



A shopper's guide to Dhaka

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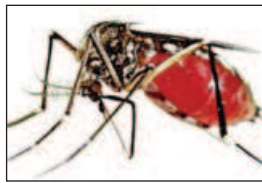
Eid in a time of uncertainty and change

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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.

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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



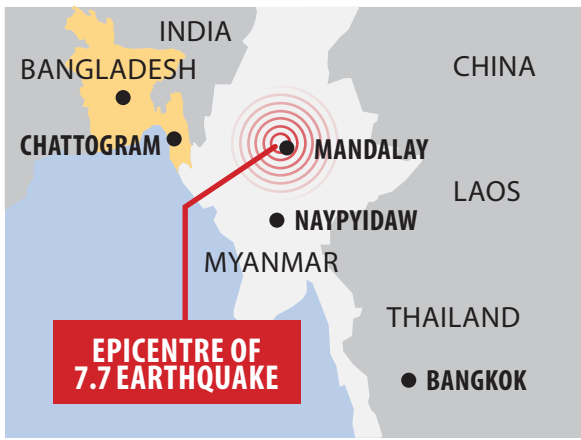
Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus meets Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday -- the third day of his four-day visit to China.

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.

PHOTO: AFP



Myanmar quake kills over 150

Many trapped as buildings collapse in the region; quake jolts 6 countries including Thailand, Bangladesh, India, China

AGENCIES

A huge earthquake hit Myanmar and Thailand yesterday, killing more than 150 people and injuring hundreds, with dozens trapped in collapsed buildings.

The death toll is expected to rise.

The shallow 7.7-magnitude tremor hit northwest of the city of Sagaing in central Myanmar in the early afternoon, and was followed minutes later by a 6.4-magnitude aftershock.

The quake flattened buildings, downed bridges, and cracked roads across swathes of Myanmar. It even demolished a 30-storey skyscraper under construction hundreds of kilometres (miles) away in Bangkok.

While the full extent of the catastrophe is yet to emerge, the leader of isolated Myanmar, in the grip of a civil war, issued a rare plea for international aid.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said 144 people had been killed, with 732 confirmed injured, but warned the toll was "likely to rise".

Eight deaths have been confirmed so far in Thailand, with more expected.

"I would like to invite any country, any organisation, or anyone in Myanmar to come and help. Thank you," he said in a televised speech after visiting a hospital in the capital Naypyidaw.

He urged massive relief efforts in the wake of the disaster and said he had "opened all ways for foreign aid".

US President Donald Trump said Washington would be offering assistance.

Four years of civil war sparked by the military seizing power have ravaged Myanmar's infrastructure and healthcare system, leaving it ill-equipped to respond to such a disaster.

Power is down in parts of Myanmar's biggest city Yangon, the local utility said.

The country declared a state of emergency across the six worst-affected regions after the quake.

A wake-up call for Dhaka

PINAKI ROY

The series of six earthquakes that shook Myanmar yesterday, occurring along the Sagaing fault -- the country's longest faultline -- served as a stark reminder of Dhaka's earthquake vulnerability.

Experts warn that without urgent preparatory measures, Dhaka, sitting atop an active seismic zone, faces catastrophic risks if a major quake strikes.

Experts say Bangladesh is one of the most tectonically active regions in the world. It sits where three tectonic plates -- the Indian Plate, the Eurasian Plate, and the Burmese Plate -- meet. The Indian Plate is moving northeast, slowly colliding with the Eurasian Plate.

The Sagaing fault is part of the Indo-Burma subduction zone, and Bangladesh also sits in it.

Yesterday's earthquakes, ranging from magnitude 4.5 to 7.7, damaged buildings across Myanmar and Thailand and reportedly killed nearly 150 people.

"It happened in the Indo-Burma subduction zone, where energy has been accumulating for more than 100 years, and

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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

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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

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

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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.



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

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

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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.

MdRubayet 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 Dauki 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 earthquake 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 Dhubri 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.

China pledges \$2.1b in loans, investment

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“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 Zangbo-

Jamuna River.

China has plans for a hydro-electricity project over the Yarlung Zangbo 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

said.

Across the border in Thailand, a 30-storey skyscraper under construction collapsed into a tangled heap of rubble and dust in a matter of seconds.

Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said eight dead bodies have been recovered, and with between 90 and 110 people unaccounted for, the toll is expected to rise.

“We see several dead bodies under the rubble. We will take time to bring the bodies out to avoid any further collapses,” he told reporters.

“I heard people calling for help, saying ‘help me’,” Worapat Sukthai, deputy police chief of Bang Sue district, told AFP.

As night fell, around 100 rescue workers assembled at the scene to search for survivors, illuminated by specially erected floodlights.

Visiting the site, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said “every building” in Bangkok would need to be inspected for safety, though it was not immediately clear how that would be

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 noninterference 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 Sai, 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.

‘Youth will help advance trade’

Yunus invites Chinese investment in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has called on Chinese investors to capitalise on the business prospects that exist in Bangladesh, urging them to invest more in the country.

He made the remark while addressing Chinese business leaders at The Presidential Hotel Beijing yesterday – the third day of his four-day visit to China, according to the Chief Adviser’s Press Wing.

Prof Yunus noted that Bangladesh is the second-largest manufacturer of readymade garments after China and benefits from a geological location ideal for regional trade and commerce thanks to the Bay of Bengal.

Highlighting that Nepal and Bhutan, being landlocked nations, face similar challenges as India’s seven sister states, he stressed the importance of establishing road connectivity with these regions to enhance trade.

About the talented young men and women in Bangladesh, Yunus said the country has a vast youth population filled with energy, creativity, and ambition and underscored the need to harness this untapped potential.

Regarding the country’s recent transformation, the head of the interim government said, Bangladesh has emerged as an entirely new nation. “A new generation is emerging, which will contribute to the growth of trade and commerce.”

Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) chairman Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun also spoke on the occasion.

NCP pushes for grassroots support amid Eid holiday

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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 Rakhaldeh, Bamankumar, Balia, and Laxmithan, 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 in Rangpur with over 200 vans on Thursday. The procession started from Mahiganj Satmatha and travelled through Deuti, Kadamtali, Kaliganj, and Pautana in Pirgacha before moving through different roads in Kaunia.

Akhter engaged in mass contact across various areas of Pirgacha and Kaunia 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

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manpower to fully regulate these

vehicles.”

Traffic on the Dhaka-Tangail highway increased but remained moving.

Ahsanul Kabir Pavel, executive engineer at the Jamuna Bridge site office, said crossings of small vehicle rose. Between Thursday midnight and Friday midnight, 35,227 vehicles passed, generating Tk 26.53 crore in toll.

To manage the rush, 18 toll booths, including two dedicated to motorcycles, are in operation.

Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of Tangail police, said, “Traffic pressure is high but manageable. We have deployed 728 police personnel to ensure the smooth journey of holidaymakers.”

After visiting the highway, Sharifa Haque, deputy commissioner of Tangail, said officials would stay on duty until all travellers reach their destinations.

In Munshiganj, bikers crowded Padma Bridge toll booths, as home-goers left Dhaka early yesterday. Long queues were also seen at the toll booths on the Dhaka-Mawa expressway but eased later in the day.

Mawa Traffic Inspector Ziaul Islam said vehicles, especially motorcycles, have been steadily going up since dawn. To handle the pressure, tolls were collected at seven booths, with three designated for motorcycles.

Abdul Kader Zilani, in charge of Hasara highway police outpost, said checkpoints have been set up at various points to regulate speed and prevent accidents.

In another development, traffic

NCP Convener Nahid Islam, a resident of the capital’s Banasree area, has been actively engaging with the local community. Party leaders said the NCP has also planned a mass-contact programme in Dhaka ahead of Eid, dividing the capital into four areas – Mohammadpur, Mirpur, Rampura, and Dhanmondi.

Senior Joint Convener Ariful Islam Adib has been organising iftar events and meeting families of the July martyrs in Mirpur, while Joint Member Secretary Akram Hossain has been assigned to Mohammadpur.

Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary will celebrate Eid in his ancestral home in Chandpur. He told this newspaper he would connect with various stakeholders in his area, including teachers, leaders of other political parties, and families of those killed in the July uprising.

Another chief organiser, Hasnat Abdullah, who is preparing to contest from Cumilla-4 (Debidwar), has been regularly attending meetings and events in the area.

Senior Joint Chief Coordinator Abdul Hannan Masud has been conducting mass contact since last week as he prepares to contest the national polls from Noakhali-6.

Masud and his supporters were allegedly attacked by expelled BNP activists in Hatia upazila of Noakhali during a street rally at Jahajmara Bazaar.

Joint Convener Sarwar Tushar will celebrate Eid in his ancestral home in Narsingdi, where he will spend the day with families of injured protesters.

Mir Arshadul Haque, Joint Member Secretary of NCP and a potential candidate for Chattogram-16 (Banshkhali) constituency, will celebrate Eid at his home in Banshkhali before resuming mass contact in the area after Eid.

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 Baluakandi, 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 Ruqunul 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 Elenga 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.

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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

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.

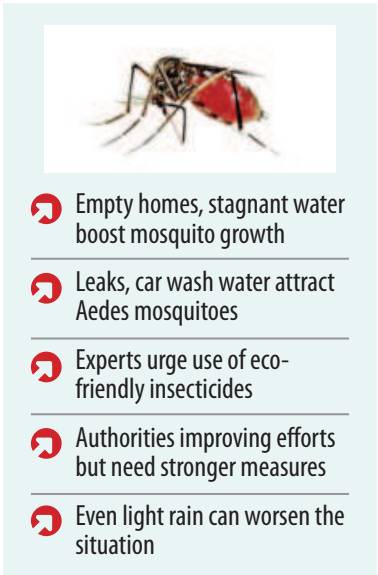
City corporations, which were uncoordinated last year, have shown better discipline this time, though on a small scale, he observed. He, however, stressed the need for local administration to stay vigilant and for mosquito control cells to be established nationwide.

“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.



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

‘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 Apparels 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, convener 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 Rajapukur 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 Sarcarpara village. He is the president of Begunbari union unit of Jatiyatabadi 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 unit 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 4

The slow death of DSCC’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 DSCC-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 DSCC’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 DSCC homeopathy centre, Rokanpur Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary, has changed its original location and now operates from the third floor of the DIT Market in Lakshmibazar, Old Dhaka.



Finding this clinic amidst a cluster of coaching centres is a challenge in itself.

Two more charitable homeopathy clinics exist under DSCC – Katara Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary in Chawkbazar and Sat Shahid Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary in Lalbagh.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

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 Sadapathar 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

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.



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 Bazar 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.

A narrow escape

FROM PAGE 3

he saw things falling around him, and the building was shaking.

"The computers and other equipment were falling down, crashing into one another, and the lift was shaking. Glass from the exterior of the building was breaking and falling apart," Tanvir said.

Nurses rushed to take care of patients and tried to protect children by holding them and creating a human shield over their heads.

"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

has been increasing amid the reduction of Indian visas since the middle of last year.

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.

"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.

If there's no

FROM PAGE 3

years... The killings that took place during the July uprising... If we move towards an election without holding trials, there is no guarantee that the trial process will continue after the election."

"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 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.

This policy has already led to the closure of the Nazirabazar clinic. The clinic's doctor retired eight years ago, leaving the compounder to manage operations alone. When Md Sharif, the last remaining staff member, retired in 2023, the clinic shut

down without any official announcement.

Before finalising its annual budget, DSCC receives proposals to increase funding for homeopathy clinics, but these requests are routinely ignored. The budget for purchasing homeopathic medicines has been reduced to just Tk 2 lakh per year.

This correspondent visited two of the four remaining homeopathy clinics to assess their condition.

The Rakanpur Homeopathy Dispensary, hidden among coaching centres on the third floor of Lakshmi Bazar DIT Market, is barely recognisable as a medical facility.

Dr Muhammad Sharif Hossain, the homeopathy doctor at Rakanpur, said, "These clinics provide free homeopathy treatment and medicine, yet DSCC officials show no interest in them. Previously, the budget was Tk 10 lakh per year, but now, all four clinics together receive just Tk 2 lakh -- far from enough to procure sufficient medicines."

WHAT DSCC SAYS

Dr Nishat Parveen, the acting chief health officer of DSCC, confirmed that these homeopathy clinics will gradually close.

Speaking to The Daily Star, she said, "According to the new organisational structure, once the current doctors retire, their positions will not be refilled, and the dispensaries will close. We are not shutting them down deliberately -- it's a matter of policy. The 1990 organisational structure included these positions, but in 2016, they were removed. As a result, the clinics will phase out, and we must follow the approved structure."

Dec, June or March?

FROM PAGE 3

"Some say the movement was only about elections? But the movement happened because the elections were not fair," he said.

"When political parties are demanding a specific election timeframe to avoid unnecessary delays, sometimes, we hear December, other times March, and then June -- such pendulum-like statements are being made by the interim government. The nation needs a specific election date to reassure this uncertainty," he added.

The BNP 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

have nearly fifty factories failed to pay bonuses?" he asked.

Rizvi criticised the government's inaction, saying, "The government should act as a liaison between factory owners and workers. It is their responsibility. If a worker goes without food, if they don't get paid before Eid, how can their families celebrate? The government should have ensured this."

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.

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 Shahin 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 Akhter 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.

280 arrested

FROM PAGE 3

Furthermore, the lawmen also recovered passports, stolen mobile phones, tablets, SIM cards, jewelry, boats, motorcycles, trucks, dredgers, excavators, dumpers, and large sums of cash.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Army has also been conducting special patrols to ensure smooth traffic flow during the upcoming Eid celebrations and to prevent black market ticket sales.

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

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.

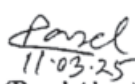
Upazila Food Controller Khandaker Abul Kalam said a total of 550 sacks, each containing 30kg of rice, were allocated under the Food-Friendly Programme at Tk 15 per kg for distribution among the poor. Of these, 69 sacks were reportedly seized.

"We are first investigating whether the

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

"Sometimes, 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.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Works Manager (Diesel) Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka. www.railway.gov.bd			
Memo No: BR/WDD/FY25/eGP/Advertisement-2		Date: March 11, 2025	
e-GP Tender Notice			
e-GP Tender is invited in National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the goods and related services / works and physical services mentioned below:			
SL No.	Tender ID	Package Description	Tender Closing/Opening Date & Time
1	1086437	Procurement of (1) Magnet valve (power contact) = 20 Nos, (2) Triangular plate = 20 Nos, (3) Magnet valve = 10 Nos, (4) Spider for magnet valve = 30 Nos and (5) Pressure switch (90-250 psi) = 15 Nos.	27-Mar-2025 11:00:00 AM
2	1086526	Procurement of (1) OSC-9 [I/N: 17-19900, P/N: 3D431944A] = 6 Nos. and (2) OSC-10 [I/N: 17-02960, P/N: 3D432213A(1/2)] = 6 Nos.	27-Mar-2025 11:10:00 AM
3	1086561	Procurement of (1) MVCC = 15 Nos., (2) CCS (110-120 psi) = 8 Nos., (3) 4 k ohms (TRR) = 20 Nos., (4) 5 k ohms (TRR) = 20 Nos., (5) 0-2500 ohms Rheostat = 5 Nos., (6) Contact FS = 5 Nos., (7) Contact Post (ST) = 5 Nos., (8) Contact Move (FS) = 5 Nos., (9) Contact Move (ST) = 5 Nos., (10) Oil seal = 10 Nos., and (11) Rheostat Assembly = 5 Nos.	27-Mar-2025 11:20:00 AM
This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal, and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.			
All potential and interested tenderers are requested to register in national e-GP system.			
 এস (২৫) (৩৭৫) (Rasel Alam) Works Manager (Diesel) Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka. Email: wmda@railway.gov.bd			
GD-813			

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.



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.

Number of UK children living in poverty highest in 20 yrs

AFP, London

The number of children living in poverty in the UK reached a new record, according to data published Thursday, as the government faces a storm of criticism over plans to cut welfare payments.

Almost 4.5 million children were living in low-income households in the year ending March 2024, according to the Department of Work and Pensions – the highest number since records began in 2002-2003.

The figure rose from a previous record of 4.33 million in March 2023 to 4.45 million last year.

A household is considered to be in relative poverty if it lies below 60 percent of the median income, or below £337 (\$435) per week.

The record figures come after Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s government announced cuts to disability welfare payments among other spending cuts.

According to the government’s own estimates, changes to the welfare system risk plunging 50,000 more children into poverty in the next five years.

Meanwhile, 21 percent of the population, or 14.25 million people, were in poverty as per the data, down slightly from the previous year.

Arctic sea ice hits lowest peak in satellite record

Says US agency

AFP, Washington

This year’s Arctic sea ice peak is the lowest in the 47-year satellite record, according to data released by the US National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) on Thursday, as the planet continues to swelter under the mounting effects of human-driven climate change.

Arctic sea ice forms and expands during the dark, frigid northern winter, reaching its seasonal high point in March. But in recent years, less new ice has formed, and the accumulation of multi-year ice has steadily declined.

The maximum sea ice level for 2025 was likely reached on March 22, measuring 14.33 million square kilometers (5.53 million square miles) – below the previous low of 14.41 million square kilometers set in 2017.

“This new record low is yet another indicator of how Arctic sea ice has fundamentally changed from earlier decades,” said NSIDC senior research scientist Walt Meier in a statement.

‘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,

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.”

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

doing this work, we are doing that work; we will implement reforms, we are creating an environment for investment in Bangladesh,” and so on.

“I have heard these stories from Hasina – ‘I am developing Bangladesh; what do you need votes for, what do you need elections for? I am working for you; I am doing this work, that work.’ By saying all this, Hasina has taken away the voting rights and all the rights of the people. “It seems that narrative is emerging

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.”

Israel hits building in Beirut’s south suburbs

FROM PAGE 12

stronghold known as Dahiyeh, were pounded last year by Israeli strikes that killed many of the group’s top leaders, including its powerful chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in a September air attack.

A US brokered truce in November put an end to the fighting and mandated that southern Lebanon be free of Hezbollah fighters and weapons, that Lebanese troops deploy to the area and that Israeli ground troops withdraw from the zone.

But the truce has been shaken over the last week by two cases of outgoing fire from southern Lebanon – several rockets fired on March 22 and another set fired yesterday morning.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said the Lebanese government bore direct responsibility for the attack and said that as long as there was no peace in Galilee “there will be no peace in Beirut either.”

Hezbollah denied links to either attack. No other group has claimed responsibility.

But Israel’s statement confirming its raid on Dahiyeh said that the yesterday morning’s rocket fire “constitutes a blatant violation of the understandings between Israel and Lebanon and a direct threat to the citizens of the State of Israel.”

It added that the Lebanese state bears responsibility for upholding the agreement.

Israel also bombarded Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon yesterday after intercepting the incoming rocket fire, the Israeli military said.

Israel has vowed a strong response to any threats to its security, prompting fears that last year’s conflict – which displaced more than 1.3 million people in Lebanon and destroyed much of the country’s south – could resume.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, in Paris to meet his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron, said in a written statement from France that the onus was on the international community to “put an end to these attacks and force Israel to abide by the agreement, just as Lebanon is committed to it.”

Dhaka-Beijing ties ready for next stage

FROM PAGE 12

local partners. He also said Bangladesh could learn from China and build a better health care system to benefit the people.

Stating that the past 50 years of Bangladesh-China ties were exciting, the chief adviser said the next 50 years would be “more exciting”.

Yunus said he was looking forward to broadening bilateral cooperation and discussing ways to make it happen.

“We share things together and make a journey together to achieve the things we collectively felt very strongly about,” he said.

India weighs

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh announced that it had requested India for a bilateral meeting between Yunus and Modi on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC summit. Yunus, who took office in August last year, has yet to meet Modi bilaterally.

Asked about the future of BIMSTEC, given the current strained ties between Bangladesh and India and the fact that Dhaka is set to assume BIMSTEC’s chairmanship from Thailand at the Bangkok Summit, Mazumdar said New Delhi had no objections to advancing the BIMSTEC agenda.

“All seven member countries are committed to BIMSTEC, and we are very optimistic about its future. We do not foresee any issues in moving forward with the BIMSTEC agenda,” he said.

When asked about discussions between Yunus and Chinese leaders in Beijing and Bangladesh’s welcoming of Chinese participation in the Teesta project, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri declined to comment.

“I don’t have many comments on that. As for a particular project, I am unsure if this is a new initiative. I will provide an update later. In any case, this is not the subject of today’s briefing, and I would prefer not to comment on the internal affairs of another country,” Misri.

Formed in 1997, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation comprises Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, and Bhutan.

While Myanmar joined in 1998, Nepal and Bhutan became members in 2004.

Tk 17,000cr project falls short on road safety

FROM PAGE 12

from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the project’s financier. At that time, the project cost was estimated at Tk 20,300 crore, according to the meeting minutes shared by Project Director Fazlul at the stakeholders’ meeting.

However, to reduce costs, 22 overpasses and 27 underpasses were removed from the original design, making the road riskier. The move would also prevent traffic from reaching the expected speed.

The loan ceiling set by the ADB was one of the reasons for the removal of the overpasses and underpasses, Fazlul told this correspondent yesterday.

He informed the meeting that a consultancy firm had been hired to assess the impact of removing the overpasses and underpasses, along with related safety issues, and it recently submitted the road safety audit report.

While it was expected that the divided carriageway and service lanes would reduce head-on collisions, the safety auditors identified several factors contributing to road accidents.

According to the audit report, at-grade U-turns, roundabouts at major intersections, U-turns for both fast and slow-moving vehicles on the main carriageway, and the absence of adequate pedestrian facilities will make the highway more accident-prone.

There are many elements, including 88 educational institutions, 204 industries, 51 marketplaces, 28 intersections, 652 branch roads, 10 hospitals and 28 filling stations, which made the highway more vulnerable to accidents, Fazlul said.

Considering all these aspects, the consultants recommended building 11 overpasses, 17 all-vehicular underpasses, 29 light vehicular underpasses, 78 pedestrian underpasses, 12 cattle underpasses, among other infrastructure, he said.

If the amount for the additional infrastructure is added to the existing cost of Tk 16,918.58 crore, the project cost will increase to Tk 20,418.58 crore.

DEADLINE In the last four years, the project authorities hired contractors for all

13 packages, but it has seen only 13 percent progress.

When asked about the reasons behind the delay in implementation, Project Director Fazlul blamed the unavailability of land as the primary cause.

The Roads and Highways Department is implementing a separate project to acquire 1,034 acres of land, of which 829.83 acres are for the highway expansion. The department, however, missed the deadline for this land acquisition twice.

So far, the project authority has received only 12 percent of the required land, sources said.

Asked if adding new infrastructure to the highway expansion project would further delay it, Fazlul said they would need around three more years to implement the project under its current plan due to the delay in acquiring land.

However, he added, if the government approved the new plan as quickly as possible, the construction of the new infrastructure could also be completed within the extended timeline.

‘LESSONS NOT LEARNT’

A project official said when the underpasses and overpasses were dropped from the plan, it was acknowledged that these would ultimately need to be constructed at the intersections to prevent traffic congestion and ensure road safety in the future.

“We now have to spend approximately Tk 21 crore on consultancy services for value engineering in road safety, which could have been significantly minimised if the consultant’s recommendations during the feasibility study stage had been incorporated into the Development Project Proposal,” he said, requesting anonymity.

He also said more overpasses and underpasses had to be added during the implementation of the SASEC-1 and SASEC-2 projects to expand the highway from Gazipur to Rangpur via Tangail, resulting in an extension of the deadline and rise in cost.

“We should have learnt lessons from the past,” he added.

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. Ho 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

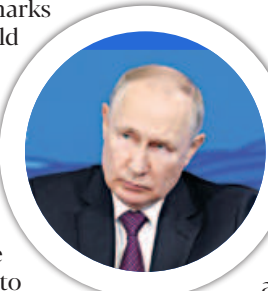
Suggests transitional govt for Kyiv under UN

AFP, Marmansk

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.

Arapprochement 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 that would have the confidence of the people, and then begin

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.

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 Houthis 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 Houthis 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 Halk 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

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PWD DIVISION, NOAKHALI
Phone: & Fax: 0312334491026, Email:- ee_noakh@pwd.gov.bd
Memo No. 25.36.7500.134/1010
Dated: 27/03/2025

e-Tender Notice
An e-Tender has been invited for the following work through e-GP Portal and that will be visible from 27.03.2025 Only the Person/Organization registered by e-GP portal can visit (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for clear observation.

Tender ID No	Package No	Name of works	Last Selling date & Time	Closing/Opening date & Time
1094750	Nkhali. MCH/WD-8	Establishment of 500 Bedded Hospital and Ancillary Building in Jeshore, Cox's Bazar, Pabna & Abdul Malek Ukil Medical College (AMUMC) & Jononeta Nurul Hoque Adhunik Hospital, Noakhali (1st Revised). (Sub Head: Construction of Academic Building of Nursing College, Construction of Mosque at Abdul Malek Ukil Medical College (AMUMC) & Jononeta Nurul Hoque Adhunik Hospital, Noakhali.)	27.04.2025 15:00	28.04.2025 15:00

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

(Md Kamruzzaman Hassan)
Executive Engineer
Noakhali P.W.D. Division.

GD-812

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উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)
শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুর এর ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের জন্য পরিচর্যা পরিচ্ছন্নতা সামগ্রী, বইপত্র ও সামগ্রিক, চিকিৎসা ও শৈল চিকিৎসা সরঞ্জামাদি, রাসায়নিক, কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী, অন্যান্য হনিয়ার সহযোগিতা প্রদানের প্রকৃত অভিজ্ঞ কর্মীদের নিকট হতে The public procurement Act 2006 ও বিধিমালা ২০০৮, আইন ও বিধিমালা ২০২৩ সংশোধিত অনুসারে সীলনামাভুক্ত ঘাটে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাবে।

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১২.	দরপত্র সিডিউল সম্বন্ধে পদ্ধতি	(প্রস্তাবক প্যাকেজের জন্য আলাদা আলাদাভাবে) প্রতিটি দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা (অফারের ঘোষণা), ১৬২০৬০২১০৩৩৩৩৩-শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুরের অনুমোদিত সীলনামা ভাষ্যে উল্লিখিত হারে টাকার প্রতিলিপি প্রদানের মাধ্যমে জমা পূর্ণক নিম্নের প্যাকেজ সম্বন্ধে ০১/০৩/২০২৪ হতে ৩১/০৩/২০২৫ পর্ব ব্যাধক স্টেটমেন্টের মূল কপি দাখিল করতে হবে। (৫) স্টেটমেন্ট কাজের হাসানাদায় মূল্য সংযোজন কর সনদ (বাকসার প্রকৃতি পত্রের) সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি। (৬) সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ জমাফত অফার (অফারের ঘোষণা) চালানোর মূল কপি জমা দিতে হবে। (৭) স্টেটমেন্ট কাজের কমপক্ষে তিন বছরের বাবদ অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র (প্রমাণ সহ) দাখিল করতে হবে (৮) দরপত্র দাখিলে বর্ণিত কাজের পরামিতি/শর্তাদি মোতাবেক দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। (৯) বিভিন্ন প্রকাশের পর হতে ১৩/০৪/২০২৫ খ্রি তারিখের মধ্যে টাকা অফার-২: ITT-10.1তে উপস্থিত টাকার ব্যাধক হুজি থাকতে হবে এবং হুজির সপক্ষে ইহার প্রমাণাদি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে। ব্যাধক হুজি না থাকলে ফরম পিডি ২-৫ প্রযোজ্য হবে, তবে ব্যাধক কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষর, নামের সীল ও মোবাইল অথবা টেলিফোন নম্বরসহ দাখিল করতে হবে। (১০) The required information regarding claims under litigation shall be during the last 03 (Three) years from Notary Public, Bangladesh by bidder in 300 tk non- judicial stamp.(Must be submit original copy.) ইহা স্বাক্ষর ও দরপত্রের দেয় শর্তাদি প্রযোজ্য হবে।																																			
১৩.	দরপত্র দাখিলের ঘোষণা	দরপত্রের সত্যিকার জমা দিতে হবে (প্রস্তাবক প্যাকেজের জন্য আলাদা আলাদাভাবে) (১) প্রতিটি স্বাক্ষর সীলনামা অবস্থায় দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে (২) হাসানাদায় নবায়নকৃত স্টেটমেন্ট কাজের ট্রেড শাইনেস এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি (২০২৪-২৫) (৩) অফারের পরিশোধের সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি (২০২৪-২৫) (৪) আর্থিক স্বাক্ষরতার সপক্ষে ০১/০৩/২০২৪ হতে ৩১/০৩/২০২৫ পর্ব ব্যাধক স্টেটমেন্টের মূল কপি দাখিল করতে হবে। (৫) স্টেটমেন্ট কাজের হাসানাদায় মূল্য সংযোজন কর সনদ (বাকসার প্রকৃতি পত্রের) সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি। (৬) সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ জমাফত অফার (অফারের ঘোষণা) চালানোর মূল কপি জমা দিতে হবে। (৭) স্টেটমেন্ট কাজের কমপক্ষে তিন বছরের বাবদ অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র (প্রমাণ সহ) দাখিল করতে হবে (৮) দরপত্র দাখিলে বর্ণিত কাজের পরামিতি/শর্তাদি মোতাবেক দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। (৯) বিভিন্ন প্রকাশের পর হতে ১৩/০৪/২০২৫ খ্রি তারিখের মধ্যে টাকা অফার-২: ITT-10.1তে উপস্থিত টাকার ব্যাধক হুজি থাকতে হবে এবং হুজির সপক্ষে ইহার প্রমাণাদি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে। ব্যাধক হুজি না থাকলে ফরম পিডি ২-৫ প্রযোজ্য হবে, তবে ব্যাধক কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষর, নামের সীল ও মোবাইল অথবা টেলিফোন নম্বরসহ দাখিল করতে হবে। (১০) The required information regarding claims under litigation shall be during the last 03 (Three) years from Notary Public, Bangladesh by bidder in 300 tk non- judicial stamp.(Must be submit original copy.) ইহা স্বাক্ষর ও দরপত্রের দেয় শর্তাদি প্রযোজ্য হবে।																																			
১৪.	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	(ক) নিজস্ব প্যাকেজ আবেদনের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র প্রদান করা করতে হবে (খ) দরপত্রের সাথে সহযুক্ত শর্ত ও নিয়মাদি অনুযায়ী। (গ) স্বাক্ষরিত শিপিং ২০০৬ ও শিপিং ২০০৮ এবং সংশোধনী ২০২৩ অনুসরণ করা হবে।																																			
১৫.	সংরক্ষিত ক্ষমতা	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণে দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষেত্রে যে কোন দরপত্র বা সনদ দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।																																			
১৬.	দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর নাম	অধ্যাপক ডাঃ জোবায়দা সুলতানা																																			
১৭.	দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর পদবী ও ঠিকানা	অধ্যাপক, শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুর।																																			
২০.	অনিবার্য কারণ বশত নির্ধারিত দিনে দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলা না হলে পরবর্তী কর্মদিবসে উল্লিখিত সময়ে দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলা তারিখ হিসেবে গণ্য হবে।																																				

(অধ্যাপক ডাঃ জোবায়দা সুলতানা)
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GD-811

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 Karttripakkha (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 Ovbashi 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



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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+1” strategy.

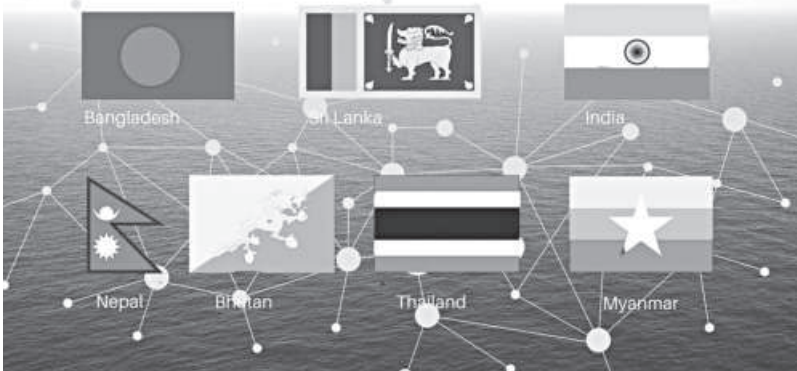
Protectionism is on the rise, too, with tariffs, non-tariff measures, and trade restrictions becoming increasingly prevalent. Supply chain innovation is also transforming global trade as automation, AI, and ethical supply chains gain prominence. The rise of the Global South signifies another important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



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

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.

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 isn’t 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 fulfill 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. Let 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

now to signal to foreign investors that we are on a path to electoral democracy.

The delayed transition to democracy is inadvertently crafting a power vacuum that has allowed opportunistic criminal entities to thrive. In a recent editorial, this newspaper spotlighted the exuberant extortion in the transport sector, with 98 percent of transport operators overcharging their passengers. They brand the extortion as “Eid tips”, which is estimated to amount to Tk 832.30 crore during this extended Eid holiday. The new goons use the modus operandi of the old ones to continue with the culture of extortion and exploitation. On average, each passenger is paying an extra fare of Tk 200. How can such behaviour 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

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.

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?

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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 @GunterEagleman, 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.

“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 thread – a deep love for both country and family. The athletes’ sacrifices often go unnoticed, but during Eid, their stories remind us of the human side behind the sports headlines. This year, for a lucky few, Eid brings rare joy. For others, it is yet another quiet reminder of the price of passion and patriotism.

“

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



‘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:

The Daily Star (DS): How is your recovery going on after missing the Women’s Dhaka Premier League (WDPL)?

Nahida Akter (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.

“

It feels great to be with the family during the Eid time...Normally, after waking up early in the morning on Eid day, I go for Eid prayer. Then I exchange greetings with family members and relatives after coming from the Eid prayer. Then I go out to meet my friends and spend some quality time with them. I have no different plan this year as well.

NAHID RANA
Cricketer

“

Before Eid-ul-Fitr, I went to Bogura where I attended an iftar with my school friends. So the time has been really spent well...On Eid day, I usually go to my village in Sonatola’s Gourpur area. There I spend time with my childhood friends and I play cricket at the school field where I started my cricketing journey. I also visit my relatives and spend quality time there.

TANZID TAMIM
Cricketer

“

After getting married, this will be my first Eid at my in-laws’. I’m currently in Kushtia, surrounded by new faces – and I’m new to them as well. As the only daughter-in-law, I also have certain responsibilities, so I’m really excited to celebrate Eid with my new family. At the same time, I’ll be missing my father and mother, who are now alone since my elder sister and I got married just 10 days apart.

MABIA AKTER SIMANTA
Weightlifter

“

I’m currently in Dhobaura, 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

“

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

“

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

“

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

“

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

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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



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

YUNUS-MODI MEET

India weighs options at BIMSTEC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday announced that it is exploring the possibility of Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting foreign leaders during his visit to Bangkok for the BIMSTEC Summit, scheduled for April 3-4.

“Meetings with other leaders in Bangkok are being considered. We will provide updates as we move forward,” Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said at a special press briefing in New Delhi when asked about a possible bilateral meeting between Modi and Bangladesh Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus.

Modi is expected to arrive in Bangkok on April 3 and travel to Colombo on the evening of April 4 for an official visit to Sri Lanka, Jaideep Mazumdar, secretary (East) of India’s Ministry of External Affairs, said during the briefing.

Earlier, the MEA issued a readout of Modi’s visits to Thailand and Sri Lanka but did not mention a bilateral meeting with Yunus.

According to the readout, the only confirmed bilateral meeting during Modi’s stay in Bangkok is with Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra on April 3.

A few days ago,

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

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.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

‘We’re up against time to find stolen billions’

BB governor tells Al Jazeera

STAR DESK

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur has expressed worry that much of the money laundered abroad by political and business elites over the last one and a half decades could disappear if it was not found quickly enough.

“We know that time is of the essence. Erosion of the asset base is a possibility,” the former IMF economist told Al Jazeera.

Days after the collapse of the Awami League government in August 2024 following the July uprising and the ouster of prime minister Sheikh Hasina, the newly-appointed central bank chief began a hunt for billions smuggled abroad by its political and business elites.

Bangladesh Bank has set up 11 specialist teams to trace the assets of 11 powerful families who are accused of laundering billions of dollars to the UK, UAE, US, Malaysia, and Singapore over the past decade.

The amount of money in question is staggering. Just one of the 11 families being investigated is suspected of moving \$15 billion out of Bangladesh and in one case withdrawing nearly 90 percent of a single bank’s deposits, leaving it on the brink of collapse, said the Al Jazeera reporter.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING					
MARCH 29					
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:37	12:45	4:45	6:14	7:45	
JAMAAT 4:47	1:15	5:00	6:29	8:15	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING			
RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
28	29		6:14
29	30	4:35	6:14
30	31	4:34	6:15



Smoke billows over Beirut’s southern suburbs following an Israeli strike, which was preceded by an evacuation warning for the area, as seen from Baabda, Lebanon, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israel hits building in Beirut’s south suburbs

REUTERS, Beirut

Israel’s air force conducted a large strike on a building in the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital yesterday, a Reuters reporter said, the first heavy bombardment there since a truce deal in November ended a war between Israel and Hezbollah.

Israel’s military said it hit a drone storage facility in the area belonging to Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah.

The strike, which was heard across Beirut and produced a large column of black smoke, followed an evacuation order by the Israeli military for the neighbourhood and three smaller targeted drone strikes on the building intended as warning shots, security sources told Reuters.

The evacuation order sent residents of the area into a panic, rushing to escape on foot as traffic clogged the streets out of the area, Reuters reporters in the area said.

Beirut’s southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold, were hit by a series of strikes.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

এভিয়ান ইনফুয়েঞ্জা সংক্রমণ প্রতিরোধে করণীয়

১। এভিয়ান ইনফুয়েঞ্জা সংক্রমণ রোধ করা সম্ভব-ভীতি নয়।

২। আপনার পারিবারিক ও বাণিজ্যিক খামারে উত্তম ব্যবস্থাপনা ও বায়োসিকিউরিটি জোরদার করুন।

৩। হাঁস-মুরগি ধরার পর ভালো করে সাবান-পানি দিয়ে দুই হাত পরিষ্কার করে ধুয়ে ফেলুন।

৪। কোথাও হাঁস-মুরগি বা অন্যান্য পাখি অস্বাভাবিক হারে মারা গেলে সঙ্গে সঙ্গে উপজেলা প্রাণিসম্পদ দপ্তরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

৫। হাঁস-মুরগির মাংস ভালোভাবে রান্না করে খাবেন। মাংস, ডিম বা মাংসের তৈরি খাবার নিরাপদ।

৬। মুরগির খামারে সময়মত এভিয়ান ইনফুয়েঞ্জা টিকা প্রদান করুন।

৭। এভিয়ান ইনফুয়েঞ্জা সম্পর্কে জানার জন্য নিকটস্থ উপজেলা প্রাণিসম্পদ দপ্তর ও ভেটেরিনারি হাসপাতালে যোগাযোগ করুন। প্রয়োজনে প্রাণিসম্পদ অধিদপ্তরের হট লাইন নম্বর ১৬৩৫৮ এ যোগাযোগ করুন।

প্রাণিসম্পদ অধিদপ্তর

মৎস্য ও প্রাণিসম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়

GD-814



PHOTO: STAR

EID RETAIL RUSH

A shopper's guide TO DHAKA



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 tupi of a similar shade for my own mischievous 'Puck'; Zunaïd 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.



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.

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



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 ones 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 Dhakaite, 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 taka 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 taka each, with the disclaimer “nile nen 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 after school dawlat 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

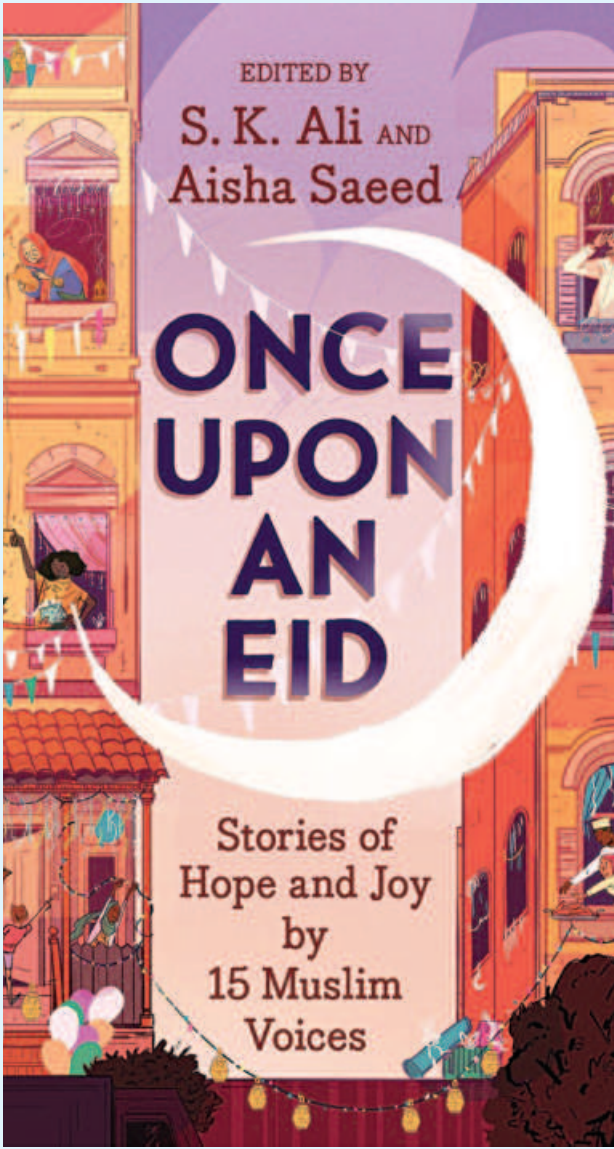
that's a very different thing. So to this day, you do not know what those blobs would have been called. But when you recall this memory, you fondly remember how cool you felt that one particular Eid.

As a Dhakaite, 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 Ligion mehdi 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, @tashfiarchy, or her email, 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.

POETRY

What does a tomb look like?



PHOTO: COLLECTED

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,
Enconced 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 Sawdagor, 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, Prarthana 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 Nusraat Faria in the lead role, also marking her return to the silver screen after a long time.

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 Xeler 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.

Leading the musical trend is **Didha** by Pritom Hasan from **Borbaad**, featuring Shaki 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

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

Ektukhani 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**.

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

Meanwhile, **Maya Maya Lage** marks the grand reunion of singers Nancy and Balam after 15 years, offering a sweet and beautifully arranged romantic number in **How Sweet**, starring Tasnia Farin and Apurba. Afran Nisho debuts playback performance in a film with the title track **Daagi**. This powerful track, capturing the film's central theme, features Nisho alongside singer Ararat Mofsin Nidhi.

Lastly, **Jonom Jonom**, another romantic gem from **Jongli**, brings together Siam Ahmed and Prarthana Fardin Dighi, with

i 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 Saiera 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 Maasranga TV on Eid Day 2 at 11:30pm.

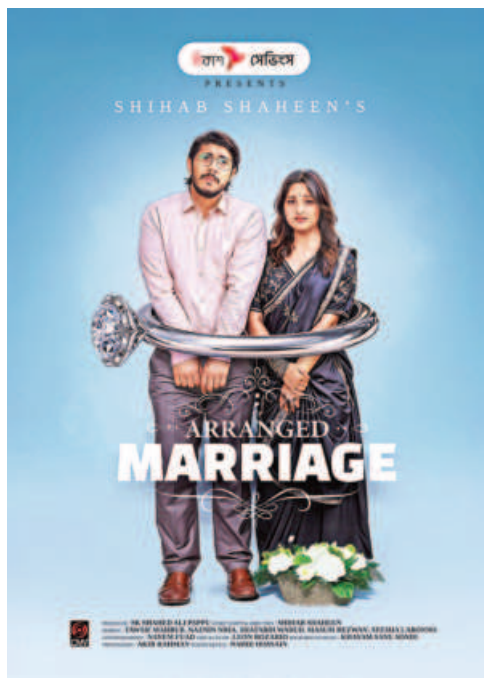
Meanwhile, Ziaul Faruq Apurba and Naznin Nahar Niha reunite in the romantic drama **Meghbalika**, a drama written and directed by Jakaria Showkhin, which will premiere on Channel i on Eid Day 4 at 4:30pm.

Ziaul Hoque Polash will be seen in a completely new role as a free-spirited, bohemian boxer in **Khalid**, 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 Tawfif Mahbub alongside Tanjim Saiera 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, **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, **Jimmi**. This female-centric plot featuring Jaya Ahsan has already made a mark with the audience, after the release

from **Jinn 3**, featuring the dazzling Nusraat 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 Nussrat Jahan and Shakib Khan.

Romance takes center stage again in **Bondhugo 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 Mushfiq 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 Ralqa, 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-11 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."

Khandokar 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-11, 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 Herlan, 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-11, said he earns at least Tk 1,500-Tk 2,000 per day by selling iftar items such as jalebi, egg chops, grammes, fritters (eggplant fritters, potato fritters), puffed rice, rissole and so on. 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 Bhawal 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-panjabi, shoes, watches, caps, prayer mats, atar, 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 an Eid-focused business centred on imports, with goods such as clothing, shoes, oils, spices, and dates being brought in to meet heightened demand in the domestic market.

However, he said 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