



A deal's going to be made with China. A deal's going to be made with every one of them [other countries].

Donald Trump,
US president, a day after
pausing tariffs for most
countries, except China

YOUR RIGHT
TO KNOW

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Exporters brace for impact as India shuts cargo route

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and RASHIDUL HASAN

Exporters in Bangladesh's garment sector face a moment of reckoning over how they will manage urgent international shipments after India abruptly closed a transshipment route that had grown popular for air cargo.

The route, via Kolkata and Delhi airports, allowed Bangladeshi exporters to move goods overland to India through the Benapole-Petrapole border and then air-ship them worldwide. It became especially popular during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, offering faster service and, often, lower costs than relying on the overstretched Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) in Dhaka.

Industry estimates suggest about 18 percent of Bangladesh's garment air cargo was flown through Indian

Industry estimates suggest about 18 percent of Bangladesh's garment air cargo was flown through Indian airports before the closure.

airports. Bangladesh exported roughly 3,400 tonnes of garments by air per week, with 600 tonnes flown through Indian airports before the transshipment ban, according to data from the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association.

The government has acknowledged airport challenges and says reforms are underway. Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman said efforts were being made to reduce HSIA's ground handling costs and improve cargo services. Commerce Adviser Sh Bashir Uddin held meetings with relevant ministries yesterday to strengthen both Dhaka and Sylhet airports as viable export gateways.

A glimmer of hope lies in the third terminal at HSIA, which industry leaders say features modern scanning, testing, and temperature-controlled facilities. "The third terminal is the finest. It's just like the airport in Singapore," said Kabir Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BAFFA).

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LAST-MINUTE PREPARATION ... Two students going through books before entering their exam hall. SSC and its equivalent examinations for 2025 began across the country yesterday. The photo was taken at the Motijheel Government Boys' High School exam centre.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHANGMA

TRANSSHIPMENT 4 lorries with RMG goods turned away from Benapole

STAR REPORT

Four lorries carrying garment products were refused entry through Petrapole Port on Wednesday, hours after India cancelled a transit facility that allowed Bangladesh to export goods to third countries through India.

The shipment refused entry by Indian customs was meant for Bhutan, said Irtiza Ahmed Anik, owner of the clearing and forwarding agency in charge of the shipment.

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US TARIFF FREEZE

Crucial window for better negotiations

Some believe the US-China trade war may help redirect RMG orders to Bangladesh

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The 90-day suspension of reciprocal tariffs by the US has brought a much-needed reprieve for Bangladesh's readymade garment sector, which had been preparing for a potential slowdown in orders and pricing pressures.

With the pause in place, industry insiders see a crucial window to negotiate

better trade terms while ensuring timely shipments to avoid future tariff hikes.

Adding to the optimism, the US administration's steep 125 percent tariff on Chinese imports may redirect work orders to Bangladesh, further strengthening its foothold in the global apparel market.

However, exporters remain cautious,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

KSRM

শেকড় থেকে শিথরে

INVESTMENT SUMMIT
Event generates interest among foreign investors
Some point out roadblocks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The four-day Bangladesh Investment Summit concluded yesterday, creating interest among foreign investors, but they raised concerns over access to resources, policy continuity and corruption.

Around 400 to 450 foreign investors and their representatives joined the summit and expressed their interest in Bangladesh.

The summit also witnessed the signing of an initial agreement on investment by two foreign firms, including Handa Industries, a renowned China-based apparel manufacturing company specialising in high-quality knitted textiles, dyeing processes and garments on a global scale, with the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA).

The company will invest \$150 million in Bangladesh.

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BUSINESS

Govt courts healthcare FDI as market heads towards \$23b by 2030

B1

Bangladesh at risk of slipping to third in global RMG export

B1

Bangladesh has potential to become digital powerhouse

B1



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'No regrets if I died that day'

Bangladeshi worker saves children from burning building, makes headlines in Singapore

THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN

Bangladeshi construction worker Shakil Mohammad was at work at River Valley Road in Singapore when he heard screams next door.

Seeing a shophouse on fire and children standing on the ledge on the third floor, he rushed to help them.

Speaking to The Straits Times a day after the incident on Wednesday, Shakil, 35, said, "The children wanted to jump. I told them, 'Don't jump! I will help you'."

Then, he and several of his fellow workers took a ladder from the construction site to get to them.

Tomato Cooking School, which runs cooking lessons and camps for children, is located in the shophouse.

Shakil, who has been working in Singapore since 2018, was second on the ladder, with another worker above him grabbing children and passing them to him.

He said: "There was one girl, when she was passed to me, her eyes were closed. I held her in my arms, but she was not moving."

"The fire was so hot. I would have no regrets if I died that day. I just needed to save the children."

Shakil thinks they saved 10 of them.

Choking up, he added, "There were three more children inside, and I wanted to go inside to save them, but I couldn't. The fire was too intense. I cannot explain how [painful] my heart is."

The fire left a 10-year-old girl dead and 21 others injured.

She died after being taken to the hospital, said the police. The 22 casualties included six adults aged between 23 and 55 and 16 children aged between six and 10.

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade confirmed the girl who died was an Australian.

Recounting the ordeal of that day, Zainal Zin, another worker, said when he arrived at the furniture store where he worked, he saw some children with burns running out crying, while others were carried out unconscious by firefighters.



Rescuers use metal scaffolding and a ladder to rescue those trapped in the burning building on River Valley Road in Singapore City on April 8. Inset, construction worker Shakil Mohammad (right).

PHOTO: THE STRAITS TIMES

Some children sat by the roadside, looking shell-shocked.

Zainal, 56, said: "I'll never forget the look on their faces, and I cannot get the scene out of my head."

"One girl was lifeless as a firefighter carried her out. Her eyes were closed. Paramedics were rushing to do CPR on her."

"Another boy, who looked like he was around four years old, had his head and arms wrapped in bandages, and he was clinging tightly to a paramedic."

Members of the public, including construction workers, used metal

scaffolding and a ladder to rescue those trapped on the third-storey ledge.

Zainal said, "It was a terrible thing to witness. This girl had burns all over her left arm. When she turned around, I saw burns on the left side of her face, too."

"I couldn't sleep last night, thinking about the children. I can't imagine how their parents must feel."

Dani Rahmat, 25, owner of a nearby barber shop, praised the migrant workers. He said: "I think they were super selfless. What they did was really inspiring."

At around 12:50pm on April 9, SCDF officers arrived for investigations.



Several bouquets of flowers were left at the scene, which has been cordoned off.

SCDF spokesperson said it is contacting those who helped evacuate the victims to present them with the SCDF Community Lifesaver Award.

The girl who died in the blaze is the fourth fire fatality in Singapore in 2025.

In January, a family of three died after a Hougang five-room flat caught fire.

According to SCDF's annual statistics, five people died in fires in 2024, up from three in 2023.

Copyright: The Straits Times / Asia News Network

Exporters brace for impact

FROM PAGE 1

Still, the sudden Indian move has raised concern. "It does hamper potential, especially the intraregional potential," said Rubana Hug, former president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). However, she said since Bangladesh has traditionally focused on direct shipping rather than transshipment, the immediate impact may not be severe.

Government officials echoed a similar tone. Mahbubur Rahman confirmed that cargo to Nepal and Bhutan via Bhomra land port remains unaffected by the Indian ban imposed on April 8. He added that Bangladesh will respond to the Indian decision diplomatically, while continuing domestic reforms to maintain export competitiveness.

Yet for many exporters, especially those serving fast fashion clients with short lead times, the loss of Indian airport access is a blow. Now, increased shipments through HSIA are expected to stretch its already-burdened infrastructure. In some cases, suppliers will rely more on alternatives, including routing goods through the Maldives for onward shipping.

WHY EXPORTERS CHOSE INDIAN AIRPORTS

One of the main attractions of Indian air transhipment was the cost. While sending a kilogram of apparel from HSIA to Europe typically costs \$2.90-\$3.20 during off-peak periods (and up to \$4.50 in peak season), shipping through India costs about \$2.60 per kg, even after accounting for overland transport to Indian airports.

Major international buyers like Inditex (Zara's parent company), which maintains a distribution hub in Delhi, preferred this route for speed and efficiency. Local suppliers relied on it to shorten lead times and optimise delivery schedules.

By contrast, exporters have long complained about bottlenecks at HSIA. The airport's cargo village has a maximum capacity of 300 tonnes,

but it handles over 800 tonnes daily even in the off-season, and up to 1,200 tonnes during peak periods. Ground handling inefficiencies and mismanagement have plagued the Dhaka airport for years. Shipments have reportedly been left exposed to the elements.

Ground handling fees are another sticking point. Dhaka charges 29 cents per kilogram compared to just five cents at Delhi airport. Combined with slower service and a lack of modern equipment, these high costs have driven exporters to seek alternatives abroad.

Fuel costs also play a role. A \$1 per-gallon difference in jet fuel prices between Dhaka and Delhi gives Indian airports a further edge.

The airport cost is driven by the high price of jet fuel, which is about 30 percent higher in Dhaka than in India. "Jet fuel accounts for 40 percent of an airline's operating costs," Biman spokesperson Bushra Islam said.

"If that's the reality, then why wouldn't a businessman prefer Delhi over Dhaka for exporting cargo?" another Biman official said. "The government should seriously look into this."

"On average, 1.75 lakh tonnes of cargo are exported annually from Dhaka airport, and Biman carries 16 to 17 percent of that total," Bushra told The Daily Star. She added that Biman also provides ground-handling facilities to various airlines that transport this cargo.

Bushra, general manager (public relations) at Biman, said the airline's cargo handling capacity will double once the third terminal becomes operational. Currently, Terminals 1 and 2 have a combined space of 19,600 square metres dedicated to export-bound cargo, with an annual handling capacity of two lakh tonnes of goods. The new third terminal alone will offer 36,000 square metres of space for exporters, with a handling capacity of 5.46 lakh tonnes per year.

A senior cargo department official at Biman said several charges, such

as overflying, landing, and parking fees, are imposed by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), not Biman. "We only provide ground handling services to foreign airlines," he said, requesting anonymity.

There are also infrastructure-related challenges. For instance, a cargo aircraft that exceeds the prescribed weight limit cannot land at Dhaka airport because of the runway's limited strength.

Additionally, Dhaka lacks world-class retail brand stores, which means there's little to no incoming cargo business. In contrast, when cargo aircraft land in India, they can bring in goods for stores in Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, and other major cities, making the return trip economically viable.

"That's why the operating cost of cargo aircraft is lower in India – they can carry goods both ways," he added.

The official said a meeting was held with Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin on Wednesday night to discuss ways to resolve the issue. "We hope for a positive outcome soon," said the official who attended the meeting, declining to give further details.

Unlike passenger services, the cargo business operates on a demand basis. When demand rises, exporters often charter freighter services, jointly deciding with importers how and where to send goods. When demand is low, airlines carry cargo in the belly of passenger aircraft.

Emirates, Cathay Pacific, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, and several other carriers currently operate dedicated cargo flights from Dhaka.

"We are opening Sylhet for cargo operations on the 27th of this month, and Chattogram will follow shortly," said Air Vice Marshal Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan, chairman of CAAB. "With the third terminal and its increased capacity, plus a fully automated system, we'll be able to handle our own cargo. That will also boost our revenue."

Some goods were meant for India and some for Nepal, he said.

However, no goods were exported to Bhutan from Bangladesh through the port in the last two days, he said.

Akhaura Land Port in Brahmanbaria saw around 70 tonnes of various goods shipped to Tripura, said Mahmudul Hasan, assistant director of the port.

At Burimari Land Port in Lalmonirhat, some goods were shipped to Bhutan, said Mehedi Hasan, assistant director of the port.

Meanwhile, export and import of other goods through Benapole and three other land ports – Akhaura, Bangladesh, and Burimari – have been uninterrupted.

In Nilphamari, jute, potatoes, and tissue paper were exported to Nepal through Bangladesh land port yesterday and nothing unusual had happened, said Abul Kalam Azad, in

charge of the Bangladesh Land Port.

Our correspondents from Jessore, Brahmanbaria, Lalmonirhat, and Nilphamari contributed to this report.

Event generates interest among foreign investors

FROM PAGE 1

ShopUp merged with Sary in a \$110 million funding deal in another noticeable achievement of the event.

However, BIDA, the key investment agency, said the target of the summit was not to secure immediate investment but to generate a pipeline of potential investments that will be followed up at specific intervals to encourage the investors.

"We will address their problems so that they can get the real information and do not face any issues in launching their investment here," said Nahian Rahim Rochi, head of business development at BIDA, at a closing press briefing held at InterContinental Dhaka yesterday.

The summit began on April 7 with visits by a team of investors to the Korean Export Processing Zone, the National Special Economic Zone in Mirsarai and the Bangladesh Special Economic Zone in Narayanganj to explore investment opportunities and see the facilities for themselves.

There were opportunities for business-to-business and business-to-government meetings at the summit.

In response to a question regarding the types of problems investors identified, Rochi said the issues have

remained the same for years.

Investors blamed the complex certificate and approval processes for obtaining resources. The government's "priority agenda" is to simplify all approval procedures.

Policy continuity is also necessary for doing business in a planned way, as frequent policy changes hamper progress, he said.

Corruption was also identified as a longstanding problem by the investors.

The government will try to address all these issues so that investors feel encouraged to invest, Rochi said.

However, the success of the summit should not be measured solely by immediate investments as its main goal was to showcase the potential of various sectors and facilitate matchmaking with local investors, he said.

Bangladesh needs high-value addition-based manufacturing companies in the garment sector, and the investment by Handa will contribute positively.

Many foreign investors are also showing interest in the pharmaceutical sector, particularly in setting up active pharmaceutical ingredients production facilities.

"We will make a roadmap to track all the interested investors so they can be

monitored and encouraged to invest in the country," he added.

At the summit, there were special events on apparel and textiles, digital economy, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and agro processing, renewable energy and youth entrepreneurship.

Kibak Sung, chairman of Youngone Corporation and a pioneer in Bangladesh's garment and textile sectors, was awarded honorary citizenship of Bangladesh yesterday for his outstanding contributions to the industry and the country's economy.

Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun, executive chairman of BIDA, addressed investors and presented the potential and prospects of investment in Bangladesh.

There were several side events, such as the World Bank's release of the Bangladesh Country Private Sector Diagnostic, which identified four sectors – green garments, housing for the middle class, paint and dyes, and digital financial services – as having strong potential to attract investment and generate millions of jobs.

A policy dialogue was held on Bangladesh's trade and investment strategies in the post-LDC era. Another event focused on responsible business conduct for decent work.

2008 MUMBAI ATTACKS Key suspect extradited to India from US

AFP, New Delhi

A Pakistan-born Canadian citizen wanted for his role in the deadly 2008 Mumbai siege landed in New Delhi yesterday after his extradition from the United States, Indian law enforcement said.

Tahawwur Hussain Rana, 64, arrived at a military airbase outside the Indian capital under heavily armed guard and will be held in detention to face trial.

India accuses Rana of being a member of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) group, designated by the United Nations as a terrorist organisation, and of helping to plot the attacks.

The National Investigation Agency said it "secured the successful extradition of... Mumbai terror attack mastermind Tahawwur Rana from the US".

The extradition took "years of sustained and concerted efforts to bring the key conspirator behind the 2008 mayhem to justice".

US President Donald Trump announced in February that Washington would extradite Rana, who he called "one of the very evil people in the world".

IAB wants country be renamed 'Bangladesh Jonokalyan Rastro'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) has formally proposed renaming the country to the "People's Welfare State of Bangladesh" or in Bangla, "Bangladesh Jonokalyan Rastro" as part of a broader push for political and constitutional reforms.

Agreeing with the Constitution Reform Commission's proposal to change the name of the state, the party made the suggestion, as it believes this name clearly reflects the commitment to ensuring public welfare.

The proposal was part of its overall opinion on the reform proposals that they submitted to the National Consensus Commission yesterday afternoon.

The IAB have agreed with 145 of the commission's reform proposals, disagreed with 26, and presented 41 new proposals. Additionally, they have offered 4 fundamental proposals.

It agreed with proposals such as changing the state's basic principles in the Constitution, ensuring a balance of power between the prime minister and the president, limiting an individual to serving as prime minister no more than twice, preventing the same person from being the head of the party, government, and parliament simultaneously, and abolishing Article 70 of the Constitution.

The party proposed the establishment of Shariah courts and suggested that in cases of proven crimes, a convict should not be eligible for presidential pardon without the consent of the victim's family.

The IAB opposed proposals like introducing provincial and city governments and electing chairmen through members' votes. Instead of amending the Official Secrets Act, they demanded its complete abolition.

It also opposed the idea of a Cabinet Committee playing a role in appointing senior bureaucrats.

The National Consensus Commission, headed by Interim Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus, has been operational since February 15.

In the first phase, several commissions were formed focusing on constitutional reforms, public administration reforms, electoral reforms, judicial reforms, and Anti-Corruption Commission reforms.

Key recommendations from these commissions were sent to 39 political parties in spreadsheet form, requesting their feedback.

So far, 32 political parties have submitted their opinions. As part of the ongoing formal dialogue, the National Consensus Commission has already held discussions with LDP, Khelafat Majlis, Bangladesh Labour Party, Rashtra Songskar Andolan, Amar Bangladesh (AB) Party, and Nagarik Oikya. Upcoming dialogues with Bangladesh Jasad and Zaker Party are scheduled for April 12.

SSC exams begin across the country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent examinations began across the country yesterday.

On the first day, the test for Bangla first paper was held from 10:00am to 1:00pm.

The exams will continue till May 13, according to a revised schedule from the Dhaka Education Board. Practical exams are set to take place between May 15-22.

Yesterday, a total 26,928 candidates were absent, while 22 were expelled for misconduct.

Education Adviser Prof CR Abrar visited the exam centre at Motijheel Government Boys' High School in the capital, and urged people to avoid spreading rumours about the SSC exams, saying that such rumours cause unnecessary mental stress for both examinees and their guardians.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Frustrated, a man steps out of his vehicle and stares at the sea of traffic on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday evening. Several areas of the capital experienced gridlock as a aftermath of the procession held by BNP in solidarity with Palestinians.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Lifesaver on the Meghna

Floating hospital brings hope to char people in Chandpur



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY, back from Chandpur

Sixty-five-year-old Zamir Ali Majhi had long suffered from an eye condition but could not afford the treatment he needed.

When doctors at a hospital in Dhaka recommended cataract surgery for both eyes -- each costing Tk 10,000 -- he had no choice but to return home to Malikandi, a remote char in Chandpur's Haimchar upazila on the bank of the Meghna river.

Later, he heard about a floating hospital stationed near a nearby village that provides free medical services.

"I came to the hospital where they checked my

eyes and told me to return today for the operation on one eye. I'm now waiting for the procedure," Zamir said at the floating hospital on Wednesday.

He was among over 100 patients who received free eye surgery during a two-day eye camp held on Tuesday and Wednesday at the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Mobile Hospital Bangladesh, stationed in the Sildertek area under Nilkamal Union.

The floating hospital, which began regular healthcare services in early January with periodic health camps, was formally inaugurated on Wednesday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Finish BCS process in one year: NCP



Protesters being intercepted by joint forces yesterday as they attempt to march towards the PSC office.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should take steps to save the lives of abandoned newborns and ensure their welfare, said speakers at a press conference yesterday.

The press conference was organised by the Dr Mujib Newborn Foundation, which supports abandoned newborns, at Jatiya Press Club ahead of the International Day for Street Children, to be observed tomorrow.

Mozibur Rahman, chairman of the foundation and also a director of the Institute of Child and Mother Health in the capital's Matuail, read out a written statement.

Citing data from the Sanskriti Foundation, he said 94 abandoned newborns were rescued across the country last year -- 64 of whom died. "Most of these lives could have been

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

rescued if the government had taken steps to protect them," he said.

He urged the government to take steps to protect the lives of abandoned newborns and ensure their welfare.

He also called for the publication of preliminary exam results, including marks, cutoff scores, and correct answers, on the PSC website. They also stressed that the written exam results, including marks, should be posted before the viva takes place.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



'Raise your voice for Palestine'
BNP calls upon Muslim world to act against Israeli atrocities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has called on the Muslim majority countries to take strong, united action to halt the mass killings and atrocities committed by Israeli forces in Gaza.

The party also urged the government to play a proactive role in influencing countries that support Israel to help end the ongoing violence.

Speaking at a rally in front of the party's Nayapaltan headquarters yesterday, BNP Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan said, "We call upon all Muslim nations to raise their voices together. The Muslim world must take appropriate steps to shift the stance of those backing Israel."

The BNP procession began around 4:45pm from Nayapaltan and ended at Banglamotor, passing through Shantinagar, Mouchak, and Moghbazar.

Thousands lined the streets, chanting slogans and waving national, BNP, and Palestinian flags. The gathering caused severe traffic congestion across Kakrail, Fakirpool, and adjoining areas.

Before the march, five standing committee members addressed a brief rally in front of the BNP office.

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JULY UPRISING

Probe into four major cases nearly done

Says ICT Chief Prosecutor's Office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People need to stand together, regardless of religion, to build a better world for all, said speakers at an interfaith civic gathering yesterday.

The event was held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in the capital's Agraon.

Leaders of different religious communities attended the event, which was organised by the National Council of Churches in Bangladesh to promote interfaith harmony, religious justice, and peace initiatives.

Presiding over the programme, Religious Affairs Adviser AFM Khalid Hossain said, "Bangladesh has made significant progress in maintaining communal harmony, but continuous efforts are necessary to strengthen it in a changing world."

He said the roots of communal harmony in Bangladesh lie in its history of cultural pluralism and shared Bangladeshi identity that transcends religious boundaries.

"Despite these positive aspects, challenges remain. Incidents of communal violence and intolerance still occur, often instigated politically or from external influences," he added.

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A total of 22 cases have been lodged with the tribunal, accusing 141 individuals. Among them, 54 are in custody, while 87 remain at large.

Of the accused, 70 are civilians, 62 are members of law enforcement agencies including police, and nine are retired or dismissed military officers, Tamim added.

The cases include the burning of six bodies in Ashulia, the killing of seven protesters in the Chakharpool area, the shooting of an unarmed youth named Amir Hossain in Rampura while he was reportedly hanging from a building's ledge, and a case against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina for alleged command responsibility.

During a views exchange meeting with journalists at the chief prosecutor's office, prosecutors said final investigation reports for these cases may soon be submitted to the tribunal.

"After the tribunal accepts the reports, the formal trial will begin," said prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim.

They also noted a severe shortage of experienced and reliable investigators in crimes against humanity cases, with

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

AT A GLANCE

339 complaints lodged

Currently, 39 are under probe

22 cases filed with tribunal

Out of 141 accused, 54 in custody



MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Police Week 2025, the largest annual gathering of the Bangladesh Police, is set to begin on April 29, following months of uncertainty.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will inaugurate the three day event at the Rajarbagh Police Lines auditorium.

However, it is still undecided whether he will present the Bangladesh Police Medals (BPM) and President's Police Medals (PPM), which are usually awarded in recognition of year-long service.

Enamul Haque Sagar, assistant inspector general at Police Headquarters, said, "It has been finalised that Police Week will be held on April 29. But it is yet to be decided whether the chief adviser will present the medals."

He said a new system has been introduced to award the BPM and PPM based on year-round merit. A committee has been formed, and officers were asked to submit citations for evaluation.

Police Week is usually held in the first two months of the year. But sources said the force took longer to regroup after a morale crisis following the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government on August 5, amid public protests over police brutality.

Many officers faced criticism for their role in violently suppressing the quota reform and anti-discrimination movements. A senior officer said more than 449 personnel -- including former inspector generals and Dhaka Metropolitan Police

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A "moual" (honey collector) collect honey from a beehive in the Sundarbans. Every year in April, the Forest Department begins issuing permits for honey collection in the Sundarbans. The mousals enter the deep forest with official passes and permits, risking their lives to collect honey.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Finish BCS process

FROM PAGE 3

The party further proposed that candidates be allowed to reshuffle their cadre choices after the written results are announced but before the viva voce. It also called for reinstatement of the non-cadre system, as seen in the 38th BCS, with the highest number of appointments given to non-cadres who pass the viva.

Meanwhile, the Public Service Commission has released the schedule for the 46th BCS written exams, which will begin on May 8 and take place at centres across Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chattogram, Khulna, Barishal, Sylhet, Rangpur, and Mymensingh.

Raise your voice

FROM PAGE 3

Speaking as chief guest, Mirza Abbas said, "Had the Muslim world remained united and raised their voices collectively, Israel would not have dared to continue this genocide."

He warned that without effective action from the United Nations and Muslim countries, such oppression would continue.

Salahuddin Ahmed, said, "The genocide in Palestine began long ago, with both direct and indirect support from global powers. Yet the leaders of the Muslim world have failed to take a firm stand."

"On behalf of the BNP,

divisions.

This comes amid protests by job seekers demanding a postponement of the exams.

Moreover, joint forces yesterday dispersed some protesters with batons around 3:00pm after they attempted to march towards the PSC office demanding postponement of the written exams.

Several protesters were detained during the incident.

Earlier on Tuesday, the protesters broke into the PSC premises over the same demands, and gave the commission a three-day ultimatum to postpone the exam date.

Police Week 2025 finally

FROM PAGE 3

commissioners -- have been named in murder cases related to the crackdowns.

"Some officers have gone into hiding or fled the country. We are now reshaping the force with new leadership in key positions. A new uniform is also in the works," said an official.

A senior DMP officer said political instability had put the event in doubt, but the appointment of a new inspector general cleared the way. "The government delayed its approval, but now the focus is on a more low-key, meaningful event."

A deputy inspector general said guidance may be given during the week ahead of the expected December elections. "But whether we can truly break free from political influence

remains uncertain -- and that's a concern we hope to raise."

Sources allege that BPM and PPM awards have previously been influenced by political considerations. On February 24, the home ministry revoked medals from 103 officers who received them in 2018 for their roles in the controversial 10th national election.

Fresh allegations suggest lobbying is again taking place, with some officers reportedly using administrative pressure to get on the medal list.

However, Police Headquarters has pledged transparency. "Only deserving candidates will receive the medals," said a senior officer. "Those lobbying for recognition will be excluded."

Fewer than 50 medals

are expected to be awarded this year.

There will be no ceremonial parade or presidential meeting this year, according to PHQ sources. The event will begin with an address by the chief adviser.

On April 30 and May 1, various units -- including the Special Branch, CID, RAB, Tourist Police, Railway Police, and Industrial Police -- will give presentations. Meetings with the home adviser, home secretary, and ministry officials will also take place.

Additional events include a PUNAK fair, a citizen dialogue, the annual Police Service Association meeting, and a reunion with retired officers.

The week will conclude with a formal dinner on May 1.

Probe into four major cases

FROM PAGE 3

a small number currently handling the workload.

Prosecutors said they have already visited 20 districts -- some multiple times -- to collect evidence.

The ICT prosecution team currently has 17 prosecutors, including three who joined last month, while the Investigation Agency has 24 investigators, with seven joining this month.

Several accused individuals have reportedly fled the country despite arrest warrants. Authorities said efforts to bring them back are ongoing through legal and diplomatic channels, though the process is time-consuming.

They are also facing difficulties in detaining the accused who are on the run, added the prosecutors.

Prosecutors also reported that crucial evidence has been destroyed -- including

deleted videos and audio recordings, burned or hidden documents from hospitals and other key locations, and erased digital data -- though some of it has been recovered.

Additionally, fugitive suspects are allegedly investing large sums of money to obstruct investigations and even attempting bomb attacks on investigators.

Some individuals linked to the previous administration are said to be hiring international lobbyists and spreading disinformation on social media to derail the trial process.

Despite these challenges, over 1,000 eyewitness testimonies have been collected so far, and investigators continue to analyse hours of video and audio footage related to the July uprising.

"We are doing everything

in our power to ensure a fair trial, based on digital evidence and in line with international standards," said Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam.

In a significant development, several amendments have been made to the ICT Act of 1973. These include -- authorisation to bring charges against members of the army, navy, air force, Rab, BGB, and intelligence agencies; provision to compensate victims using confiscated assets of the accused; power for investigators to seize documents without prior tribunal approval; and authority for the tribunal to confiscate the accused's wealth to prevent escape and ensure justice.

The chief prosecutor said these amendments are in the final phase and are expected to come into effect within a week.

"Working together across

faiths is not an option -- it is a necessity," he said.

"When we look around

and see so many acts of injustice, the need for people of faith to stand together becomes even greater," he said.

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faith



A nurse tends to a diarrhoea patient at Barishal General Hospital yesterday. Hospitals across Barishal are witnessing an alarming rise in diarrhoea cases, prompting serious concern among health officials over the increasing number of patients.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

50 hurt as robbers attack 10 trawlers

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

At least 10 fishing trawlers came under attacks by armed robbers in the Bay of Bengal on Wednesday night, leaving more than 50 fishermen shot and injured.

The assailants looted fish and essential supplies from the vessels before disabling their engines, leaving the fishermen stranded at sea.

The incident was reported to the Barguna District Fishing Trawler Owners' Association yesterday.

Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, president of the association, said the attacks took place in the deep-sea area of Boro Bajda, approximately 120 kilometres southeast of Patharghat upazila in Barguna. All the affected fishermen are residents of different villages in Patharghat.

Among the targeted

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING

APRIL 11

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:35 12:30 4:45 6:24 7:45

JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 5:00 6:28 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

School field leased for market

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A school playground in Shialkhwa village under Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila has been leased out for setting up a haat (rural market), angering students, teachers and guardians.

Shialkhwa Government Primary School and Shialkhwa School and College share the same campus and playground in the village. There are also three other kindergarten schools and a madrasa nearby. Over 1,000 students of all these five educational institutions play in this ground.

The ground was previously used for setting up haat for years before it was freed from occupation last year. Locals expressed concern that if the haat is set up on the ground again, children will be deprived of

sports activities.

"If the haat is set up in the playground ignoring our demand for conducive environment in the educational institutions, we will form a movement," said Noor Islam, a parent.

ground was used for setting up the market for years, adding that most locals want the haat to be set up on the field.

"I paid Tk 98 lakh to the government to take lease of Shialkhwa Haat," he said.

Kasem Ali, headteacher of Shialkhwa Government Primary School, said school grounds cannot be turned to marketplaces.

Lalmonirhat district education officer Mujibur Rahman and primary education officer Liton Das both agreed that the playground will be used only for sports activities of students.

Jakiya Sultana, UNO of Kaliganj, said a decision will be taken by prioritising the educational environment, while they are looking for an alternative location for the haat.



"We want to play on the school ground. It cannot be used as a marketplace," said Saiful Islam, a 10th grader.

Asadul Haque Hiru, lesee of Shialkhwa Haat, claimed that the

Diarrhoea cases surge in Barishal

Hospitals overwhelmed

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Hospitals across Barishal are witnessing an alarming rise in diarrhoea cases, prompting serious concern among health officials over the increasing number of patients.

Dr Moloy Krishna Baral, resident medical officer at the hospital, said they have been admitting 30 to 40 diarrhoea patients daily since before Eid-ul-Fitr. "The diarrhoea ward is currently receiving treatment, despite the ward having a capacity of just 12 beds.

Among them is Akhi Begum, a pregnant woman from Bhola, who was admitted on Thursday with

severe symptoms. Anis Hawlader from Gouranupi upazila brought his 10-year-old daughter Aliza to the hospital after she developed diarrhoea from consuming contaminated food.

At Barishal General Hospital, the diarrhoea ward paints a grim picture. Around 40 patients are currently receiving treatment, despite the ward having a capacity of just 12 beds.

According to the Barishal divisional health office, the situation is deteriorating rapidly, with an average

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

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SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



BANGLADESH BANK

Common Services Department-2 (Mechanical Engineering Wing) Head Office, Dhaka-1000.

Invitation for Tender (Goods & related works) through Web.

01	Procuring Entity	Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka- 1000.
02	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
03	Invitation ref. No. & Date	CSD-2(MES) 14/I(Lif)/2025-127 Date: 09/04/2025
04	Source of Funds	Bangladesh Bank's own fund.
05	Name of the work	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 900 Kg Capacity 03(Three) Nos passenger lift for annex-1 building and 1600 kg capacity 01 no. Cargo/Service lift for Main Building at Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka.
06	Address of the web for submission e-tender.	www.bb.org.bd www.e tender.bb.org.bd
07	Tender Document Price	Tk 7,000.00(Taka Seven Thousand only)
08	Last Date & Time of selling tender document.	20/05/2025 before 5.00 PM
09	Last date & time for e-tenders submission through web	20/05/2025 on or before 3.00PM.
10	Last Date & Time and Name & Address of the office for receiving Original tender security and other documents	20/05/2025 on or before 3: 15 PM Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7 th floor of 30 th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka-1000.
11	Name & Address of the office Opening Tender.	Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7 th floor of 30 th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka-1000 on 20/05/2025 at 3.30 PM. (intending tenders or their authorized representatives are allowed to attend the tender opening).
12	Eligibility of the Tenderer	(a) Tenderer shall have at least 10(Ten) years of overall business experience in the supply and installation of mechanical machineries. (b) Tenderer shall have a valid Agency/Distributorship/Authorization certificate issued from the internationally reputed Lift Manufacturer. (c) Tenderer shall have specific experience for supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of the proposed brand lift [‘A’ category standard lift i.e KONE(Finland), MITSUBUSHI(Japan), OTIS(USA/Japan/France), Schindler (Switzerland), TKE(Germany), FUJITEC(Japan), HITACHI(Japan) or equivalent product] installed in any Govt/ Semi-Govt/ Autonomous organization worth not less than Tk.6.00 crore in a single contract in the last 05(five) years. (d) The minimum amount of liquid asset i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk. 5.60 crore only. In case of credit facilities, Bank shall ensure that the above mentioned credit limit will be given if the said work is awarded to the contractor. (e) The Tenderer shall have to furnish the certificate in this respect from an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer or equivalent and shall meet all other criteria, terms & conditions as specified in the tender documents without which the tender will not be considered.
13	Tender Security	Tender Security amount is BDT 20.00 (Twenty) Lac only will be required in the form of Pay Order/ Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee in favour of Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
14	Work completion Time	08(Eight) months from the date of Award of Contract.
15	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker, Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7 th floor, 30 th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka-1000.
16	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Phone: 88-02-9530490, Fax: 88-029530321
17	Special Instructions	(i) The Tenderer shall submit the tender through Bangladesh Bank Website (e-Tendering) & shall have a valid e-mail address for participating in e-Tendering. (ii) Original PO/BD/BG as Tender Security has to be send to Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 within stipulated date and time of TDS. (iii) Scanned copy of the tender security shall be submitted with the tender through web. (iv) Tenderer shall submit all documentary evidence (attested or original), failing which the Tender may be considered as non-responsive. (v) Tenderer shall duly fill in the Form PG3-1 (Tender Submission Letter) and Form PG3-2 (Tenderer Information sheet) as per format given in Tender Document. (vi) PG3-1 form shall be completed and signed by the Authorized Signatory on the Letter-Head Pad and scanned copy of it shall be attached during submitting tender and original will have to send to Director (Engineering-E/M), CSD-2 at scheduled time as per TDS. (vii) Furnishing of any false, misleading documents shall result in rejection of the tender and may lead to action under Rules 127 of PPR 2008. (viii) All sorts of Security and Safety measures shall be carried out by the Contractor during execution of the work. (ix) Bangladesh Bank reserves all right to accept or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. No claim will be entertained in this regard.

DCP : 48/2025-957

Date : 10-04-2025

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা
কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নথরে কোন কর্ম।

Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker
Director (Engineering-E/M)
Phone- 02-9530490

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GD-861

Prangonemor to bring back 'Shesher Kobita' for Baishakh celebrations

Renowned theatre troupe Prangonemor will stage its acclaimed adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's *Shesher Kobita* on April 13 and 14 at 7pm, marking Chaitra Sankranti and Pahela Baishakh, at Dr Nilima Ibrahim Auditorium, Bangladesh Mahila Samiti.

Dramatised by Ananta Hira and directed by Nuna Afroz, the production explores the poignant love story of Amit Roy and Labanya Debi. The cast includes Hira, Afroz, Yusuf Russell, and many others.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Chaitra Sankranti and Borsho-boron

Channel i-Shurer Dhara Hajaro **Kontho Borshoboron** is set to return on April 14 after a three year hiatus, marking the celebration of Bengali New Year with choral renditions and vibrant cultural performances at Rabindra Sarobar.

The celebration will commence the evening before with a traditional Chaitra Sankranti fair, highlighting folk art, crafts, and indigenous heritage.

Date: Friday-Saturday | April 13-14, 2025

Time: 6pm onwards

Venue: Rabindra Sarobar, Dhanmondi



NEWS

No country

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh for historical reasons is a very unique relationship. It's very fundamentally a people-to-people connect."

However, Jaishankar went on to say that New Delhi has conveyed concerns over "radicalising tendencies" in Bangladesh at the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in Bangkok last week.

"We have concerns about the rhetoric coming out of people in Bangladesh. We have concerns about the attacks on minorities. I think we were very open about sharing those concerns," he said, responding to a question on what Modi conveyed to Yunus during their first face-to-face interaction in the Thai capital.

Three beaten

FROM PAGE 12

Police yesterday accused several thousand unnamed people in a case filed over the mob killings.

Besides, the tea seller's father-in-law Chan Mia filed another case accusing three people of attempted murder over the assault on locals.

Police arrested a suspect named Sohag in the case.

RICKSHAW PULLER KILLED

Police said a rickshaw puller named Surman Khan, 43, was held captive at a neighbour's house for almost 30 hours and tortured to death in Kushtia's GK Colony area, reports our correspondent in the district.

The neighbours thought he was a thief and tortured him, said Mosarrat Hossain, the officer-in-charge of Kushtia Police Station.

Officers recovered his body from the house of a local named Hakim yesterday morning.

Police arrested Hakim, his wife, and daughter after Surman's wife filed a case.

BNP men

FROM PAGE 12

Mohammad Harun, son of Abdul Gani Majhi, said, "We've known Nurul Absar for a long time. He was invited to my sister's wedding recently but could not attend due to illness. So he came to visit her on Wednesday. He was still unwell. He wanted to leave on Friday."

Ramu Police Station OC Imon Kanti Chowdhury said Nurul Absar is now in police custody. "We are checking whether there is any case against him with Rangunia Police Station or elsewhere. Otherwise, he will be handed over to his family."

1cr new jobs

FROM PAGE 12

reduce excessive tax pressures on citizens and remove the psychological barriers that discourage people from paying taxes.

To make Bangladesh more attractive to foreign investors, the BNP has proposed 11 regulatory reforms.

Mirza Fakhrul mentioned eight of them in his post: making Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) more effective, modernising visa and work permit regulations, introducing 24/7 services for investors, enabling automated profit repatriation, ensuring the

availability of skilled local workers, passing laws to ensure investor protection alongside infrastructure development, improving human resource efficiency, and expanding the scope of overseas employment through proper training and incentives.

Meanwhile, BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said that if BNP is elected it would go for serious deregulation and liberalisation to accelerate economic growth through investment promotion.

"We want to bring radical changes

through simplification of everything so that the obstacles and adversities the investors face in Bangladesh would be no more," he said.

The BNP leader said this at a views-exchange with guests for the Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025. BNP arranged the event at Hotel Sarina in the city's Banani area to raise the party's future investment policy, reports UNB.

Khasru, formerly a commerce minister under the BNP, said his party has already made a plan for the future economy, which is reflected in its Vision 2030 and the 31-Point State Overhauling Outline.

ICT seeks Interpol

FROM PAGE 12

for Liberation War affairs; Hasan Mahmud, former foreign minister; and Jahangir Kabir Nanak, ex-textiles and jute minister.

The others are Mohammad A Arafat, ex-state minister for information; Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, former Dhaka South City Corporation mayor and ex-AL MP; Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former defence and security adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina; Nasrul Hamid Bipu, ex-state minister for power, energy, and mineral resources; and Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel, former education minister.

ICT's request seeks international assistance in locating and facilitating the extradition of the accused, several of whom are believed to be residing abroad.

On November 10 last year, the ICT chief prosecutor sought an Interpol red notice against Hasina.

A red notice is a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action, according to the Interpol website.

AYNAGHAR, BOMBS

The chief prosecutor revealed that a massive secret detention centre, known as "Aynaghbar", was discovered in Uttara following a victim's release in August last year after eight years in captivity.

Based on information from multiple survivors of enforced disappearances, a map was drawn, leading investigators

'Borbaad' leads launch of SK Films' global distribution wing

Superstar Shakib Khan's production house SK Films has officially launched its international distribution wing, with operations in North America (SK Films USA) and the Gulf (SK Films UAE). The announcement came during a press conference on April 9 in Jackson Heights, New York.

The initiative kicks off with the release of *Borbaad*—slated for April 18 in the US and April 19 in Canada.

After its Eid-ul-Fitr release across 120 theatres in Bangladesh, *Borbaad* garnered interest among expatriates. In its opening week, it will screen in 35 to 40 theatres across major US and Canadian cities.

Directed by Mehedi Hassan Hridoy, the film stars Shakib Khan and Idris Paul, alongside Misha Sawdagar, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Shahiduzzaman Selim, and Jisshu Sengupta, among others.



A MUSICAL EID

Songs that are still making memories

ZAHID AKBAR

A total of six movies were released during Eid ul-Fitr this year. Among the songs from these films, *Chand Mama* from *Borbaad* and *Konna* from *Jinn 3* have each surpassed 10 million views on YouTube. The two tracks currently top the view count charts and have remained audience favourites since their release.

Beyond these chart-toppers, several other songs from the Eid releases have also been well-received by listeners. Some have made it to YouTube's trending list, while others continue to rack up impressive view counts. Overall, the music from this year's Eid films has generated considerable buzz.

Singers, composers, and lyricists have evidently put in their best effort to offer something fresh and appealing to the audience this year. Interestingly, there has been a noticeable shift in lyrical style, melody, and musical arrangement—something that becomes evident upon listening.

This feature takes a closer look at the current state of songs from the Eid film lineup:

Chand Mama, from *Borbaad* directed by Mehedi Hassan Hridoy, was released on March 28 via the Real Energy Production YouTube channel. The song has been written, composed, and arranged by Pritom Hasan. It has been voiced by Pritom and Dola Rahman and features Shakib Khan and India's Nusrat Jahan in the music video.

In *Jinn 3*, directed by Kamruzzaman Roman, the song

Konna—written by Robiul Islam Jibon and sung by Imran Mahmudul and Dilshad Nahar Kona—was released on March 17. It too has crossed the 10 million view mark. The music video stars Nusrat Faria and Abdun Noor Shajal.

Other notable tracks from *Borbaad* include *Mayabi*, sung by Sommru Monir Konal and Imran, *Didha* by Pritom Hasan, and *Nishash* by GM Ashraf. Interestingly, *Mohamaya*, a song from the same film that hasn't even been officially released yet, has already gained popularity among listeners. Written by Shomeshwar Oli and composed by Khairul Wasi, the song is performed by Mainul Ahsan Noble.

In *Jongli*, directed by M Raahim, the song *Jonom*—written and composed by Prince Mahmud and sung by Tahsan and Atiya Anisha—has resonated well with the audience. Other songs from the film include *Bondhug Shono* by Imran and Kona, and *Jodi Alo Ashto*, sung by Habib Wahid.

The film *Daagi*, directed by Shihab Shaheen, features the song *Ektukhoni Mon*, written by Sadat Hossain and composed by Sajid Sarkar. It is voiced by Tahsan Rahman and Masha Islam. Another track from the same film, *Nye Jabi Ki*, was written by Badhon, with tune and vocals by Xefer Rahman and music arrangement by Mark Don. Both songs have found a place on the audience's list of favourites.

In the Wajed Ali Sumon directorial *Antaratma*, the song *Eka Aarale*, performed by Nazmun Munira Nancy and Pintu Ghosh, has generated a fairly warm reception from audiences.

Arrest warrants issued for Hasina, Putul

FROM PAGE 12

case are Saiful Islam Sarkar, administrative officer; Purabi Goldar, senior assistant secretary; Kazi Wasi Uddin, additional secretary (administration); and Shahid Ullah Khandaker, secretary of housing and public works ministry; and Rajuk officials Anisur Rahman Mia, former chairman; Md Khurshid Alam, member (estate and land); Kabir Al Asad, member (administration and finance); Tanmoy Das, member (development and control); Md Nasir Uddin, former member (planning); Major (retd) Shamsuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, former member (development); Md Hafizur Rahman, deputy director (estate and land-3); Md Habibur Rahman, deputy director

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People asking

FROM PAGE 12

Police Station in Sylhet.

Referring to recent unrest in the Sylhet region, Jahangir said legal action has been taken against all involved. "Many have been arrested."

Commenting on shifts within the police force, he said, "There have been considerable changes. During Ramadan, law and order situation was far better than that of previous years."

Responding to a question about arrestees being snatched from police custody, the adviser said, "Those involved in such incidents are being brought to justice. If you have specific information, report it immediately, and we will act."

"Sometimes, police respond late due to a lack of vehicles and other

logistics. Many of their cars were burnt, and even police stations were torched. Due to a lengthy fund allocation process, we haven't been able to provide them with new vehicles yet."

Meanwhile, upon arriving at the Airport Police Station in Sylhet, the adviser expressed displeasure at the red carpet rolled out for him and a makeshift stage prepared for his welcome.

Refusing to step on the carpet, he instead greeted on-duty police personnel with handshakes.

Jahangir immediately instructed Sylhet Metropolitan Police Commissioner Md Rezaul Karim to remove the carpet. "I told you not to do this, so why is it still here? Get rid of it now."

Paramilitary strike in Sudan's Darfur kills 12

AFP, Khartoum

A strike by paramilitaries on El-Fasher, the last city in Sudan's Darfur region not under their control, has killed at least 12 people, both the army and local activists said.

The deaths are the latest among tens of thousands killed during nearly two years of war between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and Sudan's army.

They came on Wednesday, the same day Saudi Arabia and the United States called for the warring sides to resume peace talks.

"The militia bombarded the city of

El-Fasher with heavy artillery, killing 12 people and wounding 17," the army's Sixth Infantry Division in El-Fasher said Wednesday.

The local resistance committee, a volunteer aid group, gave the same toll of 12 dead and 17 wounded for Wednesday's attack.

Sudan's war has killed tens of thousands of people and uprooted more than 12 million.

Famine has been declared in parts of the country, including displacement camps around El-Fasher, and was likely to spread, according to a UN-backed assessment.

Insider trading!

US senator calls for probe into Trump over tariff pause

AFP, Washington

Several US senators have called for an investigation into whether President Donald Trump engaged in insider trading or market manipulation by encouraging people to buy stocks just before his dramatic reversal on global tariffs.

"Who in the administration knew about Trump's latest tariff flip flop ahead of time? Did anyone buy or sell stocks, and profit at the public's expense?" California Democratic Senator Adam Schiff posted on X on Wednesday.

"I'm writing to the White House -- the public has a right to know," he added.

Democratic members of the House Financial Services Committee wrote on X that "the President of the United States is literally engaging in the world's biggest market manipulation scheme."

The accusations came as Trump posted a few minutes after Wall Street opened that "IT'S TIME TO BUY".

A few hours later, he announced a 90-day suspension of additional tariffs against dozens of countries, with the exception of China, triggering a historic stock market rebound.



After several days of collapse, the Dow Jones index ended Wednesday up 7.87 percent, its biggest gain since 2008, and the Nasdaq up 12.16 percent, the most since 2001.

Trump also signed his post on Truth Social with the letters "DJT" -- both his initials and the stock market abbreviation for his media company, Trump Media & Technology Group. The company's shares closed the day up 21.67 percent.

White House communications adviser Margo Martin posted a video on X late Wednesday showing Trump receiving Charles Schwab, founder and co-chairman of the Schwab asset management, in the Oval Office.

"This is Charles Schwab," Trump said, introducing the 87-year-old billionaire to champion car racers.

"He's not just a company, he's actually an individual! And he made 2.5 billion (dollars) today," he said.

Former White House ethics lawyer Richard Painter also felt there was a case for investigation.

"Presidents are not investment advisors," said Painter, who had served under the administration of former president George W. Bush.

"This scenario could expose the president to charges of market manipulation," he told NBC.

The White House said Trump only wanted to "reassure" the public.



Palestinians from Al-Hirsh family stand near the ruins of their houses after they were demolished by Israeli bulldozers in the village of Al-Rihaya, south of the occupied-West Bank city of Hebron yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

France may recognise Palestinian state 'in June'

AFP, Paris

France plans to recognise a Palestinian state within months and could make the move at a UN conference in New York in June on settling the Israel-Palestinian conflict, President Emmanuel Macron said in an interview broadcast Wednesday.

"We must move towards recognition, and we will do so in the coming months," Macron, who this week visited Egypt, told France 5 television.

"Our aim is to chair this conference with Saudi Arabia in June, where we could finalise this movement of mutual recognition by several parties," he added.

"I will do it because I believe that at some point it will be right and because I also want to participate in a collective dynamic, which must also allow all those who defend Palestine to recognise Israel in turn, which many of them do not do," he added.

Such recognition would allow France "to be clear in our fight against

those who deny Israel's right to exist -- which is the case with Iran -- and to commit ourselves to collective security in the region," he added.

France has long championed a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, including after the October 7, 2023 attack by Palestinian militants Hamas on Israel.

France's recognition of Palestinian statehood "would be a step in the right direction in line with safeguarding the rights of the Palestinian people and the two state solution," Palestinian minister of state for foreign affairs Varzen Aghabekian Shahin told AFP.

Nearly 150 countries recognise a Palestinian state. In May 2024, Ireland, Norway and Spain announced recognition, followed by Slovenia in June, in moves partly fuelled by condemnation of Israel's bombing of Gaza that followed the October 7 attacks.

But France would be the most significant European power to recognise a Palestinian state, a move the United States has also long resisted.



If necessary, absolutely. If it requires military, we're going to have military. Israel will obviously be very much involved in that, be the leader of that.

DONALD TRUMP on the possibility of military action against Iran



Office on Wednesday.

"I have to stand under the shower for 15 minutes till it gets wet. It comes out drip, drip, drip. It's ridiculous."

The order directs the Energy Department to roll back "radical green" regulations limiting the flow of showerheads to 2.5 gallons of water per minute.

The White House said the order "frees Americans from excessive regulations that turned a basic household item into a bureaucratic nightmare" and ends the "Obama-Biden war on showers".

Janata Bank PLC.

Head Office
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Invitation for e-Tender

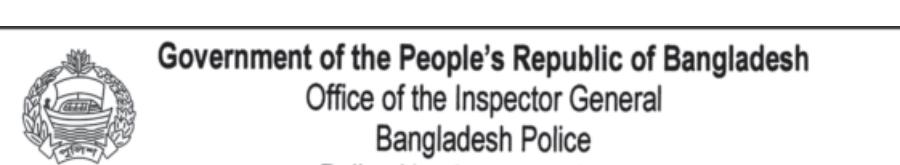
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods:

SL. No.	Tender ID No.	Invitation Reference No.	Tender Description	Tender Closing Date & Time
01	1096026	JB/IT-Proc-20/LAN Setup-Biman Bhaban/2025	Tender for Procurement of Network Accessories for LAN Setup of Biman Bhaban (3 rd Floor), 100 Motijheel (Supply, Installation & Commissioning) for Janata Bank PLC.	30/04/2025 02:30 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP System portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal and e-GP Help Desk (Email: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd/-
(Mohammad Shakhat Hossain)
Deputy General Manager



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Inspector General
Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka

Invitation for e-Tender

Memo No.44.01.0000.029.07.40.24-817

Date: 10 April 2025

For financial year 2024-25, e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of

S. No.	Description	Tender ID	Procurement Method	Scheduled Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Opening Date and Time
1.	Iron TC Plain Fabrics (For District Police)	1096598	OSTETM	10-Apr-2025 23:00	12-May-2025 12:00
2.	Iron TC Plain Fabrics (For Metropolitan and Specialized Police)	1096599	OSTETM	10-Apr-2025 23:00	12-May-2025 12:00
3.	Coffee (Shale) TC twill fabric (For District Police)	1096600	OSTETM	10-Apr-2025 23:00	12-May-2025 12:00
4.	Coffee (Shale) TC twill fabric (For Metropolitan and Specialized Police)	1096601	OSTETM	10-Apr-2025 23:00	12-May-2025 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration on the e-GP system (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is mandatory.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branch.

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

10.04.25
(Nasima Akter)

BP-7303020804
Addl. DIG (Logistics)
Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
Phone & Fax: 02223387001
E-mail: adldigsupp@police.gov.bd

US could 'revive' Panama bases

AFP, Panama City

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth floated the idea on Wednesday of US troops returning to Panama to "secure" its strategically vital canal, a suggestion quickly shot down by the Central American country's government.

Hegseth suggested during a visit to Panama that "by invitation" the United States could "revive" military bases or naval air stations and rotate deployments of US troops to an isthmus the United States invaded 35 years ago.

Global economy

FROM PAGE 12
percent tariffs against the bloc.

The 27-nation grouping responded with its own olive branch, suspending for 90 days tariffs on 20 billion euros' worth of US goods that had been greenlit in retaliation to duties on steel and aluminum.

"We want to give negotiations a chance," EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement.

She warned, however, that "if negotiations are not satisfactory, our countermeasures will kick in" and that all options remain on the table.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney called Trump's reversal a "welcome reprieve" and said Ottawa would begin negotiations with Washington on a new economic deal after elections on April 28.

Vietnam said it had agreed with the United States to start trade talks, while Pakistan is sending a delegation to Washington.

In its latest measure, Beijing announced it would reduce the number of Hollywood films imported but said it remained ready for dialogue.

China's commerce ministry warned the tariffs risked "severely" impacting the global economy.

"We hope the US will

meet China halfway, and, based on the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, properly resolve differences through dialogue and consultation," Commerce Ministry spokeswoman He Yongqian said.

Beijing's foreign ministry also warned the tariff hikes were going "against the whole world".

The US tariffs "seriously damage the rules-based multilateral trading system, and seriously impact the stability of the global economic order", foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said, adding: "This is a blatant act that goes against the will of the world and goes against the whole world."

Trump has predicted that trade deals will be made with all countries, including China, which has now refused to roll back retaliatory tariffs on US goods.

A deal's going to be made with China. A deal's going to be made with every one of them," Trump said at the White House. However, China's leaders "don't quite know how to go about it".

Meanwhile, Trump's top economic adviser Kevin Hassett yesterday said that the 10 percent tariff for almost all countries except China will likely remain in place going forward.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Chattogram South Road Division, Dohazari, Chattogram
E-mail: ectgsouth@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.1582.414.36.01.26.25-764

Date: 10-04-2025

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify for all concerns that e-Tenders is invited and published on 10 April 2025 in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for procurement of works for the following Tenders. Interested persons/firms can see details by visiting the website www.eprocure.gov.bd.

Sl.	Tender ID No.	Tender Reference No.	Name of work	Date & time
01	1092247	e-GP/EE/CSRD/PMP ROAD/01/2024-2025(Re-Tender)	Widening of Bazar Area, Construction of Drain, Bus-bay and DBS Overlay at Ch: 276+030 km. to Ch: 276+130 km., Ch: 296+610 km. to Ch: 297+066 km. (Padua Bazar) and Ch: 300+150 km. to Ch: 301+300 km (Lohagara-Amirabad) of Dhaka (Jatrabari)-Cumilla (Moinamati)-Chattogram-Cox's Bazar-Teknaf/National Highway (N-1) under Chattogram South Road Division during the year 2024-2025.	Last selling: 27-Apr-2025 15:00 Closing: 28-Apr-2025 12:00

2025.04.10.04.25

Pintu Chakma
ID No. 602219
Executive Engineer, RHD
Chattogram South Road Division
Dohazari, Chattogram

GD-860

US and Russia exchange prisoners

AFP, Washington

Russia and the United States exchanged prisoners yesterday, the second such swap since US President Donald Trump returned to the White House as the two countries push for closer ties.

Moscow released US-Russian ballet dancer Ksenia Karelina, who had been sentenced to 12 years in prison on treason charges, with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio confirming early yesterday she was on a plane to the United States.

In exchange, the United States released Arthur Petrov, according to Russian state media, citing the FSB security service. The Russian-German citizen had been facing up to 20 years in a US prison for violating export controls.

Trump and Russian leader Vladimir Putin have since pushed for a restoration of closer ties between the two countries that were severely damaged by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

A setback for Bangladeshi exporters

India could have given us time to make alternative arrangements

We are troubled by India's decision to revoke the transhipment facility for Bangladesh's export cargo to third countries transiting through its land borders to Indian airports and ports. This will disrupt Bangladesh's RMG exports and raise costs for our apparel exporters delivering orders to Western markets—especially those routed through Indian airports, such as the one in New Delhi. Thus, the decision comes as a major surprise, particularly given the recent constructive meeting between Bangladesh's interim government's Chief Adviser Muhammed Yunus and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was expected that the discussions would lead to further steps to strengthen bilateral relations. Instead, Bangladesh was caught off guard with this sudden move.

On April 8, India's Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs issued a notification stating that the directive issued on June 29, 2020—granting transhipment facilities to Bangladesh—had been withdrawn. (Later, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs clarified that the decision would not affect trade between Dhaka and Nepal or Bhutan via Indian territory, as these landlocked countries are protected under WTO guidelines.) India justified this decision by citing significant congestion at its airports and ports, which it claims has been exacerbated by the transhipment facility granted to Bangladesh. The secretary general of India's Apparel Export Promotion Council also mentioned that the move responded to a "long-standing demand" from Indian exporters to halt the transhipment of Bangladeshi cargo through Indian ports. The decision, he noted, would help rationalise freight rates, reduce congestion, and lower transportation costs for Indian exporters.

Nevertheless, this move seems to be driven more by political messaging than by economic considerations. For one, the transhipment facility was a commercial arrangement, with Bangladesh paying India for the service. Typically, when either party seeks to end such an arrangement, a transition period is granted to allow the other side to make alternative arrangements—this was not the case here.

The transhipment facility appeared to be a mutually beneficial arrangement. Its sudden discontinuation will undoubtedly harm Bangladeshi businesses. In light of this, we request India to provide a provisional period, allowing time for Bangladesh to make alternative arrangements before the facility is completely withdrawn. Alternatively, India could consider renegotiating the terms of the agreement to mitigate the negative impact on Bangladesh. At the same time, we urge the Bangladeshi authorities to explore available alternatives and take immediate steps to ensure that the efficiency of our supply chains is not compromised, and that our trade is not disrupted.

Tariff reversal should prompt new thinking

Trump's rollback of stiff new tariffs a welcome break for Bangladesh

It is heartening to learn that US President Donald Trump has paused the imposition of sweeping "reciprocal" tariffs on imports from nearly all its trading partners, including Bangladesh—a dramatic reversal that stunned the world almost as much as the initial announcement of the new tariff regime. Less surprising, perhaps, is the exclusion of China from this reprieve, as it continues to face even harsher levies. For other countries, only a flat 10 percent tariff which took effect on Saturday will now remain. However one interprets the 90-day pause—a tactical move to reduce trade deficits, a hawkish strategy to isolate China, or a reluctant step to calm volatile markets—there is no denying that it is a welcome relief for countries like Bangladesh.

The US is Bangladesh's second-largest export destination, accounting for nearly \$10 billion in export earnings in 2023, more than 80 percent of which came from the RMG sector. For an economy so dependent on a single sector and a few core markets, any disruption in trade poses grave risks. For example, if the US reciprocal tariffs stand as originally outlined after the end of 90 days, RMG exporters may face a major challenge with up to 53.5 percent levies, industry insiders say. Thus, the tariff reversal should be seen not only as a breathing space but also an opportunity to negotiate better terms while also removing all non-tariff barriers in our bilateral trade.

At the same time, we must think about building a more resilient future for our export-based economy. It is crucial to diversify our export base beyond RMG, which, despite being a success story, makes us dangerously vulnerable to external shocks. Simultaneously, our focus must extend much beyond the US. True, Bangladesh may benefit from the stiff US levies on Chinese products, the European Union, another key destination for our products, may soon be inundated with Chinese garments diverted from the US, undermining our competitiveness in that market. Keeping in mind the reality of Bangladesh losing some trade privileges after its LDC graduation, it is also crucial that we critically rethink our export-import strategy and prepare for a more competitive post-LDC landscape.

To spur growth through greater market integration as well as infusion of international investments, it is equally important that the government seriously acts on prevailing concerns about obstacles to doing business in Bangladesh. Many of these concerns were raised at the just held Bangladesh Investment Summit. A new report by the World Bank, unveiled at the summit, highlighted five key obstacles including corruption, erratic power supply, high prevalence of informal economy, high borrowing costs, and complex tax structure. These need to be addressed. Importantly, the WB also identified four key sectors, including RMG, as ripe for reform. We must address all these interconnected issues if we want to progress in today's rapidly shifting global trade landscape.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Napoleon's abdication at Fontainebleau

On this day in 1814, during the Napoleonic wars, Napoleon was facing an invasion of France by forces bent on his overthrow and, pressed by his own officers, abdicated unconditionally at Fontainebleau.

EDITORIAL

Our startup ecosystem needs nurturing



Mamun Rashid
is the chairman at Financial Excellence Ltd and
founding managing partner of PwC Bangladesh.

MAMUN RASHID

The start-up ecosystem in Bangladesh is experiencing a period of exciting growth, driven largely by a youthful, entrepreneurial population eager to make their mark. Yet, despite the energy and ambition coursing through the community, a myriad of challenges continues to obstruct its full potential.

One of the most pressing challenges that entrepreneurs face is securing adequate funding. In 2024, total start-up funding in Bangladesh saw a significant decline, falling by 41 percent year on year to \$41 million. This drop highlights a growing problem: local investor participation shrank by an alarming 95 percent, leaving start-ups heavily dependent on international backers, who accounted for 98 percent of the total funding. The situation underscores the need for a more favourable legal framework to encourage local investments and alternative financing options, such as Islamic bonds or Sukuk. By creating an environment that nurtures local investment, start-ups can reduce their reliance on foreign capital and build a more resilient financial foundation.

Another significant hurdle is the regulatory environment, where complex procedures and bureaucratic inefficiencies can deter even the most enthusiastic entrepreneurs from pursuing their ventures. Many find themselves bogged down in paperwork and compliance issues rather than focusing on innovation and growth. Streamlining registration processes and simplifying compliance requirements can lower entry barriers. Moreover, fostering transparency within the regulatory framework can boost investor confidence, paving the way for both local and foreign investments. Bangladesh can adopt best practices from other start-up-friendly nations to build a more accommodating business climate.

Simultaneously, workforce development is crucial for the sustainable growth of start-ups. A recent report revealed that 73 percent of start-ups in Bangladesh struggle to recruit qualified talent. This talent gap is partly due to educational institutions not aligning their curricula with the practical needs of the industry. Graduates often lack the hands-on experience and critical

skills that employers seek. Addressing this gap requires a coordinated effort to integrate more practical training, internships, and mentorship programmes into educational institutions. When the next generation of workers enters the job market with skills honed through real-world experiences, Bangladeshi start-ups will be better positioned to thrive.

However, inadequate infrastructure significantly hampers the growth of start-ups in many parts of Bangladesh, particularly outside major urban centres. Poor logistics, unreliable



VISUAL: FREEPIK

internet connectivity, and a lack of essential services increase operational costs and hinder efficiency, especially for start-ups that depend on timely product delivery and seamless online services. Investing in improved infrastructure, especially in rural areas, would not only benefit start-ups but also support broader economic development by improving connectivity and logistics and boosting local economies.

Equally important to the success of start-ups is access to mentorship and strong support networks. In a landscape where many entrepreneurs lack experience, guidance from seasoned mentors can make a significant difference. Organisations such as the Founder Institute provide invaluable mentorship by connecting emerging entrepreneurs with industry veterans, thus helping new businesses navigate early challenges and fostering a culture of innovation through collaboration

backing. Recently, the central bank has encouraged commercial banks to collaborate with venture capital firms by allocating a portion of their operating profit to start-up funding. Such initiatives could open new avenues for financing, making it possible for more start-ups to secure the funds they need to grow.

Attracting foreign investment is another daunting challenge, primarily due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and occasional political instability. Although Bangladesh has made progress, its position in the World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business" index still reflects areas that need improvement. Simplifying foreign investment procedures and strengthening infrastructure can help create a more welcoming environment for international investors.

For start-ups in competitive sectors like FinTech, the race to scale rapidly while maintaining sustainable practices presents a unique dilemma. On one

hand, the demand for innovation pushes start-ups to expand quickly, but on the other, the regulatory ambiguities surrounding new technologies like cryptocurrency pose risks. Creating a regulatory sandbox where start-ups can test innovations without facing legal repercussions could foster a more dynamic FinTech ecosystem.

Moreover, tax incentives, while crucial for encouraging entrepreneurship, often remain underutilised due to their complexity. Navigating the application process for incentives, such as corporate income tax exemptions, can be daunting. Simplifying these procedures and making information more accessible would help start-ups capitalise on available support, boosting their chances of success.

In parallel, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset from a young age is vital. Initiatives like BRAC's hands-on entrepreneurship training show how practical skills and business acumen can be developed early on. Entrepreneurship in the school curricula can help students think critically, innovate, and take calculated risks—skills essential for thriving in a competitive start-up environment.

Scaling a start-up is no small feat, especially when balancing growth with sustainable practices. Often, start-ups prioritise short-term gains to meet investor expectations, risking long-term sustainability. Incorporating strategies that align business expansion with environmental responsibility can help start-ups maintain a positive reputation while growing. By adopting comprehensive growth models that emphasise sustainable operations, start-ups can mitigate the risks of rapid scaling.

One aspect that can significantly boost a start-up's growth potential is global exposure. Start-ups often find it challenging to attract international investors due to limited visibility. Forming strategic partnerships and participating in global tech conferences can increase their profile and open doors to new markets. Building a strong international presence not only enhances credibility but also attracts diverse investment opportunities.

Lastly, logistical challenges, particularly in the e-commerce sector, continue to hinder start-ups. High shipping costs, delayed deliveries, and inadequate access to rural areas affect customer satisfaction and business viability. Addressing these issues through technological innovation and partnerships with local logistics providers can make operations more efficient, fostering consumer trust and loyalty.

Mob violence: Causes, consequences, and pathways to justice



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ZAKIR KIBRIA

On August 5, 2024, Bangladesh witnessed a seismic political shift with the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina following months of youth-led protests. However, the hope for democratic renewal has been overshadowed by an unprecedented wave of "mob violence."

Between August 2024 and March 2025, vigilante attacks claimed 119 lives and injured 74 individuals, while 2024 alone recorded 179 deaths—the highest annual toll in a decade, according to the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS). The Daily Star's editorial on April 6, 2025, "Why can't 'mob violence' be contained?" demands urgent introspection.

The term "mob violence" in Bangladesh encapsulates three overlapping phenomena. First, politically motivated lynchings have dominated the post-Hasina era, with over 75 percent of killings between August 2024 and March 2025 targeting Awami League affiliates, including former student leaders and local officials.

Second, communal vigilanism has surged. Third, crime-driven retribution accounts for 69 percent of incidents, exemplified by the March 2025 lynching of Riyad, an Uber driver in Dhaka, over false accusations of mugging. While the label "mob

violence" broadly captures collective brutality, it risks oversimplifying the interplay of politics, communal hatred, and institutional failure driving these acts.

The collapse of institutional trust lies at the heart of this crisis. Decades of politicised policing and judicial inertia have eroded public faith in governance. A 2024 survey by the Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF) revealed that 72 percent of Bangladeshis distrusted the police to address crimes promptly. Post-Hasina, 30 percent of police positions became vacant, and 450 of 639 police stations became nonfunctional after many were attacked.

Compounding this institutional decay is the role of digital amplification. Social media's rapid spread of rumours has proven lethal. On March 3, 2025, a fake loudspeaker announcement in Chattogram falsely accusing a man of child abduction triggered a mob killing. Cognitive psychology explains this as group dynamics overriding individual rationality. A similar incident occurred in March 2025 at Dhaka University—Tofazzal Hossain, a mentally ill man falsely accused of theft, was lynched.

Historical legacies of vigilanism further normalise violence. Rural

dispute-resolution systems like shalish (village councils) have long sanctioned extrajudicial punishments. Urbanisation has fused these practices with political violence, exemplified by the January 2025 Narsingdi incident, where two brothers were beaten to death over a minor auto rickshaw fare dispute.

The August 2024 uprising led to the dismantling of many law enforcement-related infrastructure, creating a security vacuum. Police retreated from the streets, fearing reprisals, enabling mobs to operate unchecked. Robbery cases in Dhaka surged by 69 percent year on year in January 2025, reflecting public desperation and economic difficulties.

Gender and communal tensions have further fuelled the crisis. The Magura child rape case in March 2025 sparked nationwide protests, which devolved into arson attacks on the household of the accused. Meanwhile, communal violence allegedly displaced many minority families in the post-Hasina period, with attacks often conflating political vendettas.

Economic despair compounds these issues. Poverty-stricken regions like Khulna allegedly saw numerous minority homes destroyed in mob attacks linked to unemployment and inflation.

Restoring institutional legitimacy must begin with police reforms. Addressing 30 percent staffing shortages and retraining officers in de-escalation tactics are critical. Prosecuting attackers of law enforcement is equally urgent—225 officers were assaulted between September 2024 and February 2025 alone. Judicial overhaul is also

imperative. Fast-track courts for mob violence cases could reverse the current trend, where only 15 percent of 2024 cases resulted in convictions.

Tackling root causes requires economic and social interventions. Poverty alleviation programmes in high-violence areas like Khulna and Sathkhira could mitigate desperation-driven crimes. Partnering with tech firms like Meta and TikTok to flag incendiary posts, as outlined in Dhaka Police's 2025 advisory, would counter misinformation.

Community-led initiatives offer promise. The MSF's 2024 pilot programme in Rajshahi reduced "mob violence" by 40 percent through dialogues in mosques, schools, and media campaigns. Mobilising student leaders from the anti-Hasina protests to publicly condemn vigilantism could leverage their moral authority for peace.

However, militarised crackdowns like Operation Devil Hunt—which saw over 1,500 arrests between September 2024 and February 2025 and alleged custodial deaths—risk replicating past authoritarian abuses. Transparent, civilian-led policing must replace such heavy-handed tactics.

Bangladesh's mob violence epidemic is not a law-and-order issue but a crisis of governance, trust, and economic justice. The interim government's rhetoric must translate into action: rebuilding institutions, prosecuting perpetrators, and addressing systemic inequality. As activist Nur Khan Liton asserted, "Without the rule of law, there is no way out." Failure to act risks more deaths due to mob activity in future, entrenching a culture of impunity. The time for accountability is now.

EC's accountability is key to Bangladesh's electoral reform



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MIR NADIA NIVIN

In recent discourse in Bangladesh, terms like *independence, empowerment, and accountability* have often been used interchangeably in the context of elections and institutional reforms related to the Bangladesh Election Commission (EC). While these concepts are interconnected, it is critical to understand that they differ significantly in legal and operational terms, each requiring distinct reform measures.

The Electoral Reform Commission's report, with its 200-plus recommendations across 18 key areas, underscores the breadth of electoral reforms needed. Yet, a specific focus on the EC's institutional reforms is critical, as Bangladesh's broader reform context stems from the systematic erosion of democratic institutions, with the EC at the core. The success of wider electoral reforms, whether in full or in part, depends heavily on the EC's willingness to adopt reforms enhancing its independence, empowerment, and accountability.

This article aims to emphasise accountability—a glaring systemic gap; but first, it is worth clarifying the linked concepts of independence and empowerment to frame the EC's institutional challenges.

First up, independence. The EC, established under Article 118 of the constitution, is mandated to operate independently in fulfilling its duties. Independence means the EC has been given the *ability to function and operate free from external influence*, be it government, political parties, or other vested interest groups. While the EC does possess features supporting its autonomy, the Electoral Reform Commission's recommendations aimed to strengthen this further by integrating national context and global standards.

Next up, empowerment. This refers to equipping the EC with the capacities, resources, and tools necessary to effectively carry out its mandate. Unlike independence, which ensures freedom from interference, empowerment focuses on the EC's capacity to act decisively—enforcing electoral rules and addressing challenges without legal or practical constraints. Here too, the Electoral Reform Commission proposed measures to reinforce institutional empowerment such as mandating EC clearance for executive decisions that may have an impact during elections, granting staffing autonomy, etc.

Finally, we turn to accountability of the election commission. Accountability requires the EC to be *answerable to an oversight body and, ultimately, the public, ensuring transparency in delivering on its mandate*. As a constitutional entity tasked with safeguarding a critical democratic process, the EC is indeed granted independence from the executive branch, in particular. However, this independence does not exempt it from the broader governance framework of the State. Every national institution, whether constitutional, statutory, or regulatory, typically operates within a clear accountability structure.

Astonishingly, since its inception 52 years ago, the EC, a key democratic institution, has operated without any accountability mechanism, free from oversight regardless of election outcomes. This has allowed political governments to manipulate the constitutionally "independent" EC—glaringly obvious in the last three national elections—with no repercussions for subverting fair polls, violating the institutional mandate, or the commissioners violating their oath of office. Despite repeatedly failing to deliver on its mandate of fair elections, there was no mechanism in place to hold the EC accountable. The Electoral Reform Commission's in-depth analysis revealed that this gap has directly and indirectly fuelled many of the persistent issues undermining Bangladesh's electoral system.

In parliamentary democracies like Bangladesh, a common and effective accountability model for Electoral Management Bodies (EMB), such as election commissions, is oversight by a multi-partisan parliamentary committee. Such a body would review the EC's performance, approve and monitor its budget, and investigate any misconduct. To prevent dominance by the ruling party, these committees are typically balanced with equal representation from both majority and opposition groups, ensuring fair and impartial scrutiny. This approach, recommended by the Electoral Reform Commission, aims to close the critical accountability void in our electoral process.

To expedite the implementation of a comprehensive accountability mechanism, the Electoral Reform Commission drafted a law (annexed in its report) to introduce accountability and oversight—the first of

such effort in 52 years. This draft legislature addresses, among other factors, key issues such as transparent appointments of commissioners, budget accountability of the EC to parliament (not the executive), parliamentary probes into oath breaches by commissioners with recommendations sent to the president, etc.

Public feedback, reviewed alongside Bangladesh's electoral history and

these foundational reforms.

It is, therefore, extremely unfortunate that the EC should choose to reject or oppose some of these most critical reforms proposed by the Electoral Reform Commission, both institutional and beyond, rather than embrace this opportunity as technical collaborators to jointly transform the electoral landscape. The Electoral Reform Commission has meticulously tackled the formidable task

accountability is not just about punishing missteps; it is about proving that the EC can be held to a higher standard.

Yet more astonishing is the EC's refusal to fully accept reforms designed to increase its empowerment and independence as an institution. While it accepts minor enhancements (e.g., appointing its secretary), it rejects broader powers—like suspending elections or redrawing constituencies—citing concerns about resource strain or political backlash.

While its resistance to institutional reforms remains a central concern, what remains inexplicable is its continued public pushback, rejecting vital reforms across other electoral domains. For instance, reform recommendations regarding the political party registration, designed to increase transparency in candidate nominations, reduce the influence of money politics and tackle persistent systemic flaws, have been sidestepped entirely. Instead, the EC has pressed ahead with the old, defective registration process, with justifications that hardly defend the status quo over a clearly needed overhaul.

Globally, reforms typically follow a three-step process with distinct roles: first, a commission (or a similar body) provides expert recommendations; second, stakeholders like political parties provide input and build consensus; and third, the institution (here the EC), implements them. Here, it appears as though everyone but the EC grasps their role, oddly taking on all three roles—crafting, consensus building, and implementing reforms as it pleases.

The Electoral Reform Commission, comprised of experts with extensive national and international experience in elections and democratic reforms, crafted these recommendations through rigorous analysis, which then have been validated by widespread stakeholder consultations, nationwide surveys, and review of feedback from hundreds of thousands of citizens. As such, the reform report is firmly rooted in Bangladesh's contextual realities with broad-based public support that also mirrors people's perspectives.

Therefore, these recommendations are not mere burdens, they are a lifeline to legitimacy. After decades of flawed elections, we stand at a rare juncture to overhaul our electoral system, a reset that could shape our democratic future for generations. This is not a moment to be myopic or recalcitrant. This is a moment to embrace the transformative potential of reforms, propelling Bangladesh onto the next level. We, the people of Bangladesh, are ready for free, fair, and credible elections. Hence, its current actions notwithstanding, if the EC fails to deliver, we will not relent in holding it accountable. The stakes are too high, and our resolve is unshakable.

international standards, places accountability as one of the top reform needs. Without accountability, history risks repeating. Though institution-specific reforms represent only a fraction of the Electoral Reform Commission's recommendations, their adoption is pivotal as a robust EC will determine the broader reform agenda's fate. Clarity regarding these concepts, therefore, is also vital for stakeholders, as they need to ask the right questions to ensure such reforms are duly implemented.

The EC's stance

Assuming that by now, relevant and interested stakeholders have had time to potentially review the recommendations put forward by the Electoral Reform Commission, no analysis would be complete without considering the position of the EC—the entity responsible for adopting and implementing

of pinpointing the precise reforms needed to align Bangladesh's electoral process with democratic standards—an effort that significantly lightens the EC's burden and positions the current commission favourably, handing them a detailed blueprint for progress. Yet, casting itself as a stakeholder opposing critical, well-justified reforms is deeply disturbing.

The EC's opposition to relatively standard accountability mechanisms such as setting up a parliamentary oversight committee or investigations by such committee into misconduct, mandatory transparency in vote reporting, removing financial control from the executive or making the process of appointment more transparent—all puts it at a risky position of being misunderstood as refusing to confront its own legacy. This stance ignores the broader picture:

How our youth can leverage Bangladesh-China ties

Dr Mostak Ahmed Galib
is associate professor and director of cross cultural communication & BRI research centre at the School of Marxism at Wuhan University of Technology in China.

Dr Bulbul Siddiqi
is associate professor of anthropology and director of Confucius Institute at North South University.

MOSTAK AHAMED GALIB and BULBUL SIDDIQI

exchanges, local government collaboration, and think tank partnerships. At this historic juncture, Bangladesh now has a strategic opportunity to leverage these strengthened cultural and interpersonal ties to unlock sustainable economic and social benefits—particularly addressing critical issues such as employment opportunities for youths through modern skill development.

Recently, research findings shared at a seminar titled "National Image of China in

existing cooperation with China also opens up entrepreneurship opportunities for many youths—a path actively encouraged by Professor Muhammad Yunus, who consistently urges the youths to become job creators rather than job seekers. Such entrepreneurial efforts, enabled by fluency in Chinese and a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, could open new avenues of hope, economic empowerment, sustained career growth, and global opportunities for

emerging sector, notably strengthened by China's recent decision to designate hospitals in Kunming specifically for Bangladeshi medical tourists. Youths fluent in Chinese can capitalise on opportunities as medical interpreters, healthcare logistics coordinators, and medical tourism entrepreneurs.

Given this scenario, Bangladesh could benefit substantially from Chinese President Xi Jinping's vision of "mass entrepreneurship and innovation," emphasising the empowerment of ordinary citizens, particularly youth, to innovate, start businesses, and drive economic growth. The broader vision outlined through President Xi's Global Development Initiative highlights inclusive growth, poverty alleviation, and innovation. It perfectly aligns with Bangladesh's immediate needs. China's model of "Common Prosperity" and sustainable development, known as "Ecological Civilisation," echoes the vision of Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus's concept of a "World of Three Zeros"—Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, and Zero Net Carbon Emissions. Leveraging ideas from both President Xi and Professor Yunus could become instrumental in addressing Bangladesh's youth unemployment crisis through innovation, entrepreneurship, and green jobs, ensuring "high-quality development."

Recent comments from Chen Huaiyu, chairman of the China Export-Import Bank (China Exim Bank), during the sidelines of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2025, suggest even brighter prospects. Chen said that China Exim Bank is eager to support relocating Chinese manufacturing plants to Bangladesh, positioning Bangladesh as an export platform serving Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and beyond. Emulating the transformative experience of Vietnam, Bangladesh could substantially boost employment by attracting Chinese and other international manufacturers. This would necessitate improvements in Bangladesh's business environment—a goal already

endorsed by Professor Yunus.

The commitments made by China during the recent bilateral dialogues—including plans for high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, modernisation of Mongla Port, joint development of the China Economic and Industrial Zone in Chattogram, and expedited negotiation of a Free Trade Agreement—offer practical and significant economic benefits for Bangladesh's youths. Furthermore, Bangladesh's active participation in global expos, such as the China International Import Expo and China South Asia Expo, provides young entrepreneurs direct access to international markets. The joint press release also shows that China will import more goods than ever from Bangladesh. Partnership with China's steady and pragmatic development approach—built on non-interference, mutual respect, and a "win-win" cooperative approach—represents stability, growth, and hope. Embracing President Xi Jinping's vision of building a "Community of Shared Future for Mankind" gives Bangladeshi youths a unique opportunity to participate actively in global development and diplomatic efforts.

Just as historical figures like Zhang Qian, Fa Xian, Atish Dipankar, and Admiral Zheng He once illuminated paths between two great civilisations, today's youth stand at the threshold of a similarly profound opportunity—to become modern-day torchbearers of this timeless friendship. As 2025 marks the golden jubilee of diplomatic ties and celebrates the "Year of People-to-People Exchanges," it is not just a ceremonial milestone. It shows a beacon of immense promise. To truly grasp the rich possibilities, our youth and educational institutes must recognise that language and culture are not just fields of study. They are bridges of empowerment, keys to global understanding, and doors to lifelong prosperity. Thus, investing strategically in Chinese language and cultural education may become Bangladesh's most powerful tool, enabling its youth to craft a shared future of lasting harmony, boundless opportunity, and mutual development with China.

Bangladesh" showed overwhelmingly positive sentiment among Bangladeshis towards China in nurturing friendly relationships, sharing technological development, opportunities for higher education, medical tourism, and creating a strong trading partnership with China.

China is Bangladesh's largest trading partner, facilitating \$16.63 billion in imports and just \$715.37 million in exports to and from Bangladesh, respectively, in 2024. On the other hand, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from China to Bangladesh was \$2.67 billion as of September 2024. Nearly 1,000 Chinese enterprises and multinational corporations operate in Bangladesh, creating tremendous employment opportunities.

In this context, youths in Bangladesh could further enhance their employment opportunities in Chinese enterprises and multinational corporations by acquiring practical knowledge of the Chinese language and culture, China-related studies, and technical education in various areas. The

Bangladeshi youths.

Fluency in Chinese is more vital than ever. For people to people friendship and mutual prosperity, communication barriers must be overcome. Systematic Chinese language education, available through universities, Confucius Institutes, and specialised China Studies programmes, is a transformative tool. Nearly 20,000 Bangladeshi students are studying in China, and around 3,000 students are trained annually through two Confucius Institutes at North-South and Dhaka University, as well as one Confucius Classroom in Bangladesh. These can open significant career paths for youth, including employment opportunities in Chinese companies in Bangladesh, entrepreneurship linked to China's global market and Belt and Road Initiative, higher education and research opportunities in China, and participation in governmental and development projects under the Global Development Initiative framework.

Medical tourism is another significant

LAW AND EQUALITY

EQUALITY'S BLURRED LINES

Unravelling Bangladesh's Constitutional Conundrum



To truly uphold Bangladesh's constitutional promise of equality, the judiciary must adopt a coherent approach and rigorously differentiate between these two principles, ensuring robust safeguards against arbitrary power and drive substantive equality.

MD SAIFUZ ZAMAN and MD IMAMUNUR RAHMAN

The principles of 'equality before law' and 'equal protection of law', cornerstones of modern constitutionalism meant to ensure fairness and justice for all citizens, are entangled in a web of conceptual and judicial inconsistency. In Bangladesh, these principles are enshrined in Article 27 of the Constitution. Yet, the judicial interpretation and practical application of these distinct, though related, concepts have been fraught with confusion, highlighting a broader conceptual deficiency within the legal fraternity. This ambiguity has taken on renewed urgency in the wake of the July-August 2024 mass uprising, where

protests against inequality and state repression underscored the dire consequences of failing to uphold constitutional guarantees. Now, the question remains: can Bangladesh uphold its constitutional promise of equality, or will these fundamental rights continue to be obscured by legal ambiguity?

The recent recommendation by the Constitution Reform Commission to amend Article 27 and expand 'equal protection of law' to include 'equal protection and benefit' has added to the existing confusion and complexity. While well-intentioned, the inclusion of 'benefit' is superfluous, as entitlement to the law's benefits is already implicit in the rule of law—a principle deeply

intertwined with equality. As Lord Bingham articulated in *The Rule of Law*, its essence is that everyone is bound by and entitled to the benefit of law. Explicitly adding 'benefit' risks creating further ambiguity and obscuring the distinct functions of the two limbs of equality.

To fully grasp the implications of 'equality before law' and 'equal protection of law', their historical and conceptual roots must be examined. 'Equality before law' finds early articulation in the Magna Carta, a landmark medieval document sealed in 1215 between King John of England and his barons. King John, known for his arbitrary rule, heavy taxation, and disregard for his subjects' rights, faced rebellion.

The Magna Carta established that even the monarch was subject to the law, declaring that all citizens, regardless of status, should be ruled fairly and equally. This idea was further developed by AV Dicey, who defined it as the equal subjection of all individuals to ordinary laws administered by ordinary courts, preventing arbitrary power. Over time, its interpretation has focused on the impartial application of laws, ensuring procedural fairness and guaranteeing that all individuals, regardless of status, are subject to the same legal treatment.

Conversely, 'equal protection of the law' originates from the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution. Initially focused on preventing racial discrimination, its interpretation has broadened to address various forms of discriminatory treatment. Unlike 'equality before law', which focuses on uniform application of law to prevent arbitrary enforcement, 'equal protection of the law' mandates that legislation is non-discriminatory and requires the state to take positive steps against discrimination. While the former embodies a negative approach, and the latter takes a positive approach, their primary aims remain fundamentally distinct: 'equality before law' primarily targets judiciary and executive actions in applying the law, whereas 'equal protection of the law' targets the legislature in enacting laws.

However, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh has significantly blurred the conceptual boundaries between these two principles through a series of judicial missteps. Firstly, the Court consistently employed interchangeable definitions, conflating the two principles. The concept of 'treating similarly situated individuals alike', central to 'equal protection', was misapplied to 'equality before law', which focuses on preventing arbitrary legal distinctions. In Sontosh Kumar Saha, this conflation peaked with the assertion that 'equal protection of law means all persons are equal in all cases', ignoring the principle's allowance for differential treatment to achieve genuine equality.

Secondly, the Court failed to establish a clear framework distinguishing the purposes and applications of each principle, leading to overlapping and contradictory interpretations. Thirdly, the Court's overemphasis on the 'similarly situated' criterion, relevant to 'equal protection', neglected 'equality before law', prioritising substantive equality over non-arbitrary legal application. Finally, later cases like Bangladesh v Md Azizur Rahman and Md Nur Hossain v Bangladesh reinforced this conflation by reiterating flawed interpretations, cementing a judicial

precedent that erases the distinction between these two facets of equality.

Bangladesh's equality interpretation must align with international standards, reflecting principles it has agreed to uphold. Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bangladesh is party, enshrines 'equality before the law' and 'equal protection of the law'. Nowak clarifies these principles, stating that 'equality before the law' emphasises the enforcement of existing laws, requiring impartial application by judges and administrators, rather than absolute identical treatment. It mandates equal treatment for objectively equal situations and unequal treatment for unequal ones. This principle primarily focuses on the judiciary and executive, ensuring non-arbitrary application, distinct from 'equal protection of the law', which primarily addresses the legislature's duty to enact non-discriminatory laws. This distinction, endorsed in cases like *Kavanagh v Ireland* and *O'Neill and Quinn v Ireland*, remains ignored in Bangladesh.

The evolving interpretation of equality within Bangladesh's constitutional landscape highlights the persistent difficulty in maintaining distinct meanings for 'equality before law' and 'equal protection of law'. The repeated invocation of 'like should be treated alike' to define both concepts has led to the erosion of their individual normative purposes. This trend is, however, not unique to Bangladesh. Even the Indian Supreme Court, eg, in *Srinivasa Theatre v Government of Tamil Nadu*, acknowledged their commonality, despite distinct meanings. Similarly, the US Supreme Court's experiences, including with *Dred Scott* and *Plessy*, illustrates struggles with equal protection, notably the 'separate but equal' doctrine. Only in *Brown v Board of Education* did the Court conclusively hold segregation unconstitutional, affirming that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

To truly uphold Bangladesh's constitutional promise of equality, the judiciary must adopt a coherent approach and rigorously differentiate between these two principles, ensuring robust safeguards against arbitrary power and drive substantive equality. This precision will enhance access to justice, strengthen the rule of law, and transform the cries of the masses into a reality of justice for all.

The writers are Lecturer in the Department of Law at ZH Sikder University of Science and Technology, and Assistant Professor and Chair in the Department of Law at ZH Sikder University of Science and Technology, respectively.

LAW VISION

The impacts of patent laws on plant and food security

As biotech giants continue to consolidate control over plant genetics, concerns are mounting about food security and farmers' independence. Without stricter regulations for farmers' safety, the unchecked patenting of seeds could inflate food prices and hinder efforts to create climate-resilient crops. If monopolistic patenting continues, the future of food may rest in the hands of a few powerful corporations and that too at a high cost to farmers, consumers, and global food security.

TAHSINA ZAMAN, ABDUR RAHMAN AL-MAMUN

The future of food security is increasingly threatened by the aggressive patenting strategies of major biotech corporations, according to the experts in agriculture and legal research. Farmers are being restricted, and giant companies are exploiting patent laws to monopolise seed markets and to control the development of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and new genomic techniques (NGTs). Patent laws under intellectual property laws are now being used as powerful tools to dominate agricultural markets.

Patents were designed to encourage innovation. Originally intended to protect the owner's rights in technical innovations, patents are now being used to claim ownership over seeds, plants, and even their offsprings. This growing trend is severely impacting farmers, breeders, and the overall food system. Companies are leveraging these legal protections to restrict access to essential genetic material, effectively limiting competition and endangering biodiversity.

Globally, biotech firms are attempting to expand their control through broad patent claims that cover genetic traits shared by multiple plant varieties. This misuse of the patent system creates legal uncertainty for breeders and farmers and restricts their ability to innovate. As a result, farmers and small-scale agricultural enterprises are finding

it increasingly difficult to navigate the complex web of overlapping patents without risking costly legal battles.

In Bangladesh, the Plant Varieties Protection Act, 2019 was introduced to safeguard the rights of farmers and breeders while promoting innovation. This law aims to ensure that plant varieties created through traditional breeding methods remain accessible to farmers, plant breeders and researchers. Farmers in Bangladesh face challenges in securing protection for their plant varieties due to lack of awareness and limited resources. They consider the registration process burdensome. Moreover, treating farmers and commercial breeders equally in this regard may disadvantage farmers further.

Section 23(2) of the Act permits farmers to reproduce and sell seeds except for commercial purposes. However, it is submitted that this restriction on commercial sales creates risks for food security. Limiting farmers' ability to trade seeds on a larger scale may reduce seed diversity, hinder innovation, and weaken farmers' resilience in addressing climate change and crop failure challenges.

The growing patent dominance is also posing serious risks to traditional farming practices. Farmers may inadvertently cultivate crops containing patented traits and face legal action as a result. Small breeders, unable to afford the costs of licensing fees or legal advice, risk

being pushed out of the industry altogether. This monopolisation threatens agricultural resilience at a time when climate change demands innovative, adaptable crops.

As biotech giants continue to consolidate control over plant genetics, concerns are mounting about food security and farmers' independence. Without stricter regulations for farmers' safety, the unchecked patenting of seeds could



inflate food prices and hinder efforts to create climate-resilient crops. If monopolistic patenting continues, the future of food may rest in the hands of a few powerful corporations, and that too at a high cost to farmers, consumers, and global food security.

Thus, it is urged that policymakers take immediate steps to enforce the Plant Variety Protection Act, 2019 to ensure strict safety evaluations, transparent labeling, and enhanced

traceability throughout the supply chain. In conclusion, stronger enforcement of law is essential to prevent monopolistic practices in the nation's agriculture sector.

The writers are LLB and LLM from Bangladesh University of Professionals and student, Faculty of Agriculture, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, respectively.



Records galore as Tigresses thrash Thailand

Bangladesh women's cricket team got off to a flying start in their ICC Women's World Cup Qualifiers campaign, crushing Thailand by a staggering 178 runs in their opening match in Lahore on Thursday after skipper Nigar Sultana Joty scored the fastest century by a Bangladeshi.

● Joty struck 101 off 80 balls, reaching her century in just 78 deliveries at the Lahore City Cricket Association Ground. This was Joty's maiden ton and also the fastest ever by a Bangladeshi in Women's ODI, breaking the previous record held by Fargana Hoque, who had scored a 156-ball ton against India in Mirpur in 2023.

● Bangladesh bundled out Thailand for just 93 runs in 28.5 overs, recording their biggest margin win in the format. The Tigresses' previous best in this regard was a 154-run win over Ireland in Mirpur last year.

● The 152-run third-wicket stand between Joty, who struck 15 fours and one maximum, and Sharmin Akhter, unbeaten on 94 off 126 deliveries, is the highest partnership for any wicket for Bangladesh in the format.

● Bangladesh legspinner Fahima Khatun (5-21) and off-spinner Jannatul Ferdus (5-7) bagged five wickets each -- the first instance of two bowlers claiming fifers in WODIs. These were also the career-best figures for both the bowlers.



SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh: 271-3 in 50 overs (Joty 101, Sharmin 94 not out, Fargana 53; Maya 1-28)

Thailand: 93 all out in 28.5 overs (Sutthiruang 22; Jannatul 5-7, Fahima 5-21)

Result: Bangladesh won by 178 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Nigar Sultana Joty

Barca, PSG put one foot into semis

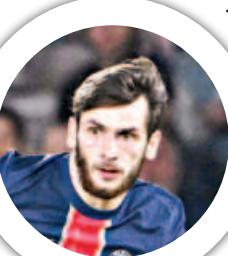
It was a night of one-sided affairs as Barcelona and PSG dominated their Champions League first-leg quarterfinal fixtures against Borussia Dortmund and Aston Villa on Thursday, respectively. Robert Lewandowski put his former club to the sword as he scored a brace to help Barcelona romp to a 4-0 win at home. Raphinha found the net, equalising an elusive club record held by Lionel Messi, and young sensation Lamine Yamal also got his name on the scoresheet to finish off a night of dominance for the Catalans. It was also a one-way traffic in Paris as PSG flaunted their youthful exuberance to cruise to a 3-1 win over Aston Villa. Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, Desire Doué, and Nuno Mendes buried Villa after the visitors clinched a surprise lead, courtesy of Morgan Rogers.

● Raphinha has now been directly involved in 19 Champions League goals this season (12 goals, 7 assists), the joint-most ever by a Barcelona player in a single edition of the competition (level with Lionel Messi in 2011-12).

● Striker Robert Lewandowski's brace took his tally to 29 goals in 28 matches against Dortmund in all competitions, two strikes more than he's managed against any other club in his career.

● Barcelona have not lost any of their 23 games across all competitions so far in 2025 (W19 D4), the best unbeaten start to a calendar year in their history (2016 – P22 W19 D3).

● Borussia Dortmund suffered their joint-heaviest defeat in a European Cup/Champions League match,

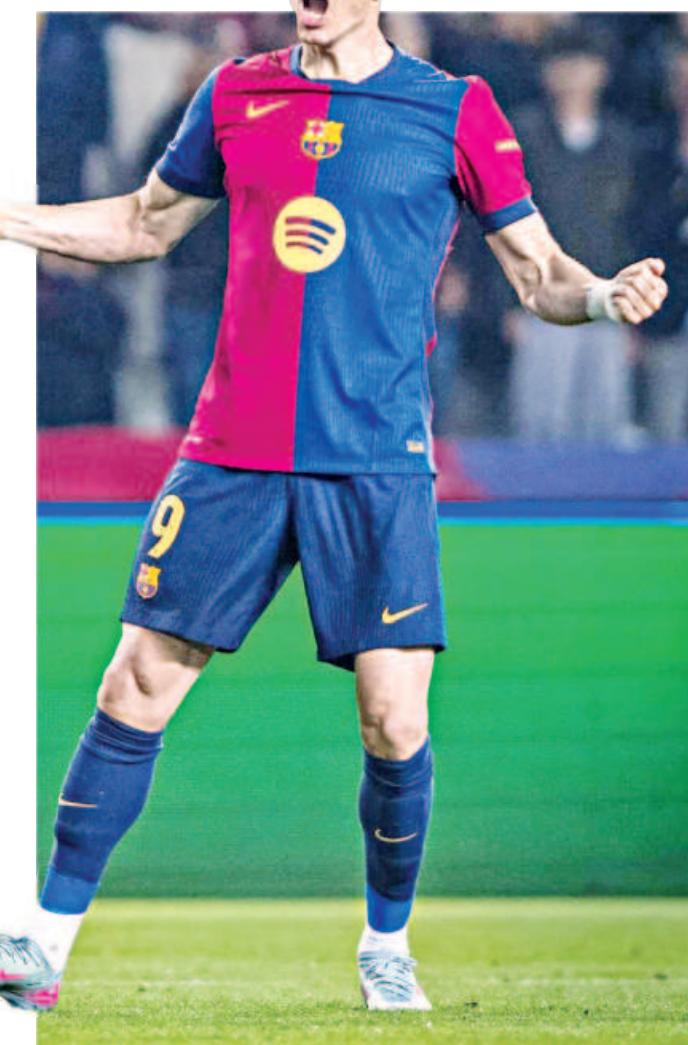


alongside a 4-0 loss to Ajax in the 2021-22 group stage.

● Barcelona recorded their biggest win in a Champions League knockout stage match since beating Lyon 5-1 in the 2018-19 round of 16.

● At 24 years and 93 days, PSG named the youngest starting XI for a Champions League quarterfinal match since Arsenal's 3-0 win over Villarreal in 2008-09 (24y 47d).

● Ousmane Dembele created nine chances in this match. It's the most on record (since 2003-04) in a Champions League match for PSG, and the most by a player overall since Joshua Kimmich for Bayern Munich against PSG in April 2021 (10).



Stumped by the system

NABID YEASIN

Every year, the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) begins with unwavering commitments from authorities to make it even more competitive than the previous years.

The same is the case for the franchise-based Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) or any other domestic tournaments -- it is as if Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials read out lines from the same script, merely swapping out the tournament names.

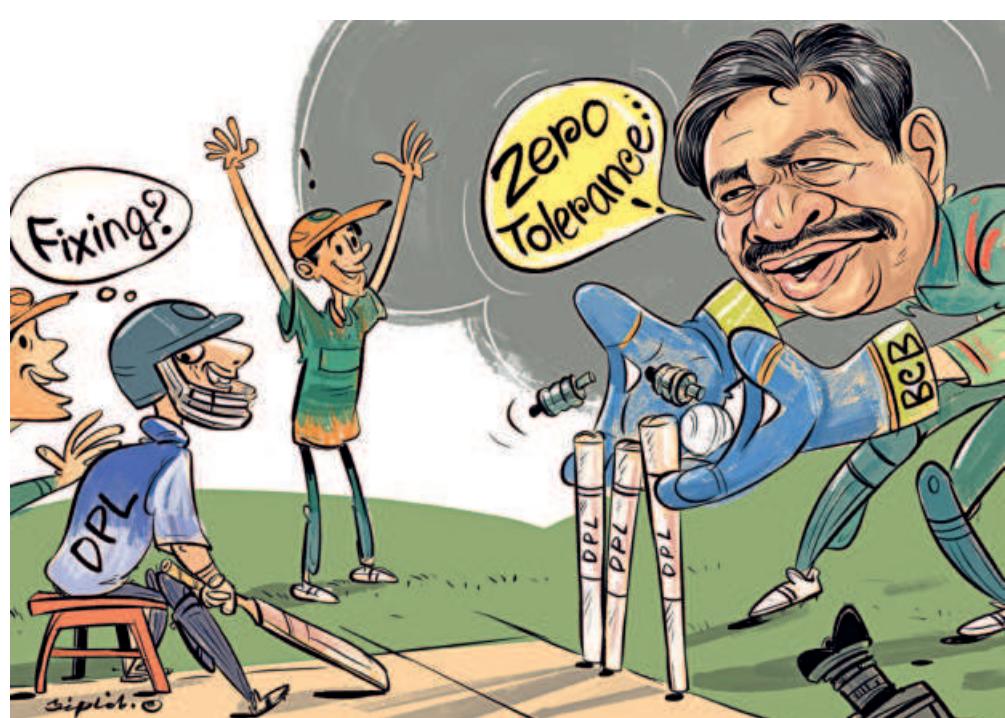
And almost every year, the charade put on by BCB high-ups is exposed -- either through the quality of cricket displayed, the blatant mismanagement, or something as bizarre as what happened on Wednesday.

Shinepukur Cricket Club batter Minhaljul Abedin Sabir's manner of dismissal in a DPL game against Gulshan Cricket Club in Mirpur portrayed the exact state of Bangladesh cricket. It was symbolic of a system where those in charge appear to be intentionally holding back progress, allowing everything but cricket to soar.

Minhaljul dragged his bat back, never apparently intending to ground it, despite having it over the crease. It was as if he allowed the wicketkeeper to take the bails off in his second attempt at having the batter stumped.

Bangladesh cricket's future, in every way, is in the hands of board president Faruque Ahmed. Questions are naturally raised about whether the Faruque-led BCB has been holding back, or even making attempts to obstruct, to place Bangladesh cricket where it should be -- much like Minhaljul's puzzling behaviour at the crease.

Faruque's return to BCB -- now in a much more powerful role than when he previously served as chief selector -- followed a nationwide movement that promised significant change to various sectors.



Yet at BCB, the only noticeable change has been the signature at the bottom of approved documents.

Since Faruque's arrival, the country's cricket has seen no meaningful progress. BPL's most recent edition was Faruque's opportunity to finally deliver on the big promises of "increased competitiveness", "quality cricket", and "strict regulations". But like in the years before him, those promises fell flat as BCB offered one of the most chaotic editions in history, marred by widespread complaints from players and officials regarding non-payment, starting from the very first day.

Under the Faruque-led administration, DPL has presented an even bleaker picture. Issues from BPL -- like non-payment and protests over irregularities -- spilled over, further compounded by the latest addition of a sombre chapter that reeks of foul play on the field, described as "shameful" by several former cricketers.

Arranging and safeguarding the integrity and quality of both BPL and DPL should be routine tasks for the governing body of cricket in Bangladesh. That the board has failed to oversee even one smooth, controversy-free domestic tournament since the leadership change is perhaps unsurprising. BCB's

primary focus remains on the national men's and women's teams. But, even in such a small domain, Faruque and company have failed to bring any visible change in structure or the way things are operated in and around the national teams.

The board may consider itself unlucky that Minhaljul's suspicious act did not go unnoticed -- unlike the many misdeeds that go unreported in lower-tier tournaments. It is nothing new that allegations of corruption, to the extent of paying off umpires, are rampant in the lower-tier cricket, which, unlike DPL or BPL, do not get televised, helping the wrongdoings fly under the radar.

For now, BCB has initiated an investigation into the alleged irregularities in the said DPL game, with the board reminding through a press release yesterday that it had taken "notes of the concerns surrounding the game".

Will the investigation bear any fruit?

Fortunately for BCB, the focus will soon shift. In a few days, Bangladesh men's national team will host Zimbabwe for a two-Test series. As is customary in Bangladesh cricket, media and fan attention will move towards international fixtures, and scrutiny over DPL and other domestic cricket issues will recede -- eventually to be swept under the rug.

However, if and when the national team fail to perform, questions about the overall quality of cricket will re-emerge, the dearth in the pipeline will be brought to the fore, and replacements for the retired stars will be sought with more gusto than ever.

The irony, as it has long been the case, will be in the way everyone would no longer talk about the main devil and the root cause of agony in Bangladesh cricket -- that is the corruption at the core that never gets properly investigated, regardless of who holds the reins at the board.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

BPL football
Rahmatganj vs
Chittagong Abahani
Live from 3:30 pm
IPL

Chennai vs Kolkata
Live from 8:00 pm
NAGORIK TV
PSL
Islamabad vs Lahore
Live from 9:00 pm

LA 2028: Historic stride for gender equality

STAR SPORTS DESK

The Los Angeles 2028 Olympics will make history with equal numbers of women's and men's teams in all sports, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced yesterday.

Of 10,500 athletes, 5,333 will be women and 5,167 men. The event lineup includes 161 women's events, 165 men's events, and 25 mixed events -- reflecting the rising popularity of women's sports and the IOC's commitment to gender balance across all competitions.

Among the notable changes, the women's football tournament will feature 16 women's teams from 12, while the men's competition will be downsized from 16 to a dozen teams.

In boxing, a new women's weight category brings gender parity across all events.

Moreover, six new 50m events added (backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke for both genders), raising total swimming medals to 41.

Furthermore, men's and women's T20 tournaments will include six teams each, reintroducing cricket to the Olympics after 128 years.

Dhaka's Rising Stars 2025 kicks off today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is set to introduce a brand new inter-school football tournament, Dhaka's Rising Stars 2025, which will commence at the Fortis Jalshiri ground in Purbachal today.

A total of eight English-medium schools -- International School of Dhaka, Scholastica Mirpur, Scholastica Uttara, Aga Khan Academy, Sir John Wilson School, Springdale International School, Alfred International School and Aurora International School -- from the capital compete in two separate age groups -- Under-12 and Under-14.

The competing schools are The matches will take place on every Friday and Saturday and both finals will take place on May 9.

BCB begins DPL investigation, two summoned

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) launched an investigation on allegations of irregularities in the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) match between Gulshan Cricket Club and Shinepukur Cricket Club, held on Wednesday, and summoned the two Shinepukur batters -- Minhaljul Abedin and Rahim Ahmed -- whose manner of dismissals caused the furor yesterday.

**Read the full story on The Daily Star website*

BPL fixing probe far from over

SPORTS REPORTER

A Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official yesterday said the independent inquiry body, which was formed to support the board and the BCB Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) with integrity issues and investigations regarding the last edition of the Bangladesh Premier League T20 (BPL), has completed nearly half of its work.

"Before Eid, I last spoke with them, and they said they've completed 40 to 50 percent of the work," BCB media committee chairman Iftekhar Rahman Mithu told The Daily Star.

"They've interviewed numerous cricketers, team officials, and others, with more interviews planned. The judge is abroad, but they've continued holding online meetings," he added.

Earlier, on February 3, BCB formed a 3-member committee with former justice of the appellate division Justice Mirza Hussain Haider named as the convenor, while former cricketer Shakil Kasem and international lawyer Dr Khaled H. Chowdhury were named as other members, after several unethical issues came to light.

There were reports that suggested the ACU identified eight matches for suspicion of spot-fixing and match-fixing, based on anonymous tips and media reports, while they monitored 10 players and four franchises.

BCB acted swiftly by forming the independent inquiry committee, but more than two months on, it is still waiting for a conclusive report. With the investigation progressing slowly, doubts remain over whether the findings will lead to meaningful accountability -- or simply become another case of concerns fading away with time.

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ICT seeks Interpol red notices for 9 ex-ministers



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday requested the home ministry to seek Interpol red notices against nine ministers and an adviser of the previous Awami League government.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam disclosed the move during a views-exchange meeting with reporters at his office, saying that the individuals named in the request face multiple charges related to crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising.

The accused include Obaidul Quader, AI general secretary and former minister of road transport and bridges; Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, former home minister; AKM Mozammel Haque, ex-minister

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

No country wishes Bangladesh well more than India
Says Jaishankar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said yesterday that no country wishes Bangladesh well more than India.

"That's almost in our DNA. As a well-wisher, as a friend, I think we hope they go the right way and do the right thing," he added. Jaishankar, who was participating in an interactive session at the Rising Bharat summit in New Delhi organised by the News18 TV channel, said, "Democracies require elections. That's how mandates are given and mandates are renewed. So, we hope that they go down that path."

He also said, "Our relationship with

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

BNP men hand witness in Salauddin Quader's case to police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Freedom fighter Nurul Absar, 76, who had testified in court against executed war criminal and former BNP standing committee member Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, was confined by BNP and Jubo Dal activists in Ramu upazila of Cox's Bazar and later handed over to police yesterday.

Abdar was in the house of Abdul Gani Majhi in Paschimpara area of the upazila when pro-BNP men surrounded the house in the early hours, said police.

Abdar is a resident of Chandonpura village in Rangunia upazila of Chattogram.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

People asking us to stay for 5 more years
Says home adviser

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said that people are telling them to stay for five more years.

"Law and order situation in the country has improved. Efforts to maintain law and order have intensified and will increase further. People are telling us, 'You should stay for five more years,'" he said while speaking to reporters after visiting the Shantiganj Police Station in Sunamganj.

Responding to a query about India's reply to the return of Sheikh Hasina, the adviser said, "We have an agreement with India regarding the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



The BNP yesterday organised a large rally in the capital to show solidarity with the Palestinian people. Party supporters gathered at Nayapaltan and marched, carrying flags, banners, and placards while chanting slogans against the Israeli atrocities in Gaza.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ESCALATING US-CHINA TRADE WAR Global economy in tailspin

US stocks back in free fall; US hitting Beijing with 145% tariff

AGENCIES

The US-China trade war intensified yesterday, sending the global economy into unknown territory and dampening relief after President Donald Trump's earlier climbdown from a wider tariff onslaught against the rest of the world.

The White House clarified that Trump's big hike in tariffs on China announced 24 hours earlier had actually taken his total levies this year on imports from the world's second biggest economy to a staggering total of 145 percent -- not the previously reported 125 percent.

This was because the latest tariff hike comes on top of a 20 percent tariff already imposed earlier. China has retaliated with levies of 84 percent on US imports.

The superpower confrontation threw a deep shadow over the jubilation that Trump was retreating from threats to impose punishing tariffs on dozens of other countries -- everywhere from European Union allies to Asian manufacturing hubs like Vietnam and even tiny, remote ocean islands.

Trump maintained a blanket 10 percent tariff on most countries. However, his retreat from more damaging levies against European countries prompted the EU to pause plans for its own retaliation.

Amid relief, Asian and European stock markets rocketed, with Tokyo closing 9.1 percent higher.

But the realisation that Trump's splashy about-face on Wednesday masked the reality of a surging trade war with China dampened spirits.

- EU suspends counter-tariffs for 90 days after Trump U-turn
- China's 84% levy on US goods comes into effect
- Beijing says tariffs 'goes against the world,' curbs Hollywood imports

Wall Street's main indexes tumbled yesterday on concerns over the impact of high US tariffs on global economy, with stocks pulling back sharply from the day-ago gains when Trump moved to pause the levies on some countries.

The 90 day halt in tariffs had lifted the S&P 500 .SPX to its biggest single-day percentage gain since 2008 on

Wednesday. The Nasdaq .IXIC posted its biggest one-day jump since 2001.

At 12:19 pm ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average .DJI fell 1,872.86 points, or 4.61 percent, to 38,735.59, the S&P 500 .SPX lost 298.72 points, or 5.45 percent, to 5,158.18 and the Nasdaq Composite .IXIC lost 1,091.78 points, or 6.38 percent, to 16,033.20.

Most S&P 500 sectors nursed losses. Information technology .SPLRCT and energy .SPNY led the fall, down more than 7% each.

Big Tech came under pressure once again, with Apple AAPL.O down 7%, Microsoft MSFT.O 4.7% and Nvidia NVDA.O 8.5%.

Gold prices hit a record high as the US dollar crumbled.

Trump says he wants to use tariffs to reorder the world economy by forcing manufacturers to base themselves in the United States.

Howard Lutnick, his commerce secretary, was bullish, posting on social media Thursday that "the Golden Age is coming. We are committed to protecting our interests, engaging in global negotiations and exploding our economy."

Amid questions over how far Trump is ready to push, the European Union welcomed the US president's partial row-back on his original threat to impose 20

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1cr new jobs in 18 months
Promises Fakhrul if BNP voted to power

STAR REPORT

If voted to power in the next national election, the BNP has said it will generate employment for one crore people within its first 18 months in office.

The party has also set a target of achieving a \$1 trillion GDP by 2034. In addition, the BNP aims to reduce the tax burden on citizens and explore ways to increase revenue collection.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir outlined the proposals in a post on his verified Facebook page yesterday.

He also noted that BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman shared three key messages in a goodwill note on the occasion of the Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025.

They are: unity is the foundation of national development; it was the government of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman that first enacted laws to attract foreign direct investment (FDI); and the governments led by Khaleda Zia consistently pursued investment-friendly policies.

In the post titled "SI Trillion Economy," Mirza Fakhrul wrote that if the BNP wins the upcoming election and forms the next government, the party plans to raise the foreign direct investment (FDI) to GDP ratio from the current 0.45% to 2.5%. It has also set a long-term goal of reaching a \$1 trillion GDP by 2034.

Currently, Bangladesh has a GDP worth around \$450 billion.

To enhance revenue collection, the BNP wants to

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PURBACHAL PLOT GRAFT
Arrest warrants issued against Hasina, Putul

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued arrest warrants against 18 people, including former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her daughter Saima Wazed Putul, on charges of irregularities in plot allocation in Purbachal New Town.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after taking cognisance of the charges.

The judge directed the officers-in-charge of over a dozen police stations in Dhaka and other parts of the country to submit progress reports on the execution of the arrest warrants by May 4.

On March 25, Anti-Corruption Commission Assistant Director Afnan Jannat Keya, also the investigation officer in the case, submitted the charge sheet against the 18 accused, showing them as fugitives. She appealed to the court to issue arrest warrants against them as they had not been granted bail by any court.

According to ACC documents, Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajib officials, had six plots allotted to herself, her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, daughter Putul, younger sister Sheikh Rehana, Rehana's son Radwan Mujib Siddiqi Bobby, and Rehana's daughter Azmina Siddiqi, in violation of rules.

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Three beaten to death in Kushtia, Kamrangirchar

STAR REPORT

A mob beat two men to death in the capital's Kamrangirchar on Wednesday while a neighbour allegedly tortured a rickshaw-puller to death in Kushtia yesterday.

In the Sylheti Bazar area of Kamrangirchar, tea stall owner Nur Mohammad, who had earlier accused several men of demanding extortion in a case, was assaulted on Wednesday night, said Amirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kamrangirchar Police Station.

Citing locals, the OC said nine or 10 men led by an accused in the extortion case were beating up the tea seller and asking him to withdraw the extortion case when a crowd gathered.

Seeing the crowd, the group tried to run away and threw seven crude bombs, three of which exploded, but locals caught two of them and beat them to death on the spot, the OC added.

The deceased are Muhammad Nadim, 30, and Masud, 32, said the officer, he said, adding that the latter was a suspected gang leader.

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HARBINGER OF SPRING

A citrine wagtail perches delicately between blooming water lilies on the tranquil waters of the Muhuri river in Feni -- its vibrant yellow plumage contrasting beautifully with the soft pink petals. Often found in wetlands and marshes across Asia and Europe, the small songbird is known for its distinct tail wag while foraging. Much like other feathered friends, the wagtail also plays its part in maintaining the ecological balance of nature by controlling insect populations, and dispersing seeds. In parts of Asia, its seasonal migration is associated with the arrival of spring.

PHOTO: NOBLE CHAKMA

