows the crescent moon's promise of renewal. We are still afraid to voice our opinions. Criminal syndicates are the latest manifestation of the might/right reality.



'Eid celebrates gratitude, compassion, and renewal for the well-being of the entire community. Hence, it demands an end to discrimination and marginalisation.'

FILE PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The interim government is trying its best to restore the broken economy, establish law and order, and earn the trust of local and international communities. But they seem to be losing their way in the treacherous terrain of a fragmented society. In a way, some of the fragmentation is their own doing. The election countdown should have started by

righteous during the season of holy festivity?

Experts predict 1.5 crore people will leave Dhaka during this season. It is refreshing for those of us who have chosen not to go to our ancestral homes or fancy resorts for the holidays, allowing us to experience Dhaka in its rare, pristine form. But many of those people will leave Dhaka knowing that they

the nation. The home adviser's 3am press conference last month could hardly assuage the tension.

Decades of autocratic governance have polarised the country. The new government could not do much to embalm the distrust and division. Instead of seeking truth and reconciliation, our politicians and would-be

have lost their jobs. The industrial sector has felt the brunt of political transition. Many factories and business houses of the former regime are destroyed and put out of operation. Political vengeance, mobbed by lingering animosities, has left thousands of workers unemployed and pushed entire communities into economic uncertainty. The country's main export sector has witnessed a slump, as many factory owners have either fled or hesitate to invest further. As factories shutter and businesses fold, we witness an unprecedented rise in crime. Reports of burglaries and street muggings have become the new norm. Even during the holy month, such crimes have continued. There is a sense of insecurity gripping

politicians are locked in a zero-sum game where victory for one side is still perceived as an existential defeat for the other. We are stuck in the myth of the snake eating its tail.

The interim government, despite its best intentions, has failed to untangle themselves from this toxic web of political animosities. A new interest group has emerged and is busy creating its own legacy. Some of them are "crafting" family heritage. Some of them are adapting to luxurious lifestyles. Some of them are enjoying the power. Some of them are keeping an eye on the situation from a distance to swoop in at a convenient time. In all probability, the fate of Awami League has taught them to secure a free get-out-of-jail card in this game of political monopoly. The result is a domino effect that's polarising society even further. Bangladesh Bank sources revealed that there were about 5,000 new millionaires (with more than Tk 10 million in their bank accounts) in the last quarter of 2024.

To bring back confidence, the rule of law must be established. The judicial process for trying the criminals involved in atrocities must be visible. We must put an end to witch-hunting and allow professional bodies to carry out their mandated tasks. The challenge is to establish a just society.

While we celebrate Eid, we need to reflect on our actions. The new moon should not be tainted by the stigma of the old. We have seen the evil of a monolithic narrative. We need to create a system that eschews class barriers, and promotes plurality and inclusivity, and above all, righteousness. That is the true spirit of Eid-ul-Fitr. It is more than the feast, the sharing of gifts, or participating in a communal prayer. There is a deep ethical dimension to this otherwise spiritual and social event. Eid celebrates gratitude, compassion, and renewal for the well-being of the entire community. Hence, it demands an end to discrimination and marginalisation.

Eid Mubarak!

# Will Trump 2.0 end the liberal international order?

**Kawsar Uddin Mahmud**  
is a geopolitical analyst and a researcher at the KRF Center for Bangladesh and Global Affairs. He can be reached at kawsardurin@gmail.com.

**Md. Obaidullah**  
is a visiting scholar in the Department of Development Studies at Daffodil International University. His research focuses on international relations, great power competition, geopolitics, and Asian politics. He can be reached at buobaidullah@gmail.com.

**KAWSAR UDDIN MAHMUD and MD. OBAIDULLAH**

After the United States presidential election in 2024, many geopolitical analysts speculated that "Trump 2.0" would be more "assertive" and "protectionist" in his policies than the previous term. In reality, it has become more palpable nowadays as the second presidency of Donald Trump has given rise to concerns regarding the future of the liberal international order (LIO).

The LIO emerged in the mid 20th century as a response to the devastation of two world wars. A coalition of liberal democracies, led by the US, constructed a system intended to promote "peace, stability and prosperity" through idealist and liberal institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The underlying logic of the LIO was that "international cooperation and peace," underpinned by democratic norms and economic integration, will prevent conflicts and wars. John Ikenberry described it as "The most ambitious and far-reaching effort to organise world politics in modern history."

With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US came forth as the sole superpower in the world political system through its LIO structure. Over the years, the US has integrated itself into the system and has been leading the world politico-economic environment as the "single most dominant power" with its military and economic might and by offering "public goods" and "free ride" to its allies and the developing countries through international institutions. However, the system has recently been exposed with significant vulnerabilities as Trump's "America First" doctrine directly challenged the US's traditional role as this order's principal architect and guarantor.

### The retreat from multilateralism

Donald Trump's "America First" policy

prioritises the "protectionist" and "national-interest-first policies" of the US over international collaboration, focusing on a transactional approach. This led to the US's withdrawal from pivotal global institutions and agreements, including the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organization (WHO). It clearly signals a retreat from collective efforts to address pressing global issues. The executive order issued on January 20, 2025, officially withdraws the US from the WHO, resulting in the WHO's consideration of cutting part of its budget by \$400 million. The US

has historically been the largest financial contributor to WHO, and its withdrawal could have serious consequences for global health security and the US hegemony in the arena since the most dominant hegemon should provide "public goods" to preserve its "preponderance of power." Critics argue that by retreating from a key pillar of global health governance, the Trump administration risks ceding influence to other global powers—Russia, China, and even members of the BRICS—thereby, fading America's ability, as the hegemon, to shape the international response to pandemics and other health emergencies.

Moreover, Trump has always been a sceptic of NATO and the UN, organisations he criticised as "outdated and financially burdensome." Trump recently criticised NATO allies for not meeting the current goal of spending two percent of their GDP on defence. Also, the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, said, "Washington will no longer allow its NATO allies to rely on American taxpayer dollars to fund their defense budgets." In addition, Trump's close billionaire backer Elon Musk sanctioned a suggestion from X user @GuntherEagleman, who wrote: "It's time to leave NATO and the UN." Although Trump has not directly stated plans to exit NATO, he has consistently urged European nations to increase their defence spending, warning that the US should not shoulder the alliance's financial burden alone with providing "free ride"—what Randall Schweller previously termed as "No More Uncle Sugar."

### Economic nationalism and trade war

Trump has given rise to confrontational trade measures by placing excessive tariffs at 25 percent against Mexican and Canadian goods (with the exception of a 10 percent rate on Canadian energy) while enforcing an additional 20 percent duty on Chinese

imports in what he called a "deficit correction effort" against economic imbalances with the countries. In this regard, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum quickly vowed retaliatory measures, pledging that Mexico would respond by targeting specific US imports. Canada, one of the closest allies of the US, found itself embroiled in an equally pugnacious exchange. Calling Trump's move a "dumb and nonsensical policy" and promising an "unequivocal" response, former Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau pointed

forcing businesses to raise prices or cut jobs. Retaliatory tariffs further reduced demand for American exports, which is weakening industries rather than protecting them. Ultimately, this grotesque policy signalled a new era of "protectionism" that challenges the longstanding LIO and forces both allies and adversaries alike to re-examine their strategic economic interests.

### Undermining democratic alliances

Trump's continuous threat to withdraw from NATO, using his demand for everyone



Under Trump, the US administration treats international alliances as 'bargaining chips' rather than as pillars of global stability.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

out that Canada would retaliate by imposing tariffs on US goods. Beijing reacted similarly, imposing tariffs on a broad array of US farm exports. China expanded its export controls to include more US companies, exhibiting a stark message of readiness to engage in a prolonged economic confrontation. Signalling the development, China's embassy said, "If war is what the US wants, be it a tariff war, a trade war or any other type of war, we're ready to fight till the end."

However, while Trump justified his policies as "a way to strengthen the US economy," the decisions led to increased costs for American manufacturers reliant on imported materials,

to pay as an "economic transaction," shows his clear contempt for European political leaders. Trusting relationships have fallen apart outside Europe as well. South Korea and Japan, which traditionally aligned with the US, have faced difficulties because of Trump's unpredictable diplomatic approaches. US allies in Asia remain in strategic uncertainty because Trump has not confirmed a policy defence of Taiwan against potential Chinese attacks. Trump's erratic diplomatic approach has caused significant strain to established strategic alliances that existed for a long time.

Trump has also shown a preference for authoritarian leaders on several occasions.

One of the most concerning manifestations involves his favour toward Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The US president praises Orbán as a "champion protector" of Western values while Hungary develops into an authoritarian political system. Similarly, Trump has developed a stronger admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin. Trump's praise for leaders such as Kim Jong Un and Mohammed bin Salman also attracted criticism because these governments have been internationally criticised for conducting authoritarian rule.

### Global security at risk

In his first term, Trump abdicated his responsibility to international treaties, starting with his departures from the Iran nuclear deal, the 1987 Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, and the Open Skies Treaty, thus demonstrating his disdain for agreements meant to prevent disastrous errors. His derision for arms control agreements is not simply a matter of policy preference; it is a fundamental shift in the role the US plays on the world stage. Allies, who once trusted Washington to serve as an honest broker in international security, now find themselves isolated by the US administration that treats international alliances as "bargaining chips" rather than as pillars of global stability. The erosion of trust has real consequences as longstanding partners such as France and Germany may begin to pursue their own model of security, seeking alternatives to the US structure that appears increasingly unpredictable and self-interested.

In addition, the climate crisis looms large as Trump's policies jeopardise global security. Climate change is not just an environmental issue—it is a grim peril for the world that is likely to worsen the world's political and economic instability and trigger resource conflicts. Trump's recent administration, marked by its climate denial and retreat from multilateral environmental agreements like the Paris Climate Agreement, seems to prioritise short-term fossil fuel interests over long-term planetary stability.

In the end, the implications of this retreat from global leadership, marking a departure from multilateral engagement and a transactional approach to alliances, are profound for the US as well as the whole world. The future of global stability depends on whether the US chooses to reclaim its role as the linchpin of the LIO or continues down a path of isolationism that wanes its standing on the world stage.

## 'We have to find a Bangladeshi way of playing cricket'

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has recently renewed their contract with former West Indies batting all-rounder Phil Simmons as head coach of the national team till the next ICC 50-over World Cup in 2027. In an exclusive interview with **The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan**, Simmons talked about his motivation behind taking up the job for a long term, his assessment of the Tigers' performance in the Champions Trophy and his vision with the side in the coming years. The excerpts are as follows:

**The Daily Star (DS):** How would you rate your first six-month stint with the Bangladesh team before the contract renewal?

**Phil Simmons (PS):** It was excellent. The players in front of me, the support I got from the board and cricket operations, it was all really good. There was no reason for me not to extend my contract.

**DS:** Many top coaches are opting to only take up franchise jobs, what prompted you to take a long-term job with the Bangladesh team?

**PS:** I enjoyed the short tenure with these players. Their attitude of wanting to win, wanting to work hard and wanting to practice hard were why I wanted to extend my contract.

**DS:** Many of the long-serving seniors have retired now, so you will have to depend more on other players as you begin your new tenure. How do you view it?

**PS:** The thing is the senior players will move on at some point. Now, the young players are going to come in and fill up the places of the seniors who have left. We need to be thinking about the 2027 World Cup. You have just lost two of your well-known players – Mushfiqur [Rahim] and Mahmudullah. So, we have to look at who is going to fill those spots. If we can start from now, it will give the replacements a chance to form their own identity in those spots.

**DS:** How do you rate Bangladesh's performance in the Champions Trophy? What actually went wrong?

**PS:** I think we just didn't bat well. That's one of the biggest takeaways. We can work on how we can score consistently and play risk-free from overs 11 to 35. Because we have done well in the Powerplay and death



overs but we need to make sure we do well in those middle overs as well. That's where all the strong teams are doing really well.

**DS:** The Tigers will play two ICC events – 2026 ICC T20 World Cup and 2027 ICC World Cup – during your next tenure. What will be your plans in those meets?

**PS:** I think planning has to start from now. We have to start putting things together, decide how we want to play T20 first of all and then 50-overs cricket. We need to figure out what is the best way for the Bangladesh team to play in order to win tournaments. The T20 planning will start with the Asia Cup. After that, we will assess what are the things that need to be changed and we will make them in time. So, there is a lot to be done.

**DS:** Bangladesh's international schedule is jam packed in the coming months. What is your opinion on player rotation to keep players injury-free?

**PS:** I think from a batting perspective, it will be difficult. I don't really believe in too much rotation in batting. You need to make sure players get time in the middle. However, from a bowling perspective, we have a good number of fast bowlers whom we can rotate and we actually need to rotate as we will be playing a lot of matches from the end of next month till the BPL later this year. We need to rotate our fast bowlers to keep them physically strong and improve their skills.

**DS:** What is your biggest dream with Bangladesh team in the coming days?

**PS:** My thoughts are that we can get a lot better than we are in all three formats. We have young players who are hungry to do well in all three formats. We have to find a Bangladeshi way of playing cricket.

## SHORT CORNER

**Chapal replaced as archery's general secretary**

Bangladesh Archery Federation's long-serving general secretary Kazi Razibuddin Ahmed Chapal has been replaced from the position of general secretary of the ad-hoc committee by international judge and organiser Tanvir Ahmed. The move came after the five-member Search Committee threatened to quit if Chapal was kept in the position in the new committee. Chapal, however, has been retained as the No. 1 member in the new 19-member ad-hoc committee.

**Tamim back home after heart attack**

Former Bangladeshi cricket captain Tamim Iqbal returned home Friday, days after suffering a massive heart attack during a local match. "After observing his health condition, we have decided to discharge him today," Shahabuddin Talukder, a doctor at Evercare Hospital told reporters.

**Ancelotti to go on trial for alleged tax fraud**

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti will go on trial next week for allegedly failing to declare income to Spain's tax office, the Madrid court which will hear the case said Friday.

\*Read full stories on *The Daily Star* website



**Novak Djokovic** turned on the style to take his place in the last four of the Miami Open with an impressive 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) win over American Sebastian Korda, becoming the oldest man to reach a Masters 1000 semifinal on Friday. A victory at Miami would be a landmark 100th singles title for the 24-time Grand Slam champion.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Saudi Arabia's \$500m takeover of cricket and its many implications

### ASHFAQ UL-ALAM

On June 10, 1990, Bangladesh took on Fiji in an ICC Trophy group stage match in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

The team led by Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, the current chief selector, came out victorious by three wickets with Akram Khan, current director at the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), scoring an unbeaten 42 in a 190-run chase.

Even in defeat, some Fiji players came off well in that game, one of them being all-rounder Neil Maxwell, who made 36 with the bat and picked up a wicket with the ball.

Maxwell, who had represented Australia at age level and played first-class cricket for New South Wales and Victoria, represented Fiji, the country of his birth, in the ICC Trophy three more times in 1997, 2001 and 2005. Later he moved on to sports marketing, becoming an agent for many top international cricketers and even becoming the CEO of IPL franchise Kings XI Punjab for a time.

Now, the former Fiji all-rounder is spearheading a new global Twenty20 cricket league backed by Saudi Arabia's SRJ Sports Investment which could potentially change the power dynamics of world cricket and further devalue Bangladesh's position in the global cricketing ecosystem.

**What is the Saudi League?**  
Franchise T20 leagues are literally dime a dozen with almost every Test playing nation having a league of its own. Even countries that don't have ICC full membership like the UAE, Canada, the USA and Nepal have their own T20 leagues.

So, if Saudi Arabia, a gulf nation which has aggressively invested in golf, motorsports, football, esports, MMA, chess and snooker in the last few years with its 'Vision 2030' in mind, wants to splash up to USD 500 million out of their USD 1 trillion Public Investment Fund (PIF) for a new cricket league, what's the big deal?

The big deal is that this proposed new league, which is still in the planning stage, is not trying to carve out a slice for itself in an already congested market of franchise cricket, but is aiming to revolutionise the game as we know it.

Firstly, it won't actually take place in Saudi Arabia as in the initial blueprint, only the final is supposed to take place there.

Secondly, seven to eight teams from different countries are expected to compete

in not one but four separate tournaments held in different venues spanned across the year, much like the ATP Tours in tennis, culminating in a final like the ATP Finals.

So, the Saudis are not just trying to enter the cricket market, they want to establish a new T20 circuit with them at the helm of it.

### Wider implications

Another aspect that sets this league apart is that the World Cricketers' Association (WCA), the global body for cricketers, is a key part of its think tank.

WCA has been butting heads with ICC for years on issues like cricket scheduling and improved remunerations for players.

The association released a comprehensive review of the game's global structure on March 26, 2025, where it called out ICC for its short-term thinking, said only 10.5 percent of the global cricket revenue go to the cricketers, proposed reducing India's current share in the revenues from 38.5 percent to 10 percent and also proposed setting up a global growth and development fund for associate nations.

In the same report, WCA also shared skepticism over whether these proposals would be implemented and said, "A new global cricket product may need to be created that achieves this."

This 'new global product' could be the Saudi league, which promises to distribute its revenue more evenly among all participants and allocating more funds for teams outside the 'Big Three' of India, Australia and England so that they can play more Test matches.

Currently, 50 percent of the ICC's total revenue goes to the 'Big Three' and this monopoly has forced established Test teams like South Africa, West Indies and New Zealand to cut back on the number of five-day matches they play.

The situation is even direr for a new Test nation like Ireland, which recently had to cancel its home Test series against Afghanistan owing to a fund crunch.

Funds from the new league could potentially save the future of Test cricket. And as the Saudi-backed league is set to become the first player-led league in cricket, this should mean higher salaries for the cricketers, which would turn it into one of the most lucrative leagues for the players.

Challenges and the India question

Injection of more funds, a new exciting tournament format, more funds for Test

cricket and better remuneration for cricketers: till now it seems that this new Saudi-backed league – if it takes off – would be a blessing for the game.

But for all that to happen, cricket's biggest stakeholder, India, have to be on board.

As the most powerful and influential cricket board in the world, Board of Control for Cricket in India's disapproval would almost certainly lead to the ICC also rejecting this new league.

Moreover, for this new league to reach its potential, it would require the participation of Indian players. Right now, the BCCI does not allow any of its contracted cricketers to compete in leagues outside of India. If

Investment's CEO Danny Townsend had broached the subject of the new league to Jay Shah, at that time secretary of BCCI and currently the ICC chairman.

But getting approval from India won't be easy as a new league like this would threaten the current hierarchy of global cricket, where India sits on top.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is also not interested in entertaining this new league, evidenced by its CEO Richard Gould saying, "there is no scope or demand for such an idea," recently to Sydney Morning Herald. Cricket Australia (CA) is also likely to oppose it.

But that's how the big wigs are thinking



it doesn't make an exception for the Saudi league, it would greatly hinder the league's earnings potential.

While venturing into golf a few years back, Saudi Arabia had boldly created a parallel circuit, LIV Tour, offered millions to top golfers to deflect them into their circuit and basically took over the game with its wealth. But till now, the Saudi officials have taken a much more cautious approach in cricket and have been mindful of India's stronghold on the game.

The IPL players' auction for the ongoing edition was held in Jeddah in last year's November, during which, according to media reports, Saudi Arabia's SRJ Sports

about this Saudi-backed league. What about Bangladesh?

Where does Bangladesh stand? The first question from a Bangladeshi perspective about the Saudi league should be whether a team from Bangladesh would get to take part.

As the structure of the league is still taking shape, there is a chance that players of different nationalities could mix and match to form a team, just like how it happens currently in franchise competitions.

But even if that happens, the interest for Bangladeshi cricketers is likely to be minimal if not nonexistent.

There are other implications as well.

In the current cricket calendar, there are separate windows for all leading franchise competitions, with IPL having the highest two-month window.

The Saudi officials are unlikely to tinker with the IPL window or try to barge into the windows of England's The Hundred and Australia's Big Bash League (BBL).

But if this new league gets approved, four more windows would be sealed off in the calendar, putting other weaker franchise leagues like the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) at a disadvantage.

This new T20 league would reduce the importance of inconsequential bilateral series, and further diminish the importance of the already flailing ODI format, both bad news for Bangladesh cricket.

Unlike the cricket authorities in countries like South Africa and West Indies, BCB is not really in need of funds to hold Tests, so how much value the extra Saudi cash could add is debatable.

So, as things stand right now, if a team from Bangladesh doesn't get to participate in this league, there is really not much Bangladesh cricket could gain from it.

### The solution

Coming back to Neil Maxwell, this is not his first rodeo at trying to start up an improbable cricket league.

Maxwell was one of the first persons to push for the creation of a T20 league in the USA in the early 2010s. It turned out he was a bit ahead of his time as a little over a decade later, Major League Cricket began.

Now, Maxwell is leading the charge to establish a radical new league which could change cricket's future. But right now, there seems to be more reasons for it to fail than succeed.

Getting approvals from the ICC and the 'Big Three', the sheer logistics of holding four tournaments and a final every year and finding the time for a competition like this in an already packed schedule are just few of the many hurdles that lie ahead of this ambitious competition.

However, the solution to all of these problems may be quite simple.

As Dan Ohlmeier, late American television producer and former president of NBC West Coast, had once said to explain how every problem in the sports broadcast industry gets solved, "The answer to all your questions is money." And for the Saudis, money is no problem.

"I have been in the national training camp for the last month and got a five-day [Eid] vacation from today [Friday]. So, there is no special plan to celebrate Eid. I usually hang out with friends and family members on Eid. However, I'll have to maintain my fitness during the vacation and take some rest. One thing I usually miss during Eid is how I used to go shopping with my father before Eid."

ASHRAFUL ISLAM, Hockey player



## Eid between cheers and commitments

Eid is a time of joy, togetherness, and celebration -- a cherished occasion in every Bangladeshi household. But for the country's athletes, the festival often arrives with a bittersweet note. National duty rarely allows room for family time, and the festive spirit is often experienced from hotel rooms or distant fields. However, this year brought a rare twist. For once, the Bangladesh men's cricket team found themselves at home, free from international commitments. In what would be a rarity, the men's cricketers can do things that general people do during Eid -- exchange warm embraces, share plates of delicious food, and perform Eid prayers with loved ones. It's a luxury they seldom enjoy, making this Eid all the more special. On the other hand, the Bangladesh women's cricket team, though on home soil, have to sacrifice the celebrations for something greater. With the ICC World Cup Qualifiers looming, they are locked in training camp -- focused, determined, and chasing a dream that demands everything.

In other sports, the story is mixed. Some athletes will be able to spend Eid at home, basking in the warmth of their families. Yet others, particularly those involved in international tournaments, will watch celebrations unfold from afar, hearts tugged by both duty and desire. Despite the varying circumstances, there is a shared athletes' sacrifices often go unnoticed, but during Eid, their stories remind us of the human side behind the rare joy. For others, it is yet another quiet reminder of the price of passion and patriotism.

**GG** I'll be missing my parents, wife, and friends during Eid-ul-Fitr because I have to stay in the preparation camp in Dhaka for a four-nation tournament to be held in Bhutan next month. I also missed being with my family during the last Eid-ul-Adha due to my duty on a UN mission. In my 15-year professional career, I've missed many Eid celebrations and have become used to it. However, I feel better when the hard work pays off and I can deliver something good for the nation.

MOHAMMAD SELIM  
Boxer

**GG** I'm currently in Dhabaura, Mymensingh, to celebrate Eid. I'm really happy because I'll get to spend time with my parents, siblings, relatives, and friends. Due to international engagements and training camps, I had to stay at the BFF dormitory several times during Eid, but this time I have a plan to meet the junior footballers in my locality.

SANJIDA AKHTER  
Footballer

**GG** I usually celebrate Eid with my teammates at the BFF dormitory due to training camps or international engagements, and speak with my parents over the phone. But this time, I'll be celebrating Eid with my parents, sister, and relatives, and I'm really glad for the opportunity. Receiving salami from elders is always fun, but this time I'll be the one giving it to the younger ones, which will also be a joyful moment. However, I can't go out much, as everyone comes to meet me at home on Eid day.

AFEIDA KHANDOKAR  
Footballer

## 'Eid different now as we've embraced responsibilities'

Bangladesh women's team will be celebrating this year's Eid-ul-Fitr at their training camp in Mirpur as they gear up for the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifiers -- set to take place from April 9-19. In a recent conversation with The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan, seasoned campaigner and vice-captain Nahida Akter opened up about her past Eid celebrations with teammates, her fond childhood memories of the special occasion, and more. The following are excerpts from the interview:

**DS:** How is your recovery going on after missing the Women's Dhaka Premier League (WDPL)?

**NA:** Alhamdulillah, I'm feeling better at the moment. I missed the WDPL to play in the qualifiers, so the recovery was very important.

**DS:** It must be tough to miss Eid with your family due to the camp.

**NA:** Obviously, there is a sad feeling. But as a professional cricketer, I have to accept it. I can't decide where I should be. I remember when we went to Pakistan in 2015, a similar thing happened to us. We had to leave for Pakistan the day after Eid, so we celebrated that Eid together here. It's obviously a matter of sorrow not to be with your family during Eid days, but the team is also a family for us, so that sad part doesn't last long.

**DS:** How do you celebrate Eid when you are with the team?

**NA:** Usually, in the morning, after waking up, we speak to our families over the phone. Then we exchange Eid greetings with everyone here. Normally, we spend the morning doing so. The BCB also arranges all

kinds of things for us on this special day so that we don't feel we are away from our families. We spend Eid day mostly together and might also go out in the evening.

**DS:** Is there anyone in the side who also cooks for you?

**NA:** Earlier, there were some senior cricketers who cooked for us on Eid day. In 2015, the senior apus cooked for us and treated us in such a way that we didn't feel we were away from family.

**DS:** The juniors will probably be expecting the same from you.

**NA:** Previously, the seniors had to give us *salamis* (a traditional gift of money given during Eid, particularly by elders to younger family members), but now we have to give them to the juniors. I feel happy to get *salami*, but I feel happier to give it. As we are earning better now, it makes me happier to present my family members and my teammates with Eid gifts and *salamis*.

**DS:** Now that you have become a star, how different is your Eid day from your childhood ones?

**NA:** Previously, I didn't have to worry

about anything. I celebrated Eid day mostly by visiting family, relatives, and friends and receiving *salamis* from them. I also roamed around with my friends. But now, being in this profession, I don't often get the opportunity to do the same. Eid lasts just two days, but we can't go home. So, in a professional setting, despite our wishes, we can't do it. There is some sadness, but it has become normal for us. Now we have all grown up, and we have embraced our responsibilities for our family, friends, and team.

**DS:** Your favourite Eid tradition?

**NA:** What I like the most about Eid is when my father and two brothers go for Eid prayer, and I lay out their Panjabi (a traditional long tunic worn by South Asian men) and *tupi* (prayer cap) after they have taken a shower. They then leave for Eid prayer wearing new clothes and shoes, and my mother, sisters, and I step outside to watch them go to the Eidgah (An open-air prayer ground where Muslims gather for special congregational prayers). That's the most satisfying thing about Eid for me. When I'm not with my family, I miss that moment very much.

**GG** This Eid is going to be special for me because I'll get to spend it with my mother, who worked so hard for me to reach this stage. I missed her during the last Eid-ul-Adha, although that day I achieved the Olympic quota place in Turkey for the Paris Olympics. As we have a lot of international matches and training camps, we often can't go home to celebrate Eid. I may miss celebrating the next Eid-ul-Adha with my family due to international engagements.

SAGOR ISLAM, Archer



**GG** This will be the third consecutive Eid that I'll spend outside Bangladesh, as I'm currently in a training camp in Thailand, where I also celebrated both Eids last year. There wasn't much festivity in Thailand; I couldn't even enjoy sweetmeats, especially *Lachcha Shemai*. On Eid day, I'll attend training early in the morning before going to a mosque nearly 5 km away for Eid prayers. I really miss celebrating Eid back home.

SAMIUL ISLAM RAFI, Swimmer



**GG** This Eid is going to be different for me as I'll celebrate it with my only son and my parents, while my elder brother is also coming home for Eid. So, I think the day will be joyous for us. During my childhood, I used to receive money from the elders, but now the responsibility is on my shoulders to give cash gifts and clothes to family members -- it's a very different feeling.

MOHAMMAD ISMAIL, Sprinter



## Dhaka-Beijing ties ready for next stage Prof Yunus tells Xinhua

STAR DESK

Dhaka sees Beijing as a "good friend", and it wants to take the bilateral relationship to the next stage, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus said in an interview with the Chinese state news agency Xinhua yesterday.

Bangladeshis are inspired by China's achievements, and they hope to learn from China's experience in developing the country, he said.

"Our relationship has been very strong over the years. Our business is very strong, and we benefit from our collaboration with China," the chief adviser told Xinhua.

"We can take it to the next stage where our collaboration is not limited to the economy only. It will be cultural too," he added.

Prof Yunus, who shared the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize with the Grameen Bank for pioneering microfinance, hailed China for its achievement in poverty reduction.

Most countries focus on GDP growth rather than addressing the needs of ordinary people, but China focused on the low-income group, he said. "That's why the Chinese are very successful in reducing poverty very quickly."

Xinhua reported that China had been Bangladesh's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years. At present, there are nearly 1,000 Chinese enterprises operating in Bangladesh, which have created more than 550,000 jobs in total.

Yunus hopes more Chinese investors will come to Bangladesh and open up a broader market together with

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

**Election is your duty, not reforms**  
Says Khasru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said there is an attempt to avoid elections, just like Sheikh Hasina did, in the name of reforms.

He said this while speaking at an iftar with journalists at Chittagong Club in the port city.

He called on everyone to come forward in fulfilling the aspirations and expectations of a "New Bangladesh".

He said a significant shift has occurred in the mindset of the people after Hasina's ouster, and politicians must act accordingly, understanding this.

He hoped that journalists would play their role in realising the aspirations and expectations of people in the post-Hasina era.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Workers of garment factories owned by TNZ Group staging a demonstration with cooking pots in front of Sromo Bhaban in the capital yesterday, demanding payment of their overdue wages and Eid bonuses. Story on Page 3.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## DHAKA-SYLHET HIGHWAY Tk 17,000cr project falls short on road safety

Warns audit report; recommends additional Tk 3,500cr investment

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Road safety and speed will remain compromised on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway even after the completion of its ongoing Tk 17,000 crore expansion, a recent audit report warns.

Inadequate overpasses, underpasses, and pedestrian facilities will hinder road safety, preventing the mega project from achieving its intended purpose, according to the report.

It recommended constructing 57 additional underpasses and overpasses, 78 pedestrian underpasses, and 74 footbridges with ramps, among other infrastructure.

This will raise the project cost by Tk 3,500 crore.

The findings came four years after the approval of the project to upgrade the highway into a four-lane one with service lanes on both sides. Under the existing plan, only 13 overpasses or underpasses will be built on the 209 km-long national highway.

Although the project's current deadline is December 2026, it has

achieved only 13 percent progress, mainly due to land unavailability, making a timely completion highly unlikely.

If the recommended infrastructure is added, the

With only 13 underpasses and overpasses for 209 km highway, existing plan compromises safety and speed, audit finds

It recommends 57 additional underpasses and overpasses, 78 pedestrian underpasses, 74 footbridges

implementation period may also increase along with the cost.

The Road Transport and Highways Division held a meeting with stakeholders earlier this month after project consultants presented recommendations to enhance road safety measures.

Chaired by Mohammed Ziaul Haque, an additional secretary at the division, the meeting recommended implementing the proposed measures to ensure that road safety is not compromised, according to the meeting minutes.

When contacted, AKM Fazlul Karim, project director of the SASEC Dhaka-Sylhet Corridor Road Investment Project, said the project authorities would present the stakeholders' recommendations to the Project Steering Committee at a meeting expected after Eid. If the committee agrees, they will submit a revised development project proposal.

The Dhaka-Sylhet highway is one of the most accident-prone roads in the country. According to police reports, more than 400 people have been killed in 358 road crashes on the highway over the past five years.

**SAFETY, SPEED**  
Consultants hired by the Roads and Highways Department in 2014-15 carried out a feasibility study and developed the detailed design for the project. This was reviewed in 2020 following a recommendation

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

&lt;/



PHOTO: STAR

## EID RETAIL RUSH

# A shopper's guide TO DHAKA



## RAFFAT BINTE RASHID

Who is crazy enough to go window shopping at this time of the year? I mean during the month of Ramadan, and that too in a cosmopolitan like Dhaka.

Well, I am guilty of affirming that this is one of my favourite festival leisure pursuits.

Not that I love being stuck in traffic, but the joy, I find in going through racks of clothes in new designs, checking out the play of colours in trend and the stark contrasts, perfectly blending in with the intricate artistry of handiwork, is euphoric.

Be it the stacks of silks, satin, velvet, and laces in Islampur, imported dresses in Chandni Chawk

or just picking gifts from thrift stores, my friends and I have done it all within the first ten days of Ramadan.

Ramadan is when every cranny of this city witnesses people opting for some sort of brisk festival business. They put up their trademark blue plastic canopy stuck on two poles by the roadside or sit on a spread-out blanket on the pavement offering an array of random items from

from a van parked near Rajlakkhi in Uttara," says Alfie Hossain, who works in that vicinity but goes to her husband's home in Narayanganj during weekends and holidays.

"The black zari embroidery Sharara set (an Indian pant dress) that I got from these lanes was a good bargain, the same dress in any other mall would have cost me half of my bonus. And on top of that I got gifts for all my family members," she continues.

Agreeing with what Alfie said I

with mirror works, a red sandal shoe, and a tupa of a similar shade for my own mischievous 'Puck'; Zunaid a three-year old who lives in the garage next door. His antics delight me to no end and Eid gifts for him were first on my list," says Paula Aziz a resident of Mohammadpur and an ardent fan of its town hall bazaar.

Panjabi shopping is the main highlight of the season, be it buying yards from Islampur and making be-spoke ones to opting for high-

of Dhanmondi. "Come Eid, I always drop by these stores in New Market to see their collections. I will also get some panjabis for my son and nephews."

One of my Eid window shopping lanes is Bailey Road and popping in all the Tangail sari stores is a matter of priority. Tangail taant sari is the best choice of festival wear for an Eid that falls in the Bengali month of Chaitra. Their white or any pastel shade of soft handloom sari with a woven border is elegant beyond words. Tangail Saree Kutir is the favoured handloom saree store in town.

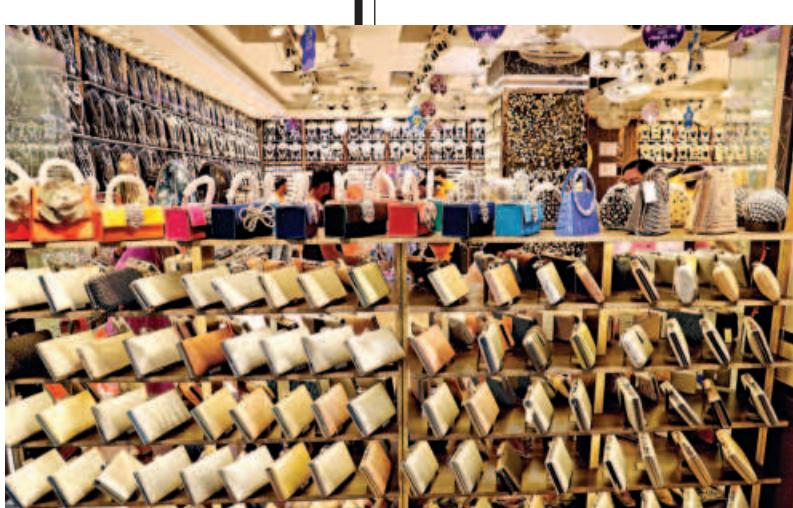
This time I went looking for traditional Rajshahi silk sari in vegetable dyes and batik work. The exquisite silk yarns of full silk, half silk, endi silk, and raw silk make for beautiful festive dresses, shalwar kameez, sari, and kurtas. For men, the age-old fashion staple of the seventies and eighties – the cream raw silk half sleeve shirts, should make a comeback. I think it makes for an exclusive gift for your special one. Sopura Silk on Gulshan Avenue and Doyel Silk in Dhanmondi are your go-to shops for cent percent deshi silk besides their regular panjabi.

The posh malls of the city housing local boutiques and imported wear are all fine too. I walked the entire Chandni Chawk shopping block on the first Friday noon of Ramadan and found it to be stocked with imported wear.

But on the contrary, I was happy to see the local spinoff and copy designs of these foreign wears. I mean sweat shops in Keraniganj and Mirpur are doing great jobs in sustaining the local garment businesses. Replicating the designer wears to the dot and bringing the price down for mass purchase is a job well done. I found a beautiful burgundy georgette shalwar kameez with intricate zari and kamdani work that is hard to distinguish from the master copy of imported overpriced dresses.

After all, what is Eid without designers' wear, and that too a local bespoke one? However, instead of opting for an imported copy, go for local designer wear. My earnest request to Dhaka is to please do your shopping from local heritage, and designer wear stores. Make the slogan "Deshi First, Deshi Always" the headline of your shopping list this festive season.

Celebrate traditions the traditional way.



green cardamom to prayer beads. The convenience item list can be that motley.

And not to forget the parked vans loaded with clothes stationed by any busy intersection. Practically in any free space, they set up their pop-up stores, with no regards to traffic norms.

Shirts, tees, socks, scarves imitation jewellery, bed sheets, home décor accessory, kitchen essentials, and crockery, you find every item on your wish list in these street set-ups, just as much in quality as in the malls.

"I got a set of teacups for my mother, and a set of stoneware dessert bowls for my mother-in-law

too felt that walking by these alleys and going through these beautiful and easy-on-the-wallet items, you will find great Eid gifts and nicknacks. Roadside shopping has seen a sharp rise on the city streets and is at its peak now during Eid. Uttara, Dhanmondi, and Mohammadpur are just a few areas where street shopping from carts is making waves.

"I was looking for Eid gifts for the children living in my backstreet. They are the kids of the caretakers of apartments in my lane and my husband and I have a cute rapport with them all. We are extremely fond of the cheery band of tiny boys and girls. I was looking for a red Panjabi

end brands like Aarong, Kumudini, Aranya, et al. Personally, I am sold to Kumudini for Panjabis, they have the widest range of cotton, silk, and khadi with intricate hand embroidery.

"Kumudini's starched cotton white Panjabi with Gila or creased sleeves are one of a kind in Dhaka. This lost technique of using the hard and flat 'gila' fruits to crease the sleeves of their Panjabi adds an extra touch of nobility to your Eid Kurta and is only done by this traditional handicraft store," Aziz adds saying that her family is a band of boys, and Panjabi shopping for them is a must-do Eid ritual in her house.

"No Eid is complete without purchasing saris," smiles Roza Islam

## CREATIVE NONFICTION

# Of glitter pens, prestige, and Eids in Dhaka

**You walked for what felt like hours, chubby feet maneuvering past the squeeze of the Taraweeh crowd, huffing and panting to match your father's big strides. You stepped over the same blocks of bricks as he did to transport yourself to the other side of a pool of mud, adrenaline pumping all your blood to your cheeks and ears as you felt them heat up.**

TASHFIA AHMED

Being a Dhakaita, your Eids in childhood were spent in mournful longings for something to happen. They felt like that one uncle from bidesh who over-promised and under-delivered. You blamed it on your lack of a "graamer bari"—this mystical place your classmates would talk about when they returned from Eid vacation, happy tans framing their smiles several shades brighter than you last saw them.

For you, Eid was curtain-drawn rooms and freshly spread sheets you were not allowed to climb onto. For you, Eid was Jagjit Singh and Lata Mangeshkar's crooning conspiracy of lulling you to sleep, even as you sat straight-backed on the sofa, its grating fabric chafing the back of your thighs. Evidently, the Social Studies book had lied. Eid wasn't fun. You didn't get to play with anyone. Instead, you were handed the chore of keeping your new Eid clothes neat and stain-free.

As such, the only sliver of fun you got to have was pre-Eid when the pavements before the flat block you lived in would decorate themselves with stalls selling Eid greeting cards.

These were makeshift, temporary dokan—practically glorified blanket forts propped up with poles of bamboo—but oh how glorious they were in their assortments of glitter-coated roses, Tom and Jerry wearing the white salat topi, elaborate cut-outs and pop-ups, all wishing you a very joyous Eid, five takas each (two, if you took your mother there and she haggled it down to even include freebies). It was a flex to receive the most number of cards and to give the best-looking ones, so of course, you waited to see what the rest were getting to make a calculated purchase. You had recently learned how to count on your fingers and you did that to ascertain how many cards were needed for all your classmates. At home, you sat down with them splayed on the cold mosaic floor and picked each card in regard to your friends' and the rest of your classmates' personalities and tastes. The boys got the Shrek card but for your coolest boy friend you saved the Hot Wheels card. The girls were getting glitter. And for each of them, you wrote a personalised message with glitter gel pens.

One Eid, inflation affected the cards. Prices of glitter had gone up or something so the cards were ten takas each, with the disclaimer "nile nai na nile nai". You lamented the days of cheaper buys and found a simple solution: You had to DIY them with chart papers, scissors, and glitter pens. In each class period, you rushed to finish the classwork, and scrambled over to the teacher's desk to hand the exercise copy over so you could use the rest of the class time to make those



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

cards. After several painstaking days of worsened handwriting, lowered marks, and a parent-teacher meeting addressing your crafting problem, you had about 10 cards ready. But what about the rest of your classmates?

At an iftar dawat on the weekend before school closed for the Eid holidays, you brought it up with your father:

*Papa, greeting cards. My friends. It's a matter of prestige. Please.*

So, just after iftar you held his thick pinky and walked down the stairs from the eighth floor because the lift was observing its scheduled rest. But this was a matter of prestige.

You walked for what felt like hours, chubby feet maneuvering past the squeeze of the Taraweeh crowd, huffing and panting to match your father's big strides. You stepped over the same blocks of bricks as he did to transport yourself to the other side of a pool of mud, adrenaline pumping all your blood to your cheeks and ears as you felt them heat up. More air, more air, breathe. This is a matter of prestige.

But at the turn of the corner: There it was. Your destination. Paltan's stationery hub. Real dokan, not the temporary kind, lined the expanse of this market, sprawling all the way out to the main road where the rickshaws

stood custodian to its vibrance. Bright white lights boasted strings hanging greeting cards of a variety so extensive they threatened to spill out onto the streets.

The storekeepers started showing you all their cards, but very quickly you realised they were not the flashy glitterfest nor the familiar cartoon faces that you had expected. These cards were mostly monochromatic, either a single shade of blue or brown, and featured solemn images of masjids or the tessellation patterns that decorate the domes of the most majestic of those masjids. These cards were not the kitschy phantasmagoria of Barbie dancing with Bugs Bunny that you had hoped to find. These were too elegant and demure—not good enough for your tacky, childish taste for sparkles and vibrant shocks of colours.

Just as you were about to wrestle with your expectations and settle for reality, one of the storekeepers brought out the showstopper: A whole array of white popcorn-textured cards with images that popped up, quite literally, into neon-coloured foam-like squishy blobs. You can't quite explain what these blobs really looked or felt like without drawing comparison with your father's shaving foam or those clay slimes that

your nephews and nieces play with, but oh were they just the sensory nirvana you needed to set yourself apart from the rest of your classmates!

You gave your father the signal and he haggled the prices down. You don't quite remember how much he paid for each card but so long as you got to be the giver of the coolest cards this Eid, you could not bother to care for much else.

On the last day of school, you waited till everyone had distributed their cards and then you rose, envelopes in hand, carrying the aura of grandness you felt to each seat as you handed out the cards you had selected for each of your classmates. As soon as the first wow hit your ears, you knew you had accomplished just what you had wanted.

The boys played with the squishy blobs by digging their fingers into them, but very quickly, they got bored. The girls, however, cooed and crooned to get you to spill where you had gotten these cards from. Some even wondered how these blobs were made or what they were called. You remembered a storekeeper saying "ambush" and so you told them that. But now, you know that "ambush" was most likely a mispronunciation of "emboss" and

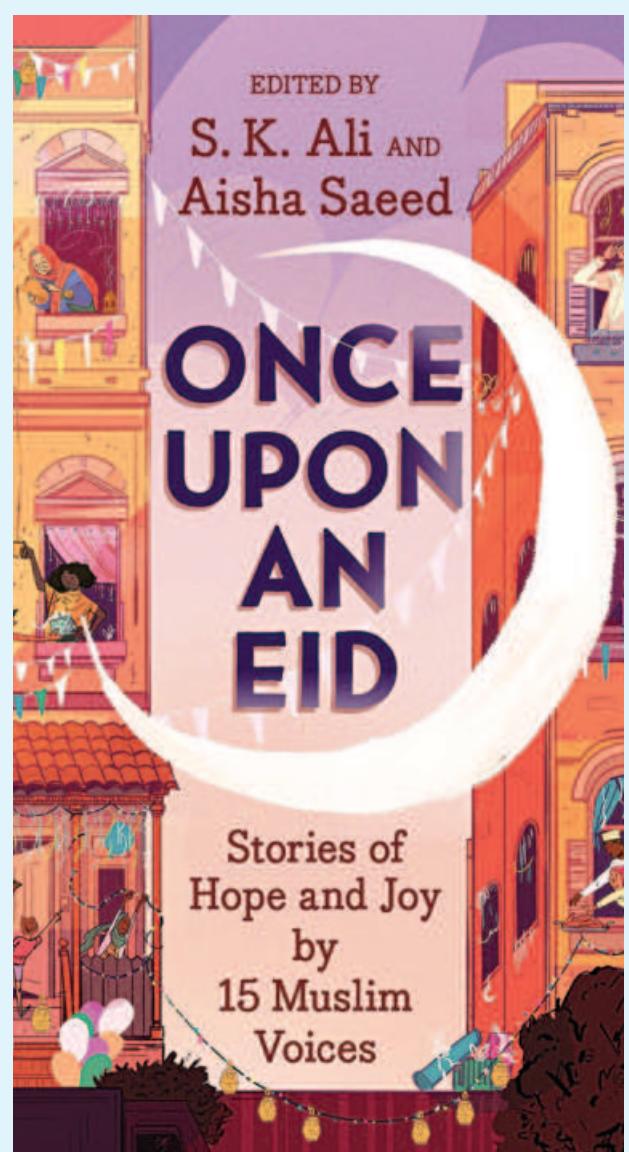
that's a very different thing. So to this day, you do not know what those blobs would have been called. But when you recall this memory, you fondly remember how cool you felt that one particular Eid.

As a Dhakaita, your Eids never quite captured the communal joy promised by your Social Studies book as all your cousins were busy celebrating their Eids with the patrilineal sides of their extended family and the neighbourhood kids were away at the coveted graamer bari. The little joys you could find were from the consumerist culture of Eid peddled by the TV channels and ads: Buying Eid greeting cards, applying Lijon mehedi while trying to replicate the designs on their free pamphlets, watching the Eid special episode of Ityadi, getting your parents to buy you a pair of Jump keds and following the programme schedule of Eid special telefilms that you had cut out from *The Daily Star*'s entertainment page.

You find joy in what you can.

**Tashfia Ahmed**, 29, is a teacher at Scholastica and a contributor for Star Books and Literature. You can reach her at her Instagram, @tashfia, or her email, [finitestinfinities@gmail.com](mailto:finitestinfinities@gmail.com).

## WHAT WE'RE READING THIS WEEK



### Once Upon an Eid

S.K. Ali and Aisha Saeed (eds.)

Amulet Books, 2020

For those who have ever wondered what Eid feels like in different countries, *Once Upon an Eid* is the perfect anthology to explore. This delightful collection of middle-grade short stories celebrates the diversity of traditions observed by Muslims around the world on this joyous occasion that unites them all. It portrays that although religion might be deeply personal, stories of hope and joy like this shows that celebration and kindness transcends diversity. The book begins with introducing the ever-confident and eccentric Hawa. Along with her, we embark on a journey of discovering different customs and traditions celebrated by her South African cousins on Eid and relate to the heartbreak of not being able to wear your perfect dress on Eid. Beyond the celebration of Eid, wonderful descriptions of food and decoration, this book also explores the themes of love, loss and grief of spending a special occasion without a loved one. However, the best thing about this anthology is that not all Muslim characters are portrayed as unrealistically good or perfect, making them feel authentic and relatable.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

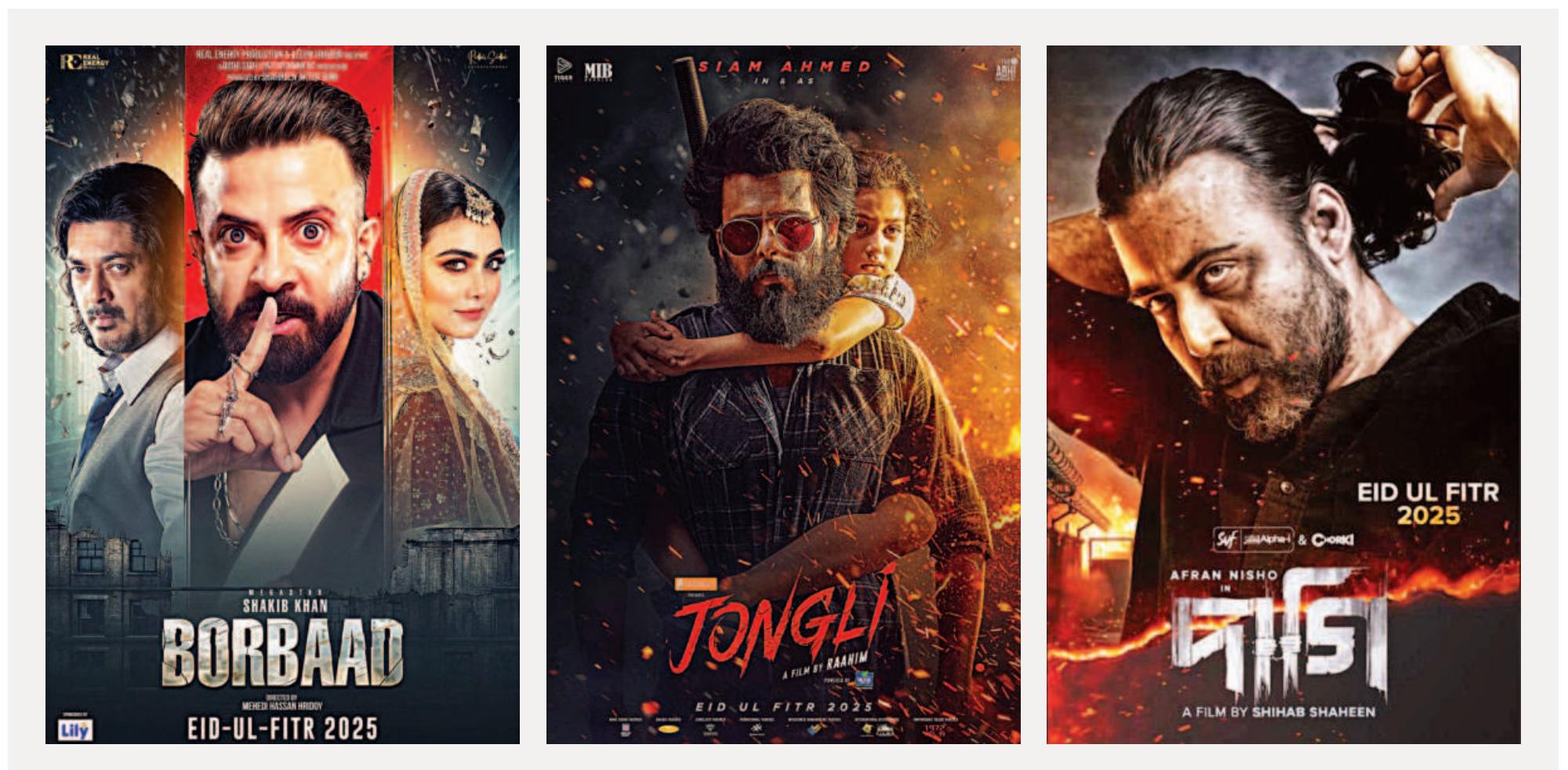
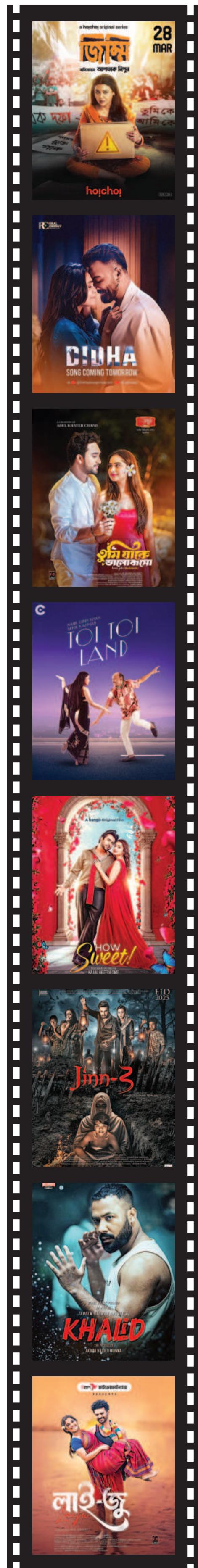
## POETRY

# What does a tomb look like?

### TIASHA IDRAK

Let us talk about death.  
Let us talk about funerals.  
About tombs and dignity.  
About mementos and memories.  
Let us talk about funeral rites,  
About ablutions,  
Washing the body, enveloping it in white shroud,  
Whispering prayers before sending your beloved to their maker,  
Ensconced in mother Earth,  
A dignity in death.  
Let us talk about the luxury to grieve,  
To not have the ground trembling under your feet,  
To not have hellfire rain down upon you,  
To not die without breaking a fast,  
To not shed tears for the child who didn't survive till the next suhoor.  
They say people are equal in death,  
That eternal slumber is fair to all,  
And yet, in the land of olives,  
I see no fairness,  
Where tombs take the shape of vines of torn limbs and flesh,  
Hanging on the wall,  
Tiny tiny pieces of hope,  
Little fingers, tuft of hair, remains collected in plastic bags,  
"10 kg for a 6 year old."  
Sophisticated missiles to slay sleeping children  
Crates devour tents,  
Dates turned black on ashening trees,  
Soil gray from gunpowder,  
Skin peeled off the chin, hanging like paint,  
Sisters, mothers burned to crisp,  
Heads and limbs scattered amidst debris,  
A puzzle for us hapless spectators—  
Wasn't the fire supposed to cease?  
Trembling hands, lovingly stuffing a cloth  
Inside a head hollowed,  
A father's fingers tenderly grasping the end of a pigtail,  
His darling child cradled in his arm,  
Face tilted towards the sky  
Unseeing eyes posing a question—  
Was Satan not shackled in this Holy Month?  
The wind carries the cries of the dead,  
The anguish of those still living,  
Children under the rubble,  
Half eaten bread in hand,  
A torn slipper,  
A chipped glass,  
Coffee spilled, never to be sipped again.  
Where homes are replaced by tents and tents replaced by nothingness,  
Abandoned bookshelves in childhood homes,  
Prayers buried in mass graves,  
Funerals delayed,  
Here in Gaza,  
I see no fairness,  
Here in Gaza,  
They're not allowed dignity in death.

**Tiasha Idrak** is submerging in her own ocean of thoughts. She reads, writes, doodles, and daydreams most of the time.



# EID 2025

## Your complete entertainment itinerary

### SHOWBIZ DESK

As Eid-ul-Fitr approaches, the entertainment industry gears up to deliver some of the year's biggest productions across cinema, television, and OTT platforms. This year is no exception, with highly anticipated films and soundtracks setting the stage for a grand celebration.

Let's take a look at the films that are set to mesmerise audiences this festive season:

#### Film

An Eid without a Shakib Khan starrer feels incomplete, and this year, the superstar is set to dominate theatres with *Borbaad* and *Antaratma*.

*Borbaad*, an action-packed film, boasts a stellar cast including Idhika Paul, Misha Sawdagar, Fazlur Rahman Babu, and Intekhab Dinar.

*Antaratma*, a romantic drama featuring Darshana Banik, was shot four years ago and will finally see the light of day, bringing back Shakib's signature romantic hero persona.

Joining the Eid race is Afran Nisho, making his much-anticipated return to the big screen with *Daagi*, directed by Shihab Shaheen. The film pairs him with Tama Mirza for the second time after *Surongo*, and its teaser and soundtrack have already created a buzz online.

Siam Ahmed stunned audiences with his rugged first look in *Jongli*, directed by M Raahim. The film reunites him with Shobnom Bubly, with whom he shared great chemistry in *Taan*. Adding to the excitement, Parthana Fardin Dighi also stars in the film, marking her first onscreen pairing with Siam.

Breaking the mould of male centric stories, *Jinn 3* introduces a gripping horror narrative with Nusrat Faria in the lead role, also marking her return to the silver screen after a long time.



Meanwhile, *Chokkor 302* marks the return of the versatile Mosharraf Karim to the big screen. Directed by debutant Saraf Ahmed Zibon, this suspense thriller sees Mosharraf Karim playing a detective, while Reekita Nondine Shimu stars as his wife.

#### OTT

Ashfaque Nipun arrives with his yet another political thriller, *Jimmie*. This female-centric plot featuring Jaya Ahsan has already made a mark with the audience, after the release

of its trailer.

Filmmaker Shihab Shaheen will deliver his projects across three mediums for the upcoming Eid holidays. *Daagi* on the silver screens, *Arrange Marriage* on television, and the web series *Myself Allen Swapan 2* on OTT.

Featuring Nasir Uddin Khan as the protagonist and Rafiath Rashid Mithila in a significant role, the Chorki original series *Myself Allen Swapan 2* also features Xefer Rahman.

The web-film *How Sweet*, directed by Kajal Arefin Ome, is expected to bring his signature blend of humour and drama. This Bongo original project features Apurba and Tasnia Farin.

#### Music

Leading the musical trend is *Didha* by Pritom Hasan from *Borbaad*, featuring Khan and Idhika Paul, a melodious track that has claimed the top spot on YouTube Bangladesh.

Hot on its heels is *Konna*, a refreshing song by Imran Mahmudul and Dilshad Nahar Kona



Sakib Khan and Idhika Paul, a melodious track that has claimed the top spot on YouTube Bangladesh.

and Shobnom Bubly's sweet chemistry in *Jongli*, create a truly enchanting experience.

*Ektukhoni Mon*, a heartfelt track by Tahsan Khan and Masha, transports listeners into a world of melody, as Afran Nisho and Tama Mirza deliver effortless on screen magic in *Daagi*.

*Boym Pakhi 2.0* is back, the new version sees Nasir Uddin Khan joining forces with Xefer to revive his popular track for *Myself Allen Swapan 2*.

Meanwhile, Ziaul Faruq Apurba and Naznin Nahar Niha reunite in the romantic drama *Meghabalka*, a drama written and directed by Jakarta Showkhin, which will premiere on Channel i on Eid Day 4 at 4:30pm.

*Allen Swapan 2* brings together Mehazabien Chowdhury and Farhan Ahmed Jovan, reuniting their beloved on screen chemistry once again for their hit franchise. This drama marks Mehazabien's return to the romantic genre after a long while. Directed by Probir Roy Chowdhury, it will air on Channel i on Eid Day 2 at 2:30pm.

*Prem Bhai*, starring Tawsif Mahbub alongside Tanjim Saara Totini and Faruk Ahmed, is a special Eid drama directed by Imraul Rafat. Produced under the banner of CMV, the drama is set against the backdrop of Old Dhaka's Sutrapur, highlighting the unique struggles and vibrant essence of this historic neighborhood.

The telefilm *Fire Fighter*, directed by

from Eid Day 1 to Day 8 at 6:10pm.

The telefilm *Tomader Golpo*, directed by Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Raz, will air on Channel i on Eid Day 1 at 2:30pm. The family drama features Farhan Ahmed Jovan, Tanjim Saara Totini, Dilara Zaman, Saberi Alam, and Monira Akter Mitu, among others.

*Bantir Biye*, a romantic comedy featuring Farhan Ahmed Jovan and Keya Payel, is directed by Probir Roy Chowdhury and will air on Maasrange TV on Eid Day 2 at 11:30pm.

Meanwhile, Ziaul Faruq Apurba and Naznin Nahar Niha reunite in the romantic drama *Meghabalka*, a drama written and directed by Jakarta Showkhin, which will premiere on Channel i on Eid Day 4 at 4:30pm.

*Ziaul Hoque Polash* will be seen in a completely new role as a free-spirited, bohemian boxer in *Khald*, directed by Taneem Rahman Angshu. The telefilm, which also stars Safa Kabir opposite him, will premiere on Channel i on Eid Day 5 at 4:30pm.

*Best Friend 2.0* brings together Mehazabien Chowdhury and Farhan Ahmed Jovan, reuniting their beloved on screen chemistry once again for their hit franchise. This drama marks Mehazabien's return to the romantic genre after a long while. Directed by Probir Roy Chowdhury, it will air on Channel i on Eid Day 2 at 2:30pm.

*Prem Bhai*, starring Tawsif Mahbub alongside Tanjim Saara Totini and Faruk Ahmed, is a special Eid drama directed by Imraul Rafat. Produced under the banner of CMV, the drama is set against the backdrop of Old Dhaka's Sutrapur, highlighting the unique struggles and vibrant essence of this historic neighborhood.

The telefilm *Fire Fighter*, directed by



Meanwhile, *Jinn 3*, featuring the dazzling Nusrat Faria and Shajal Noor in a vibrant, festive setting.

Meanwhile, the electrifying item song *Chand Mama* from *Borbaad* has turned up the heat. Voiced by Pritom Hasan and Aditi Rahman Dola, it features Nusrat Jahan and Shakib Khan.

Romance takes center stage again in *Bondhucho Shono*, where Imran and Kona's mesmerising vocals, paired with Siam Ahmed

Tahsan and Atiya Anisha's soothing voices elevating the song's dreamy essence. With such a fantastic collection of songs, this Eid's musical lineup is one to remember!

#### YouTube and TV

Chanchal Chowdhury makes his return to television after a brief hiatus with *Mission Munshiganj*, a drama series directed by Animesh Aich, co-starring Ashna Habib Bhabna. The series will premiere on Channel

Zubair Ibne Bakr and starring Irfan Sajjad and Farin Khan, highlights the struggles of firefighters and will air on Eid Day 3 at 2:30pm.

Meanwhile, the drama *Abdar*, a romantic comedy starring Moshfiq R Farhan and Farin Khan, directed by Rubel Anush, will air on Eid Day 2 at 7pm on RTV.

With a mix of blockbuster films and binge-worthy content, this Eid is definitely going to be a treat for entertainment lovers.





PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

# How Eid moves money in the economy

**The streets and markets of Dhaka come alive with eager Eid shoppers, all keen to complete festive purchases while retailers respond to changing trends by offering modern and affordable options to cater to a diverse range of customers**

MD ABU TALHA SARKER

As the fasting month of Ramadan draws to a close, the festive spirit is evident not just in growing contributions to charitable causes and a surge in remittances but also the infectious energy among everyday people on the streets.

Eid, a time of joy, unity, and generosity, marks the end of the holy month and serves as a major economic driver.

According to unofficial estimates, Tk 495 crore is given as "Fitr", an obligatory alms giving for every able Muslim, with even more distributed through informal channels, especially when people return to their village homes for the celebration.

Remittances also soar ahead of the occasion, with migrant workers sending home larger sums so their families can celebrate. Bangladesh received a record \$2.94 billion in remittances during the first 26 days of March, according to central bank data. The inflow was 82 percent higher than the same period last year, industry insiders said.

Mohammed Helal Uddin, a professor of the Department of Economics at the University of Dhaka, said this leads to a redistribution of wealth.

At the same time, the streets and markets of Dhaka come alive with eager Eid shoppers, all keen to complete festive purchases while retailers respond to changing trends by offering modern and affordable options to cater to a diverse range of customers.

Additionally, the Eid rush creates temporary job opportunities, with companies hiring extra staff to meet

Kalyan Samity, the transport sector gets a boost. The demand for jewellery also rises, with daily sales swelling to about Tk 3 lakh from Tk 80,000, according to the BSOA.

However, the biggest boon comes for apparel retailers, with the BSOA estimating that around Tk 37,400 crore is spent on clothing ahead of Eid-Ul-Fitr.

As the final days of Ramadan draw near, the excitement of Eid shopping in Dhaka intensifies. While shoppers may face challenges ranging from unpredictable weather to political changes, one thing remains constant: the desire to celebrate Eid in style, with comfort, elegance, and tradition.

Across Dhaka's upscale shopping malls and arcades, from Bashundhara City Shopping Centre to Jamuna Future Park, Karnaphuli Garden City, and Taltola Market in Khilgaon, crowds are flocking in to complete their Eid shopping.

Anisur Rahman, a staff member at Najish Fashion in New Market, observes, "Sales have been steady, with an increase in customers every day."

In particular, Pakistani garments, famed for high quality, have become the must-have item of the season, he says.

Marium Jannat, a middle-aged shopper, praises the colour and fit of Pakistani dresses, saying, "The designs are perfect, and the fabric quality is excellent. These dresses are fashionable and make us feel great, especially during the Eid."

Similar trends are visible in the wholesale markets like Islampur Wholesale Market and Polwel Super Market. Mohammad Al Amin from Top 8 Collection at Islampur Lion Tower reveals that their goods have been flying off the shelves.

"We've received 1,100 new catalogues this year, and our boutique items are especially popular," he says. "We offer a unique collection of boutique items, including party dresses, lehengas and sarees. Traders and online entrepreneurs can select items that align with the catalogues," he explained.

Md Nuruzzaman Rockey, another wholesaler from Islampur, mentioned that they recently launched a new factory in Khilgaon. This facility specialises in the production of shirts and panjabis, which are supplied to well-known local brands such as Boom, Classic, Richman, Freedom, and others. "The products are priced between Tk 1,250 and Tk 1,350, and sales have been progressing smoothly throughout Ramadan."

Meanwhile, retailers like SaRa Lifestyle Ltd are anticipating a strong sales season, expecting a 20 percent growth compared to last year.

The company's newly launched 'Persian Tale' collection, featuring intricate Persian royal motifs combined with contemporary designs, is receiving a warm reception from customers, said Mohammad Motiur Rahman, assistant director of operations at SaRa Lifestyle Ltd.

Their collection includes sarees, three-piece sets, and denim pants for men, women, and children, with prices

ranging from Tk 250 to Tk 9,990.

The collection features screen printing, sublimation printing, embroidery, embellishments, and intricate handwork, incorporating festive abstract, floral, traditional, and geometric motifs.

Fashion houses like Kay Kraft have also experienced a surge in demand, particularly for their Eid collections.

Khalid Mahmood Khan, the company's co-founder, shares that they have been receiving positive responses from customers despite a slight dip in foot traffic during the early weeks of Ramadan.

However, with Eid approaching, he expects the crowds to pick up.

Yellow, one of the leading popular brands in Bangladesh, has also seen positive results this season. With 17 stores across the country



and a robust online presence, Yellow has launched over 1,500 new Eid styles, keeping up with the growing interest in fashion.

"We are confident in our sales and expect to exceed our targets by Chand Raat," said an official from Yellow, who wished to remain anonymous.

Despite the growing sales, some market participants have observed a slight shift in consumer behaviour this year.

Towhid Chowdhury, director of Easy Fashion Limited, notes that while business has been steady, customers this year have gravitated towards more muted tones and lighter fabrics, likely due to the intense summer heat.

"Our cotton fabrics have been particularly popular, as they provide comfort and breathability," he explains.

Like other lifestyle brands, Sailor has also refreshed its product portfolio to attract more customers during Ramadan. They introduced a new fabric blend of cotton and rayon, allowing customers to wear the garments without the need for ironing, explained Aviaz Islam Shuvo, the branch manager at Sailor's Khilgaon outlet.

Ameera Haque, a middle-aged woman from West Rajabazar, visited Bashundhara Shopping Mall with her five-year-old son, Reshad Rafiq, to shop for Eid. She spent time exploring Yellow's women's section, purchasing a metallic black two-piece for Tk 4,500.

She also selected a light colored panjabi with intricate sleeve and collar detailing for her husband, and a

matching set for her son.

In the footwear sector, Apex Footwear has emerged as a leader, with Raihan Kabir, the company's marketing manager and e-commerce lead, boasting that no competitor has been able to match their success.

However, he also acknowledges a shift in shopping patterns, noting that the typical vibrancy of Eid shopping seems to be missing this year.

"While people are shopping, there's a different energy this time. It feels quieter, less festive," he reflects.

Selim H Rahman, chairman of Hatil Furniture, a popular furniture brand, said furniture sales go up 25 percent during Eid.

Another major feature of the celebrations are sweet and savoury delights, especially as the spirit of hospitality is in full-swing. Around Tk 27,555 crore is spent on entertaining guests during Eid, according to the BSOA, meaning the demand for cooking spices and essentials multiplies.

Mohammad Abu Yousuf, proprietor of Raja Mosta Store at Mirpur II Kitchen Market, said prices of spices had not increased ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

"We are selling Indian cumin for Tk 640 per kilogramme (kg), cardamom for Tk 1,350, plums for Tk 420 and cinnamon for Tk 500 per kg," he said.

"The spices at our shop are of high quality. The prices of cinnamon, cardamom, and cumin are the same as they were prior to the fasting month of Ramadan."

Khandaker Jamil Uddin, owner of Jamil Store at the same market, echoed those sentiments, saying similar items can be found at different price points depending on quality.

Parul Parveen, a customer residing at Sangbadik Abashik Alaka in Mirpur's Pallabi, was shopping with her husband Darul Huda, and said they always shop from this kitchen market as everything from daily essentials to lifestyle products are available here.

"Today I bought Eid-related goods like vermicelli, sugar, salt, plums, corn flour, baking powder and so on," she said.

However, she said that prices had been hiked slightly compared to what they were prior to Ramadan.

"For example, I bought white and red sugar at Tk 130 and Tk 140 respectively just three or four days before Ramadan. But I have bought these goods at Tk 140 and Tk 155 now," the middle-aged woman said.

"During Eid, we will eat biryani, for which we bought spices at additional prices. We will make fried chicken and vegetables using corn flour. We use spices to make eggplant fritters, potato fritters, and other fritters for iftar and sehri."

Beauty and cosmetic shops are also witnessing an avalanche of customers ahead of the Eid as women throng to stores and branded outlets across the capital city to buy make-up.

Reshma Khatun, a garments worker from Mirpur II, came to shop with her colleagues to buy a make-up kit before leaving for her home village.

"I will not get enough time to buy these goods. Today I got a gap and came out with my colleagues. We purchased a

slew of things such as bangles, earrings, laces, clips, hairbands and a make-up kit," she said.

Sarwat Simin Dina, a first-year student at Siddheswari Girls' College in Malibagh, said she visited Herian, Flormar, and Moon's Gallery. She shared that her family would not go to their home village for Eid due to her examinations after Eid, making them very sad.

Jesmin Akhter, a staff member at Moon's Gallery, noted that the outlet has been experiencing high customer footfall so they are expecting growth.

Jahangir Alam, a makeshift vendor in Mirpur II, said he earns at least Tk 1,500 Tk 2,000 per day by selling iftar items such as jalebi, egg chops, gramme, fritters (eggplant fritters, potato fritters), puffed rice, rissole and so one. He said his earnings exceed Tk 2,000 on Friday and Saturday.

Travel is also a huge part of Eid, with many holidaying in different destinations at home and abroad. Capitalising on this, travel agencies and airlines along with hotel and motel allure people with a range of benefits and offers and earn huge sums.

Pradip Sanyal, executive director of Bhawali Resort and Spa in Gazipur, said the lion's share of an entire year's business takes place during Eid. "Some 90 percent to 100 percent of the rooms are booked during the festival," he said.

Khandaker Golam Moazzem, senior research fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, stated, "As Eid is an integral part of our lives, the sales of goods and services during this period have a significant impact on the economy."

"The sales of Eid-centric lifestyle products such as pajama-pajabi, shoes, watches, caps, prayer mats, atra, and other clothing items increase exponentially compared to other times of the year, making it a substantial business."

He said the supply chain for these products has expanded from urban centres to rural areas, further impacting the overall economy. In addition to clothing, food items also see a surge in demand.

"Eid bonuses for both public and private sector employees, alongside the additional income of business owners, drive increased earnings and spending during this period," he said.

He also remarked on the increased flow of remittance, saying, "This influx of money through various channels has a positive impact on the economy, strengthening the domestic supply chain."

He further pointed out that there is a disparity in the return share within the supply chain, as end-users and those at the producer level do not always benefit equally from the business. Producers at the lower end of the supply chain often fail to see the advantages, as do the end-users, he remarked.

Moreover, businesses tend to exploit the situation by inflating prices due to the lack of government regulation and monitoring.



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

demand.

According to the Bangladesh Shop Owners Association (BSOA), business conducted before Eid-ul-Fitr amounts to around Tk 170,000 crore.

Mohammed Abu Eusuf, executive director of the Research and Policy Integration for Development, said the magnitude of the Eid economy is much bigger than anticipated.

"Around 40 percent of round-the-year transactions on food and non-food items are done during the Eid," he said. "Marginal businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises, take all-out preparations for the occasion as they get 40 percent of their yearly earnings from the Eid business."

This upturn is seen across the board. With approximately 40-50 million passengers travelling during Eid, according to the Bangladesh Jatri

and a robust online presence, Yellow has launched over 1,500 new Eid styles, keeping up with the growing interest in fashion.

"We are confident in our sales and expect to exceed our targets by Chand Raat," said an official from Yellow, who wished to remain anonymous.

Despite the growing sales, some market participants have observed a slight shift in consumer behaviour this year.

Towhid Chowdhury, director of Easy Fashion Limited, notes that while business has been steady, customers this year have gravitated towards more muted tones and lighter fabrics, likely due to the intense summer heat.

"Our cotton fabrics have been particularly popular, as they provide comfort and breathability," he explains.

Like other lifestyle brands, Sailor has also refreshed its product portfolio to attract more customers during Ramadan. They introduced a new fabric blend of cotton and rayon, allowing customers to wear the garments without the need for ironing, explained Aviaz Islam Shuvo, the branch manager at Sailor's Khilgaon outlet.

Ameera Haque, a middle-aged woman from West Rajabazar, visited Bashundhara Shopping Mall with her five-year-old son, Reshad Rafiq, to shop for Eid. She spent time exploring Yellow's women's section, purchasing a metallic black two-piece for Tk 4,500.

She also selected a light colored panjabi with intricate sleeve and collar detailing for her husband, and a

matching set for her son.

In the footwear sector, Apex Footwear has emerged as a leader, with Raihan Kabir, the company's marketing manager and e-commerce lead, boasting that no competitor has been able to match their success.

However, he also acknowledges a shift in shopping patterns, noting that the typical vibrancy of Eid shopping seems to be missing this year.

"While people are shopping, there's a different energy this time. It feels quieter, less festive," he reflects.

Selim H Rahman, chairman of Hatil Furniture, a popular furniture brand, said furniture sales go up 25 percent during Eid.

Jahangir Alam, a makeshift vendor in Mirpur II, said he earns at least Tk 1,500 Tk 2,000 per day by selling iftar items such as jalebi, egg chops, gramme, fritters (eggplant fritters, potato fritters), puffed rice, rissole and so one. He said his earnings exceed Tk 2,000 on Friday and Saturday.

Travel is also a huge part of Eid, with many holidaying in different destinations at home and abroad. Capitalising on this, travel agencies and airlines along with hotel and motel allure people with a range of benefits and offers and earn huge sums.

Pradip Sanyal, executive director of Bhawali Resort and Spa in Gazipur, said the lion's share of an entire year's business takes place during Eid. "Some 90 percent to 100 percent of the rooms are booked during the festival," he said.

Khandaker Golam Moazzem, senior research fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, stated, "As Eid is an integral part of our lives, the sales of goods and services during this period have a significant impact on the economy."

"The sales of Eid-centric lifestyle products such as pajama-pajabi, shoes, watches, caps, prayer mats, atra, and other clothing items increase exponentially compared to other times of the year, making it a substantial business."

He said the supply chain for these products has expanded from urban centres to rural areas, further impacting the overall economy. In addition to clothing, food items also see a surge in demand.

"Eid bonuses for both public and private sector employees, alongside the additional income of business owners, drive increased earnings and spending during this period," he said.

He also remarked on the increased flow of remittance, saying, "This influx of money through various channels has a positive impact on the economy, strengthening the domestic supply chain."

He further pointed out that there is a disparity in the return share within the supply chain, as end-users and those at the producer level do not always benefit equally from the business. Producers at the lower end of the supply chain often fail to see the advantages, as do the end-users, he remarked.

Moreover, businesses tend to exploit the situation by inflating prices due to the lack of government regulation and monitoring.