



PAHELA BAISHAKH Chhayanaut all set for celebrations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chhayanaut is all set to celebrate Bangla New Year, Pahela Baishakh, with its iconic cultural programme at Ramna Batamul in Dhaka.

The revered cultural institution, which has been hosting the event since 1967, will once again greet the rising sun with timeless classical ragas beneath the banyan tree – an enduring symbol of the spirit and resilience of Bangalee cultural identity.

The 58th edition of the traditional Baishakh celebration, however, carries a profound sense of loss.

It will be the first time that the event takes place without Sanjida Khatun, Chhayanaut's co-founder and president, who passed away on March 25. A towering figure in Bangladesh's cultural landscape and a pioneering musicologist, her absence will be deeply felt.

"This year's programme will be dedicated to her memory, honouring her lifelong commitment to music,

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POLISHING OFF THE PATACHITRA... Former students from Dhaka University's Faculty of Fine Arts apply the final touches to cloth-based scroll paintings, traditionally known as "Patachitra". The 20-foot-long canvases are adorned with motifs reflecting Bangladesh's rural life, mythology, and folklore. Five such vibrant artworks will be carried overhead as part of the grand procession celebrating the Bangla New Year on Monday. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

REGISTRATION DEADLINE NCP to seek 2-month extension from EC

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

The newly formed National Citizen Party will formally request the Election Commission to extend the registration deadline for political parties by two months, as the party is unlikely to meet the registration requirements by April 20.

NCP has formed a special team to handle registration-related tasks, which will soon engage with the EC, Ariful Islam Adeb, NCP senior joint convener, told The Daily Star.

The party, which is based on the student-led July uprising, officially launched on February 28. Shortly after, the EC issued a public notice inviting applications from new parties for registration, with a submission deadline of April 20.

Meanwhile, the legitimacy of the EC's public notice has been contested with the High Court by Rastra Sangskar Andolan. Following a preliminary hearing on March 18, the court issued a rule with a stay order, though according to petitioner's lawyer Abeda Gulruk, this applies only to the Rastra Sangskar Andolan and not to other parties.

At least three key NCP leaders told this newspaper that they were working to fulfil all registration requirements, including the establishment of a central office, necessary district and upazila offices, finalising the party charter, and formation of committees, within the next two months.

"A divisional coordination team will soon be formed to take steps for announcing committees," said a central leader, adding that upazila committees were almost ready and district committees required further structuring.

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\$462m of RMG shipped through India in 15 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's garment industry transhipped over 34,900 tonnes of apparel products worth \$462.34 million through India to 36 countries in 15 months.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association shared the data yesterday after India abruptly cancelled the transhipment route for Bangladesh on April 8.

It came amid global concerns over new "reciprocal" tariffs announced by the US, which later paused the levy for three months for Bangladesh, India and other countries, except China.

Bangladesh's exports through India in the 15 months from January 2024 to March 2025 included various clothing items such as blouses, trousers, T-shirts, and baby garments.

The US, European Union nations like Germany and France, and Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea were among the destinations.

The United Arab Emirates, Australia, and Canada were among the top non-EU importers, while South Africa and Chile also featured prominently.

The shipments were routed through India as part of regional trade facilitation. The route, via Kolkata and Delhi airports, had grown popular for air cargo, especially during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

It allowed Bangladesh exporters to move goods overland to India through the Benapole-Petrapole border and then air-ship them worldwide. The route offered faster service and, often, lower costs than relying on the overstretched Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka.

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

In FY24, Bangladesh exported \$44.47 billion, with \$36 billion from garments. Of its \$8.4 billion exports to the US in 2024, 90 percent were ready-made garments.

Medicine critically low due to Gaza aid block

Warns WHO; rescuers say Israeli air strike kills 10,
including 7 Palestinian children

AGENCIES

Medicine stocks are critically low due to the aid block in Gaza, making it hard to keep hospitals even partially operational, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

"We are critically low in our three warehouses, on antibiotics, IV fluids and blood bags," WHO official Rik Peeperkorn told reporters in Geneva via video link from Jerusalem.

The United Nations said its analysis of 36 recent Israeli strikes in Gaza showed only women and children were killed and decimated the human cost of the war.

The UN rights office also warned that expanding Israeli evacuation orders were resulting in the "forcible transfer" of people into ever-shrinking spaces in the war-ravaged Palestinian territory.

Spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani warned the military strikes across Gaza were "leaving nowhere safe".

Meanwhile, Gaza's civil defence agency said a pre-dawn Israeli air strike yesterday killed 10 members of the same family, including seven children, in the southern city of Khan Yunis.

The Israeli military said it was looking into the attack, adding in a separate statement that it had struck approximately 40 "terror targets" across Gaza over the past day, reports AFP.

Israel resumed intense strikes on the Gaza Strip on March 18, ending a two-month ceasefire with Hamas.

Efforts to restore the truce have so far failed.

"Ten people, including seven children, were brought to the hospital as martyrs following an Israeli air strike that targeted the Farra family home in central Khan Yunis,"

Netanyahu yesterday reiterated his pledge to bring back the hostages still held in Gaza in a message marking the Jewish Passover holiday.

His comments came after US President Donald Trump suggested progress in hostage release talks, telling a cabinet meeting on Thursday that "we're getting close to getting them back".

In a video message for Passover – a holiday celebrating the biblical liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt – Netanyahu said "for many families there will be empty chairs".

Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have become internally displaced by the war, with many making daily trips on foot to fill plastic containers with water from the few wells still functioning in remoter areas – and even these do not guarantee clean supplies.

The Palestinian Water Authority stated that most of its wells had been rendered inoperable during the war.

On March 22, a joint statement by the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics and the Water Authority said more than 85 percent of water and sanitation facilities and assets in Gaza were completely or partially out of service.

Palestinian and United Nations officials said most of Gaza's desalination plants were either damaged or had stopped operations because of Israel's power and fuel cuts.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

- » 36 Israeli strikes in Gaza killed 'only women and children': UN
- » Witnesses report heavy Israeli tank fire in Khan Yunis
- » Trump cites progress on Gaza hostage talks

New logo for police finalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police has finalised its new logo or monogram, replacing its older emblem featuring a sailboat.

The new logo has the national flower shapla (water lily) sitting on water surrounded by wheat and paddy wreath tied with three jute leaves on top.

The word "police" in Bangla is written below the lower joint of the paddy and wheat wreath.

Police headquarters issued an order in this regard on Thursday signed by its Additional Deputy Inspector General (Logistics) Nasima Akhter.

The PHQ has asked all concerned to prepare to use the new logo for flags, signboards, uniforms, and other items in districts and units.

The order said the monogram has already received the approval of the appropriate authorities and was awaiting a gazette notification.

The police monogram was previously revised through a gazette notification issued on February 10, 2004. Later in 2009, a new logo was introduced featuring a sailboat flanked by garlands of wheat and rice stalks. The emblem also included a

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Scientists recreate brain's pain circuit in world first

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have recreated the brain circuit responsible for transmitting feelings of pain for the first time.

The breakthrough, made by a team at Stanford University in the US, could help with developing better treatments for pain disorders.

The mapping of pain pathways in a lab dish could also allow experiments and tests to be conducted on nerve circuits without causing pain to laboratory animals.

"We can now model this pathway non-invasively," said Sergiu Pasca, a professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences at Stanford University, who led the study.

"The [lab-built circuits] don't 'feel' any pain. They transmit nervous signals that need to be further processed by other centres in our brains for us to experience the unpleasant, aversive feeling of pain."

It is the first time that scientists have witnessed waves of electrical activity travel along the entire nervous pathway responsible for sensing pain – from the body's skin to the brain.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

The watermelon harvest is in full swing in the Dakop upazila of Khulna. These watermelons, known for their sweetness and rich flavour, are highly sought after across the country. Farmers invest around Tk 35,000 to Tk 40,000 and three months of hard labour into cultivating each bigha of watermelon. This season, wholesalers are spending between Tk 70,000 and Tk 1 lakh to acquire a bigha of farmland, which typically yields 600 to 700 watermelons. The photo was taken in the Bajua Khajurtala area yesterday.

Govt mulling out-of-court settlements Says BB governor on recovering laundered money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, City

The government is considering out-of-court settlements as an option to recover laundered money from abroad, as the formal legal process is often time-consuming.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur revealed the information during a discussion on "Anti-Money Laundering and Contemporary Banking Issues" at the central bank's Chattogram office yesterday.

"Many countries pursue alternative means beyond formal procedures. The government is willing to consider them if settlements can help expedite the return of funds," the governor said.

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