

## Hold polls

FROM PAGE 5  
Detective Branch in the capital's Gulshan area. Farroque, a former opposition chief whip in Parliament, alleged that proper legal action was not being taken against AL leaders involved in misdeeds and looting.

The BNP leader said the cohorts of Awami League remained active within the administration, working to destabilise the country.

In such a situation, he urged the chief adviser to arrange a credible election as early as possible.

"We don't want a government like Hasina's. We don't want leaders like the former Awami League law minister or education minister in the future government. Give us an election that brings honest individuals to power," he said.

Meanwhile, BNP Standing Committee Member Selima Rahman on Friday said, "We want fair elections. The home affairs adviser has said the country wants this government to stay for five years. But we know what the people really want."

## 3 bodies

FROM PAGE 5  
multiple stab wounds were found on his body and a blood-stained knife was also recovered from the scene.

"Based on the condition of the body, we suspect he was killed at least 36 hours ago. His home is in Kishoreganj, but we are investigating why he came to this area and how he was murdered," he added.

According to Delowar's family, he was a driver by profession and lived in Gazipur. The family has yet to determine any motive behind the killing.

In another incident, police recovered the body of a newborn girl wrapped in cloth from an abandoned property in the Khaisar embankment area under Daudpur of the same upazila.

## Promises made

FROM PAGE 5  
"The river becomes rough during monsoon," said Ismail Ali of Hamidpur. "Every year, one or two boats sink. Students cross this river daily. We've been hearing promises about a bridge for decades," he said.

Md Kaysar Hamid, executive engineer of the Roads and Highways Department in Moulvibazar, said a survey for the main bridge has been completed and design work is currently underway.

A consultation firm, the Institute of Water Modelling (IWM), is conducting a study to determine the alignment of the approach roads on both sides, he said.

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A van driver transporting large bamboo baskets to the market. These baskets are made for day-to-day use and is sold wholesale for between Tk 100-300 depending on the size. The photo was taken in the Zero Point area of Khulna city recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Boro harvest in full swing in haors

Farmers start early amid fear of weather

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrokona

Farmers in Netrokona's haor areas have started harvesting Boro paddy ahead of the Bangla month of Baishakh, fearing possible inclement weather in the coming days, including rainfall and nor'westers.

This year, early-ripening Boro varieties were cultivated in the 134 small and large haors of the district, particularly in Madan, Mohanganj, and Khalijuri upazilas.

The new varieties have matured earlier than those used last year, prompting farmers to begin harvesting sooner.

Hundreds of farmers were seen busy harvesting paddy yesterday in Dingapota and Jagannathpur haors in Mohanganj and Khalijuri

upazilas. Netrokona, known as a hub for Boro cultivation, relies heavily on its haor areas, which comprise about 25 percent of the district's arable land and supports the livelihoods of nearly 30 percent of its population.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Boro paddy has been cultivated on 1,85,460 hectares this year, including 41,075 hectares in haor areas. If the weather remains favourable, all the paddy in the haors can be harvested within the next 10 days.

The weather has been good this year. The new varieties are also more disease-resistant. So, the yield seems higher. Now all we need is a good market price," said Abdul Kaiyum Khan, a farmer

from the Dingapota Haor area.

Md Abdus Sakur Sadi, agriculture officer of Mohanganj upazila, said they encouraged farmers to plant high-yielding, pest and disease-resistant varieties such as BRRI Dhan 88, 89, 92, 96, 102, and BINA-25, which mature faster than the commonly used BRRI Dhan 29. "Farmers followed our advice, and we expect a bumper yield," he added.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department has warned that although rainfall is currently low, heavy rain of over 250mm is likely in border areas after April 17.

Md Nuruzzaman, deputy director of DAE in Netrokona, said, "Our production target this year is 12,62,000 tonnes, worth over Tk 3,155 crore at government-declared prices."



## Youth held over rape of 13-yr-old girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Police yesterday arrested a youth over the rape of a 13-year-old girl in Palash upazila in Narsingdi.

The arrestee, Ashik Dewan Shanto, 18, is from Shibpur upazila, said Md Monir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Palash Police Station.

The victim, a seventh grader, is a resident of Narsingdi Sadar upazila. According to police, she met the accused via TikTok and was reportedly in a relationship with him.

According to a complaint lodged by the victim's family, Ashik and one of his friends had taken the victim to Palash upazila on Friday, where they allegedly raped her.

Later, Ashik took her to a hospital at night as she fell ill.

On information, police went to the hospital, arrested Ashik, and handed him over to Palash Police Station, said the OC.

Police are trying to arrest his friend.

The girl is currently undergoing treatment at the hospital. We will visit the spot and take necessary legal action," the OC said.

He also said filing of a case in this connection is underway.

## PRAYER TIMING APRIL 13

FAZR Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

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

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Don't equate July

FROM PAGE 3  
for wider reforms. These

include a bicameral legislature, increased representation of women in Parliament, and separating the posts of Prime Minister, Leader of the House, and Party Chief. The party also backed a more balanced distribution of power between the President and the Prime Minister.

JASAD called for abolishing the Rapid Action Battalion and suggested dividing the country into provinces. At the start of the meeting, NCC Vice Chairman Prof Ali Riaz said the reform process was driven by public demand, though initiated by the interim government. He said the commission plans to finish the first round of

talks with political parties by mid May.

In the afternoon, the commission also met with the Zaker Party. A 10-member delegation, led by Secretary General Shamim Haider, presented their views. The NCC began formal consultations on March 20. So far, it has met with seven parties.

## Increase lower

FROM PAGE 3  
former district and

sessions judge and former SC registrar general Syed Aminul Islam; former district and sessions judge Masdar Hossain; Dhaka University Associate Professor Kazi Mahfuzul Haque Supan; and a student representative.

## Man accused in 2013 child rape case arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A man accused in a 2013 child rape case in Jashore's Pagladahe village was arrested yesterday morning, 12 years after the crime was committed.

Abdul Khalek, 40, had been evading arrest since May 4, 2013, when he allegedly tied up and raped a child in the Pagladahe Math Para area.

Following the arrest yesterday, he was sent to court in the afternoon through the Jashore Sadar Court.

Police said the victim and her mother were living in a rented house at the time. After the incident, several law enforcement agencies launched a manhunt, and a reward was announced for Khalek's capture. A charge sheet was filed against him in the same year.

Despite these efforts, Khalek managed to stay under the radar. A few months after the incident, his family abruptly left the area without notice, and the accused disappeared from public view. A court-issued arrest warrant also failed to secure his capture for over a decade.

However, following the recent political shift, Khalek began making brief public appearances in his native village, according to police. Acting on a tip-off, a team from the Jashore District Detective Branch (DB) raided Pagladahe early yesterday and arrested him.

After initial interrogations, Khalek was presented before the court. Law enforcement agencies have said that the whereabouts of the victim and her family are currently unknown.

Manjurul Haque, officer-in-charge of the Jashore DB, confirmed the arrest.

## From Dhaka, for Gaza

FROM PAGE 3

By mid afternoon, the entire area surrounding the Udyan was overwhelmed by a tidal wave of people.

Abu Musa, a student of Dhaka College, said, "Every day in Gaza, children are dying, and mothers are crying. If we stay silent now, we are complicit in this horror."

Musa also expressed his frustration at the international community's response. "Israel is growing more reckless because of the United Nations' failure and the deafening silence of the Muslim world," he said.

"I bought the largest flag available," said Russell Ahmed, who joined the rally with friends. "This is how I protest. Gaza may be far, but our solidarity can reach there."

The massive gathering did not come without its logistical challenges.

Police said although it was a public holiday, the demonstration impacted traffic on almost all major roads in the capital, leading to severe congestion in many areas.

Some streets, however, remained relatively empty.

Police said this was because many people avoided taking their cars out, while others headed directly towards Suhrawardy Udyan, easing pressure on some roads.

Symbolic coffins were laid out in the middle of the rally, some with the names of Palestinian children who have died in recent weeks. Others bore the words "Stop ethnic cleansing" and "End the apartheid".

The air rang with slogans -- "Free Free Palestine", "Gaza, we are with you", "Down with Zionism" -- shouted in unison.

Zulfikar Ahmed, a private university student from Dhanmondi, said he had come to show that Bangladeshis stand with oppressed people everywhere.

"The Palestinians have faced occupation, airstrikes, and apartheid for decades. Today, we show that their pain is ours."

"Even if we cannot physically stand with them, we can at least raise our voices," he said.

Among the sea of marchers were also madrasa students and teachers.

Abdus Sabur, a

traffic sergeant on duty at Dhanmondi 27, requested anonymity, said, "There are no empty roads left in the capital. We've had to implement diversions on some routes to keep traffic moving."

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) deployed additional officers across key intersections, including Bangla Motor, Shahbagh, Katabon, and Science Laboratory. Police said they had to divert vehicles in several areas.

A steady stream of processions continued to pour into the city centre even after 4:00pm.

As the sun dipped low over Suhrawardy Udyan, thousands stood together, proclaiming, with one voice: "Palestine will be free!"

Following this, Asif Nazrul attended a views-exchange meeting on the infrastructure development activities of Bandarban district, held at the District and Sessions Judge Court.

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