



DHAKA MONDAY APRIL 7, 2025

REGD. No. DA 781

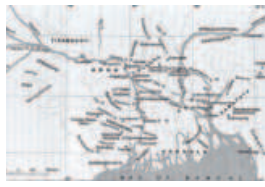
VOL. XXXV No. 80

CHAITRA 24, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SHAWWAL 8, 1446 HURI

16 PAGES: Tk 15.00



Samatata, Bangalah, Subah-i-Bangalah
P10



Reassessing Bangladesh's defense strategy in the South
P9



Political expediency and the narratives of our liberation
P8



I chase characters that break the mould: Tama
P6

Dhaka confident of riding out tariff storm

Say advisers and exporters; govt to send two letters to Trump administration within 48 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi exporters remain optimistic about withstanding the Trump administration's sweeping tariffs, hoping that bold diplomacy and a united front at home will shield them from the trade shock.

Manufacturers and exporters see a narrow but promising window to strengthen Bangladesh's position in the US market, as Dhaka signals its intention to reduce the trade imbalance and actively engage with Washington.

To that end, the government will send two formal letters to the US administration within 48 hours, laying out Bangladesh's plan to address the bilateral trade gap and remove both tariff and non-tariff barriers.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus will write to US President Donald Trump, while Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin will address the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the US government's lead trade negotiation office. Both letters will outline specific policy measures to deepen trade ties and restore confidence.

These initiatives come in direct response to Trump's new reciprocal tariff regime announced on April 2, which has upended traditional global trade frameworks and triggered re-evaluations in capitals around the world.

Bangladeshi exporters have expressed alarm, warning that the new tariffs could disrupt exports to the US, which remains Bangladesh's single largest export destination.

Garment manufacturers say the new tariffs, effective from April 9, are likely to provide international buyers with additional leverage to further suppress prices paid to Bangladeshi exporters.

The decision to draft the letters was taken yesterday at a high-level meeting at the finance ministry, attended by four advisers to the interim



SUFFOCATING THE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Thick smoke billowing from the burning waste at Matuail landfill in Dhaka's Demra shrouds the sky. The toxic haze drifts towards the neighbourhoods forcing people to inhale the nearly unbreathable air. Exposure to such poor quality air not only triggers short-term health issues but also long-term respiratory complications. Today is World Health Day.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

“One thing we all agree on is that Bangladesh must not lose its competitiveness, especially not to a rival country.”
Syed Nasim Manzur, MD, Apex Footwear Ltd

government, senior bureaucrats and representatives from key export sectors.

Following the meeting, Syed Nasim Manzur, president of the Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB), expressed strong optimism.

“From the private sector, we are extremely confident. If there's a level playing field, we can succeed – we've done it before, and we can do it again,” he said. “It's the government's responsibility to create that level playing field. The rest is on us. That's why a united effort is essential.”

Manzur said the current sense of momentum was driven by the government's clear and time-bound plan. “We've said it before: this has a shelf life. If we don't act within that window, we will fall behind. But today, I feel we may be able to avoid that. And more importantly, we can overcome it.”

Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear Ltd, emphasised that all stakeholders were aligned on one core principle: national interest comes first. “Identifying opportunities while safeguarding Bangladesh's interests is essential,” he said.

“One thing we all agree on is that Bangladesh must not lose its competitiveness, especially not to a rival country,” Manzur added.

He also underscored the importance of broadening the export base. “Of course, RMG is our main export driver. But there's a world beyond RMG. We're seeing new sectors emerge,” he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

UPRISING ASSAULT
61 pro-AL lawyers land behind bars

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered 64 pro-Awami League lawyers to be sent to jail after rejecting their bail prayers in a case filed over assault, vandalism, and attempted murder during the uprising last year.

Three of the 64 fled the courtroom on hearing the court's rejection of their bail petitions, court sources said, adding that their identities could not be confirmed.

Former presidents of Dhaka Bar Association Saidur Rahman Manik, Gazi Shah Alam, Mahbubur Rahman, its former general secretary Asaduzzaman Khan Rachi, and former public prosecutor Nazrul Islam Shamim are among the accused.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

How our media got politicised

Media Reform Commission report details 15 years of censorship and cronyism

ZYMA ISLAM

How did our media get to a place where censorship is rampant and media organisations pander to political parties?

The Media Reform Commission found a key reason: 30 years of free passes to political allies to establish media organisations with dubious sources of funding.

The commission conducted a survey among 45,000 households and found 79.46 percent participants saying that the media was not independent because of political interference, and just over half said that media freedom was hindered by the interference of influential figures. A quarter mentioned that the business interests of the media outlet owners negatively affected their freedom.

“Over the last three decades, nobody has questioned the source of funding for mass media. As a result, mass media has been politicised. Many large business groups have used mass media as a shield to protect their

business interests and influenced editorial policies to serve the government of the day,” says the Media Reform Commission report.

“They have concentrated power by each owning multiple newspapers, TV channels, online news portals and radio stations. These have hurt competition and eroded public trust in the media.”

The report goes on to say, “All investors have to declare the source of income of their capital, there is no such compulsion when it comes to investing in media. As a result, black money has entered the industry.”

“Those who have invested black money and abused the influential power of the media to protect their own vested or political interests have created anarchy within the industry.”

In 1996, when Awami League came into power, it provided licences to Ekushey TV (ETV), ATN Bangla and Channel i. But the government also closed down Dainik Bangla, Times, Bichitra and Ananda Bichitra.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BUSINESS

Remittances hit record \$3.29b in March

Bangladesh received a record \$3.29 billion in remittances in March – the highest monthly figure to date – marking a 65 percent year-on-year surge.

The rise is largely attributed to stronger inflows through formal channels, an uptick in overseas employment and expatriates sending more money home for Eid-related expenses.

Remittance earnings have been climbing steadily since August last year, providing some much-needed breathing space.

STORY ON B1

STANDING WITH GAZA

Students go on strike across Bangladesh

STAR REPORT

Students, universities, and political parties have announced programmes in solidarity with the oppressed people of Gaza.

Today's programmes include strikes in educational institutions and workplaces and demonstrations in the capital and other cities, denouncing the ongoing genocide and mass destruction in Gaza.

The announcements follow a global call to action by Palestinian activists, urging schools, universities, offices, and courts to shut down simultaneously to demand an immediate end to the violence.

In response, students from dozens of institutions across the country announced the suspension of academic activities. Dhaka University (DU) and Rajshahi University (RU) authorities officially backed the strike.

Since Israel launched its offensive on Gaza – a 365 square-kilometre enclave of 2.4 million people – on October 7, 2023, at least 50,695 Palestinians have been killed and 115,338 others wounded. According to the United Nations, nearly 69 percent of Gaza's buildings have been destroyed or damaged.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



PHOTO: AFP

Demonstrators march during the nationwide “Hands Off!” protest against US President Donald Trump and his adviser, Tesla CEO Elon Musk in New York. Tens of thousands of protesters flooded the streets of major US cities on Saturday to oppose the divisive policies of Trump.

Anti-Trump rallies rock US

AFP, Washington

Tens of thousands of protesters flooded the streets of major US cities on Saturday to oppose the divisive policies of President Donald Trump, in the largest demonstrations since his return to the White House.

Opponents of the Republican president's policies – from government staffing cuts to trade tariffs and eroding civil liberties – rallied in Washington, New York, Houston, Florida, Colorado and Los Angeles, among other locations.

“I am so angry, I'm so mad, all the time, yes. A bunch of privileged, white alleged rapists are controlling our country. It's not great,” said New York painter Shaina Kesner, 43, joining a crowd marching through the heart of Manhattan.

In Washington, thousands of demonstrators – many traveling from across the United States – gathered on the National Mall where dozens of speakers rallied opposition to Trump.

“We have about 100 people who have come down by bus and van from New Hampshire to protest against this outrageous administration (that) is causing us to lose our allies across the world, and causing devastation to people here at home,” said Diane Kolifirath, 64, a bike tour guide.

“They're gutting our government.”

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Army chief leaves Dhaka for Russia, Croatia

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman left Bangladesh for Russia yesterday morning on an official visit.



Following his stay in Russia, Gen Waker will travel to Croatia on April 10, according to a press release from the Inter-Service Public Relations Directorate.

During the visit, he will hold courtesy meetings with senior military and civil officials of both the countries and exchange views on enhancing bilateral cooperation in defence and related sectors.

He is also expected to visit several military installations and arms-manufacturing facilities, the ISPR said.

After wrapping-up his visit, the army chief is scheduled to return home on April 12.



Workers preparing and arranging ledgers at a shop in Chattogram's Andorkilla on Saturday. The demand has skyrocketed ahead of Halkhata, a festival the traders celebrate by starting afresh with a new book on Pahela Baishakh, with the hope that all customers would settle their dues before the Bangla New Year.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

4-yr-old raped while visiting grandparents

Imam sent to jail over rape of teenager with disabilities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A four-year-old girl was raped allegedly by her step-uncle while she was visiting her grandparents' house in Maheshpur upazila of Jhenaidah on Friday night.

Police found out about the incident yesterday after she was admitted to a hospital. No arrest was made and the family was yet to file a case till the writing of this report last night around 9:00pm.

The accused has been on the run since the incident came to light.

According to the girl's relatives, she went to visit her grandparents with her mother on Thursday. On Friday night, the child's step-uncle took her to a field and raped her. Later, the child told her family about the incident.

She was taken to Jibannagar Upazila Health Complex first and then sent to the One Stop Crisis Centre of Chuadanga Sadar Hospital, said Mostafizur Rahman Sujon, medical officer at Jibannagar Upazila Health Complex.

Jibannagar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mamun Hossain said, "The child lives in Jibannagar, and the incident took place in Maheshpur. However, if a case is filed with this police station, we will investigate and take action."

Meanwhile, in Brahmanbaria, a district court yesterday sent a man to jail in a case filed over the rape of a 17-year-old girl with physical disabilities in Bancharampur upazila on April 1.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Dhaka confident of riding out tariff storm

FROM PAGE 1

For example, Bangladesh is now exporting small plastic bags worth \$4 million per month, with the US as the largest and fastest-growing destination. "We cannot, and should not, ignore this market."

Manzur said he hoped the government's outreach to the US would yield results quickly. "I hope that within the next 24 to 48 hours, we'll be able to give our buyers some really good news."

Former BGMEA President Rubana Huq echoed this hope. "We're expecting a letter from our side that President Trump might tweet himself. That's the kind of impact we're aiming for."

Tapan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd, said the business community was "truly worried". However, after Sunday's discussions, they see a roadmap.

Chowdhury also called for support for other industries than garments. He said India once supplied about 30 percent of US pharmaceutical imports, and it has already lost some of that share in the sector, causing a drop in the share prices of Indian companies.

"This shift presents an opportunity for Bangladesh, especially for our pharmaceutical industry. Opportunities are emerging from all directions. For policymakers, this is a pivotal moment," he added.

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said Bangladesh was prepared to expand its commercial ties with the US, even if with the import of more essential goods such as LNG.

He emphasised that the government will ensure that exports from Bangladesh continue to flow. "Our garment sector is more competitive than many others. American consumers know this, and we aim to strengthen that perception further through private sector efficiency."

Ahmed also stressed that beyond goods, there are many services Bangladesh can import from the US and offer other services in return.

Addressing the complex nature of trade barriers, he said: "Tariffs don't always tell the full story. Non-tariff measures -- regulations, certifications and customs delays -- can also distort trade. We want to make sure American businesses don't face unnecessary hurdles here."

The government, Ahmed said, will work quickly to rationalise and streamline those barriers.

Commerce Adviser Bashir Uddin said they agreed that the tariff and non-tariff barriers in US-Bangladesh trade should be reviewed.

"Accordingly, we are taking steps to reassess and remove tariff-related and non-tariff barriers that hinder our trade," he said.

Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud said other countries like China and those in Europe were retaliating against the US over new tariffs, and it was unclear where the trade war would stop.

"The whole world will be jolted. But for us, things are going on according to the plan," the adviser said.

He also said it was not possible to pass the burden of the hiked tariffs on to the workers. "Wage cannot be reduced. We rather need to improve productivity and capacity to supply world-class garments."

Khalilur Rahman, the chief adviser's high representative on Rohingya and other priorities, said the government has been discussing this matter with US authorities since February. "Today, I feel encouraged by our discussion with the business community."

He said the Bangladesh ambassador to the US spoke with the Assistant US Trade Representative. "The signals we're receiving from there are aligned with our thoughts. So, we believe we'll be able to finalise our positions within a day or two."

Earlier, Bashir Uddin said he consulted US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Tracey Ann Jacobson about communication strategies for negotiation with the US government.

61 pro-AL lawyers land behind bars

FROM PAGE 1

The court, however, granted former president of Dhaka Bar Association Abu Sayeed Sagar and 18 female lawyers bail in the same case.

Judge Md Zakir Hussain of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after the accused appeared before the court and submitted bail petitions through their lawyers.

During the hearing, the defence lawyers told the court that their clients had received anticipatory bail for eight weeks from the High Court.

The HC also asked the lawyers to surrender before the lower court before the expiration of that bail. In compliance with the court order, their clients surrendered and sought bail, the defence said.

The prosecution opposed the bail petitions saying that the charges brought against the accused were

serious and heinous.

The judge then ordered law enforcers to send them to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

On February 6, lawyer Mohammad Ali Babu filed the case against 144 pro-AL lawyers for assault, vandalism, and attempted murder on August 4 last year.

According to the case statement, the pro-AL lawyers illegally assembled outside the Dhaka Bar Association building on August 4. The pro-AL lawyers attacked other lawyers and members with sticks and explosives.

The accused also vandalised the chambers of pro-BNP lawyers, damaging documents, including bank cheques.

The complainant was allegedly attacked by the group while he was returning to the Bar Association from a court that day.

How our media got politicised

FROM PAGE 1

However, the licensing of these channels came with specific terms and conditions that would remain in effect permanently.

These conditions included broad and ambiguous requirements, such as maintaining "respect for Bangladesh's history, culture, liberation, the spirit of the Liberation War, and social and religious sentiments". Additionally, broadcasters were prohibited from airing content that could be seen as undermining "sovereignty, national unity, development, and the national image".

The conditions also required broadcasters to air special programmes on August 15, March 17 (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birthday), and other significant dates related to the Liberation War. However, this particular clause was revoked during the subsequent BNP tenure.

In 2001, after the BNP government came to power, the High Court revoked ETV's licence, and intelligence agencies seized broadcasting equipment from TV stations, citing the need to halt terrestrial broadcasting. As a result, the channel was shut down. It was only after 2005, when the new owners of ETV agreed to operate solely as a satellite channel, that it was allowed to resume operations.

During the BNP tenure, 10 television channels began transmission -- NTV, RTV, Banglavisión, Boishakhi TV, Desh TV, Channel One, Islamic TV, SNTV, CSB and Diganta TV.

"There are allegations that these channels were given licences on political grounds, because their owners are either directly or covertly related with BNP," says the report.

Both NTV and RTV belonged to Khaleda Zia's private secretary and parliamentarian Moaddeq Ali Falu. When Falu was jailed in 2007, RTV changed hands and went over to Bengal Group. There are allegations that a state intelligence agency was involved in this share transfer, noted the report.

Channel One's owner was Giasuddin Mamun, known to be close to BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman.

Khaleda Zia's parliament adviser and MP Salauddin Qader Chowdhury got the licence for CSBTV, while BNP parliamentarians Moshfiqur Rahim, Salahuddin and Nasiruddin Pintu were given licences for DeshTV and SNTV respectively.

Khaleda Zia's brother Maj Gen (ret'd) Sayeed Iskandar brought forth Islamic TV and former city corporation mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka was behind Banglavisión, notes the report.

Boishakhi TV's owner AYM Kamal was close to BNP leader Mirza Abbas, it says.

CSBTV's licence was cancelled during the I/II caretaker government on allegations that it was broadcasting anti-government content.

The 15-year-AL regime was one of anarchy, says the report.

To ensure the media followed its instructions, the government offered various incentives and took punitive measures. It exercised control through mechanisms such as granting publication and broadcast licences, imposing excise duties, regulating government advertisement allocations, delaying ad payments, restricting access to government establishments and official programmes, issuing threats, engaging in harassment, and even resorting to violence.

When granting media licences, the most influential factor became the political affiliation of the investor or the media outlet, says the report.

Even in the absence of evidence showing relevant experience or proof of the required capital investment, applicants who identified as "Awami League supporters" or claimed they intended to establish a TV channel to promote the ideals of the Awami League were given priority, it says.

Journalists who acted as sycophants of Sheikh Hasina were given multiple licences for TV channels, or placed as editors and chief executives in organisations, or given jobs as press

officers in foreign embassies.

These media organisations became the mouthpieces of the ruling Awami League and it became a rule to slander the opposition and portray opposition activists as criminals.

Any time anyone presented a dissenting opinion on screen, the state intelligence agencies were activated to remove their presence on TVs, the report says.

Many news managers and journalists were summoned to the DGFI headquarters and threatened, and in some cases, their employers were forced to fire them.

The AL administration shut down Diganta, Channel One, Islamic TV, and SNTV.

Between 2009 and 2014, 27 television stations were issued licences.

"These licences were given to AL party members, their family members or business groups closely allied with them."

While inspecting the licences of different houses, the media commission found that the relevant ministries did not even put up a semblance of verifying the documents submitted with the applications.

"Verifying these documents should have taken a while, but it can be noticed that at least seven channels were given licences within 3-4 days of application [submission]," says the report. "It is clear that these licences were given on political grounds."

In addition to the terms defined in 1996, the AL government also attached conditions like one stating that the stations must broadcast content advocating against terrorism, criminal activities, and political violence. It also became mandatory for them to transmit via Bangabandhu satellite.

"Such terms and conditions, especially the ones that are politically driven, will make it impossible for any media to operate in an impartial and independent manner. These terms and conditions force the TV channel to always be pro-government."

The national broadcast policy states that radios, TVs and online platforms cannot broadcast anything that is "anti-state", "hurts religious sentiments", or "alters the historic heritage of Bangladesh" or does not conform to the laws, culture, and heritage of the country.

The kind of restrictive terms and conditions that are relevant for TV stations, are also applicable for FM radio stations, notes the report.

The channels too made pledges to serve the AL when applying for licences.

For example, when AsianTV was launched by the chair of Bangabandhu Shainik League Harun-Or Rashid in 2011, he said that he wanted to establish a TV station to be a part of "Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's vision to create a digital Bangladesh". He was then a parliamentarian.

Salman F Rahman and Nazmul Hasan Papon were granted licences for Independent TV after pledging to "support the activities of the Awami League government". At the time, Papon was a member of parliament, while Salman secured a loan of Tk 300 crores from banks to establish the channel.

Morshedul Alam, the chairman of Bengal Group, was granted Channel 52 after committing to implement "Vision 2021". Similarly, the application for Channel 21 pledged to fulfill the Awami League's vision of establishing "Vision 2021 and a Digital Bangladesh".

In 2022, Titus TV was bought by Bashundhara Group and renamed TSports. Titus TV's application for licence stated its commitment to "create the Golden Bangla that embodies the spirit of the Liberation War, and that was dreamt of by the best Bangalee in a thousand years, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman".

When Bangladesh Chhatra League's former general secretary Ismat Kadir Gani applied for Channel 5 in 2021, he identified himself as a "committed worker of the Awami League". He used the logo of Mujib's centennial on his application and declared his commitment to work to implement the Father of the Nation

Bangabandhu's dream.

Global TV's application by AL parliamentarian Mamunur Rashid Kiron said the channel wants to begin broadcasting to implement a Bangladesh whose ideals are governed by those of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He also said that the channel would partake in Sheikh Hasina's dream to create a Digital Bangladesh.

Channel 9's application stated, "Our channel will highlight the development activity of 'Vision 2021'. As part of a pro-liberation force, we will focus on the development activity of the present government to build a digital Bangladesh."

Contacted, Channel 9 Managing Director Enayetur Rahman Bappi said, "I had simply purchased the licence. I don't know on what grounds the channel got the licence."

Channel 9's licence was sought by Brig Gen (ret'd) Syed Shafayatul Islam, who was the former general secretary of AL.

Duronto TV was given a licence at a time when its owner, former state minister for foreign affairs Shahrar Alam was himself a member of the parliamentary standing committee on information and communication services.

Green TV's owner Syed Golam Dastagir Gazi applied for licence in 2013 pledging to implement Bangabandhu's vision and ideals, Sheikh Hasina's dream Bangladesh, and AL's Vision 2021.

DBC Channel got its clearance in only three days while Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury was Sheikh Hasina's press adviser.

Bashundhara Group's News24 and AL politician Kamal Ahmed Majumdar's Mohona TV continued to broadcast misinformation against their business and political rivals, unabated because they were close to the government, reads the report.

Then parliamentarians Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury, Bidyt Barua, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Obaidul Muqtadir Chowdhury, Apu Ukil and AL's business ally Chowdhury Nafeez Sarafat were all given licences to launch online portals based on their close political relationship with the party.

The AL muzzled three private TV stations which had obtained licences during the BNP regime, and stopped publication of the BNP-leaning Amar Desh. Its editor and publisher was arrested and jailed for five years. He faced as many as 124 cases including one accusing him of plotting to kidnap and murder Sajeed Wazed Joy.

Jaijaidin Editor Shafiq Rehman was also accused in the same case and placed on remand. In 2019, Abul Asad, the editor of Dainik Sangram was jailed for five years.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiuur Rahman was slammed with 55 cases under the Digital Security Act and The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam faced 84 cases, of which 16 were for sedition.

Journalist leaders Shawkat Mahmud and Ruhul Amin Gazi were jailed for more than a year, and journalist Oliullah Noman was arrested.

ETV's chairperson Abdus Salam and journalist Kanak Sarwar were jailed for broadcasting a speech of BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman.

The commission noted that such media outlets, particularly those who had encouraged the deposed prime minister to repress the July-August mass uprising, whitewashed their AL links by replacing them with those of the BNP.

Many journalists were politically pressured to leave their positions while many TV channels fired their staff members in managerial positions and replaced them with journalists identified to be from "anti-Awami League politics". The commission documented massive overhauls in 29 media organisations.

"The level of change we have seen in the media is unprecedented," commented Abul Kalam Azad, one of the researchers who worked on the report.

Nagorik TV, a channel owned by

Mohammadi Group's owner Rubana Huq and her son Navidul Huq saw the most number of staff members being fired, 40 in total. This includes their head of news, Dip Azad and two news editors. The commission spoke to many from the station who said that Azad, a secretary general of the AL faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, was considered a liability by the channel.

Navidul said that the cuts had nothing to do with August 5.

"Media spending had gone down and we had started downsizing in 2023. We cut 20 people from the news team and reduced our overall manpower by 30-40 percent. All were paid full compensation. This was done in response to market conditions."

He said no journalist was terminated because of allegations of being politicised.

Especially outside Dhaka, journalists have been accused of being AL supporters and booked under different types of legal cases, including murder charges.

In Ekattor TV, the channel's chief Mozammel Babu, who had been widely criticised for turning the station into a mouthpiece for the Hasina government, was removed, and its special correspondent Shafique Ahmed, who covered the BNP, was given the charge of chief operating officer and head of news.

Shafique said, "I have been a journalist for 26 years and a planning editor and senior special correspondent at Ekattor TV. I was promoted based on my qualifications. Everyone knew about the work of this TV before August 5. After August 5, I asked the board if they wanted to be a political mouthpiece, and they said they did not. Ekattor's editorial policy and chair's directive is to make it a TV for the people."

All five media organisations owned by the Bashundhara Group have experienced massive changes. Right after August 5, Kader Gani Chowdhury, a member of BNP Media Cell and Ziaur Rahman Foundation, was given the charge of East West Media Ltd, as a deputy managing director. Kader used to be a journalist at the pro-BNP Dainik Dinkal.

Abu Taher, executive editor of Bangladesh Pratidin, was appointed editor of the newspaper in late August last year. Taher had been elected as the senior vice chair of the Jatiya Press Club from a BNP-Jamaat supported panel. Following the ouster of Hasina, he became the chairperson of the Club.

Bashundhara's newspaper Kaler Kantho, television station News24 and online portal Banglanews24.com also saw a multitude of staffing changes in key positions, with BNP-leaning individuals being promoted, notes the report.

"We have learnt that these were done in consultation with the political party itself," said Azad.

At the Beximco-owned Independent TV, the heads of news retained their positions, but their authority was curbed. A journalist named Mostafa Kamal, who the report identified as belonging to the BNP camp, has been given control over the station as its main head of news. Following August 5, when crowds tried to attack the television station, Kamal tackled the situation. Ashish Saikat, who had previously held that post, was asked not to come back to work.

In DBC TV, four people in managerial positions lost their jobs, and Samakal's BNP-beat journalist Loton Ekram was recruited as an editor at the station.

At Boishakhi TV, the head of news was replaced with Ziaul Kabir Sumon, who had worked at Diganta TV in the past. Their news editor was replaced by a reporter who covered the BNP beat.

At Desh TV, the AL-beat reporters were fired and their managing director was arrested and jailed on charges of attempted murder.

The media institutions, criticised for being allies of the deposed dictator, have neither reflected on their past actions, nor apologised, and are going about business as usual.

When the commission invited them to critically assess their past coverage, the commission faced their reluctance.

জন ও নিরাপদে রেমিট্যান্স পাঠান
প্রিয়জনকে প্রসোজাতে...

যেকোনো শাখা থেকে রেমিট্যান্স গ্রহণ করলেই
পাবেন সরকার নির্ধারিত ২.৫% প্রমোদনা

সাথে আবেগ ও আশ্রয় নিশ্চিত আকর্ষণীয় পুরস্কার

* শর্ত প্রযোজ্য

পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
PUBALI BANK PLC.

Best Financial Institution
DHL-The Daily Star Business Awards.

AAA
Rated Bank

ISO/IEC
27001:2022

ঘরে বসেই
ব্যাংক
অ্যাকাউন্ট
খুলুন

পাই ব্যাংকিং (PI Banking) -
একটি পূবালী ব্যাংক অ্যাপস

ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

Sacked BDR members demand reinstatement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of dismissed members of the erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles (now Border Guard Bangladesh, or BGB) demonstrated in front of its headquarters at Pilkhana, Dhaka yesterday morning demanding reinstatement to their jobs and compensation.

They began the sit-in at the BGB gate-4 around 10:00am. They termed their expulsion "unjust dismissal". Their family members also took part in the sit-in.

A large contingent of police and BGB members has been deployed to the area to maintain order.

The protesters, many of whom lost their jobs following the 2009 BDR carnage, claimed they were not involved in the incident but were still punished without "due process".

"Our only demand

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Demanding reinstatement to their jobs and compensation, dismissed members of the erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles (now Border Guard Bangladesh, or BGB) demonstrated in front of its headquarters at Pilkhana, Dhaka yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

132 killed in road crashes during Eid

Says BRTA data from March 28 to April 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 132 people were killed and 208 injured in 110 road accidents that took place in eight days during the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation between March 28 and April 4 in eight divisions across the country.

According to the data prepared by the Road Safety wing of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, 24 casualties were recorded on the Eid day alone on March 31.

BRTA published each day's statistics on its website daily based on incidents that occurred in the 24-hour period of that day.

According to the statistics, before Eid, 12 people were killed in 12 incidents on March 28, 13 were killed in 12 incidents on March 29, and 16 were killed in another 12 road accidents on March 30.

After the Eid, 19 people were killed in 17 road accidents on April 1, 22 people were killed in 12 incidents of accidents on April 2, while 12 more were killed in 11 accidents on April 3, and 14 were killed in 16 accidents on April 4.

This year, Eid was celebrated on March 31, with a five-day holiday from March 29 to April 2. In addition, the government declared April 3 as a public holiday, followed by weekly holidays on



April 4 and 5, paving way for nine days of vacation.

DIVISION-WISE ACCIDENTS

Dhaka division saw 32 people killed and 89 injured in 27 incidents of road accidents.

In Chattogram, 31 people were killed and 51 others injured in 17 accidents, including at least 11 deaths and two injured in a single accident on April 2 as a passenger bus and a microbus collided head-on on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway in Lohagara upazila, as per media reports.

In Rajshahi, 14 accidents left as many people killed and 15 others injured, while 19 accidents left 23 people killed and another 23 injured in Khulna. At least 10 people were killed and another seven injured in seven road accidents in Mymensingh.

In Rangpur, 14 road accidents claimed 11 lives and left another 18 injured. In Barisal, seven accidents caused six deaths and left another 10 injured, while five were killed in five road accidents in Sylhet.

'He'd still be alive had those in power cared'

Says father of July martyr

MASHFIQ MIZAN and SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Ashiqur Rahman Hridoy, 16, was hit with 35 shotgun pellets - three of them lodged in his head - during a protest against the state crackdown on quota reform demonstrators in Dhaka's Jaurabari on July 18.

He miraculously survived that day, but died eight months later, without proper treatment and ignored by the very people he believed he was fighting for, the family claimed.

Since August 5, the day Sheikh Hasina's government fell, his father, Ansar Hawladar - a rickshaw-puller from Patuakhali - went door to door, seeking help for his son's treatment.

No one responded.

Neither the state nor the student leaders, who are now building political careers off the uprising,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Hridoy, 16

Maternal, neonatal care still a challenge

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Despite notable progress in healthcare, Bangladesh continues to lag behind in ensuring essential maternal and child care, with a significant number of stillbirths and child deaths reported each year, health experts said.

A shortage of trained midwives, a high number of home deliveries, inadequate postnatal care, and limited access to specialised services for small and sick newborns remain major challenges, they added.

Experts stressed the importance of initiating care from the very beginning of pregnancy, increasing facility-based births attended by skilled health personnel, ensuring timely childcare, and raising community-level awareness to improve maternal and neonatal health.

Against this backdrop, Bangladesh, along with the rest of the world, is observing World Health Day today under the theme "Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures".

The day is being marked just days after the release of two UN reports, which said Bangladesh continues to face critical challenges in maternal and newborn care, with over 1,00,000 child deaths and 63,000 stillbirths reported annually.

The reports were published recently by the United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME).

One of the reports said Bangladesh records over 63,000 stillbirths annually - equivalent to one stillborn in every 41 births, highest in South Asia.

The other report said more than 1,00,000 children in Bangladesh die before the age of five, with nearly two-thirds of these deaths occurring within the first 28 days of being born.

Asked about the causes behind the high number of child deaths, Prof Iflat Ara Shamsad, former head of the Department of Paediatrics at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, pointed to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



'Committed to combat trafficking'

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment to combatting human trafficking and underscored the government's enhanced efforts to address the crime at both national and regional levels.

"Bangladesh has established a robust legal framework to hold traffickers accountable. Law enforcement agencies remain vigilant, border security has been strengthened, and awareness campaigns have been intensified to inform at-risk communities," he said.

The adviser made these remarks while speaking as the chief guest at the third meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Human

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

CRM

ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক-এর সকল শাখা ও ফাস্ট ট্র্যাকে বসানো হয়েছে

CRM-এ টাকা উত্তোলন ছাড়াও রিয়েল টাইমে টাকা জমা ও পাঠানো যায়

সকল লেনদেন সম্পূর্ণ ফ্রি

ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক
আপনার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী

Workers attack two

FROM PAGE 5
According to Industrial Police and EPZ sources, a total of 173 workers were recently dismissed from three factories – including Excelsior Shoes and JW Apparel – during the Eid holidays.

The terminated employees were reportedly paid four months' basic salary along with other benefits.

Unrest erupted following the dismissals, with workers blocking the main CEPZ road for over 30 minutes yesterday afternoon.

Mohammad Solaiman, superintendent of the Industrial Police, Chattogram range, said the unrest at Excelsior Shoes Ltd began around 8:30am when the terminated workers gathered at the factory gate.

Quoting witnesses, he said the protesters broke the main gate, stormed the premises, and began

attacking officials and staff. Security supervisor Mamun, who was injured in the attack, said 60 to 70 people, including the terminated workers, forcibly entered the compound and beat up guards and officials.

They also vandalised office equipment, including glass doors, window panes, and computers.

GM Mohiuddin told The Daily Star that 40 of the terminated workers had been dismissed following discussions with the CEPZ authority, on charges of inciting unrest and involvement in earlier clashes in January and February.

All dues were cleared prior to termination, he added.

Abdus Sobhan, executive director of CEPZ, said the situation was brought under control with assistance from law enforcement agencies by 2:30pm.

He'd still be alive had those in power cared

FROM PAGE 3
came forward to help. Not even the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation, which was established to support the wounded and families of those killed, alleged Ansar.

"I went to the July foundation in Dhaka twice from Patuakhali. The last time they mocked me, saying people like me show up with fake cases," said Ansar, weeping beside his son's freshly dug grave.

"He'd still be alive had those in power cared," he added.

Meanwhile, Hridoy suffered at their home in Jouta village of Baulal upazila. His vision worsened, fevers became frequent, and the pain from the remaining pellets intensified. On Wednesday, his condition deteriorated.

He succumbed to his injuries at the Baulal Upazila Health Complex on Friday.

Ansar said he sold his only battery-powered rickshaw and a cattle to take Hridoy to Dhaka for treatment. Doctors even recommended treatment abroad, which was beyond the family's means.

Only after his son's death did Ansar receive Tk 20,000 for funeral expenses from the assistant commissioner (land) of Baulal, along with a promise from the Patuakhali deputy commissioner to help him buy a new rickshaw.

Hridoy, the youngest of

four siblings, dropped out of school after class seven due to poverty. He worked occasionally in his village and Dhaka, where his elder brother Shohanul Islam Anis works as a carpenter.

Hridoy came to Anis's home in Jatrabari on July 13 and joined the protests.

"I told him not to go, fearing something might

happen. But he kept going without telling me," said Anis.

After being shot on July 18, Hridoy was treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where two of the three pellets were removed from his head. Doctors advised against removing the third due to a risk of fatal complications.

Although treatment at DMCH was free, the family struggled with associated costs. "We could only afford basic medicine from local pharmacies. Proper treatment might have



Parents of Hridoy mourn their son at their village home. PHOTO: STAR

Prime accused

FROM PAGE 5
former president of the local Swachhchasebak League and a defeated chairman candidate.

Zajira Police Station Officer in Charge Dulal Akand confirmed the arrests to The Daily Star, stating that seven individuals from both factions were taken into custody following the clash.

Meanwhile, a Rab team arrested the prime accused, Kuddus Bepari, from Dhaka.

Jalil is currently in Shariatpur district jail, while Kuddus was recently released on bail in a separate case. Both have multiple cases filed against them, including charges related to bomb explosions, assault, and murder,

according to the OC.

"The situation is currently under control," he added. "Police are actively conducting searches to ensure no explosives remain hidden. Legal action will be taken following a thorough investigation."

Law enforcement and intelligence teams are also investigating the source of the explosives and other materials used during the clash.

Superintendent of Rab 8, Mohammad Monir Hossain, confirmed Kuddus Bepari's arrest to The Daily Star.

He said the arrest was made around 1:00am in Dhaka's Mominbagh area during a joint operation conducted by Rab 8 and Rab-3.

Five killed in road

FROM PAGE 5
The deceased was identified as Abu Bakkar, 50, from Hajir Ali village in the upazila, said Jashore Kotwali Police Station OC Abul Hasnat.

In Gazipur, a pedestrian was killed after being hit by an unidentified vehicle

in the Asia Pump area of Tongi on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway around 10:00am yesterday.

The deceased is Arun Kumar Mallick, 75, from the Bara Deora area of Tongi, said Tongi West Police Station OC Iskander Habibur Rahman.

Sacked BDR members

FROM PAGE 3
is reinstatement with compensation," said Fazlur Rahman, a former subedar major.

"We sought a meeting with the BGB director general to submit our memorandum. Our five-member delegation tried to engage, but we had to hand over the memorandum through the gate to a BGB official via a senior police officer. Until we receive a clear response, our movement will continue," he added.

Afzalur Rahman, another expelled BDR member, said, "During the 2009 BDR mutiny, I was posted in Khagrachhari, far from Dhaka. Yet, I was

Committed to combat

FROM PAGE 3
Trafficking, held at a city hotel.

The adviser highlighted several recent initiatives, including a national action plan to combat human trafficking, a web-based national referral mechanism for victim support, and the establishment of dedicated tribunals to expedite the prosecution of trafficking cases.

He also noted the expansion of mutual legal assistance frameworks with BIMSTEC and other partner countries to boost regional cooperation.

"Traffickers continue to evolve, exploiting economic vulnerabilities and misusing technology. This

Committed to combat

FROM PAGE 3
Trafficking, held at a city hotel.

The adviser highlighted several recent initiatives, including a national action plan to combat human trafficking, a web-based national referral mechanism for victim support, and the establishment of dedicated tribunals to expedite the prosecution of trafficking cases.

He also noted the expansion of mutual legal assistance frameworks with BIMSTEC and other partner countries to boost regional cooperation.

"Traffickers continue to evolve, exploiting economic vulnerabilities and misusing technology. This

Nor'wester

FROM PAGE 5
by temperatures between 38 and 39.9 degrees Celsius. The bulletin also forecast rainfall in different areas over a 10 day period starting from 6:00pm yesterday.

It said rain or thunder showers accompanied by lightning and temporary gusty wind are likely during the first five days, with chances of continued rain or thunder showers in the following five days.

Referring to the bulletin, BMD meteorologist Md Shaheenul Islam said thunder showers, lightning, and gusty winds are typical features of Nor'westers.

Regarding the current heat, he said the country's weather is currently in the pre-monsoon season, which lasts from March to May.

High temperatures are normal during this time. He said global temperatures have been rising slightly each year, and Bangladesh is no exception.

Maternal, neonatal

FROM PAGE 3
several common factors.

"Although Bangladesh has made significant progress in reducing child mortality, we are still at risk," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

She identified common illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, typhoid, and other infectious diseases as major contributors to child deaths.

The main issue lies in the lack of awareness, she said.

"People need to be educated on the importance of breastfeeding and the introduction of supplementary foods after six months, which are readily available in our food system," she said.

Prof Iflat stressed the need for accessible healthcare for these common diseases to prevent further child mortality. She also emphasised the importance of care from conception to safe delivery for ensuring healthy babies.

One of the UN reports said home deliveries, which account for 30 percent of all births in the country, are a major contributor to high newborn mortality and stillbirth rates.

Many of these births occur without skilled medical assistance,

significantly increasing the risk of complications, it said.

Another major concern is the limited access to specialised care for sick newborns. Many rural areas lack adequate healthcare facilities, leaving newborns without essential medical attention.

The shortage of trained midwives also remains a critical issue.

To meet its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target, Bangladesh needs to save an additional 28,000 newborns each year, the report said.

Contacted, Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, said they have taken several plans to reduce newborn mortality and stillbirth rates.

He said they have taken steps to increase the number of midwives as the existing number is inadequate.

They were taking steps to increase facility-based delivery and better integration between health and family planning, he told The Daily Star over the phone.

"We are also working to increase SCANU [Special Care Newborn Unit] facilities and telemedicine service for early risk detection," he said.

Illegal sand mining

FROM PAGE 5
sand trader Nunu Mia are reportedly leading the operation, selling up to 100 truckloads of sand daily.

Residents of Chinitola expressed frustration over dust from sand-laden trucks, which covers their markets and homes. Despite repeated complaints, the issue remains unresolved.

Mintu Mia admitted that the operation is unauthorised but has continued for years with little opposition.

Melandah UNO SM Alamgir Hossain said illegal sand extraction is prohibited and legal action will be taken against those responsible.

In Bakshiganj, illegal sand and soil extraction from the Old Brahmaputra, Dashani, and Jinjaram rivers continues to wreak havoc, especially during the dry season when water levels drop. Syndicates extract sand using dredgers and remove topsoil from farmland to sell to brick kilns, significantly reducing soil fertility.

Locals reported that despite periodic crackdowns, the operations quickly resume, and the government receives no revenue from the illicit activity.

Bakshiganj residents demanded stricter enforcement of the law,

as occasional raids have proven ineffective. They said the authorities must take more substantial and regular action to halt the destructive activities that are causing long-term environmental damage.

In Jamalpur Sadar, sand traders have been lifting sand from the Brahmaputra river for years, increasing the risk of collapse of the vital Brahmaputra Bridge.

However, the administrations of Jamalpur and Sherpur remain indifferent.

In Sarishabari, influential locals have been extracting sand from the Jhenai river. Although the administration occasionally conducts drives and punishes sand lifters, the practice continues.

Deputy Commissioner Hasina Begum said drives are being conducted regularly in all upazilas from where sand is being lifted, and administrations have been asked to stop illegal sand lifting.

PRAYER TIMING
APRIL 7

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-40	12-45	4-45	6-21	7-45
JAMAAT 5-15	1-15	5-00	6-24	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Date: April 07, 2025

Save the Children

Save the Children is the world's leading, independent organisation for children

Invitation for Tender

Save the Children International (SCI) is hereby inviting request for proposal from the interested experienced bona fide vendors for Supplying ALP Book.

For details, please see the IFT schedules, which are available on <http://procurement.scibd.info/> under tender notification for free of cost. Downloaded copy is acceptable for tender participation.

SL	Name of IFT	Reference No.	Pre-Bid Meeting schedule	Last date of RFP Submission
1	ALP Book Printing	IFT/SC/CXB/F Y-25/(Manual)/02	Zoom Meeting: 13/04/2025 https://zoom.us/j/97819893529?pwd=BSJajKaOPamrCNuorDxRh5QCCESkA5.I	April 28, 2025, on or before 03:00 pm.

Special Instruction:

- All activities in connection with the said procurement of services will be guided as per the SCI's Procurement Policies.
- SCI reserves the right to accept or reject part/whole of any or all the application without assigning any reason.

Director - Procurement & Supply Chain

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা

নং সংস্থা/ব-৫৯/০৫-৭৩৮৮ তারিখ: ০৬ এপ্রিল ২০২৫

আবশ্যিক

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের RISE সেন্টারের "Intellectual Property Management of BUET" প্রকল্পে জরুরী ভিত্তিতে নিম্নবর্ণিত পদের ছয় মাসের জন্য সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে নিয়োগের জন্য যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের নিকট হতে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রম	পদের নাম	পদের ন্যূনতম যোগ্যতা	পদ সংখ্যা
১.	সহকারী প্রোগ্রামার সর্বস্বত্ব মাসিক বেতন: ৩৫,৬০০/- টাকা	(১) কেন্দ্রীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে তড়িৎ ও ইলেক্ট্রনিক কৌশল/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে কমপক্ষে বি.এসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিগ্রিধারী হতে হবে। (২) প্রার্থীর শিক্ষাজীবনে কোন পর্যায়ে তৃতীয় শ্রেণি/বিভাগ গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।	১ টি

অগ্রহণী প্রার্থীকে সাদা কাগজে নাম, পিতার নাম, মাতার নাম, ছদ্ম ও বর্তমান ঠিকানা, শিক্ষাপত্র যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা, জাতীয়তা, জন্ম তারিখ, মোবাইল নম্বর ইত্যাদি উল্লেখপূর্বক এবং NID-এর কপি, সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের দুইকপি ছবিসহ আবেদনপত্র পরিচালক, RISE সেন্টার, ইসিই ভবন, ৯ম তলা, বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১২০৫ বরাবর পৌঁছাতে হবে। নিয়োগ পরীক্ষার/সাক্ষাৎকারে উপস্থিত হওয়ার জন্য কোন প্রকার যাতায়াত বা সৈনিক ভাতা দেওয়া হবে না। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ ব্যতিরেকে এই নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়া অংশ/বাতিল/পদ সংখ্যা হ্রাস-পূঞ্জির ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়ার কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীগণকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।

উল্লিখিত পদের আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ: ২৭/০৪/২০২৫

উপবর্ণিত পদের বিজ্ঞপিত তথ্যের জন্য বুকেট ওয়েব সাইট (regoffice.buet.ac.bd)-Vacancy-এর Job circular page-এ Search করা অথবা রেজিস্ট্রার অফিসের সংশ্লিষ্ট শাখায় সরাসরি যোগাযোগ করা বাইতে পারে।

রেজিস্ট্রার

GD-824

Heat, low rainfall

FROM PAGE 5
budding as expected. Some are even dying due to the drought, said Shamim Ahmed Chowdhury, manager of Shirajnagar Tea Garden.

The drought has also created conditions for pest outbreaks, he said.

Nipen Pal, general secretary of the Bangladesh Tea Workers Union, said most gardens no longer maintain the recommended number of shade trees.

"Each acre should have 300-350 shade trees, but half the gardens lack even that. This not only lowers yield but also affects tea quality."

Experts from the Bangladesh Tea Board and the Bangladesh Tea Research Institute have warned that tea bushes thrive in temperatures between 20-25°C and can only tolerate up to 29°C without damage.

However, temperatures

in Moulvibazar have reached as high as 38-39°C this season.

"If there are enough shade trees, the microclimate under the canopy can allow the plant to tolerate up to 35°C," said Ismail Hossain, director of the Bangladesh Tea Research Center.

"But beyond that, photosynthesis is disrupted, and the plant's food production stops."

Dr Rafiqul Haque, director of the Tea Board's Project Development Unit, said, "We must focus on planting shade providing creepers and climate-resilient tea varieties. Water reservoirs in each garden and efficient irrigation systems are also essential."

With no signs of immediate rainfall, the future of the tea industry this season remains uncertain, and stakeholders are calling for urgent measures to prevent further losses, he added.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
Company Matter No. 471 of 2025

Hersa Imam, Managing Director of Remedial Limited, Flat-A10, House-60, Road-11A (New), Dhanmondi, R/A, Dhaka-1209. ----- Petitioner

-VERSUS-

The Register of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, TCB Bhaban (6th Floor) Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215. ----- Respondent

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that the above named petitioner has filed an application under section 81(2) of the read with section 85(3) and section 396 of The Companies Act, 1994 before the Company Bench of the High Court Division of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of Bangladesh with a prayer of condoning the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of Remedial Limited for the calendar year 2023-2024. After preliminary hearing on 17.03.2025, his lordship Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel presiding over the said Hon'ble Court, was pleased to admit the application. Any person interested in the application may appear before the Hon'ble court either in person or through and Advocate and contest the matter. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of requisite costs.

(BM Mamun-or Rashid)
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Chamber: Md. Zafarullah Chowdhury & Associates
52/1, Hasan Holdings, 9th Floor, New Eskaton Road, Dhaka.

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি
POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212 www.powergrid.gov.bd
স্মারক নং- ২৭.২২.১৫৩৭.৬৭৮.০৬.০৩৯.২৫.২৯৫ তারিখঃ ২৭/০৩/২০২৫খ্রিঃ

e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

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

ID	Reference	Title of Works	Closing Date and Time
1094740	27.21.0000.684.07.001.25.293, Date: 27/03/2025	Muffling of Tower No-787, 790, 799, 800, 808, 810, 816, 818A, 822 of Modunaghat-Hathazari 132 kV Transmission Line and Painting of Tower No- 12, 13, 16 of Modunaghat-Shikalbaha 132 kV Transmission Line.	13 Apr 2025 at 14:30
1094103	27.21.0000.684.07.001.25.289, Date: 25/03/2025	Painting of Tower No-10, 11, 12, 13 of Dohazari-Coxsbazar 132 kV Transmission Line and Muffling of Leg of Tower No-3, 18, 85, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94 of Dohazari-Shikalbaha 132 kV Transmission Line & Tower No- 122 of Dohazari-Coxsbazar 132 kV Transmission Line of Dohazari 132/33 kV Grid Substation under Power Grid Bangladesh, GMD, Chattogram-South.	13 Apr 2025 at 14:00

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

নুরউদ্দীন মোহাম্মদ স্বরহাদ স্টেশনারী
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, জিএমডি, চট্টগ্রাম (দক্ষিণ)

Prime accused among 8 held over AL factional clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

Eight individuals, including the prime accused, have been arrested in connection with Sunday's violent clash between two factions of the Awami League in Zajira upazila of Shariatpur. The clash saw the detonation of over a hundred locally-made crude bombs.

The arrests were made in separate operations carried out yesterday by members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and the police.

Sub-Inspector Sanjoy Kumar Das of Zajira Police Station filed a case under the Explosive Substances Act, naming 88 individuals and accusing 800 to 1,000 unidentified people.

The clash broke out on Sunday morning in Mulai Bepari Kandi and Durbadanga areas of Bilaspur union, between supporters of Bilaspur Union Parishad Chairman Kuddus Bepari and defeated chairman candidate Jalil Madbor.

Law enforcement personnel have been deployed in the area since the incident to maintain law and order.

Kuddus, the main accused in the case, is a member of the Zajira upazila unit of the Awami League and the current chairman of Bilaspur Union Parishad. Jalil Madbor is the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Despite multiple government crackdowns, illegal sand extraction continues from Jamalpur rivers, posing serious threats to the riverbanks and causing irreversible damage to the environment. Inset, in Madarganj, locals staged a human chain and protest rally on March 9 against the illegal activities.

PHOTO: STAR

UNREST AT CEPZ

Workers attack two factories, 15 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 15 people, including three senior executives, were injured after agitated workers launched an attack and vandalised the office of a shoe factory at the Chattogram Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) yesterday morning, protesting the termination of several employees.

The incident occurred at Excelsior Shoes Limited, where eight of the injured were later admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

The injured are General Manager Mohiuddin Ahmad, Quality Control Manager Kamrul Hasan, HR Manager Shakil Ahmed, senior guards Md Babul and Abdul Hakim, security guard Saimul Islam, security supervisor Mamun Ur Rashid, and a worker named Biplob.

Later in the day, terminated workers also staged demonstrations at JW Apparel, another factory within CEPZ, where they reportedly assaulted two to three officials and guards.

Production at both factories was suspended following the incidents, said CEPZ Executive Director Abdus Sobhan.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Illegal sand mining ravages Jamalpur

Defying crackdowns, syndicates continue activities

SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB, Jamalpur

Illegal sand extraction continues unabated in Jamalpur's Madarganj, Melandah, Sarishabari, Bakshiganj, and Jamalpur Sadar upazilas, posing serious threats to farmland, riverbanks, bridges, residences, and local communities.

Despite multiple government crackdowns, syndicates continue to operate without fear of punishment, causing irreversible damage to the environment and livelihoods.

In Madarganj's Hatmagura village, locals staged a human chain and protest rally on March 9 against the illegal extraction of sand from fertile, three-crop farmlands using dredger machines.

Protesters alleged that BNP leader Mojibur Rahman and Awami League leader Mostafizur Rahman are involved in the sand extraction, destroying hundreds of acres of



agricultural land. Farmers have demanded immediate intervention from the authorities.

Mojibur Rahman denied the allegations, claiming that he legally

purchased the land and is extracting sand for road construction.

Madarganj Assistant Commissioner (Land) Sayeda Khanom Liza said despite repeated drives to stop sand extraction, it cannot be fully prevented. The relentless extraction is endangering the region's agricultural resources.

In Melandah upazila, unregulated sand mining from the Madardah river poses a severe threat to nearby bridges, homes, and farmlands.

Locals alleged that traders continue extracting sand using excavators, disregarding prohibitions on such practices. BNP leader Farhad Hossain Mintu and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Five killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Five people were killed in road accidents in Sirajganj, Gazipur, and Jashore during Saturday night and yesterday.

In Sirajganj, at least three people were killed, and four others injured when a truck collided with a three-wheeler at Bhuiyagati in Raiganj upazila on Dhaka-Bogura highway, on Saturday night.

The deceased have been identified as Shushanto Kumar Das, 55, of Ghurka village; Md Mirajul Islam, 12, of Degholbari village in Ullapara upazila; and Motaleb Hossain, 30, of Raiganj upazila in Sirajganj.

Officer-in-charge of Hatikumrul Highway Police Station, Md Abdur Rouf said that a three-wheeler carrying 7-8 people, traveling from Bhuiyagati to Ghurka, was hit by a Bogura-bound truck near the Palli Biddut sub-station around 8:30pm.

Three people died on the spot while four others were injured, the OC said.

Vehicle movement on Dhaka-Bogura highway got suspended for a while following the accident.

In Jashore Sadar upazila, a hotelier was killed after being hit by a motorcycle in Bagerhat Bazar, on Saturday night.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Nor'wester likely in next few days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid ongoing heat making life difficult in Dhaka and other parts of the country, rain showers are expected to bring some respite over the next few days.

Meanwhile, there is also a possibility of nor'westers hitting parts of the country during this period.

Yesterday, the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) recorded the highest temperature in the country at 38 degrees Celsius in Baghabari, Sirajganj -- reaching the threshold of a moderate heat wave.

In Dhaka, the maximum temperature was 36.1 degrees Celsius.

In its bulletin yesterday evening, BMD reported that a mild to moderate heat wave was sweeping over several districts, including Dhaka, Rajshahi, Pabna, Sirajganj, Moulvibazar, Rangamati, Feni, Jashore, and Chuadanga. The heat wave may persist in the coming days.

According to BMD, a mild heat wave occurs when temperatures range from 36 to 37.9 degrees Celsius, while a moderate heat wave is defined

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Children bathe in the Kirtankhola to beat the summer heat. They clamber onto each other's shoulders and then jump into the water to turn the activity into a type of gymnastic game. The photo was taken in the Rasulpur area of Barishal city yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

BCS EXAMS

'Fix overlap of schedules'

Candidates protest in front of PSC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Candidates of the 44th to 47th Bangladesh Civil Service exams yesterday demanded that the Public Service Commission immediately publish a specific time-bound roadmap to conclude the long-stalled recruitment processes.

They held an hour-long sit-in protest in front of the PSC office in Dhaka's Agargaon area. Later, three representatives from each batch submitted a memorandum to the PSC chairman, outlining their concerns and proposals.

In the memorandum, the candidates said many were forced to sit for the 44th, 45th, and 46th BCS exams due to poor scheduling and overlapping timelines.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Heat, low rainfall threaten tea yields

MINTU DESHWARA

Tea production in the country has been severely affected by the ongoing heatwave and drought, which have persisted since the end of Chaitra.

Tea gardens are reporting significant losses as new buds fail to sprout and newly planted tea saplings wither under the scorching sun.

Industry insiders fear that if the current conditions persist, the sector may fall short of this year's production target, continuing the trend from last year when the industry also failed to meet its target due to issues like load shedding.

Md Anisur Rahman, in charge of the Sreemangal Meteorological Observatory, said the region typically receives 15-20mm of rain during this time of year.

"Last March, we had 48mm. This year, only 4mm was recorded. There's been virtually no rainfall in the last five months."

According to the Bangladesh Tea Board, Bangladesh has 167 tea estates, of which 92 are located in Moulvibazar

district alone. The Bangladesh Tea Board set the production target for 2025 at 102 million kilogrammes. However, only 3,64,000kg of tea was produced in January, a figure far below expectations.

According to estate officials, extreme heat and lack of rainfall have dried up many tea hills. Around 40 percent of



newly planted saplings and 10 percent of mature tea bushes have already been damaged. In many gardens, workers are struggling to maintain plantations through limited irrigation due to lack of water sources.

Now is the crucial time for plucking tea leaves, but the bushes are not

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh				
Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)				
Plot # E-5/A, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-E- Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.				
Web: www.btrc.gov.bd				
Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI)				
For the Selection of Consulting / Audit Firm				
For Conducting Operator's Procedure and Systems Audit of Grameenphone Limited				
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH				
1. Ministry/Division	Posts and Telecommunications Division, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology			
2. Agency	Autonomous Bodies and Other Institutions			
3. Name of Procuring Entity	Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)			
4. Procuring Entity Code	Not applicable			
5. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
6. Expression of Interest for Selection of	Consulting/ Audit Firm (Lump - sum)			
7. EOI Ref. No.	14.32.0000.400.01.007.24.431			
8. Date	27/03/2025			
KEY INFORMATION				
9. Procurement Method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)			
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10. Budget and Source of funds	Revenue Budget (Own Funds)			
11. Development Partner (if applicable)	Not applicable			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12. Project/Programme Code (if applicable)	Not applicable			
13. Project/Programme Name (if applicable)	Not applicable			
14. EOI Closing Date and time	29/04/2025 (12.00 P.M) Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT+6)			
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT				
15. Brief Description of the Assignment	Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (hereinafter referred to as the 'Commission' or 'BTRC') intends to appoint a Consulting/an Audit Firm for conducting Operator's Procedure and Systems Audit of Grameenphone Limited. The scope includes performing the auditing tasks in the following categories: 1) Regulatory and Legal Matters 2) Technical Matters 3) Financial Matters 4) Any Other Matters The details of the scope of work are mentioned in the Terms of References (TOR).			
16. Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity Required	The lead firm (Audit Firm) must be a competent ICAB member with sufficient and high-scale auditing experience. Additionally, the lead firm and/or any of its Joint Venture, Consortium or Association (JVCA) partners must have sufficient technical and information system auditing experience in multinational telecom/IT firms. The lead firm is encouraged to associate with foreign audit firm(s) with sufficient information system (technical) audit experience in multinational environment. The details of the experience, resource and delivery required are mentioned in the TOR. Detailed TOR and other relevant information are available at WEB LINK (https://btrc.gov.bd).			
17. Other Details (if applicable)	The formation, operation and obligation of JVCA shall be governed by the Rule-54 of Public Procurement Rules-2008 of Bangladesh.			
18. Association with foreign firms is	Encouraged			
Ref. No.	Phasing of Services	Location	Indicative Start Date (Month/Year)	Indicative Completion Date (Month/Year)
19 -	Not applicable	Dhaka	07/2025	12/2025
20. Name of the Official Inviting EOI	M. A. Taleb Hossain			
21. Designation of the Official Inviting EOI	Director, Administration Division, BTRC			
22. Address of the Official Inviting EOI	Plot # E-5/A, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-E- Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.			
23. Contact Details of the Official Inviting EOI	Tel: +8802222217116 Email: diradmin@btrc.gov.bd/taleb_hossain@btrc.gov.bd			
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all EOIs.				

(M. A. Taleb Hossain)
Director
Administration Division, BTRC
Phone: +8802222217116
e-mail: diradmin@btrc.gov.bd

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Exhibition:
'Journey of the
Roots'

Gunoboti presents *Journey of the Roots*, an experiential installation exhibition celebrating traditional Bangladeshi craftsmanship through a modern lens. Showcasing *Rannaghorer Onushongo*, a curated bamboo kitchenware line, the event blends cultural heritage with contemporary design, offering visitors a sensory journey into artisanal innovation and functional artistry.

DATE: FRIDAY-SUNDAY | APRIL 11-13

TIME: 5:30PM ONWARDS

VENUE: ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA, DHANMONDI



I chase characters that break the mould: Tama Mirza talks 'Daagi'

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Tama Mirza is currently basking in the success of her latest film, *Daagi*. Since its release during Eid, she has been visiting various theatres and receiving widespread acclaim from audiences. Reflecting on this positive reception, Tama shared with The Daily Star, "The audience has wholeheartedly embraced *Daagi*. Their love and appreciation mean the world to us."

She added that tickets were sold out till last Sunday, highlighting the film's popularity. "We've been experiencing full houses, and the enthusiasm from viewers is truly overwhelming," she added.

Tama, along with co-star Afran Nisho, has attended multiple screenings, directly engaging with fans. She recounted, "Every time I visited the theatres with Nisho *bhai*, we've been met with immense love. Hearing audiences praise *Daagi* repeatedly is incredibly gratifying."

In *Daagi*, Tama portrays the character Jarin, while Nisho plays Nishan. The chemistry between their characters has struck a chord with viewers. "Hearing the audience chant 'Nishan-Jarin' during screenings has been heartwarming. It indicates that our pairing has been well received, especially following our collaboration in *Surongo*," Tama expressed.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Addressing the film's suitability for family viewing, Tama emphasised, "*Daagi* is indeed a family-friendly movie. We've always maintained that from the beginning, and the audience's response has affirmed it. People of all ages, from youngsters to the elderly, are coming to watch and enjoy it."

The actress has seen *Daagi* multiple times in theatres while cherishing the live reactions. "Experiencing the audience's excitement firsthand is unparalleled. Personally, I hold *Daagi* in high regard," she remarked.

Moreover, Tama mentioned that director Shihab Shaheen and fellow actress Mithu have lauded her performance, considering it her best to date. Expressing gratitude, Tama said, "Hearing such praise from Shihab *bhai* and Mithu *apa* is humbling. I'm thankful for their support and belief in me."

She attributes the film's success to its compelling narrative, music, and meticulous direction. "The audience's acceptance of our story and execution validates our hard work. It's fulfilling to see our efforts resonate widely," Tama noted.

Looking ahead, Tama aspires to take on diverse roles that leave a lasting impression. She explained, "I aim to prioritise scripts that offer distinct, mould-breaking characters, to ensure my performances stand out. I hope to undertake more unconventional roles in the future."

Reflecting on her role as Jarin in *Daagi*, Tama considers it a fortunate opportunity. "Such roles are rare, and I'm grateful for the audience's appreciation. It's a significant milestone in my career," she concluded.

For now, Tama remains immersed in the world of *Daagi*, savouring the journey it has offered.

Amadou Bagayoko of Amadou & Mariam passes away at 70



Amadou Bagayoko, the celebrated Malian guitarist and one half of the Grammy-nominated musical duo Amadou & Mariam, has died at 70 due to an illness, his family confirmed.

Alongside his wife Mariam

Doumbia, Amadou gained global acclaim for fusing Malian music with rock and blues, selling millions of records.

The blind couple met in 1976 at a Bamako school for the visually impaired and began performing together in the 1980s.

Their 2004 album *Dimanche à Bamako* brought international fame. They composed the 2006 World Cup anthem and performed at the 2024 Paris Olympics closing ceremony.

Amadou & Mariam collaborated with artists like Damon Albarn and David Gilmour, and performed for Barack Obama.

He is survived by Mariam and their three children.

Ed Sheeran drops Persian-inspired single 'Azizam'



Ed Sheeran recently released *Azizam*, the first single from his upcoming eighth studio album, *Play*. Produced by Ilyah Salmanzadeh—renowned for his work with Ariana Grande and Charli XCX—the track draws on Persian musical influences, with the title meaning "my dear" in Persian.

The musician revealed the idea originated from Salmanzadeh's suggestion to explore his Persian roots. A video titled *Pink Heart*, featuring footage from Sheeran's US promotional tour, accompanied the song release, while an official music video is expected soon.

Speaking on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* in March, the four-time Grammy winner said *Play* is part of a 10-album concept he envisioned at 18.

'Shobar Agey Bangladesh' announces nationwide 'Swadhinata Concert'

Shobar Agey Bangladesh Foundation is set to host simultaneous *Swadhinata Concerts* on April 11 across four cities—Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, and Bogura. The concerts will take place from 3pm to 11pm at key locations, including Manik Mia Avenue in Dhaka, MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram, and Khulna Stadium.

Artists performing at the Dhaka concert include James, Feedback, Shironamhin, Powersurge, Aftermath, Pritom, Xefar, Porshi, Ferdous Wahid,



Mila, Agun, Haider Hossain, Animesh Roy, Sohan Ali, Abrar Shahriar, Mahtim

Shakib, Selim Chowdhury, Aleya Begum, and Miltah Zaman, among others.

The Chattogram venue will feature performances by Miles, Souls, Ark, Lalon, Ashes, Subconscious, Bay of Bengal, Teerondaz, Metrical, Kiran Das, Natai, Emran, Konal, Chishti Baul, Tasnim Anika, Salma, Rayhan, Shubhro, Moushumi, Ethun Babu, Rituraj, and others.

In Bogura, the concert will include Artcell, AvoidRafa, Different Touch,

Mizan, MNB, Vikings, Baghdhara, Hridoy Khan, Baby Naznin, Khurshid Alam, Kanak Chapa, Alam Ara Minu, Kornia, Yamik, Luipa, KZ Rabbi, Muttaki Hasib, Rajib, and Mahin, among others.

The Khulna concert will see performances by Warfaze, Arbivirus, Shonar Bangla Circus, Carnival, Bangla Five, Kure Ghar, Biborton, Asif Akbar, Balam, Tahsan Khan, Monir Khan, Kona, Nasir, Joy Shahriar, Tuntun Babul, Rukhsar Rahman, Liza, and Palash.

NEWS

Beginning of new investment narrative

FROM PAGE 12

bureaucratic and uncertain to modern, structured, and welcoming.

The BIDA chairman said, "We are not here to promise \$10 billion in investments overnight. What we are doing instead is laying the groundwork—building institutions, fixing fundamentals, and sending the right signals to serious investors."

He underscored the importance of continuous political support in maintaining investor confidence.

"Investors need to be assured that policies won't be reversed after elections. That's why we have engaged with all major political parties, including the BNP, NCP, and Jamaat e-Islami. They have assured us of their support for investment continuity."

The BIDA has formed dedicated committees with the parties to keep investment issues bipartisan and ensure long-term reform momentum.

Unlike traditional conferences, the Investment Summit will feature immersive field activities, including visits to the National Economic Zone in Mirsarai, Chattogram, and the Japanese Economic Zone in Araihaazar, Narayanganj, direct engagement with factory operators and sector-focused breakout sessions.

"This is not about sitting in air-conditioned rooms. Delegates will walk the sites, talk to real businesses and get a real sense of Bangladesh's capabilities."

More than 700 participants from more than 40 countries are expected, including institutional investors, international development partners, and non-resident Bangladeshis.

Among the attendees are Oscar Garcia Maceiras, the chief executive officer of Inditex; Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, group chairman and CEO of DP World; Kyeongsu Lee, vice-president of Samsung Construction and Trading Corporation; Jon Omund Revhaug, executive vice-president and head of Telenor Asia; and Han Jun-seok, CEO of Giordano Korea.

"Some companies attending have combined GDPs larger than Bangladesh's," said Ashik.

Baroness Rosie Winterton of Doncaster, DBE, the UK's trade envoy to Bangladesh; Jarno Syrjala, under-secretary of state for international trade at the ministry for foreign affairs of Finland; and Mike Orgill, senior director of public policy and government relations of Uber's APAC region are also expected.

The BIDA chairman acknowledged that Bangladesh still has work to do to improve the ease of doing business,

particularly in energy supply and policy coordination.

"Energy supply is stabilising. LNG payment delays have been addressed and long-term gas contracts will ease pressure from 2026 onwards. We must guarantee pipeline gas for industrial use—you can't run factories on stove pressure."

He also stressed the need to improve investor tracking.

"We need a pipeline of serious investors—30, 50, even 100 companies—and a follow-up mechanism. Right now, we don't have that basic foundation."

The BIDA plans to build a real-time investment tracking system post-summit to monitor interest, engagement, and progress.

In terms of data transparency, Ashik admitted that current FDI figures often include reinvested earnings and working capital loans.

"We are reviewing this. What matters is fresh, high-quality capital. Revised investment numbers will be published by mid-April."

The summit will end with a cultural showcase, highlighting Bangladesh through the lens of its artists, musicians, and creators.

"This is not just an event—it's the beginning of a new investment narrative for Bangladesh."

Shakib under investigation

FROM PAGE 12

crab traders, corruption in cricket, and concealing assets in his election affidavit.

At the time of the political upheaval that led to the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, Shakib was playing in the Global Cricket League in Canada. He has not returned to Bangladesh since and is currently residing in the United States with his wife and children.

ACC ON TULIP

ACC Chairman Momen addressed recent media reports concerning a letter from the legal team of Tulip Siddiq, the former UK Anti-Corruption minister who recently resigned amid controversies over her links to her aunt, Sheikh Hasina, and the origins of a number of properties in London used by her.

Momen clarified that while legal representation is a common right, charges of corruption are non-compoundable and must be dealt with through the courts.

"Letters exchanged between legal teams cannot replace proper legal proceedings," he said.

Tulip had earlier told Sky News that she was unaware of any formal charges and had not been contacted by the ACC.

According to Momen, the ACC has gathered extensive documentary evidence and has already prepared a full charge sheet after detailed scrutiny.

"The case has been submitted to court. If she fails to appear after a warrant is issued, she will be treated as a fugitive."

"This is not only about Tulip Siddiq. The same legal process will apply to all absconders, including Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Rehana, Sajeb Wazed Joy, Saima Wazed Putul, Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby, and Azmina Siddiq."

HASAN, WIFE SUE
In a separate move, the ACC has filed separate cases against former foreign minister Hasan Mahmud and his wife, Nuran Fatema, for illegally amassing wealth.

Investigators revealed that Hasan was involved in suspicious transactions amounting to Tk 39.76 crore through nine bank accounts. His wife allegedly carried out transactions worth Tk 683.15 crore across 56 accounts.

60 lakh new voters added

FROM PAGE 12

The revisions were carried out via door-to-door surveys in 2009-2010, 2012-2013, 2015-2016, 2017-2018, 2019-2020 and 2022-2023.

To register as a new voter, applicants must provide the data collectors with: the online birth certificate, the nationality/citizenship certificate and a photocopy of a family member's NID.

Applicants may also need to submit copies of their SSC/Dakhil/equivalent certificates or Class 8 certificates (if applicable), along with utility bills (such as electricity, gas, water bills, or holding tax receipts).

The EC has urged applicants to be careful during the registration

process. The names of the applicant and their parents must match with those on the birth or educational certificates and the date of birth must correspond to that on either the birth certificate or educational certificate.

The permanent address must be accurate and match the applicant's actual residence.

The EC emphasises that dual registration or being listed as a voter more than once is strictly prohibited.

Meanwhile, the Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday said that all election-related activities, including updating of the NID and the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies, were progressing well.

4-yr-old raped

FROM PAGE 2

Brahmanbaria Chief Judicial Magistrate Court's Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Mejbah Uddin Bhuiyan passed the order after police produced Abdul Karim, 42, imam of a local mosque, said Court Inspector Md Habibullah Sarkar.

Bancharampur Model Police Station OC Morshedul Alam Chowdhury said Abdul was arrested around 9:30pm on Friday in Tatuakandi village under Dariyadaulot union.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said the girl used to go to a local mosque for Quran lessons. On the morning of April 1, after other students went home, Imam Abdul took her to a room and raped her and threatened her with murder so that she didn't tell anyone. However, when the girl went home, she informed her family.

The victim's mother filed a case with Bancharampur Model Police Station on Friday. Police arrested the accused the same night.

We hope India

FROM PAGE 12

provisions of this law and found that it attempts to curtail the rights of India's minority Muslims and discriminate against them.

He expressed concern that the law, which goes against the traditions, rights, and interests of some 20 crore Muslims—about 14 percent of India's population—creates ample scope for misuse.

"It could lead to disastrous consequences in the management of Islamic religious institutions."

He said some 10 lakh acres of property are under Waqf Boards in India, and most of the lands are used for public welfare purposes such as mosques, madrasas, graveyards, and orphanages.

The inclusion of non-Muslim members in the governing boards

under the new law has sparked controversy and could infringe upon the constitutional rights of Muslim citizens, he added.

"We [BNP] believe that it is not appropriate to take any such step at the state level, as it may lead to the fear of destroying communal harmony due to interference in the religious rights of Muslims and discriminatory behaviour."

He also said giving non-Muslims the authority over the administration and management of these religious properties is tantamount to direct interference in the religious rights of Muslim citizens.

BNP Chairperson's advisory council member Ismail Zabihullah and its law affairs secretary Kaiser Kamal were also present at the press conference.

'Bombs were planted in Aynagar'

FROM PAGE 12

"When we unknowingly entered one centre, we found bombs had been planted there—some fitted with timers. It appears there was an apparent attempt to assassinate those who were conducting the investigation," he said.

"As the prosecution has yet to bring these findings to light, many may assume that no real investigation has taken place. However, once formal charges are submitted, people will begin to understand the extent of what has been uncovered," he added.

When asked about the locations and whether suspects involved in the bomb planting had been identified, Tajul declined to comment further.

He also said they have received draft probe reports of three cases—killings in Chankharpool and Ashulia, and another involving command responsibility allegations against Sheikh Hasina—and hope to submit formal charges for two of them within this month.

Meanwhile, the tribunal yesterday approved petitions to interrogate Constable Nasirul Islam, accused of killing seven people in Chankharpool,

and Nayek Sohel Mia, accused of throwing Shaikh Ashabul Yamin from an APC in Savar. Interrogations will be held on April 10 and 13, respectively.

It also extended the deadlines for submitting investigation reports on crimes against humanity committed during the uprising in Jatrabari and Farmgate to June 6 and July 6, respectively.

The three-member bench, led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, approved the extensions following prosecution requests. The previous deadline expired yesterday.

Explaining the need for more time in the Jatrabari case, Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim said the crime scene spans over three kilometres, with hundreds killed.

Gazi highlighted the killing of Imam Hasan Taim, a college student and son of a sub-inspector, who was shot at point-blank range by police. Statements from witnesses, including Taim's friend who took wounded Taim away from the spot, have been recorded.

Tajul said that a three-month extension was sought for the investigation into the killing of Golam

Nafiz, a student of Banani Bidyaniketan School and College. Nafiz gained national attention through iconic images showing him draped in the national flag on a rickshaw after he was shot by police in the Farmgate area.

Nafiz was taken by rickshaw to three different hospitals, none of which provided him with treatment. Tajul added that at one point, there was an attempt to burn him alive and dispose of his body in a manhole.

The tribunal issued arrest warrants for three individuals in connection with the incident, but they remain at large, Tajul said.

He later told journalists that the tribunal received 38 formal complaints and gathered hundreds of video clips and over 150 witness statements over the incidents in Jatrabari. Due to the scale of the case, more time is needed.

The chief prosecutor also said disinformation campaigns, and efforts to derail or discredit the tribunal were ongoing. The investigation agency and prosecution identified many involved in these campaigns. "No scandal or smear campaign will obstruct justice," he said.



This handout photograph taken and released by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine yesterday shows firefighters extinguishing a fire in a residential building following an air strike in Kupiansk, Kharkiv region. PHOTO: AFP

NUKE DEAL Iran rejects US's direct talks offer

AFP, Tehran Iran's top diplomat has dismissed direct negotiations with the United States as pointless over nuclear talks, his office said yesterday. Trump sent a letter to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last month calling for negotiations but warning of military action if diplomacy failed. On Thursday, the Trump said he favoured "direct talks", arguing they were "faster" and offered a better understanding. But Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said direct talks made no sense with a country "that constantly threatens to resort to force in violation of the UN Charter". "We remain committed to diplomacy and are ready to try the path of indirect negotiations," he said. "Iran keeps itself prepared for all possible or probable events, and just as it is serious in diplomacy and negotiations, it will also be decisive and serious in defending its national interests and sovereignty."

Indian PM hails close Lanka ties

AFP, Colombo India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Sri Lanka's sacred Buddhist tree yesterday before wrapping up a state visit during which he secured defence and energy deals. Modi offered flowers to the Sri Maha Bodhi, an object of worship and a symbol of sovereignty for the Buddhist-majority island, in the pilgrim city of Anuradhapura. The tightly guarded fig tree is believed to have grown from a sapling of the tree in India under which the Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment over 2,500 years ago. The Hindu-nationalist Indian premier also worshipped and offered robes to the tree during a previous visit in 2015, underscoring its religious and cultural importance to both nations. The tree, botanical name ficus religiosa, is worshipped daily by thousands as a symbol of the "living Buddha", its branches propped up by gold-plated iron supports. The tree is guarded around the clock by monks, police, and armed troops. "This visit has reaffirmed the deep cultural, spiritual and civilisational ties between our two nations," Modi said on social media, before returning to India. On Saturday, Modi and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake oversaw the signing of seven agreements, including on defence and energy. Dissanayake rolled out the red carpet for Modi and announced on him the country's highest civilian honour for "the deep personal friendship" shown to Sri Lanka. Modi's visit is seen as a strategic move to counter rival China's growing influence in the region.



We simply cannot cling on to old sentiments when the world is turning this fast... The world as we knew it has gone. Old assumptions can no longer be taken for granted. Keir Starmer British PM laments a 'new world' governed by 'deals and alliances' rather than rules

Kyiv missile attack kills 2

Zelensky urges more 'pressure' on Moscow; next Russia-US contact could be 'next week'

AFP, Kyiv President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday warned that Moscow is increasing its aerial bombardment after Russia mounted a "massive" missile and drone attack on Ukraine overnight, killing two people and wounding at least seven. Zelensky said the attack proved that "the pressure on Russia is still insufficient". Meanwhile, Russia claimed the capture of a village in Ukraine's Sumy region in a rare cross-border advance. Early yesterday, Russia "launched a massive nationwide attack on Ukraine using ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones," said first deputy prime minister Yulia Svyrydenko. In the capital Kyiv, explosions were heard overnight, and a dark plume of smoke rose up from the city early Sunday morning, AFP journalists saw. "Preliminarily, one person was killed, and three were wounded, two of them were hospitalised," the head

of the city's military administration, Tymur Tkachenko, wrote on social media. City mayor Vitali Klitschko said that "the body of a man killed in an enemy attack was discovered in Darnytsia district. He was on the street, near the epicentre of the explosion. The man's identity is being established." A missile strike partially destroyed a building housing state foreign-language broadcasters, the Russian-language Freedom television channel reported, saying that its newsroom had been destroyed. Emergency services said that during attacks, fires broke out in

non-residential buildings in Kyiv, damaging a multi-storey business centre, furniture factory and warehouses. In the nearby Kyiv region a man was burnt when an attack sparked a house fire, the head of the military administration said. Overnight, Russia attacked Ukraine with 23 cruise and ballistic missiles and 109 drones, the Ukrainian air force said, causing damage to six regions. The air force said it shot down 13 of the missiles and 40 drones while 54 others caused no damage. The latest attacks came two days after a missile attack on the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rig killed 18 people including nine children on Friday evening. The UN's high commissioner for human rights, Volker Turk, yesterday denounced Russia's "reckless disregard" for human life in using "an explosive weapon with wide area effects". Russia said it had struck a central artillery base and enterprises involved in producing drones and hit its targets.



Students go on strike across Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1 According to Wafa news agency, the official news agency of the Palestinians, the call for today's strike was made, protesting the horrific massacres and crimes committed by Israeli forces. These include the killing of civilians, particularly children and women, and the widespread destruction aimed at displacing Palestinians from their homes. A press release signed by Mohammad Rofiqul Islam, director of DU's Public Relations Office, said classes and exams would remain suspended today and university offices would be closed from 9:00am to 11:00am. A revised exam schedule will be announced later. At least 12 DU departments, along with the Faculties of Law and Fine Arts and the Institute of Education and Research (IER), issued separate statements suspending

academic activities in solidarity with the plight of the Palestinians. Meanwhile, DU students under the banner Azad Palestine marched on campus around 7:30pm yesterday and held a gayebana janaza (funeral prayer in absentia) for Gaza's victims near TSC. The group also announced it will march to the US Embassy on Tuesday. RU authorities, in a statement, condemned the violence in Gaza and urged the international community to act urgently. "As an academic institution committed to peace, justice, and human dignity, we call for immediate and effective steps to end the barbaric violence and protect civilians," the statement reads. RU also announced upcoming protest programmes. Students from several universities also joined the strike, including BRAC

University, Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET), University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), Begum Rokeya University, Daffodil International University (DIU), Green University, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), Khulna University, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET), Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST), and Noakhali Science and Technology University, among others. People also expressed their solidarity on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X, demanding an end to the violence, sharing updates on the situation in Gaza and calling for global pressure on Israel. Political parties also announced solidarity programmes.

Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) described Israeli actions in Gaza and Rafah as "barbaric genocide". The JCD announced a separate protest programme for tomorrow. JCD activists will stage a silent protest at 10:30am in front of educational institutions covering their mouths with black cloths. Marches from all institutions will follow at noon, culminating in protest rallies. Sarjis Alam, chief organiser (North) of the National Citizen Party (NCP), posted on Facebook urging people to take to the streets. "As humans and as Muslims, it's not enough to condemn. Students across the country, regardless of their political affiliations, must unite against the Israeli killers," he wrote. Meghmallar Bosu, president of a faction of Dhaka University unit of Bangladesh Chhatra

Union, posted a video urging students to join the strike by skipping classes and keeping campuses shut. "We declare full and active support for the Global Strike called in protest against the Israeli genocide in Gaza. Nationwide demonstrations will be held tomorrow [Monday]," said Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim, ameer of Islami Andolon Bangladesh, in a statement. Hefazat-e-Islam also urged the public to join the strike tomorrow after Zuhr prayers. Meanwhile, the Dhaka South unit of Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Ulama Mashayekh Aimma Parishad announced a protest procession in the afternoon in response to the Gaza killings. According to Al Jazeera, Israeli strikes have killed at least 46 Palestinians in the past 24 hours alone.

Anti-Trump rallies rock US

FROM PAGE 1 In Los Angeles, a woman dressed as a character from dystopian novel "The Handmaid's Tale" waved a large flag with the message: "Get out of my uterus," a reference to Trump's anti-abortion policies. In Denver, Colorado, one man in a large crowd of protesters held up a placard reading "No king for USA." The rallies even extended to some European capitals, where demonstrators voiced opposition to Trump and his aggressive trade

policies. "What's happening in America is everyone's problem," Liz Chamberlin, a dual US-British citizen told AFP at a London rally. "It's economic lunacy... He is going to push us into a global recession." And in Berlin, 70-year-old retiree Susanne Fest said Trump had created "a constitutional crisis," adding, "The guy is a lunatic." In the US, a loose coalition of left-leaning groups like MoveOn and

Women's March organised "Hands Off" events in more than 1,000 cities and in every congressional district, the groups said. Trump has angered many Americans by moving aggressively to downsize the government, unilaterally impose conservative values and sharply pressure even friendly countries over borders and trade, causing stock markets to tank. "We're out here to stop the, honestly, fascism," protester Dominic Santella

told AFP in Boston. "We're stopping a leader from... jailing his opponents, stopping him from jailing just random people, immigrants." Many Democrats are irate that their party, in the minority in both houses of Congress, has seemed so helpless to resist Trump's moves. At the National Mall, just blocks from the White House, thousands heard speakers, including Representative Jamie Raskin, a Democrat who

served as impeachment manager during Trump's second impeachment. "No moral person wants an economy-crashing dictator who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing," he told the crowd. Activist Graylan Hagler, 71, also addressed the protest, saying: "They've woken up a sleeping giant, and they haven't seen anything yet." "We will not sit down, we will not be quiet, and we will not go away."

জাতীয় গৃহায়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ গৃহায়ন ভবন ৮২, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা www.nha.gov.bd স্মারক নং- ২৫.৩৮.০০০০.৪০৩.১৮.০০৪.১৯- ১৯২ তারিখঃ ০৯/০৩/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ। নিবন্ধন সনদ বাতিল সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, রিয়েল এস্টেট উন্নয়ন ও ব্যবস্থাপনা আইন, ২০১০ এর ধারা ৪ উপধারা (২)(ঘ) ও রিয়েল এস্টেট উন্নয়ন ও ব্যবস্থাপনা বিধিমালা-২০১১ এর বিধি ৫ অনুযায়ী নিম্ন বর্ণিত ৩৬ টি প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিবন্ধনের মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণের সময়সীমা ৫ (পাঁচ) বছর অতিক্রান্ত হওয়ায় এবং শুনানীতে অংশগ্রহণ না করায়/সম্মুখীনকৃত লিখিত জবাব প্রদান না করায় জাতীয় গৃহায়ন কর্তৃপক্ষের ২৪২ তম বোর্ড সভার ২১ নং সিদ্ধান্ত এর আলোকে ২৬৬ তম বোর্ড সভার ২৭ নং সিদ্ধান্ত মোতাবেক নিম্ন বর্ণিত ৩৬ টি প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিবন্ধন সনদ এতদ্বারা বাতিল করা হলো।

ক্রমিক	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	নিবন্ধন নম্বর
১।	কিনশ ২১ ডিভিউএন এন্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাগী নং-০৯ (সেগুন-২), রোড নং-১০/০৫, রকবু ডি, বনানী, ঢাকা	জাপক-০৩
২।	প্রিমিয়াম হাউসিং এন্ডেট ডিভিউএন ঠিকানাঃ ৪৫, বিজয়নগর আইনাম হাউসিং টাওয়ার, ঢাকা	জাপক-০৪
৩।	এনা প্রপার্টিস লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাগী নং-০৩, রোড নং-২/৫, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা-১২০২	জাপক-০৮
৪।	গ্রেট ওয়াল্ড লাক প্রপার্টিস হাটজ নং-২/১২, ইয়ান রোড, ডিওইউএন, বারিধারা, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস, ঢাকা-১২০৬	জাপক-০৯
৫।	গ্লোরিয়া প্রপার্টিস লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ জাকরাম টাওয়ার (৩য় ফ্লাই), কক্ষ - ৩), ১৫/৫ বিজয়নগর, ঢাকা-১২০০১	জাপক-১১
৬।	মাস্টার হোমসেস (প্রাইম) লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ৫৫/বি, পুরানা পল্টন, মোহাম্মদিয়া টাওয়ার (১৫ ফ্লাই), ঢাকা	জাপক-১২
৭।	ভুবিন হাউসিং লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ৩৬, তেঁদা ডালিয়া (৫ম ফ্লাই), কামাল জাহাঙ্গীর এডিনিটি, বনানী, ঢাকা	জাপক-১৪
৮।	বিস্টার্ন ল্যান্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাগী নং-০২ (৫ম ফ্লাই), সুন্দরাম টাওয়ার, ১ম ফেজ, কলাবাগান, ঢাকা	জাপক-১৬
৯।	স্টেটওয়ে ল্যান্ড প্রপার্টিস লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাগী নং-১৫, বি-২, বনানী ডিওইউএন, ঢাকা	জাপক-১৯
১০।	স্টেটওয়ে হাউসিং লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাগী নং-১৫, বি-২, বনানী ডিওইউএন, ঢাকা	জাপক-২২
১১।	সিটিজেন ল্যান্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বসতি এডিনিটি, বাগিচা ১০, পূর্ণশাল-২, ঢাকা	জাপক-২৩
১২।	আরবিডি প্রপার্টিস লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ৩২, পুরানা পল্টন, সুন্দরাম জাহাঙ্গীর পরাঙ্গা (১ম ফ্লাই), ঢাকা	জাপক-২৬
১৩।	পারিভ্রামক রিয়েল এস্টেট লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাগী নং-১২৯, রোড নং-০২, ডিওইউএন, বারিধারা, ঢাকা-১০০০	জাপক-২৯
১৪।	নোবো হাউসিং এন্ড রিয়েল এস্টেট ডেভেলপমেন্ট লিমিটেড হাটজ নং-১০৫, স্টেট-২০-কে-৪, ২৪/৫, সেগুন জাহাঙ্গীর ইসলাম সার্বভৌম, বিজয়নগর, ঢাকা	জাপক-৩১
১৫।	এক আই সি এল রিয়েল এস্টেট এন্ড ডেভেলপার লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ৫৬, পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা	জাপক-৩৩
১৬।	পারিভ্রামক ডেভেলপমেন্ট এন্ড ডিভাইন লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ৩৬, কোম্পানী রোড, পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা-১০০০	জাপক-৩৪
১৭।	বিপারী রিয়েল এস্টেট এন্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট কেং লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ২২/২ (২য় ফ্লাই), দেশপাড়া পল্লী, মিরপুর-১০, ঢাকা	জাপক-৩৫
১৮।	সেন্টিনেল অফ বেসাল প্রপার্টিস লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ৩৫, মিরপুর রোড, ১১ টি, সুন্দরাম টাওয়ার, ঢাকা	জাপক-৩৬
১৯।	বনুয়া বিকাশ লিমিটেড শ্রীমতী কলার, বাগী নং-৩৫ (৫ম ফ্লাই), রোড নং-৫/৫, সাকসনলিম রোড, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা	জাপক-৩৯
২০।	নুপার ডিভাইন এন্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাগী নং-১১৬, রোড নং-১১, সিটি ডিওইউএন, মহাশালী, ঢাকা-১২১০	জাপক-৪১
২১।	প্রাক্টিক প্রপার্টিস লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ২২/৫, বিহার সন্নী লিংক রোড, ঢাকা	জাপক-৪৩
২২।	সেন্টিনেল ২০০৮ লিমিটেড ৭/১১, সিংগলি রোড, সেকেন্ড নং-০২ (৫ম ফ্লাই), অন্যাকলি পুসার মার্কেট, মেট্রো, ঢাকা	জাপক-৪২
২৩।	বসুডি বিকাশ এন্ড ডেভেলপার লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ রওশন মেমোরি, ২ হাটখোলা রোড, ৪র্থ ফ্লাই, ওয়ারী, ঢাকা	জাপক-৪৫
২৪।	এসএলএল চম্বিনা স্ট্রিট লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাসা নং-২/১/বি, রোড নং-১/৩, মিরপুর-২, ঢাকা	জাপক-৪৬
২৫।	হীরাবিল প্রপার্টি ডেভেলপমেন্ট প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ (সি)-২, প্রায়াম মার্কেট (৫ম ফ্লাই), রোড নং-২৫, পূর্ণশাল-২, ঢাকা-১১২২	জাপক-৪৮
২৬।	হার্ব হোমসেস লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ১০/০২, প্রিয় প্রাঙ্গন টাওয়ার, ১৯ কামাল জাহাঙ্গীর এডিনিটি, বনানী, ঢাকা-১২১৭	জাপক-৪৭
২৭।	নবোয় হাউসিং লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ইনসাইল মানসন (৫ম ফ্লাই), ৩২ মহাশালী গুয়ার্ডহাউস গেট, পূর্ণশাল, ঢাকা	জাপক-৪৯
২৮।	আমারোয় বাগী লিমিটেড মহাবুবা মফিজ রাস্তা, ১০-১১, শিল্প স্ট্রিট, রকবু ডি, জাহাঙ্গীর রোড, মোহাম্মদপুর, ঢাকা	জাপক-৫০
২৯।	নবধারা হাউসিং লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ১৭৭, শ্রীমতী নজরুল ইসলাম সার্বভৌম, হাটখোলা মেট্রো, ৬ষ্ঠ ফ্লাই, ঢাকা-১০০০	জাপক-৫১
৩০।	রিচমন্ড ডেভেলপার লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ মনোর (৫ম ফ্লাই), বাগিচা নং-১৪, রোড নং-১১, রকবু ডি, বনানী, ঢাকা-১২১৩	জাপক-৫২
৩১।	পূর্ণশালী ল্যান্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাসা নং-১০, বি-২, রোড নং-১১/০/৫, পূর্ণশাল-২, ঢাকা	জাপক-৫৩
৩২।	শ্রীমতী পার্বত্য প্রপার্টিস লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ২০/৪, উত্তর পার্বত্যনগর, ঢাকা-১১২৭	জাপক-৫৪
৩৩।	সবুজ ঘাট অফিস লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ গ্রাম রাস্তা কামরুল, পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা-১০০০	জাপক-৫৫
৩৪।	ইউসিও বাসো হাউসিং লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ বাগী নং-১৬, রোড নং-১৩, সেগুন-৪, উত্তর, ঢাকা-১২১০	জাপক-৫৬
৩৫।	সুন্দর হাউসিং লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ মফিজ বেসলাটা, টাওয়ারের কুতুবপুর, মফিজ, নারায়নগঞ্জ	জাপক-৫৭
৩৬।	মাসপাই হাউসিং লিমিটেড ঠিকানাঃ ৩৪, পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা-১০০০	জাপক-৬১

উল্লেখ্য যে, রিয়েল এস্টেট উন্নয়ন ও ব্যবস্থাপনা আইন, ২০১০ অনুযায়ী জাতীয় গৃহায়ন কর্তৃপক্ষের আওতাধীন এলাকায় অনির্দিষ্ট ডেভেলপার এবং অননুমোদিত প্রকার হতে গ্রেট/স্ট্রাট ক্রয় কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ থেকে জনসাধারনকে বিরত থাকার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

(স্বাক্ষরিত)
(স্বাক্ষর)
জাতীয় গৃহায়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ
সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা।

GD- 822

Proper sewage management is vital

Dhaka's unimplemented master plan leading to rampant pollution

It is unfortunate that a decade after adopting a master plan to address the city's sewage problem, the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) has made little progress in its implementation. The plan originally envisioned the establishment of five sewage treatment plants across Dhaka, but only one—the Dasherbandi plant—was set up two years ago. Unfortunately, this facility is still not fully operational, as it has not been connected to Wasa's sewerage network. Moreover, while Wasa is struggling to acquire land for its Mirpur and Rayerbazar treatment facilities, it has yet to complete the feasibility study for the plant in Uttara. In the absence of proper sewage treatment facilities, most of the city's sewage now ends up in rivers and water bodies.

A recent study by the River and Delta Research Centre has revealed the severity of pollution in rivers surrounding Dhaka—Buriganga, Turag, Shitalakkhya, and Balu. It identified 102 industrial waste outlets, 75 municipal sewer lines, and 216 private outlets discharging untreated waste into these rivers. Additionally, pollutants enter through 38 sluice gates, 62 service canals, and 441 dumping points. Industrial units, dockyards, and markets are exacerbating the problem.

Experts, however, say the Wasa master plan was unrealistic to begin with, given the challenges of finding suitable land for large-scale projects in a densely populated city like Dhaka. With the plan proving ineffective, authorities should instead prioritise localised solutions, such as mandatory septic tanks, small-scale treatment plants, and strict enforcement of building regulations. Small treatment plants should be established in large housing project areas, while the construction of modular treatment systems should be made mandatory for high-rise buildings. Our current construction rules require septic tanks in buildings outside the sewerage network. Despite past efforts by the two city corporations to block sewage outlets and enforce this rule, their attempts were largely unsuccessful. To ensure compliance, Wasa, city corporations, and Rajuk must intensify their efforts, while building owners must also adhere to the provision during construction. Moreover, the Dasherbandi plant should be brought under Wasa's sewerage network as it could treat up to five lakh tonnes of sewage per day; the Pagla sewage treatment plant must also be urgently repaired.

Dhaka is becoming increasingly unliveable with its air and water becoming severely polluted, endangering the lives of its residents. To protect this city and its residents, the government must come up with a new vision—a new master plan—with a clear strategy to address the city's persistent sewage pollution, save our rivers and water bodies, and ensure a healthier environment.

Why can't mob violence be curbed?

Recent estimates show continued surge in mob beatings

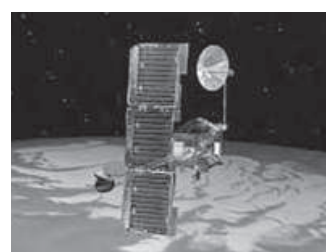
That mob violence continued unabated throughout March highlights once again the dangers of the business-as-usual approach the government appears to have adopted in response to this troubling trend. In fact, data from the human rights platform Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF) show that mob beatings more than doubled within a month—from 18 incidents in February to 39 in March. The number of people killed in such attacks also surged, from 8 to 13. While these estimates are consistent with other recent crime figures, the picture that emerges in relation to mob violence is quite concerning.

In one particularly disturbing incident early Sunday last week, Riyadh, an Uber driver in Dhaka, was beaten to death after being falsely accused of being a mugger. According to his wife, he was taking a passenger from Pallabi around 2:00am when another car hit his vehicle from behind. As he stepped out to confront the driver of that car, its passengers shouted "mugger", prompting locals to beat him up. "He bought his car for Tk 16 lakh just a couple of months ago... Would a mugger buy a car for Tk 16 lakh?" his wife asked. Similarly, in Narsingdi, two brothers were killed by a mob on Monday night following an altercation with local autorickshaw drivers. These incidents are a stark reminder of the ease with which criminals disguised as common men are perpetrating such attacks.

The question is, why can't the government contain mob violence? What makes a section of the public feel so emboldened that they can take the law into their hands and execute "punishment" for perceived injustices? MSF has analysed the various motives leading to such attacks. Among them, suspicions of crimes including theft, robbery, mugging, extortion, rape, smuggling, and drug peddling often resulted in deadly violence. Sometimes, murder suspects were targeted. Political and personal grudges were also flagged as frequent drivers of mob violence. For instance, around the same time Riyadh was killed, a man was beaten to death in Shariatpur for allegedly asking two youths to stop smoking in public. Such a broad spectrum of motivations shows how easily mob violence can be incited, and executed, in the absence of effective deterrents.

This must be changed. This trend, which saw a surge after the political changeover in August, owes primarily to two reasons: first, the inability of law enforcement to act decisively and identify or detain those involved in mob violence, and second, the failure of the judiciary to ensure proper punishment. We urge the government to address these systemic issues with utmost priority.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Mars Odyssey spacecraft launched

On this day in 2001, NASA launched the Mars Odyssey spacecraft, which reached Mars in October and transmitted photos and other data back to scientists on Earth.

Political expediency and the narratives of our liberation

WINKERS AWEIGH!

Tanim Ahmed
is digital editor at The Daily Star.



TANIM AHMED

It was plainly evident on March 26 how Bangladesh's political parties do not dither to propagate alternative narratives of our independence and the 1971 Liberation War purely for expediency. They did not seem to mind at all that, in the process, they end up belittling or trivialising 1971 or our independence, which should have become sacrosanct by now.

The July uprising leaders—some of whom remain in the government, while others lead the newly formed National Citizen Party (NCP), having established itself as the natural heir of the July uprising—revisited their comparison of the achievement of 2024 with 1971. Their statements on March 26 were along the same vein, perhaps in an attempt to reassure people that they are still respectful of 1971 even while they eulogise 2024. Take Nahid's remarks, for example. The top NCP leader said many could not yet grasp the significance of the mass uprising and the people's victory.

He said the events of 1971 and 2024 were interconnected, and the spirit of the Liberation War was revived through the July uprising. "We believe '71 and '24 are not separate," he said. The promise of equality, he added, had remained unfulfilled, allowing a fascist regime to rule Bangladesh for 15 years. "In '24 we advocated for the same egalitarian society."

Still an adviser to the interim government and one of Nahid's longtime comrades from the uprising, Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan said merely securing a piece of land—which seems to suggest that it is all that happened through the Liberation War in 1971—is not necessarily the be-all and end-all of freedom. True independence is also in the freedom of thought, expression, and speech, which was not there in the last 15 years.

BNP leaders, on the other hand, were sharp in their criticism of these young leaders, dismissing any comparison with 1971, as they have been doing for quite some time. Senior leaders of this party, which had been the main opposition camp to the Awami League regime, have been sharply critical of the oft-repeated pronouncements like "new independence," "second republic," and "Bangladesh 2.0."

But BNP had no qualms about being the main ally of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Chhatra Shibir for a long time to hold on to power,

or even appoint Motiur Rahman Nizami or Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed—both of whom are held responsible for leading vigilante militias during the Liberation War and have been hanged for their war crimes—as ministers. As such, one could assume that this newfound sensitivity regarding our Liberation



The covered mural at the Liberation War Memorial in Lalmonirhat.

PHOTO: STAR

War—which is, of course, welcome if proven to be genuine—is nothing but political posturing; a ploy to set themselves apart as the champions of Bangladesh's Liberation War and the sanctity of 1971.

While the political sphere is rife with such exchanges, Jamaat is cleverly exploiting the opportunity to posit its own narrative of the Liberation War, which it had actively opposed. It would have been unimaginable even last year that the party which actively opposed the Liberation War, joined hands with the Pakistani army, and was instrumental in abetting, inciting, and even perpetrating war crimes, would presume to have any authority on this matter.

But for some people, Jamaat's acceptance—however grudging that might have been—as a political force

came about only after it came to light that they had been among the forces that bolstered the July uprising. In fact, it transpired later that many of the frontline uprising leaders were top office bearers of Shibir, a fact they had concealed from the public and even their comrades.

The uprising leaders, for their part, have indicated that Jamaat and Shibir's sacrifice and active participation in the July uprising of 2024 have been enough of a penance for their crimes in 1971. The presumption that participation in an uprising undoes war crimes, wittingly or not, implicitly likens the July uprising and the Liberation War. Jamaat, for its part, has latched on to that sliver of opportunity to criticise

the social fabric of harmony and tolerance, they smack of being run by those adept at concealing their identity. The optics of men wielding sticks tied with the red and green, beating down Indigenous people on the streets of Dhaka for demanding the inclusion of "Adivasi" in an artwork on a textbook—which, by the way, remains deleted—would suggest that patriots were acting against traitors, when actually it could be argued to be the other way around.

Together, this lays the groundwork for Jamaat to emerge free of its mire and shame of 1971 and helps it claim a place as a rightful political contender.

To conclude, a mural depicting the 1971 Liberation War was covered up this Independence Day—before being

Mujib and his "pro-India stance."

They point out how Bangladesh had been run according to Indian prescriptions, how Dhaka continued to be manipulated by New Delhi, and thus insinuate that the independence of 1971 was not quite what we thought it to be. That it was not quite true independence. And that rhetoric, quite conveniently—too conveniently, in fact—fuses rather well with the NCP claiming to have heralded a new independence.

There are also alarming signs on other fronts. There are the ghostly platforms like "Students for Sovereignty" and the "Inquilab Mancha" preventing the Indigenous people from marching for their rights or activists from standing up for rape victims. While there is no conclusive evidence of who is behind propping up these platforms disrupting

destroyed later—because, according to the district commissioner, it did not align with the ideals of the July uprising. Surely that would add to the jubilation of those who want to undermine our independence and sow seeds of doubt. While those seeds fester, the uprising leaders remain quiet, looking the other way.

If the independence of the nation has to take a back seat to the spirit of the July uprising—if it is perceived that celebrations of our Independence Day are becoming muted just so that it is not too inconvenient for certain quarters—then those perceived to be behind such a disposition would see their credibility eroded. The July uprising will always have its place. But so long as the NCP is seen not giving '71 its justified importance, it may affect their likelihood of winning the hearts and minds of the people.

A diplomatic reset wrapped in contradiction

THE STREET VIEW

Mohammad Al Masum Molla
is a journalist at The Daily Star. He can be reached at masumjm@gmail.com.



MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The Yunus-Modi meeting in Bangkok appears to be the long-awaited diplomatic reset that many had predicted—but few expected to materialise so soon. On the surface, it looks like India is finally acknowledging the interim government in Dhaka. But beneath the handshake seemingly lies a tangle of contradictions, strategic hedging, and diplomacy. It's not just about turning a new page—it's about writing the next chapter.

From denial to dialogue

For nearly eight months, India's relationship with Bangladesh has remained awkward, intermittently broken by a handful of uplifting moments when officials met and discussed bilateral issues. This meeting, therefore, signals more than engagement. It's an implicit admission that reality has outpaced India's assumptions. Yet, Modi's words seem to carry an almost performative tone—he talked about democracy

and inclusion after years of openly backing elections in Bangladesh that were anything but democratic. His government supported Hasina through the 2014 walkover, the 2018 ballot-stuffing, and the 2024 puppet show of a vote. So, when Indian officials say they support a "democratic and inclusive Bangladesh," one cannot help but ask: since when?

The people vs the party

Modi claims India is connected to the people of Bangladesh—not to any political party. It's a noble sentiment, but history arguably tells a different story. India's deep-rooted ties with the Awami League were not merely diplomatic—some may say they were ideological, strategic, and personal. Delhi has in the past prioritised regime stability over popular legitimacy. So, is this newfound detachment real, or just rhetorical repositioning now that the old guard has fallen? Perhaps Modi's statement is less about people and more about giving India room

to pivot—to distance itself from Hasina without appearing disloyal, and to engage with Yunus without committing too deeply.

Shelter as strategy

Yunus's call for Hasina's extradition was bold, necessary, and symbolic. It marked a shift from transitional governance to assertive leadership. But India's non-committal response—labelling the request as "under consideration"—could suggest that Hasina is now less a guest and more a bargaining chip. By sheltering her, India retains leverage over the interim government. It's a contradictory position—India claims to support peace and stability in Bangladesh, yet it harbours a figure accused of inciting unrest. If Yunus is serious about moving forward, he'll have to navigate this situation delicately.

Security concerns and political theatre

The discussion on minority rights and social unrest is another minefield of double meanings. India expressed "serious concern" about the treatment of Hindus in Bangladesh—likely as much for domestic political optics as for genuine worry. Yunus, meanwhile, dismissed many of the claims as exaggerated or false, pushing back on India's moral posturing. Here again, India's selective outrage feels somewhat hollow. It had no such concerns under Hasina, even when

systemic violence and suppression were rife. The sudden spotlight on minority rights raises the question: is this about human rights or political messaging?

Border killings and hollow empathy

Yunus made a heartfelt appeal to stop border killings, invoking the suffering of families torn apart. Modi responded with the usual line—Indian forces fire in self-defence. Yet, hundreds of civilians have died in these so-called "self-defence" incidents over the years, often unarmed and within Bangladeshi territory. This isn't just a bilateral security issue—it's about trust. If India continues to act unilaterally on its border while preaching partnership, the credibility of its cooperative rhetoric falls apart.

The real game behind the optics

So, what does this meeting really represent? For me, it's not as much of a breakthrough. It's a calibration. India is adjusting to—not embracing—the new Bangladesh. This is not about Yunus earning India's trust; it's about India hedging its bets. Delhi wants to remain relevant, especially as Dhaka's ties with China deepen and with Pakistan open. India isn't fully on board with the interim government yet. But it is experienced enough to realise that ignoring it any longer could cost regional influence. The meeting, therefore, is less about conviction and more about pragmatism.

Reassessing our southern defence strategy



Alauddin Mohammad
is joint member secretary of National Citizen Party (NCP).

ALAUDDIN MOHAMMAD

Bangladesh's security concerns have historically been shaped by its relationship with India, particularly when the governing regime maintained strong ties with New Delhi, reflecting the enduring and complex historical dynamics between the two nations. This evolving security landscape now demands a shift in strategic focus. Recent developments along the southern border, particularly from Myanmar and non-state actors, indicate an urgent need to reassess the country's defense and diplomatic approaches. The rise of armed insurgent groups, border violations, and disruptions to trade highlight the vulnerabilities of Bangladesh's southern frontier. In response to these emerging threats, a new security paradigm—the Southern Contingency Framework (SCF)—is necessary to address these challenges effectively.

The China India rivalry and Bangladesh's strategic dilemma

Bangladesh's geopolitical landscape has been linked to the ongoing rivalry between China and India. Both regional powers have vested interests in South Asia, often influencing Bangladesh's security, economic policies, and foreign relations. China has invested in Bangladesh's infrastructure through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), while India has historically played a crucial role in Bangladesh's defense and diplomatic affairs. The Myanmar crisis further complicates this dynamic, as China has maintained close ties with Myanmar's military regime, while India has historically supported certain movements within Myanmar. These competing influences leave Bangladesh in a precarious position, requiring a carefully balanced foreign policy that prioritises national security while maintaining strategic autonomy.

The escalating security crisis in the south

Tensions involving Myanmar affecting southern Bangladesh have long existed but have recently intensified to a concerning level. On October 27, 2023, the Three Brotherhood Alliance (3BTA), which includes the Arakan Army (AA), launched Operation 1027 against Myanmar's military, capturing significant territory in Rakhine State. The growing instability along the Myanmar border quickly spilled over into Bangladesh, as seen on February 4-5, 2024, when over 100 Myanmar Border Guard Police (BGP) personnel illegally crossed into Bangladesh and were disarmed and interned by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB). The situation further deteriorated on May 22, 2024, when the AA launched a large-scale attack on Maungdaw, seizing over 10 junta camps and killing approximately 200 Myanmar military personnel. This escalation

posed direct risks to Bangladesh's territorial integrity and border security.

The security threats extended to the maritime domain. On June 6, 2024, ferry services on the Teknaf-Saint Martin route were suspended due to gunfire from Myanmar, leaving over 10,000 residents facing food shortages. That same month, AA fighters allegedly fired at Bangladeshi trawlers, including one carrying election officials. These hostilities continued into October when the Myanmar Navy fired on six Bangladeshi fishing trawlers near Saint Martin's Island, killing one person and injuring two. Although Myanmar authorities later released 72 detained

fishermen and their trawlers on October 10, 2024, the situation underscored the fragile nature of Bangladesh's southern security.

By November 2024, the crisis had escalated further. On November 5, the AA detained 20 Bangladeshi fishermen and seized 15 boats, accusing them of illegal entry. Although the fishermen were released on November 7 after negotiations with the BGB, this episode demonstrated the group's growing power in the region. The most alarming development came on December 8, 2024, when the AA announced its control over the entire 271-kilometre Myanmar-Bangladesh border after capturing a BGB base in Rakhine State. This takeover led to an indefinite ban on vessel movement in the Naf River, disrupting trade between the two countries.



A view of Myanmar visible from the bank of the Naf River in Teknaf.

PHOTO: MD RAJIB RAIHAN

The economic ramifications of this crisis

Some key theories of security and strategic

Trade between Bangladesh and Myanmar also suffered due to the border instability. According to Teknaf customs, in the fiscal year 2023, Bangladesh imported 188,999 metric tonnes of goods worth Tk 1,545 crore from Myanmar. By the fiscal year 2024, imports had sharply declined to 71,741 metric tonnes, valued at Tk 808 crore. This decline underscores the economic vulnerabilities linked to border insecurity.

Realism, Securitisation Theory, and Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)—offer valuable insights but present limitations in fully addressing the emerging threats in Bangladesh's southern frontier. Realism, which prioritises state-centric power politics and military preparedness, provides an essential framework for understanding geopolitical tensions. It primarily focuses on conventional state actors, making it less adaptable to addressing asymmetric security threats and non-state actors like the AA. The Securitisation Theory highlights how security threats are shaped through political discourse, aiding in understanding how Bangladesh frames its security concerns. Nevertheless, it does not offer direct policy mechanisms for managing concrete security risks beyond discursive practices. The RSCT explains Bangladesh's security challenges by situating them within the broader dynamics of South Asia, particularly the China-India-Myanmar triangle. While useful, this theory assumes that regional security is shaped predominantly by state interactions, overlooking the significant role of transnational insurgent groups and

should conduct more joint military exercises with friendly nations to improve rapid response capabilities. Strengthening naval and coast guard operations near Saint Martin's Island is essential.

Thirdly, Bangladesh should leverage diplomatic channels, particularly through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations, to address cross-border tensions. Engaging China and

Bangladesh must deploy advanced surveillance technology, including drones and satellite monitoring, to enhance situational awareness along the Myanmar border. Additionally, fortifying border security posts and increasing the presence of the BGB and the Bangladesh Navy will serve as deterrents against incursions.

India (on equal terms) in diplomatic dialogues to ensure Myanmar's stability will be crucial in preventing further escalation.

Fourthly, to mitigate economic risks, Bangladesh should reduce its reliance on Myanmar for imports and explore alternative trade routes. Strengthening domestic fisheries, agriculture, and logistics infrastructure will help absorb trade shocks caused by border disruptions.

Fifthly, we need to increase focus on community-based security and intelligence gathering. Local communities near the border should be integrated into intelligence-sharing networks. Establishing rapid communication channels between security forces and residents will enhance early threat detection and crisis response.

Finally, Bangladesh should focus on exploring innovative methods to engage with non-state actors following the UN Charter. The Charter encourages peaceful dialogue and conflict resolution through mechanisms such as Article 33 (negotiation and mediation) and Chapter VIII (regional arrangements). By leveraging these provisions, Bangladesh can establish new avenues for communication with non-state actors while ensuring compliance with international norms and advancing its security and strategic interests. This approach can boost broader regional stability and enhance Bangladesh's diplomatic capabilities.

Bangladesh's security posture must evolve to address the emerging threats from the south. The SCF offers a comprehensive strategy to safeguard national security, economic stability, and regional influence. By strengthening border defense, military preparedness, diplomatic engagement, trade security, and community intelligence, Bangladesh can effectively mitigate the risks posed by the ongoing instability in Myanmar. As regional dynamics continue to shift, Bangladesh must remain proactive in securing its sovereignty and national interests.

informal economic networks. Given these limitations, Bangladesh requires a more comprehensive and adaptive security approach, such as the SCF, which must comprehensively integrate military, diplomatic, economic, and community-driven strategies to address evolving security threats effectively.

SCF can provide a multi-pronged approach

Firstly, Bangladesh must deploy advanced surveillance technology, including drones and satellite monitoring, to enhance situational awareness along the Myanmar border. Additionally, fortifying border security posts and increasing the presence of the BGB and the Bangladesh Navy will serve as deterrents against incursions. Presence does not always necessitate a physical deployment in all operational contexts.

Secondly, the Bangladesh Armed Forces

Trump's trade policy and its effects on women in Bangladesh



Rakib Avi
is a development worker and a graduate research assistant at University of Georgia.

RAKIB AVI

President Trump's recent imposition of steep tariffs on countries around the world has shocked the international community. It has sent the share market tumbling, wiping off some \$6 trillion from Wall Street in a fateful two days since the announcement went public earlier this week. As countries and their leaders are formulating their responses—some favouring a more belligerent approach, like China and perhaps the European Union—and others most likely making a frantic dash through formal and informal channels to appease the US president, Bangladesh faces a precarious scenario. While the way the tariffs have been calculated has puzzled economists and trade analysts alike, the effect on the world economy doesn't look very promising. But I'll let people who are trained in trade policy and economics address that. What is critical to the declaration of an additional 37 percent tariff on Bangladeshi imports is this: what does it mean for women's labour force participation in the country, and more broadly, women's economic empowerment?

Although the new tariff, has been applied immediately to all Bangladeshi goods entering the US, the sector that will be disproportionately hit is Bangladesh's RMG industry. The RMG sector contributes to 80 percent of the total national exports in Bangladesh and 10 percent of the country's

GDP. It also employs some four million workers, more than 60 percent of whom are women. Even after all the talk in the last few decades about diversifying Bangladesh's export portfolio, the country is still very much dependent on the RMG sector for bringing foreign currency into the nation, thereby being a key driver of the economy. Among the countries in South Asia, Bangladesh has somehow been slapped with the second-highest tariff, coming only after Sri Lanka, which has seen a 44 percent tariff imposed. India and Pakistan are at 27 percent and 29 percent, respectively. Economists around the world are still scratching their heads about how the "reciprocal tariff" was calculated. But that is also something probably not worth debating anymore—it is the post-truth world we live in, and as a nation whose single largest export market is the US, there is only so much flexing our muscles can do.

One thing that is often ignored in policy circles is the impact of the RMG sector beyond the economic sphere and its effect on the overall journey of women's empowerment in Bangladesh. The growth of the sector has coincided with phenomenal social transformation: fertility declined from 6.9 births per woman in the early 1970s to around 2 by 2021, and the average age of marriage for girls rose from 14.6 years to 17

years within a similar time period. Some 15 percent of all Bangladeshi women aged 16-30 now work in the garments sector. This is a very high number in the national context, where less than half of Bangladeshi women participate in the labour force. All this points to the fact that the prosperity of the garments sector is closely linked with female economic empowerment.

Researchers have found solid evidence

to their ability to be financially independent. Young girls in villages with nearby factories are more likely to stay in school, since better-paying jobs are awarded to workers with more cognitive skills. Meanwhile, adolescent girls gain the option of wage work, as older girls are more likely to be employed in the factories. Together, these effects lead to families investing in girls' education and deferring marriage and childbearing.



One thing that is often ignored in policy circles is the impact of the RMG sector beyond the economic sphere and its effect on the overall journey of women's empowerment in Bangladesh.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

that the availability of nearby manufacturing jobs has positive impacts on women's life prospects. One study examining the impact of RMG factories in Bangladesh found that girls living near garment factories married and had children later than those in villages without nearby factories. The profound impact of this cannot be overstated. Delaying marriage and childbearing until women are ready and able has long-term consequences for health outcomes and directly contributes

On the other hand, staying out of school and losing potential employment opportunities has a deleterious effect on girls' empowerment. During the Covid lockdown, there was a spike in child marriage, which was the outcome of parents marrying off young girls as a coping strategy to deal with economic strain at the household level.

Trade analysts and industry actors are perhaps better positioned to forecast what this tariff means in real terms for the garments

sector. Both Vietnam and Cambodia are facing their own tariff-related challenges, with 46 percent and 49 percent tariffs imposed on their imports, respectively. Common-sense logic indicates that the competitive advantage Bangladesh enjoys—low labour costs—will be further stretched, with RMG companies already operating on razor-thin margins. The rising costs in the US market of garment products made in Bangladesh will compel buyers—i.e., the brands—to move to other, more favourable countries, such as Egypt, Kenya, or Honduras—all three of which have lower tariffs imposed on them by the US.

Regardless of the government response—which I believe will be driven by negotiation and diplomacy to gain concessions—the impact on women's labour force participation and overall financial empowerment is very much on the line. The recent cuts to foreign aid by the US have been decry by many, but this will be a larger blow to women's economic empowerment, as Bangladesh has yet to develop a sector that can hire and retain women workers at such scale. The strain on the RMG sector may eventually lead to job cuts and women moving down to lower-productivity jobs and more traditional gender roles. Families will also not see the value in sending girls to school without the economic pay-off, and this might lead to a further rise in child marriage.

Trade policies such as these have a strong impact on social outcomes, as decades of progress could be eroded by these decisions. Policymakers and other development partners should take note of this phenomenon and begin thinking of policy tools like cash transfers and support for displaced women workers. Let's not let the hard-won gains of the last few decades in women's economic empowerment go to waste. The losses could very well be irreversible.

THE MANY BENGALS

Samatata, Bangalah, Subah-i-Bangalah

RILA MUKHERJEE

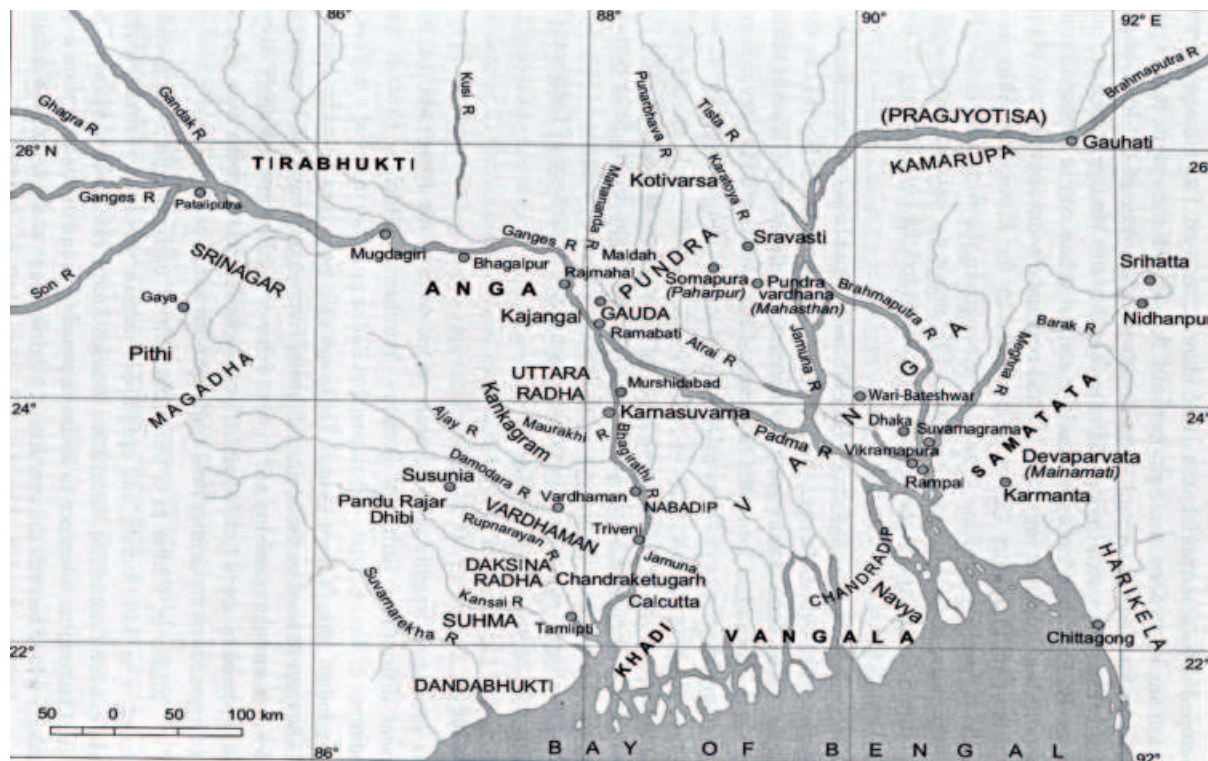
Historians usually approach Bengal's history from Gaur-Pandua in the west (i.e., Ilyas Shahi and Husain Shahi Bengal), but what of early Bengal? With a dynamic geography, there were multiple Bengals with oscillating contours. Anga was what is now eastern Bihar, Jharkhand, and northern West Bengal; Suhma, West Bengal and northwest Bangladesh; and Pundra, West Bengal and northern Bangladesh. There was no fixed core and no discernible capital.

I Bengal became an aggregate of four distinct subregions, created by the prevalent hydrography: Pundravardhana (initially north Bengal, subsequently embracing a very large area of early Bengal); Radha or Rarh (largely to the west of the river Bhagirathi); Vanga (central deltaic Bengal, covering the Dhaka-Vikrampur-Faridpur area); and Samatata Harikela (Bangladesh's southeasternmost part to the east of the Meghna, including Noakhali, Comilla, and Chittagong, and often

downstream links by reconfiguring boundaries and moving upward by the thirteenth century to include the landlocked polities of Srihatta and Tripura. This provided access to the Bay of Bengal. The sea would become very important to Bengal's economy.

The cultural turmoil resulting from these changes makes envisaging a heartland for Bengal difficult. Uncertainty came from upheavals caused by regional integration after the 'classical age' ended, from about the seventh century. This is when the contours of Bengal start taking shape.

Bengal's early political history centres around two polities: that of Sasanka (ca. 600-25, perhaps until 637), who achieved prominence by fighting Harsha of Kannauj and Bhaskarvarman of Kamrup; and that of the Palas—especially Dharmapala, Devapala, Mahendrapala, and Mahipala I—who are credited with transforming Bengal into an imperial power. Sasanka's kingdom was based on Gauda (not to be confused with Gaur in Lakhnauti), with its core at Karnasuvarna in western Bengal. Gauda's territorial extent is unclear



Historical geography of Bengal.

SOURCE: HISTORY OF BANGLADESH, ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BANGLADESH, 2018.

20 mints existed. Of these, Fathabad was the sultanate's most significant mint, with a prodigious silver output. Silver came in by sea from Arakan and Pegu and subsequently overland from the Shan states between Upper Burma and Yunnan.

III The Bengal coast's distinctiveness lies in its funnel-like shape—the only *asamudrahimacala* region (from the mountains to the sea) in land-locked northern South Asia—and it was accordingly privileged in foreign notices. On 9 July 1346, Ibn Battuta came into Bengal through Chittagong—a city filled with food, but it smelled bad, and yet it was 'a hell full of good things'. Everything was cheap, including slaves. He bought 'an extremely beautiful' slave girl, and a friend bought a young slave boy for two gold dinars. He came to Sonargaon on 14 August 1346. There he boarded a Chinese junk bound for Java.

There are several notices on these two port-cities: Chittagong and Sonargaon. Fei Xin's *Hsing'ch'a-sheng-lan* (*The Overall Survey of the Star Raft*, ca. 1436) saw Chittagong as Bengal's gateway and only seaport, but Sonargaon (the 'Sonargawan' of Fra Mauro's 1450 world map)—and not Chittagong—was the political centre and maritime hub:

'This country has a sea-port on a bay called Ch'a-ti-chiang [Chittagong]; here certain duties are collected...After going sixteen stages (we) reached So-na-erh-chiang [Sonargaon], which is a walled place with tanks, streets, bazaars, and which carries on a business in all kinds of goods. (Here) servants of the King met (us) with elephants and horses. Going thence twenty stages (we) came to Pan-tu-wa [Pandua], which is the place of residence of the ruler.'

Ma Huan's *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan* (*The Overall Survey of The Ocean's Shores*, 1433) noted:

'Travelling by sea from the country of Su-men-ta-la (Acheh)...the (Nicobars) are sighted, (whence) going north-westward for twenty li one arrives at Chih-ti-chiang. (Here) one changes to a small boat, and after going five hundred odd li, one comes to So-na-erh-chiang, whence one reaches the capital. It has walls and suburbs; the king's palace, and the large and small palaces of the nobility and temples, are all in the city. They are Muslims.'

Ming China's expansion in the fifteenth century destroyed upland polities—Tai, Ahom, Mong, and Meng—leading to substantial human migration into the southeast. Nicolò de' Conti's itinerary (ca. 1420s-30s) reveals this dynamic relationship between places:

'Travelling many days journey by land, and by sea, he entered at the mouth of the Ryver Gangey, and came unto a Citie named Cernomen [Sonargaon], very noble and plentiful...Going from hence uppe the ryver three moneths, leaving behinde him foure famous Citie, he came to a goodly famous Citie named Maarazia [Varanasi], where there is great plenty of the trees called Alloes, and plentie of golde, and silvr, Pearles, and precious stones. And going from hence he directed hys waye unto the mountaines of the Orient, for to have Carbuncles, and travelling thirteene dayes, he returned firste to Cermon and afterwards unto Buffetanya [Vardhamanapura or

Chittagong]. And after that, sayling a wholemoneth by sea, he came unto the entering of the river Nican [Arakan], and sayling upon it sixe dayes, he came unto the Citie also name Nican, and he went from thence seaventeene dayes journey through the deserte mountaynes, and plaine country, the fiftene days of which the people of that country cal Clava, and sayling up this river a month, he came unto a famous great Citie called Ava, being 15 miles in compasse.'

In 1585, Ralph Fitch saw a region called 'Bengala', with 'Porto Grande' lying in the Tripura-Chittagong belt. Evidently, Sonargaon was no longer the maritime hub:

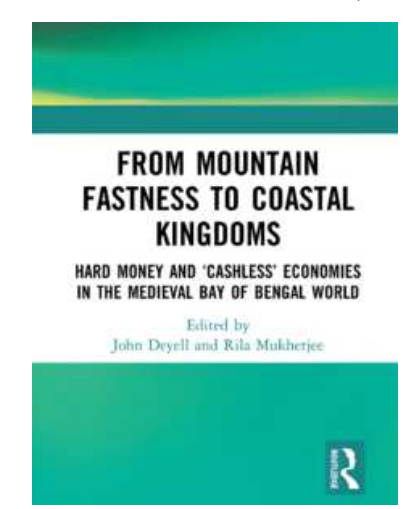
'From Satagam I travelled by the Countrie of the King of Tippara or Porto Grande, with whom the Mogores or Mogen [Arakanese] have almost continuall warres. The Mogen, which be of the Kingdome of Recon [Arakan] and Rame [Ramu], be stronger then the King of Tippara, so that Chatigan or Porto Grande is oftentimes under the King of Recon...From Chatigan in Bengala, I came to Bacola [Bakla]...From Bacola I went to Serrepore [Sripur], which standeth upon the River Ganges, the King is called Chondery [Chand Rai]...Sinnergan [Sonargaon] is a Towne sixe leagues from Serrepore...I went from Serrepore the eight and twentieth of November, 1586 for Pegu in a small Ship or Foist of one

particularly the steaming inhalation from the creeks and inlets during the summer, was...oppressive.'

The merchant mariner Thomas Bowrey called seventeenth-century Bengal 'one of the largest and most Potent Kingdomes of Hindostan... blessed with many fine Rivers that issue out into the sea of Gulph of Bengala vizt. below Point Palmirs...and the Arackan Shore... some of which are navigable both for great and small ships... This Kingdome is now become the most famous and Flourishing'. In the 1680s, per William Hedges, Bengal was still 'ye best flower in ye Company's Garden and all India'.

What changed subsequently?

V At a time when the west-east fluvial shifts saw much economic activity (the



port towns of Bakla, Sripur, Loricul, Katrabuh, and Sandwip were drawn into Portuguese networks by the early sixteenth century) and agricultural yields rose, southeast Bengal was hitched to the Mughal Empire. Six new rivers and their channels linked it to the western delta's rivers, and these facilitated access to Delhi. This connect killed off its economic vitality. Business was hampered because goods now went to the west through the new channels. Trade by the Meghna-Brahmaputra channel to the northeast, Ava, and Yunnan was no longer a viable option due to political uncertainties. Instability in Burma from the sixteenth century meant that routes to China through Upper Burma were risky. Soon after, the sea route to Arakan fell into disuse.

In a sub-global context, as this world faced a crisis, traditional players went, supplanted by new state forms. In a global context, the Portuguese conquest of Melaka in 1511 transformed it from a regional entrepôt to a world emporium in the sixteenth-century age of commerce. This reoriented or destroyed existing networks and caused the decay of previously robust polities. There was warfare in Tripura, Bhulua, Mrauk U Arakan, Toungoo and Mon Burma, Lan Na, and Ayutthaya. Interior Sukothai ceded way to maritime Ayutthaya. Massive shifts in human population occurred. Burma was particularly unstable until unified by the Toungoos from 1510. Ava was destroyed in 1527 and Mon Pegu was defeated by the first Toungoo state in the 1530s. Husain Shahi Bengal ended in 1538. The succeeding Sur dynasty revived *uttarapatha* as *Badshahi Sarak* (later called Grand Trunk Road) and linked Sonargaon to Delhi and beyond. Then the Mughals came and, by the early seventeenth century, started their push into southeast Bengal.

VI Economic expansion, the use of firearms, and provincial reorganisation had rendered post-sixteenth-century

southeast Bengal stable, but this trend reversed in the seventeenth century. Southeast Bengal entered into an unequal relationship with the Mughals as a raw material and cash crop (rice, raw cotton, sugar, oilseeds) supplier for the empire. This accounted for its still high revenue assessment at 50 crore dams, but the vibrant port towns of the southeast now became mere providers of agricultural produce.

Yet, while trade declined and people moved elsewhere, the sixteenth-to-eighteenth-century fluvial shifts rendered the western delta 'moribund' and the southeastern delta 'active'. The active delta boosted the vital agricultural base. Production zoomed. But the shifts also flooded villages and caused human displacement. Southeast Bengal's fragmented coastline, with its rivers, creeks, and inlets, saw persistent *magh* (Portuguese-Arakanese slavers) raids. The Mughals could not combat this menace. Shihabuddin Talish wrote that a hundred boats of the Mughal Bengal fleet fled if they saw even four of the enemy's boats. The agriculturally productive southeast became a pirate-infested, slave-raided area.

Contemporaries have left us their impression of the raided areas. The English East India Company official Streynsham Master wrote on 7 September 1676: 'This morning we came faire by the Arracan shore... and came to an anchor at the mouth of the River near the Ile of Coxes...' (Sagor, south of Kolkata), and added on September 8: 'This day we passed by the River which goes to Chittygom and Dacca, which the English call the River of Rogues, by reason the Arracaners used to come out there to Rob...'

Bowrey, Master's contemporary in Bengal, noted: 'Many Isles there be in the mouth of the Ganges, not inhabited more than with wild beasts... the Natives much dreading to dwell there, being timorous of the Arrackaners with their Gylars who many times have come through the Rivers and carried away captive many poor families of the Orixia folks.'

Yet another contemporary, François Bernier, wrote: 'They scoured the neighbouring seas in light galleys, called galleasses, entered the numerous arms and branches of the Ganges, ravaged the islands of Lower Bengal, and often penetrating forty or fifty leagues up the country, surprised and carried away the entire population of villages on market days... (or) a marriage. The intruders made slaves of their unhappy captives.' He added: 'It is owing to these repeated depredations that we see so many fine islands at the mouth of the Ganges, formerly thickly peopled, now entirely deserted by human beings, and become the desolate lairs of tigers and other wild beasts.'

These remarks show the raids had now penetrated into the western delta.

Overall, an expanding population in Bengal from the mid-sixteenth century resulted in population pressure and a resource crunch in the seventeenth century, accelerated competition for resources, and engendered chronic warfare. Demographic trends explain some long-term processes: population rise; vibrant trade; incipient commercialisation; new styles of warfare, i.e., a changeover from cavalry-based warfare to gun-equipped troop warfare; disease such as smallpox (Ahom Assam: 1574, 1637, 1768; Manipur: 1520, 1531, 1541, 1581, 1651, 1672, 1685, 1699, 1720, 1744); and frequent famines (a particularly severe one occurred in the 1660s in the southeast). Maritime decay and commercial decline triggered the seventeenth-century crisis, leading to famine, disease, and slavery at a time when the circuits of international trade were enmeshing this world.

Southeastern Bengal underwent a triple squeeze: an ecological squeeze from its west, an expanding frontier squeeze from Arakan, and a renewed economic squeeze from Mughal Bengal at a time when the old order was in disarray. Population decline goes a long way in explaining this seventeenth-century crisis. James Rennell's 1780 map of the Bengal delta marked it as a 'Country depopulated by Muggs' and showed several forts around Bakla that were built to repel *magh* attacks. Warren Hastings's survey of five villages in the Chittagong region from 1768 to 1772 showed birth rates in drastic decline, indicating the insecurity and terror caused by *magh* raids. After this, the focus of history-writing shifts to western Bengal and, although most of the southeast became part of British Bengal, it, with the exception of Dhaka, enters our attention only in the late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries.

Rila Mukherjee is a retired Professor in History, University of Hyderabad, India.



On September 20, 1414, the Sultan of Bengal sent a giraffe as tribute to the Yung-lo Emperor of China. The animal arrived at the Ming court to great acclaim and was thoroughly documented in words and images, like in this hanging scroll from the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The giraffe was interpreted at court as the qilin, a mythical beast supposedly seen only when a sage ruler was on the throne. Many exotic animals were sent as tribute to the Ming court from lands visited by the imperial fleet and its admiral Cheng Ho.

parts of Tripura).

From the sixth century onward, these units crystallised into Vanga (lower Bengal between the Bhagirathi and the Padma-Meghna rivers); Varendra (present north Bengal and parts of Bangladesh); Samatata (formed of the trans-Meghna territories of the Comilla-Noakhali plain and the adjacent parts of hilly Tripura); and Harikela (the areas around Chittagong and the western part of coastal Arakan).

These units continued moving. By the twelfth century, the administrative unit of Pundravardhanabhukti, called Mahasthan or Great Place, linked the eastern Himalayan foothills with lower Bengal. Numerous waterways connected it to Kamrup, which housed the traditional land and fluvial routes into Burma, Yunnan, and China. Another unit on the far side of the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta, Harikela, reinforced upstream-

but seems to have stretched westward to Magadh and parts of Bihar, southward to Odisha, and eastward to Kamrup. The Pala polity, however, is like an imperial mandala without a clear core. It was also a cashless and coinless economy.

II From the thirteenth century onwards, with Muslim rule, a process of territorial consolidation occurred, and some changes ensued. Southeast Bengal became 'Bangalah'—the 'Bengala' of the Portuguese accounts echoes this. It was Bangalah, not the west, that was economically and culturally advanced. Lakhnauti referenced western Bengal. They were two distinct polities, integrated only in the fourteenth century into what we call medieval Bengal. Under the Ilyas Shahis, although the capital was in Pandua in the west, more mint towns were found in the southeast. Under the later Ilyas Shahis (1437-87), as many as

Miraz supports youth inclusion for Zimbabwe Tests

SPORTS REPORTER

While the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) is ongoing, Bangladesh national Test team players are already setting their sights on the upcoming Test series against Zimbabwe in Sylhet and Chattogram.

With Test team's Liton Das and Nahid Rana expected to participate in the Pakistan Super League (PSL), several new faces may be called up for the series.

As the series against Zimbabwe is not part of the ICC World Test Championship cycle, it offers a valuable opportunity to test fresh talent. Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who is the vice captain of the Test side and had previously captained Bangladesh to a 1-1 series draw in the West Indies in December last year, emphasised the importance of including younger players, especially in the absence of experienced stars like Mushfiqur Rahim and Shakib Al Hasan.

"There are many young players who will have an opportunity going forward. When we won a Test match in the West Indies, we didn't have many [established] players, and that created chances for two or three youngsters. In this series against Zimbabwe, some young players will likely get opportunities, and it will be important for them to perform," Miraz told reporters after his DPL team, Mohammedan,



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

secured a five-wicket win over Prime Bank in Mirpur yesterday.

"Our senior-most players have retired, and we have to slowly take on the responsibility. Those who are here must perform and help take Bangladesh to the next level. This responsibility belongs to all of us," he added.

One promising name is Mahidul Islam Ankon, who impressed in the last Bangladesh Premier League and has been in good form during the current DPL. Ankon made his Test debut during the home series against South Africa last year, and with Liton unavailable for the upcoming matches, sources suggest

Ankon is the frontrunner to take over as the wicketkeeper-batter. He also featured in the warm-up match in the Caribbean during Bangladesh's last Test tour.

Miraz expressed confidence in Ankon's potential to contribute.

"He [Ankon] has performed well in domestic cricket over the past three to four years and has been considered a regular performer. He even earned his chance in the national team. I feel it's important to give them [young players] opportunities -- if they do well, they can serve Bangladesh for the next five to seven years. That's crucial. At the same time, he will develop the habit of performing in

international cricket. He is preparing well, and I've played alongside him for a long time. Given his mentality, I believe he will succeed in international cricket," Miraz said.

Zimbabwe are scheduled to arrive in Bangladesh on April 15, and with the DPL still underway, questions have been raised about how the national team will prepare for the two-Test series, which begins on April 20 in Sylhet before moving on to Chattogram for the second Test that starts on April 28.

The Tigers had recently participated in the Champions Trophy after playing in the BPL, a T20 competition, and coaches and officials had voiced concerns about the adequacy of their preparations.

"The schedule was set earlier, and you can't suddenly change the calendar. We have to adjust and play in the BPL, DPL, and international matches. In the future, the board could consider maintaining a better balance between domestic and international fixtures," Miraz suggested.

"We will have about 10 days before the Test series, and we hope to prepare during this time. We may have a two-day practice match in Sylhet or a match scenario practice session. But I believe 10 days is plenty of time to prepare," Miraz concluded.

Emon etches name on record books



Bangladesh opener Parvez Hossain Emon etched his name on the record books during a Dhaka Premier League (DPL) game yesterday, smashing the fastest-ever fifty by a Bangladeshi player across formats. Emon reached his half-century in just 15 balls, eclipsing the previous record held by Shuvagata Hom, who had struck a 16-ball fifty for Shinepukur Cricket Club in the T20 edition of the DPL in 2019. This time it was Shinepukur who were at the receiving end as Emon's record-breaking 61 not out off 23 balls helped Abahani chase down a modest 89-run target in only 6.4 overs with 10 wickets in hand. Emon struck four fours and six towering sixes on his way to achieving the feat. The fastest fifty in world cricket, though, was scored in nine balls -- six less than Emon's -- by Dipendra Singh Airee of Nepal during an Asian Games match against Mongolia in 2023.

PHOTO: STAR

'Hamza helped us raise the level and quality of our game'

Bangladesh football has been witnessing mixture of excitement and dismay over the past few months. While Hamza Choudhury's introduction has taken the hype surrounding the men's team to an all-time high, the euphoria following the women's team's successful defence of SAFF Women's Championship last year has soured due to a long-standing rift between the senior players and the head coach.

To know about his views regarding the issues surrounding both teams, **The Daily Star's Atique Anam** contacted Bangladesh Football Federation president **Tabitha Awal**. Here are the excerpts of the interview:

The Daily Star (DS): You sat with the six senior women's footballers on Saturday. Was it just a courtesy meeting or was there more to it?

Tabitha Awal (TA): It is the mandate and obligation of the federation to routinely speak to all players concerned and especially those involved with the national teams.

DS: Does the departure of senior players before the coach's arrival mean the process of their reintegration and contract signing is stalled for the moment or has there been any headway made?

TA: It's a leading question, with speculation so I will respectfully not comment.

DS: With the opponents in Asian Cup Qualifiers already fixed, has there been any discussion by you or the women's wing chairman with head coach Peter Butler regarding the standoff with 18 senior players and how many players he wants to start his camp with?

TA: We are in continuous discussion with

all stakeholders to prepare for the AFC qualifiers. Our pre-training camp will have a revolving philosophy to accommodate as many talented players as possible. Then we will split the training sessions to prepare for both the women's senior team and the women's under-20 team.

DS: Has there been any demands or suggestions made by the players regarding their contracts or when they are willing to join the camp?

TA: It's the current policy of BFF not to discuss individual contracts or discussions with individual players.

DS: What was your impression of the men's team's performance against India and which areas do you think need improvement?

TA: As a tournament, we are happy with one point from a draw and that too from an away match. As an individual match, we played to win and could have won. We need to score goals and I am confident we will.

DS: Hamza Choudhury showed his class in his first game for Bangladesh, even with five days' training with the team. People's interest about the men's team is probably at an all-time high. How should BFF cash in on the arrival of Hamza to make long-term progress?



TA: BFF doesn't single out any individual player. We treat and respect all members of the national team equally. Hamza has definitely helped us to raise the level and quality of our game. We hope to now build the future teams at a higher quality of football as we now know what level we need to achieve.

DS: What is BFF's stance regarding overseas-based players who have the interest of representing Bangladesh and possess a certain standard?

TA: Anyone of Bangladeshi origin can be considered for the national team as long as they qualify to the standards and are able to play according to the Bangladeshi

football philosophy. We don't differentiate between players in the domestic league or any other leagues.

DS: The exclusion of Fahamedul Islam from the squad for the India game, especially after the coach himself brought him from Italy, created a lot of controversy. There have been talks of syndicates and locals not being supportive of foreign-based players. How will BFF address these concerns, going forward?

TA: This is a very uninformed question.

DS: Jamal Bhuiyan's absence from the playing XI, too, raised questions. Have you or the technical committee had any discussion with the head coach or his coaching staff regarding the technical aspects, including the selection, of that game? If yes, what was the outcome?

TA: All our players are equally talented and able to represent their country while supporting each other. We have SAFF ahead to win and AFC ahead to qualify and a pool of 30 players who will all be needed at various times.

Hockey players feel the pressure of past successes in AHF Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national hockey team feel the pressure of maintaining their streak in the AHF Cup as the winners of the last four editions are set to attempt a fifth straight triumph later this month.

The men in red and green clinched the AHF Cup title in the last four editions in 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2022 respectively and will start another campaign in the 10-team event from April 17 to 27 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

In the tournament, which will serve as the qualification tournament for the Asia Cup, Bangladesh are pitted against hosts Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Kazakhstan in Pool B.

"The only pressure is maintaining the standard we have set in the previous editions as we have won the tournament four times in a row. But we are hopeful about defending the title and qualifying for the Asia Cup as one of two sides," head coach Mamun Ur Rashid told *The Daily Star* yesterday.

The head coach has selected an 18-member squad for the event, picking new faces like Obaidul Hossain Joy and Abed Uddin.

"All 18 players were picked on the basis of their performances during the training camp," Mamun said, adding that he gradually trimmed the squad from 63 to 18 after evaluating their fitness, performance and a few other factors.

"I am hopeful about defending the title after the way the players trained in the camp. However, it would have been better if we could have played a few practice matches before the tournament but the federation could not arrange it due to financial constraints," said Mamun, adding that they are a bit wary of teams like Indonesia and Thailand, who prepared for the event in Malaysia, and Oman who trained in Pakistan.

PSG's domestic dominance just routine as Europe awaits

REUTERS, Paris

With a 10th Ligue 1 title in the last 12 seasons, Paris Saint-Germain have made their dominance in French football a matter of routine rather than a contest.

Their 24-point lead over Monaco with six games left means they have sealed this season's title and tells the story of a club operating on a different planet to their rivals, a machine fine-tuned for relentless success on home soil.

Luis Enrique's side have been ruthless, their 6-1 mauling of St Etienne eight days ago yet another flex of their muscles, a statement that, even with change, their grip on French football remains iron-clad.

The victory against Les Verts extended their unbeaten away run to 38 games, a feat matched in the top five European leagues only by AC Milan from 1991-93, and while Saturday's 1-0 win against Angers was not impressive, it wrapped up the inevitable.

PSG can also become the only team in the French top flight to remain unbeaten throughout a season, which has been another procession and potentially damages the value of Ligue 1.

"We've been champions for weeks now," Enrique, who has lost only two of his 61 league games with PSG, told reporters last week.

Even the departure of Kylian Mbappe has not loosened PSG's stranglehold, instead giving the team a more collective mindset that allowed them to see off Liverpool in Champions League last 16.

Ousmane Dembele has filled the void with style, slotting into a false nine role and netting 23 times this year.

Their transformation under Enrique has extended beyond Ligue 1 and, while the ghosts of previous European failures still linger, their commanding progress at the expense of Liverpool hinted at a new, steeper PSG.

A Champions League quarterfinal against Aston Villa now awaits and, after that, a French Cup final against Stade de Reims will provide another test of PSG's hunger.

With the league wrapped up, Enrique's challenge is to keep his players sharp, their focus unwavering.

"It's about motivation," Enrique, who was criticised when PSG struggled at the beginning of the season, said recently. "We still have important matches to play to maintain the fairness of the championship, and we want to finish unbeaten," the Spaniard said on Saturday.

For PSG, Ligue 1 has become a procession. But this season will be judged on what comes next -- their pursuit of continental supremacy, the one prize that has always eluded them.



Both Real Madrid and Barcelona stumbled at home in LaLiga on Saturday night, but it was Real who were left ruing their 2-1 loss against Valencia more than their archrivals Barca, who were held to a 1-1 draw by Real Betis. (R) Valencia stole the show in the 95th minute as the Santiago Bernabeu when Hugo Duro headed past Real's third-choice goalkeeper Fran Gonzalez -- who started due to injuries to Thibaut Courtois and Andriy Lunin -- from a Rafa Mir cross following a slick counter-attack. Meanwhile, Barcelona failed to break down a frantic Real Betis defence, having failed to convert a series of lively attacks into goals. Barcelona cut open Betis in the seventh minute with a goal from Gavi, but the visitors hit back after 16 minutes when centreback (L) Natan Souza equalised. Despite the draw, Barcelona, who now have 67 points from 30 matches, moved four points ahead of Real Madrid atop LaLiga.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS

THE BEST QUALITY EVERY TIME GUARANTEED BSRM

THE NATION'S LARGEST ROD MANUFACTURER

BSRM building a safer nation

COMPLETE GUIDANCE APP FOR HOME BUILDING

নির্মাণে আঁধার

Available on the Google Play and App Store

60 lakh new voters added

Election Commission reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 60 lakh citizens are set to be added to the voter list and over 20 lakh deceased voters are being removed from the roll.

According to a recent report by the Election Commission based on data collected by field-level officials to update the list, the total number of voters in the country stands at 12.37 crore.

The door-to-door voter list updating process, which began on January 20, will continue until April 11. The final updated list is expected by June 30.

During this period, eligible citizens who were left out can submit their information online and visit designated registration centres to enrol as voters.

According to the EC report, 60,87,739 individuals have been enrolled as new voters so far. Of these, 28,59,228 are male, 32,27,775 are female, and 1,055 are transgender.

Besides, 20,87,036 deceased voters will be removed from the list. Of them, 12,03,315 are male, 8,86,393 are female and 330 are transgender.

Since the introduction of the photo-based national ID card in 2007-2008, the EC has revised the voter list six times.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



The Bangladesh Ambulance Owners' Welfare Association park ambulances in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday to press home their five demands, including a national policy for ambulance services and an end to alleged police harassment of drivers on roads. The organisation also announced a nationwide strike from April 12.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

INVESTMENT SUMMIT 2025 Beginning of new investment narrative for Bangladesh

Says BIDA chairman Ashik Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has set its sights on becoming a globally competitive, investor-friendly economy by 2035, said BIDA Chairman Ashik Chowdhury yesterday.

"We must imagine what Bangladesh will look like in 10 years -- the picture we want to see then must inform the actions we take today," said Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, at a media briefing.

The briefing comes ahead of BIDA's Investment Summit 2025, the first large-scale conference after the interim government took charge in August last year.

The goal of the three-day summit, which kicks off today at Intercontinental Dhaka, is to shift the global perception of Bangladesh's investment climate from

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

GRAFT CASE Shakib under investigation

ACC responds to Tulip's comments to UK media; sues Hasan Mahmud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has launched an inquiry into allegations of corruption against former national cricket team captain and ex-lawmaker Shakib Al Hasan.

ACC Chairman Mohammad Abdul Momen confirmed the development while speaking to reporters yesterday.

Shakib, the former world number one all-rounder and one of the most prominent figures in the country's cricketing history, was appointed the ACC's goodwill ambassador in 2018.

As part of his contract as the brand ambassador, he also made a documentary film without any remuneration. The documentary was made to mark the inauguration of the ACC's 106 complaint hotline at that time.

The ACC removed Shakib Al Hasan from his position as brand ambassador in 2022 after allegations of irregularities and corruption were raised against him.

Momen said, "The commission has launched a probe into allegations of corruption involving Shakib Al Hasan. If the investigation uncovers evidence of wrongdoing, a case may be filed against him."

The allegations stem from a formal application submitted on August 28 last year by Supreme Court lawyer Milhanur Rahman Naomi. The complaint accuses Shakib of involvement in stock market manipulation, illegal gambling ventures, gold smuggling, fraud against

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



'Bombs were planted in Aynagarh'

ICT chief prosecutor claims attempt made to kill investigators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tajul Islam, chief prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal, has alleged an attempt to assassinate officials investigating secret detention centres built during the previous Awami League government.

Speaking to journalists after yesterday's proceedings, Tajul said the ICT investigation agency uncovered three of the most complex secret detention centres, known as Aynagarhs. Among them, the Taskforce For Interrogation (TFI) cell -- a semi-underground facility -- was found in a concealed state.

"These spaces had been sealed off by erecting walls, which had to be demolished during the investigation," he said.

He added that the entire area had been filled with garbage, which investigators had to clear in order to expose the crime scenes. He was present at the time, Tajul said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Wave of Israeli strikes kill at least 46 in Gaza

Israeli military changes initial account of Gaza aid worker killings

AGENCIES

A wave of Israeli strikes on Gaza yesterday targeted residential buildings and makeshift tents sheltering forcibly displaced families, killing at least 46 people.

Al Jazeera, quoting medical sources in the tiny Palestinian enclave, said at least 113 people were hospitalised with injuries.

Many victims are still trapped under the rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them, they added.

Apart from overnight strikes, at least 13 people were killed in Israeli attacks since dawn.

In Khan Younis, overnight Israeli air strikes killed 19 people.

Mohamed Abou Ouda, a Khan Younis resident, told Al Jazeera that he woke up to his neighbour's house having collapsed onto his.

"We did not hear the sound of a missile. We only saw smoke and a huge explosion that shook the whole neighbourhood," Ouda said, adding that their home was now a pile of "twisted metal and burning memories".

Abu Khaleel al-Madhoon, another resident of Khan Younis, said he was "devastated" by the attack.

"They were kind, peaceful people, never involved in anything. The explosion shook the entire area like an earthquake. The family was

asleep, unaware, and in an instant, everything was gone. Children, women, all killed in cold blood. This is nothing short of pure brutality."

Since Israel broke the ceasefire deal on March 18, at least 1,309 people have been killed and 3,184 wounded in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Gaza's health ministry yesterday likened Israel's prevention of polio vaccines in the besieged and bombarded territory to "a time bomb that threatens to spread the epidemic".

In a statement, it said 602,000 children in Gaza were at risk of "permanent paralysis and chronic disabilities" unless they received the desperately needed vaccines. The ministry urged relevant health authorities to apply pressure on Israel to allow the entry of the polio vaccines.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military yesterday provided new details that changed its initial account of the killing of 15 emergency workers near the southern Gaza city of Rafah last month.

The 15 paramedics and emergency responders were shot dead on March 23 and buried in a shallow grave where their bodies were found a week later by officials from the United Nations and the Palestinian Red Crescent. Another man is still missing.

- At least 602,000 children in Gaza at risk of 'permanent paralysis'
- Witnesses say attack on Khan Younis 'nothing short of pure brutality'
- UN says situation in Gaza becoming 'desperate'

We hope India will reconsider Waqf bill: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP hopes that the recently passed controversial Waqf (Amendment) Act in India will be reconsidered in the interest of maintaining communal harmony in the region, said BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed.

"India is a large democratic country and its government will reconsider this law, upholding the guardianship role of the state in protecting the religious rights of citizens of all religions...we express this hope," the senior BNP leader said at a press conference at the party chairperson's Gulshan office yesterday.

"We believe that this step [to reconsider this law] will play a historic role in maintaining communal harmony in the region."

He said the All India Muslim Personal Law Board and other like-minded organisations have termed the new law contradictory to the core spirit of the Islamic "Waqf" system.

"They [the organisations] view this law as a direct interference in the religious rights of Muslim citizens."

The concept of "Waqf" is rooted in Islamic laws and traditions. It refers to an endowment made by a charitable or religious purposes, such as building mosques, schools, hospitals, or other public institutions.

The bill was passed in both Houses of Parliament.

Salahuddin said he analysed various

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Three killed in clash over land dispute

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A khatib of a local mosque and two others were killed in a clash over a land dispute at West Para in Kutupalong under Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Abdullah Al Mamun, khatib of Kutupalong Bazar Jame Mosque; his cousin Abdul Mannan; and Mannan's sister Shahina Begum.

Ukhiya Police Station Officer in Charge Arif Hossain confirmed the incident to The Daily Star.

"We are still looking into the matter and will provide details later," the OC said.

Mohammad Ali, general secretary of the Kutupalong Bazar Committee, said the conflict between the khatib and his cousins stemmed from a boundary wall dispute.

"Mamun was on one side of the conflict, while Mannan and Shahina were on the other. All three were first cousins," he added.

Mohammad Ali, who was at the hospital during the time of reporting, said all three died from injuries from the clash.



After a nine-day Eid vacation, all public and private offices, banks, and courts reopened yesterday. The photo shows officials and employees entering the Secretariat building in the capital yesterday morning.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

New 3D-printed skin could end testing on animals

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have developed a 3D-printed imitation of human skin with living cells, an advance they say could enable cosmetic testing without the use of animals.

Researchers, including from the Vellore Institute of Technology in India, say the skin imitation mimics the natural three-layer tissue structure of human skin and is ready for testing cosmetic nanoparticles.

Their study, published in the journal STAR Protocols, comes amid restrictions imposed in the European Union on the animal testing of cosmetics and their ingredients.

Scientists worldwide are looking for alternatives to test the absorption and toxicity of cosmetics like sun creams and serums.

The latest research provides a protocol for fabricating scaffolds similar to human skin using 3D printing. "The process is simple, cost-effective, environmentally friendly, and allows customisation by adjusting treatment parameters," scientists write in the study.

The starting point for making these skin imitations is a hydrogel formulation, printed together with living cells, researchers say.

