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Transforming Together for a Sustainable Future

30 years! A relentless pursuit of excellence by the bank, for the country, and for its people, building a sustainable tomorrow.

Through this journey, we've grown into a dynamic financial institution that champions innovation, accessibility and sustainability. Driven by the hard work and adaptability of our people, we've contributed in shaping Bangladesh into a resilient economy, fueling progress and prosperity.

Now, backed by the trust of millions and decades of renewed expertise, we stand ready to embrace the future – **stronger than ever**.

MESSAGE FROM

**THE CHAIRMAN
OF PRIME BANK**

“Over the last 30 years, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to transparency, ethical banking, and innovation.”



On the auspicious occasion of Prime Bank's 30th anniversary, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you on behalf of the Board of Directors. This milestone is not only a celebration of our journey, but a sincere tribute to your unwavering trust, loyalty, and continued partnership with us over the past three decades.

When Prime Bank was established in 1995, our goal was simple yet ambitious: to provide reliable, people-focused, and fully compliant banking services that would contribute meaningfully to the economic growth and well-being of our nation. We envisioned a bank that could support individuals, empower businesses, and serve as a partner in the progress of Bangladesh. Thanks to your confidence in us, that vision has taken root and flourished.

Over the last 30 years, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to transparency, ethical banking, and innovation. We have always placed the interests of our customers at the core of our mission, and we've worked tirelessly to ensure that the services we provide are not only efficient and secure but also aligned with national and global compliance standards.

Whether through personal banking, SME support, or corporate financing, we have aimed to make banking accessible, responsible, and impactful.

Our journey, however, is far from over. We are in a time of transformation—driven by technology, shaped by global trends, and guided by the evolving needs of our customers. Prime

Bank has embraced this transformation wholeheartedly. From digitizing our services and launching mobile-first solutions to introducing AI-driven risk management tools and sustainable financing options, we are redefining what modern banking means in Bangladesh.

As Chairman, I take great pride in the bank's performance and resilience over the years. We have navigated financial shifts, global disruptions, and regulatory evolutions with strength and stability. None of this would have been possible without your support, which motivates us to constantly perform better and lead with purpose.

Prime Bank was founded for the people of Bangladesh. Every decision we make and every service we launch is centered on the idea that banking should empower lives and build futures. We believe that our growth is only meaningful when it uplifts communities, promotes financial inclusion, and drives sustainable development in our country. This belief continues to shape our strategies, operations, and aspirations for the next 30 years and beyond.

Thank you once again for your invaluable trust, your loyalty, and your journey with us. As we mark this 30-year milestone, know that we look to the future with optimism, ambition, and an unrelenting commitment to serve you even better. You are not just customers; you are the foundation upon which Prime Bank stands.

With deepest gratitude,

Tanjil Chowdhury

Chairman,
Prime Bank PLC.

CUSTOMERS, PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

“Over the past few years, we have entered a new chapter of transformation. Banking is evolving rapidly, and Prime Bank has responded with bold steps to redefine modern banking in Bangladesh.”

As Prime Bank celebrates 30 years of service to the people of Bangladesh, I want to take a moment—on behalf of our entire leadership team and dedicated staff—to say thank you. This incredible milestone belongs to you as much as it does to us. Your trust, loyalty, and feedback have shaped our growth, inspired our transformation, and fueled our pursuit of excellence in every corner of the bank.

Three decades ago, Prime Bank began its journey with a strong commitment: to offer the highest standards of banking—built on integrity, innovation, and inclusion. Our goal has always been to serve not only as a financial institution, but as a catalyst for progress. Whether helping individuals achieve their personal financial goals, supporting entrepreneurs and SMEs, or financing large-scale national development projects, we have consistently worked to be a bank for the people.

At the heart of our journey has been an unwavering focus on compliant, ethical, and forward-thinking banking. We take pride in maintaining rigorous governance and operational standards that build confidence in everything we do. More than just providing financial services, we've strived to foster relationships—relationships based on trust, transparency, and a genuine understanding of your needs.

“Over the past few years, we have entered a new chapter of transformation. Banking is evolving rapidly, and Prime Bank has responded with bold steps to redefine modern banking in Bangladesh.”

We are leveraging digital innovation to bring convenience and speed to your fingertips, investing in sustainability to protect our shared future, and enhancing our internal performance metrics to create

greater value for our stakeholders. Our mobile banking, internet platforms, agent banking networks, and SME-focused solutions are all designed with one clear purpose: to serve you better, faster, and more efficiently.

I am incredibly proud of how our teams have responded to this call for transformation. But more importantly, I am inspired by how you—our customers—have embraced these changes, encouraged us, and journeyed with us through every milestone. Your feedback, your loyalty, and your expectations have challenged us to raise our standards and perform at our best.

Looking ahead, we are more determined than ever to uphold our legacy of excellence while embracing a future defined by innovation and inclusion. Prime Bank was built for Bangladesh—for its people and for its future.

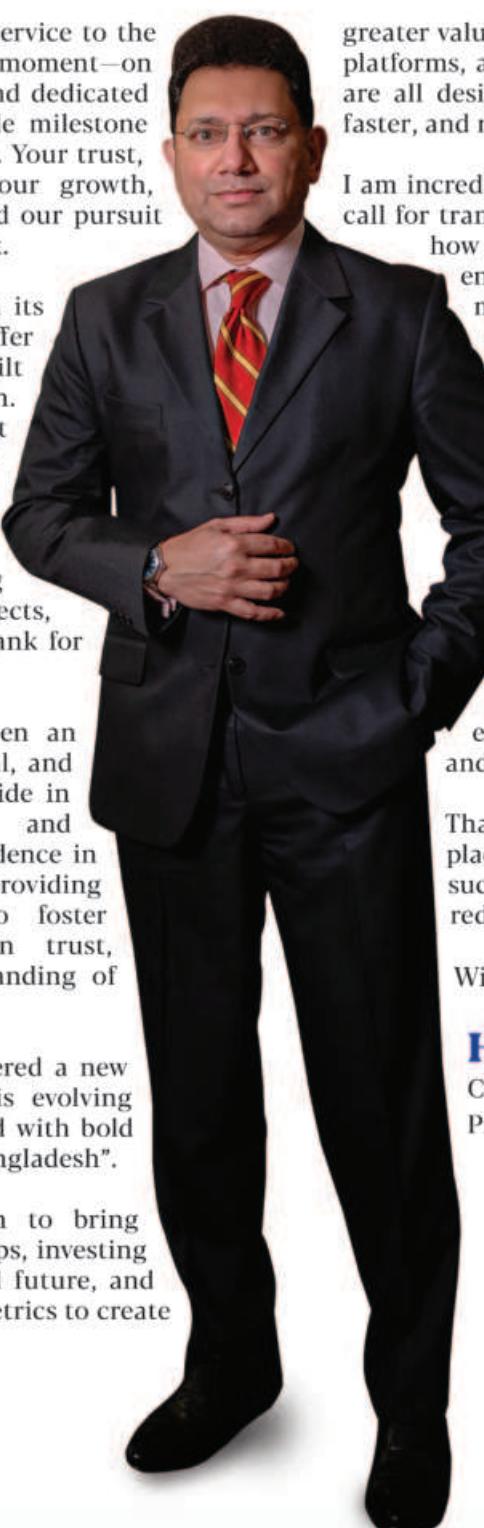
As we continue this journey, we renew our promise to be a driving force in the development of our country. We will continue to support businesses, empower youth and women, invest in green solutions, and contribute to the financial ecosystem in ways that are sustainable, responsible, and inclusive.

Thank you for being a part of our story. Thank you for placing your trust in us. Here's to 30 years of shared success—and to many more as we grow, transform, and redefine the future of banking together.

With sincere appreciation,

Hassan O. Rashid

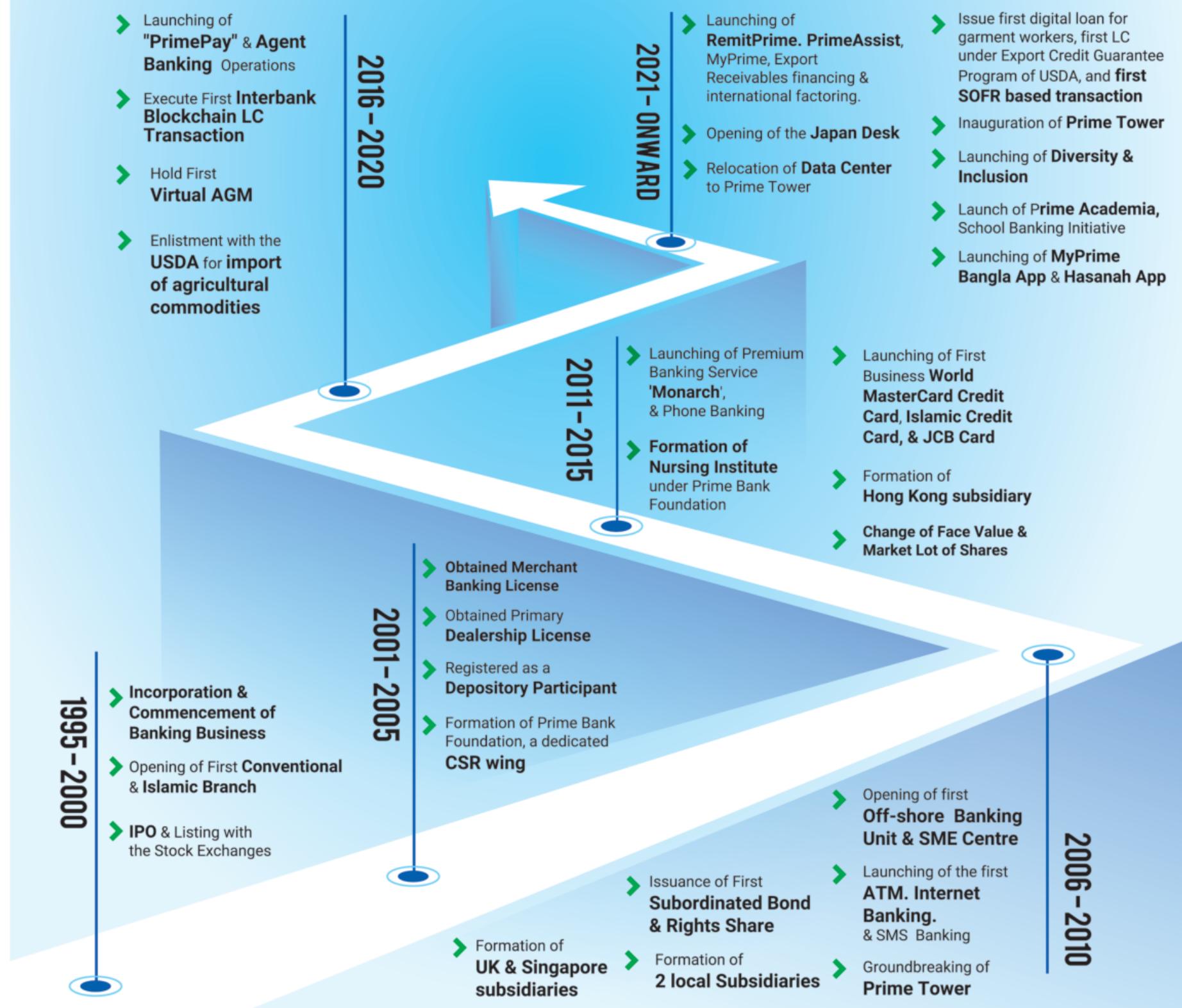
Chief Executive Officer,
Prime Bank PLC.



MESSAGE FROM

**THE CEO OF
PRIME BANK**

30 YEARS OF GLORIOUS JOURNEY



 **MyPrime**
250,000+ No. Customers | 6+ Million No. Transactions/Year

30 YEARS OF ISLAMIC BANKING 

50+ Bn Deposit Portfolio
35+ Bn Investment Portfolio



Total Awardees 4476
Completed Graduation 3700 | Total Awardees in Job Over 1800
Total amount of stipend given since 2007 Over 44 Crore

Prime College of Nursing, Dhaka offers B.Sc. in Nursing and Diploma in Nursing Science & Midwifery courses till date 579 students graduated from this institution.



Prime Bank Grammar School provides education facilities covering both Cambridge Curriculum and National Curriculum (English Version). Currently, a total of 339 students are enrolled under this program.



Prime Bank Eye Hospital

Prime Bank Eye Hospital offers eye care support to eliminate reversible blindness. It also arranges free eye camps in rural areas and conducted eye surgery later on identifying the cataracts patients amongst the patients received eye care services.

Served 3,16,357 patients
surgeries done 19,177
1,062 camps were conducted.

10 YEARS OF SPONSORING NATIONAL SCHOOL CRICKET TOURNAMENT

Since 2015 Prime Bank in partnership with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has been organizing National School Cricket Tournament.

OUR FOOTPRINT SINCE 2015
3,157 SCHOOLS | 5,544 MATCHES | 67,535 STUDENTS



A SNAPSHOT OF Prime Bank



ESTABLISHED IN 1995.
Currently headquartered in Gulshan, Dhaka



147 BRANCHES
and 158 ATMs at 140 locations of Bangladesh



2,900+ EMPLOYEES
Including 23% women



152 AGENT BANKING OUTLETS



596 FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS
covering 305 banks spread across 64 countries



PUBLICLY LISTED
at CSE in 1999 and DSE in 2000



70+ AWARDS IN THE LAST 30 YEARS

Winner of multiple local and international awards including



DEPOSITS

Figures in BDT million

2024	358,868
2023	305,269
2022	265,841
2021	243,070
2020	233,028
2019	216,444

LOANS AND ADVANCES

Figures in BDT million

2024	343,458
2023	315,293
2022	296,481
2021	263,015
2020	232,400
2019	213,955

TOTAL ASSETS

Figures in BDT million

2024	548,118
2023	471,285
2022	431,604
2021	388,100
2020	345,724
2019	322,010

NET ASSET VALUE PER SHARE

Figures in BDT million

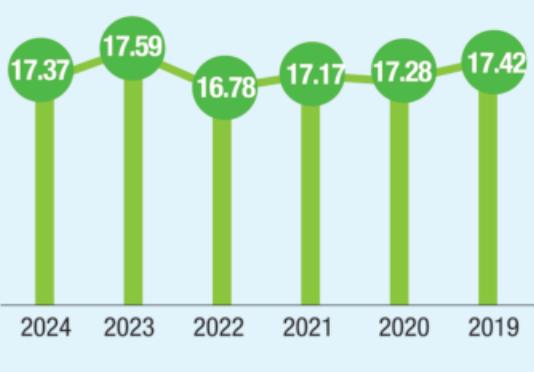
2024	34.27
2023	29.69
2022	27.26
2021	25.06
2020	24.07
2019	23.53

EARNINGS PER SHARE

Figures in BDT million

2024	6.58
2023	4.27
2022	3.55
2021	2.75
2020	1.59
2019	1.47

CAPITAL TO RISK WEIGHTED ASSET RATIO (percent)



PROFIT AFTER TAX

Figures in BDT million

2024	7,446
2023	4,838
2022	4,022
2021	3,111
2020	1,797
2019	1,662

THE FUTURE IS LOADING...

 Prime NOW

MILLION DREAMS TOGETHER FOR BRIGHTER TOMORROW



Prime Bank taught me how to bank

Tahmina Akter Mou, Founder, Ilma Dairy Farm

I have been a proud customer of Prime Bank since May 1, 2023, when I opened an account for my venture, Ilma Dairy Farm. From the very beginning, my experience with Prime Bank has been truly remarkable. Joining hands with the bank has been an opportunity to learn, grow, and understand the

world of banking more deeply. What I appreciate the most is the commitment of Prime Bank's officials. They keep their word and consistently deliver on their promises. Their dedication to ensuring the best possible service for customers, with speed and professionalism, truly stands out. We have complete trust and confidence in Prime Bank—something that has allowed us to work closely and confidently with them.



Seeing women in leadership roles at Prime Bank is truly encouraging

Halida Hanum Akhter, Chairperson and Founder, Health Promotion Links

I was serving as the Director of an autonomous reproductive health research and training institute, one of our statisticians later joined Prime Bank. In 2002, after leaving that organisation to pursue my own entrepreneurial journey, I was in search of a reliable bank to place some institutional grants as fixed deposits. I reached out to my former colleague, and in 2003, opened my

first Fixed Deposit account with Prime Bank. That marked the beginning of my journey with the bank. Since then, my experience with Prime Bank has been nothing short of excellent. Whenever I needed assistance, they responded promptly—either by sending someone from the bank or by ensuring swift and efficient service during my visits. I truly appreciate the professionalism, warmth, and efficiency of the bank's staff. As a woman working in women's health, it's inspiring to see women



Prompt Service and Peace of Mind That's Why I Choose Prime Bank

Dr. Ainun Nishat, Professor Emeritus, BRAC University

I am a regular customer of Prime Bank. I take the bank's services to deposit money and withdraw when needed. Whenever I have some savings, I try to keep them as fixed deposits at Prime Bank. I also avail services including bill payments and issuing pay orders. As a customer, a few things are very important to me—a sense of security and peace of mind. Many banks in Dhaka hesitate or even fail to provide cash for slightly large cheques. But I've never faced such

issues with Prime Bank. Whenever I needed money, they provided it without hesitation. In fact, they even asked which denominations I would prefer. This feeling of comfort and security comes from the bank's management and policy level decisions. Their professionalism and behavior assure me that keeping my money in Prime Bank is safe.

Moreover, while other banks often keep customers waiting for hours after depositing a cheque, I have never faced that at Prime Bank.

Even during busy hours, they somehow ensure the cheque is processed quickly. The same goes



I am satisfied with Prime Bank's service as a customer

Manzuma Murshed, Managing Partner, Mentors' Chittagong

I am truly happy that Prime Bank is celebrating 30 years of its journey. My experience with this bank has been truly excellent. Their customer service, in particular, is exceptional. The entire team at the Chittagong branch does an outstanding job for us. Whenever I

have required assistance or support, I have received it from them within a short time. We are working to develop entrepreneurs across various sectors. We always encourage them to save money. I needed some ideas about different schemes, especially DPS (Deposit Pension Scheme), for them. At that time, I contacted Prime Bank's Chittagong branch, and they promptly provided me



Prime Bank's hospitality and personalised service is unmatched

Shanaz Khaleque, Ex Senior Teacher- Maple leaf International School

Back in 2011, there were very few banks that felt relevant, so I opted to open an account with Prime Bank. However, I did not use my account for a long time. In the past two years, the whole scenario of the bank has changed, and I have come to love it and started banking with Prime Bank regularly. Overall, I have had a very delightful experience with the bank. Due to my good experience, I encour-

aged my whole family to bank with the same institution, and now my daughters and son-in-law are all clients of the bank. What I love most about the bank is their hospitality. I do my banking at the Dhanmondi branch; it feels at home whenever I go there, as they know me and treat me on a personal level. They remember my birthday, my anniversary, and on every occasion, I receive personal greetings from the staff of the bank. I also love the Prime Bank app. Personally, I am not very tech-savvy, but even for me the app is quite helpful and easy to use. I would definitely say I feel secure with the money I have in Prime Bank, because the bank staff have always been transparent about the rates and other details. They never over-commit just to keep the numbers looking good, like some other banks.

I would definitely recommend Prime Bank to anyone I know, with my full gratitude and confidence. They are vigilant, helpful, and definitely trustworthy with anyone's hard-earned money.



Prime Bank has always stood by my business needs

Md. Rezaul Haque Rezu, Proprietor, Haque Bread & Food Products

I used to take services from another bank, but a few Relationship Managers from Prime Bank—whom I knew personally—encouraged me to start banking with Prime. That's how my journey with Prime Bank began. Since then, they have consistently stood beside me like a

trusted partner. Whether it is handling transactions or accessing services, I have always been highly satisfied with Prime Bank. In times of urgent need, their timely support has truly been unforgettable. What I appreciate most is their strong commitment to customers. The prompt service I receive whenever I have a need is commendable. Recently, when I needed funds to

expand my business but could not manage it elsewhere, I reached out to Prime Bank. They immediately arranged the required amount, which played a crucial role in my business growth. That's why Prime Bank is a name I deeply trust and rely on—a place where I know I can always find the banking support I need, whenever I need it.



Still banking with Prime Bank after all these years

S M Sayeduzzaman, Former Banker

As far as I can remember, it was around 1997-98. At the time, I was serving as a Senior Principal Officer at Bangladesh Krishi Bank. One day, an officer from the Islamic banking branch of Prime Bank requested me to open a savings account. At his request, I opened a Mudaraba savings account. That was my very first account with a private bank. If that gentleman

had not personally come to my office and made the request, I probably would not have opened an account with a private bank at all. At that time, government banks were considered the banks for ordinary people, and private banks were seen as banks for the wealthy. Later, although I opened accounts with several other private banks as needed, I eventually had to close them. But the account with Prime Bank is still active. Like a first love, since it was my first private bank account, I never felt like closing it. I have always found the officers and



I am highly satisfied with Prime Bank's efficient customer service

Zeeshan Hasib, Financial consultant and Ex Banker

Prime bank, is one of the leading private commercial bank in Bangladesh. I

have been banking with Prime Bank for a while now and I am highly satisfied with their efficient customer service, user friendly mobile app and its credit/debit card propositions

that offers great rewards. On its anniversary I wish Prime Bank, its staff, customers and shareholders the very best.



I appreciate the commitment shown by the bank towards its customers

Meherun N. Islam, Group President & Managing Director, CEMS-Global, USA & Asia-Pacific

I decided to begin my journey with Prime Bank after watching an interview with Mr. Azam J Chowdhury. His words reflected a strong professional commitment. The employees are the true assets of Prime Bank. I am very satisfied with the communication and interactions I have had with the bank staff. What I appreciate the most is the commitment shown by the bank and its officials toward their customers—and the way they follow through on that commitment.

When a customer receives the service they expect from a bank, it means the bank's service is functioning properly. In essence, most banks offer similar services. Therefore, achieving customer satisfaction through service is a bank's greatest accomplishment. It's important to remember that the money deposited in the bank belongs to customers. You conduct business with that money. We hope you will keep our money safe and ensure our services are delivered with respect. Additionally, all customers should be treated with due dignity.

Please keep in mind—this is

money entrusted to you by the

people. You are doing business with other people's money. Keep

us secure and give us the proper service as a sign of respect. Big and small, all kinds of customers should get proper respect. We also have to understand that the bank is doing business with our money and maintaining all of their needs with the profit. We should not do anything irregular that would cause issues for both the bank and us. It can be anything. Our activities will ultimately hurt our country's economy. We should not use banks or bankers for our own benefit wrongly. In the same way, bankers should not prefer any single customer unfairly and hurt other customers—and, at the end of the day, their own institution.



From gen Z to 80+, Prime's service is relevant for all age groups

Tonima Sultana, Fashion Designer at Red Bedroom Fashion House

spouse and son to the Dhammendi branch as clients.

What I like most about the bank is that the bank seems very relevant to all age groups. My mother, who is 80 plus, is very happy with her banking experience. My son, who is Gen Z, only banks with Prime Bank.

My journey with Prime Bank started in 2019 during the Covid pandemic. I learned about the bank from one of my close friends who recommended me with conviction when I asked her about which bank to go to. So far, I have had a very good experience with the bank.

I have recently introduced my

as per the customer's needs and preferences.

I can certainly assert that I had a very secure banking experience with Prime. I do not think twice before investing with Prime Bank, as I know that the staff at my branch will definitely suggest me whichever product is best suited for me. I am a proud client of Prime Bank and I will definitely tell everyone to go to Prime Bank and enjoy seamless banking.

Prime Bank

A few words of inspiration from some of our valued customers

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'Khona' returns to stage for 92nd show

P6



EU tightens asylum rule with list of 7 safe countries

P7



Tigresses aim to seal WC berth

P11



Banks' CSR spending falls to 8-year low

B1

ELECTION ROADMAP

BNP unhappy as Yunus gives no specific timeline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The election must be held by December, as any delay could cause the situation to spiral out of control, the BNP said after a meeting with the chief adviser yesterday.

The BNP said it was dissatisfied because Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus did not say specifically when the election will be held.

"The honourable chief adviser did not give us a specific deadline.... He said he wanted the election to be held between [this] December and June [2026]," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told reporters in front of state guest house Jamuna, the CA's official residence.

Fakhrul and BNP standing committee members Jamir Uddin Sircar, Mirza Abbas, Nazrul Islam Khan, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Salahuddin Ahmed, and Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku attended the nearly two-hour long meeting.

"We are not satisfied at all. We clearly said that unless there is an election by December, the political, economic, and social conditions of the country will worsen further," Fakhrul said.

Advisers Salihuddin Ahmed, Wahiduddin Mahmud, Adilur Rahman Khan, and Asif Nazrul also attended the meeting.

"We are not satisfied at all. We clearly said that unless there is an election by December, the political, economic, and social conditions of the country will worsen further."



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir



"To me, they seemed content. When our meeting ended, I thought they had received answers to many of the questions on their minds. That's how I felt. Fakhrul Bhai might have felt differently."

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul

Asif talked to reporters minutes after Fakhrul's briefing ended. Between this December and June next year, the law adviser said, the election would be held as early as possible.

Fakhrul said the BNP demanded a specific roadmap to the election.

"In the given political situation and the state of the country, we believe the solution will come from a fair election," he said.

Fakhrul said his party leaders would discuss among themselves and with ally parties to decide the next course of action.

Asked whether he thought the government was trying to extend its stay in power, Fakhrul said the chief adviser "did not rule out [election in] December. But leaves the window open until June. However, we have made it clear that December is our cut off time".

The BNP leaders pointed out at the meeting that the next Ramadan will be in February, and then there will be the SSC and HSC exams -- each of which takes a month or longer. By the exams end, it will be monsoon and elections may seem impractical, said sources present at the meeting.

In response, the CA said he would keep these factors in mind.

At the meeting, Fakhrul submitted a four-page letter to the CA, outlining what immediate actions the government must take.

The letter mentioned the responsibility of national identity cards should lie with the Election Commission and urged the CA to promptly resolve the legal complexities over redrawing the boundaries of constituencies.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



TIME'S LIST
Yunus among 100 most influential people

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has been named among TIME magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2025.

This recognition follows his pivotal role in steering Bangladesh toward democracy following last year's student-led uprising.

The TIME100 list, published yesterday, celebrates global figures for their influence and leadership. This year's honourees include US President Donald Trump, Elon Musk, UK PM Keir Starmer, Mexico's President

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

After harvesting Boro paddy, farmers busy threshing it on a field in Paschim Bilpabla of Khulna's Dumria upazila. They are happy with the yield of the crop this year. Each maund (40kg) of paddy is being sold at Tk 1,300-1,400.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



Students at different polytechnic institutes block a street in Tejgaon's Satrasta area in the capital around noon yesterday, halting traffic movement and causing citywide gridlocks. They demonstrated as part of their countrywide programme to realise their demands, including cancellation of a High Court verdict on the promotion of craft instructors to junior instructors. They called a railway blockade for today. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Polls timing tops parties' talks with US officials

BNP wants it by Dec, Jamaat before Ramadan, NCP after structural reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has told a visiting US delegation that it wants the national election to be held by December as it believes issues related to reforms can be settled within the next one month.

The newly-formed National Citizen Party (NCP) said it wants the polls only after fundamental structural reforms to the state.

The NCP also alleged the local authorities are working in favour of the BNP in many areas while NCP leaders are facing attacks. Therefore, holding an election under such an administration is not possible.

The Jamaat-e-Islami conveyed its position that the election should be held before Ramadan next year, arguing that polls after that period could be uncertain because of the rainy season.

The three political parties shared their views in three separate meetings with the US delegation led by Nicole Chulick, deputy assistant secretary of state at the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, at the residence of the US deputy head of mission in the capital yesterday.

Chulick arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday, while Andrew R Herrup, deputy assistant secretary at the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs,

arrived yesterday. US Chargé d'Affaires to Myanmar Susan Stevenson will accompany Herrup during his visit to Bangladesh.

Today, the US delegation is scheduled to meet Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, National Security Adviser Dr Khalilur Rahman and Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain.

This is the first official-level visit by the US after President Donald Trump assumed office.

This is the first official-level visit by the US after President Donald Trump assumed office in January.

Talking to reporters after the meeting with Chulick, BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said it is possible to hold the polls even before December.

Speaking to reporters after meeting with Chulick, BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said the national election could be held even before December.

Citing the chief adviser's remarks, he noted

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Roadmap for election by July

EC says it is working with election in Dec in mind

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is likely to announce its roadmap for the 13th national election by July in line with the timeline announced by the interim government.

Discussions on the next election with the registered political parties will take place in August-September or earlier, if possible, said Election Commissioner Anwarul Islam Sarkar yesterday at a media briefing.

Since taking office, the current EC has been working according to its own action plan, he said, adding that, as part of this plan, they have been updating the voter list.

The EC hopes to complete the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies within three months provided the government decides regarding amendments to the relevant law.

Preliminary preparatory work will be mostly completed within the next three months, he said.

Asked whether preparations are being made assuming the polls will be held in December, Sarkar said that they are proceeding according to the government-declared timeline, which is December.

"We are moving forward based on the repeatedly announced timeline by the government," he said.

Regarding new party registration, Sarkar said three parties have applied for registration so far and many others have sought an extension of the deadline.

The current application deadline is April 20.

When asked whether there would be changes to the law regarding the registration of political parties, he said they

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Novoair may be grounded from May

RASHIDUL HASAN

Novoair is likely to shut down its operation for around three months from May as the private airline has started the process of selling its five ATR aircraft in its fleet.

The process is likely to be completed this month, said Md Mofizur Rahman, managing director of Novoair.

Novoair is hopeful of getting a new investor on board soon, he said, adding that discussions are at the final stage.

"If we get the new investor, we will not sell our aircraft to foreign buyers. In that case, our flights will not shut down. Otherwise, we will have to discontinue the flight operations for three months."

The airline's staff and officials will get their salaries as normal in those three months.

Since its inception on January 9, 2013, Novoair has invested more than \$50 million in aircraft acquisition and an additional \$10 million in infrastructure and support equipment.

Except for its 2018-19 financial year, the airline has incurred losses every year.

The pandemic caused significant losses to the airline and the ongoing price escalations due to the Ukraine war have continued to affect profitability, Rahman said.

Additionally, the shrinking domestic market and reduced demand have compounded the challenges.

Despite plans to expand its fleet and international network, Novoair has been unable to do so due to a global shortage of aircraft available for lease and due to competition from larger airlines.

NOVOAIR



After harvesting Boro paddy, farmers busy threshing it on a field in Paschim Bilpabla of Khulna's Dumria upazila. They are happy with the yield of the crop this year. Each maund (40kg) of paddy is being sold at Tk 1,300-1,400.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



KROMOSHO EXHIBITION

Where past and present collide

RBR

An artistic mind finds inspiration even in the mundane details of life. It makes the ordinary extraordinary. The smell of frying omelettes, the stirring sound of the spoon in a teacup, the sight of a mother oiling her daughter's hair, or an old man reading a newspaper -- any of these can spark a fancy in their mind.

All these dull routines of our everyday life, and these intangible fleeting sights and sounds excite an artist, making them want to freeze these moments of magic realism in their art.

Photography is such a visual art form, that frames such creative expressions and ideations through images a photographer takes. And renowned Bangladeshi photographer Munem Wasif is one such artist, who can sniff out an artsy story in the actual moment.

The curator and educator will hold his solo exhibition, after a long hiatus since 2009, titled "Kromosho", loosely translated to "progressively or gradually changing".

The exhibition commences on April 18 at 6:00pm, at Bengal Shilpalay. "Kromosho" exhibits the artist's two decades of work on Puran Dhaka in three phases of timespan -- titled "Stereo, Kheyal, and Bare: encircling the past, present, and on to the imagined future".

"Gradually, these timelines cross each other's boundaries. The body of my work has a personal vocabulary and the history and atmosphere of old Dhaka that has always fascinated me. The place has been my muse for the longest time. The moments I have captured are given the colour of my imagination; from intimate memories of my childhood, my relationships, and



PHOTO: MUNEM WASIF

the ether I grew up in. My imagination is more complex than the ordinary because I found streaks of semblance in these flashes from my real-life events," says Munem Wasif.

Wasif has documented multiple layers of time and recorded the exponential growth of old town communities, embracing urbanity through photography, film, and various other media. He celebrated their living without prejudice, and a sense of adapting, which is in constant transformation and is fluid.

"STEREO (2001-2022)" shows the city's casual comfort in dwelling both in the past and present; a refrigerator,

LED lights, digital watch, or baking bakarkhanis in a custom-made oven, shunning the old clay tandoor, to depict how Old Dhaka morphed with time, embracing urbanity yet retaining its core of being chaotic, dramatic, and forever evolving.

"I revisited the places I photographed to witness the changes it went through. There, I again captured the newness and adaptability to changes over time to make a comparison. The deliberate juxtaposition of the latest photographs in the exhibition alongside the earlier black and white works, allows the audience to understand the hybridised realities of Puran Dhaka, and one is left

in a space with a complex impression of contemporary life," explains Wasif.

"KHEYAL (2015-2018)" is primarily fiction or imagination capturing the enigma that is this historic city. Living amid the grandeur of neglected Mughal architecture are dynamic social groups and spontaneous neighbourhoods that inhabit spaces around courtyards, narrow lanes, and bustling bazaars; and the fine line between private and public space is faded.

"I would describe the content as characters who are lost in certain mental states and are found in other magical situations," comments Wasif.

"Shammano", or bare assemblage, is the final part of the exhibition. Here, Wasif reveals how the colour palettes of the chaos surrounding the city, or discarded objects and material triggered the urge to experiment and create something for him.

"Pieces of discarded wood, metal wires, and parts of furniture were given a new lease of life and purpose in my studio. I enjoyed rediscovering something new in the old, placing them in unexpected configurations, embracing the idea of chance in the process," notes Wasif.

A skateboard from broken pieces of cracked wood and the broken legs of a chair were visualised as a third eye. "You need to have an eye to see and recalibrate the old," he adds.

To Wasif, his career has matured and aged along with this city. From film to digital photography, Wasif's relationship with Old Dhaka gradually deepened.

Photographs are not just realistic document of what is happening around you. It can very well be a poem that allows you to imagine the abstract moment -- and that in itself is powerful.

Pakistan foreign secy in Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Pakistan Foreign Secretary Amina Baloch arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a two-day visit to attend the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC), the first such diplomatic engagement in 15 years, as Dhaka and Islamabad seek to normalise relations.

Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin will lead the Bangladeshi side and Amina Baloch will lead the Pakistani side at the FOC to be held at the State Guest House Padma today.

After the FOC, Amina Baloch will also call on Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain. She will also attend an interaction with the think-tanks and Pakistani diaspora in Dhaka in the evening.

The FOC is being held ahead of Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar's visit to Bangladesh, expected on April 27-28.

Relations between the countries have been warming since the fall of the Awami League-led government on August 5 last year.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Bangladesh's future rests on its people

Says US state dept

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US State Department has reiterated that the future of Bangladesh will ultimately be determined by its people.

State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce made the statement during a press briefing in Washington on Tuesday, responding to a question about rising concerns over extremism and political unrest in the country.

A journalist asked for the US government's stance on reports of growing "Islamist extremism" under the Prof Yunus-led government in Bangladesh, with protesters allegedly displaying images of Osama bin Laden and targeting American brands such as KFC and Coca-Cola with antisemitic rhetoric.

Bruce acknowledged that Bangladesh is facing several internal challenges but declined to comment on specific issues.

She noted that the United States has previously engaged with Bangladesh on these matters.

"All of these, including what you're discussing -- protests, et cetera -- are ultimately for the Bangladeshi authorities to handle," she said, adding that continued dialogue with Dhaka remains important.

"Democracy matters, and actions by people matter to confront issues that might, as we've seen over the last 20, 25 years, destroy their lives. It's pretty clear what the choices are for many nations on this planet," she added.

"Ultimately, the future of Bangladesh is going to be decided by the Bangladeshi people."

Polls timing tops parties' talks with US officials

FROM PAGE 1

that reforms endorsed by all political parties would be implemented.

"The remaining issues will be brought before the people during the election. Based on the public mandate, parties will enter the next parliament with their respective agendas. After that, no unresolved matters will remain. The Election Commission is prepared and has stated there are no further obstacles. So, the election can take place before December," Khasru said.

He told the US diplomat that without the restoration of democratic order, many decisions--both domestic and international--would remain stalled, impacting key stakeholders.

"Once an elected government is in place, decision-making becomes easier, especially with public support. It's not just about immediate actions--those considering investments, both local and foreign, are evaluating short-, mid-, and long-term prospects. This is not a short-term issue," he added.

Khasru said the US-Bangladesh relationship was the primary topic of the discussion during the meeting.

They also discussed the BNP's policy and its future economic plans as the US delegation was interested in these matters.

"Issues like the economy and tariffs came up, and Bangladesh's position regarding tariffs was also discussed. We said that Bangladesh wants to sit together and collectively address the tariff issue," he said.

He added that the matter needed to be addressed because if the tariff is not brought within a tolerable limit, the country's exports will be at stake.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Organising Secretary Shama Obaid also attended



Nicole Chulick



Andrew Herrup

the meeting.

After their meeting with the US delegation, NCP Convener Nahid Islam told reporters the field-level administration does not appear to be working impartially and that NCP leaders and activists are coming under attack in different parts of the country.

"If we wait till June, the monsoon season will begin with probabilities of cyclones and flooding, which could make the election uncertain. That is why we believe it must be held before Ramadan," he told reporters.

He said that the US delegation wanted to know about the current political situation in Bangladesh and asked when and how the upcoming election will be held.

"We told them that the chief advisor said the election will be held by December this year or June next year. We want to see if he sticks to his commitment," added the Jamaat chief.

Shafiqur also said they had an open discussion and touched upon the issues of how their economic policy and foreign relations would be if the party was elected.

The US delegation also wanted to know the Jamaat's views on various regional matters and raised the issues of rights of the minorities, women and labour.

"We requested the US delegation to reconsider the 37 percent tariff, as our country is currently at a critical juncture, going through a crucial time. We requested that they relay our concerns," Shafiqur said.

The US delegation stated their commitment to democratic norms, he said. "We said we exercise democracy in the party and are committed to the same at the national level."

He said the US delegation also held a meeting with the vice chancellors of the public and private universities.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar accompanied Shafiqur at the meeting.

Yunus among 100 most influential people

FROM PAGE 1

toward democracy: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus," Clinton writes.

Highlighting Yunus' legacy, Hillary recalled his work in founding Grameen Bank, which revolutionised microfinance by extending small loans to impoverished communities -- 97 percent of them women -- enabling millions to start businesses, support their families, and reclaim their dignity.

"I first met Yunus when he travelled to Arkansas to help then-governor Bill Clinton and me set up similar programs in the US," she said.

"Since then, wherever I've travelled in the world, I have witnessed the extraordinary impact of his work -- lives transformed, communities lifted, and hope reborn."

Hillary noted that Yunus has once again responded to his country's call by leading the post-uprising transitional government as chief adviser.

"As he shepherds Bangladesh out of the shadows of oppression, he is restoring human rights, demanding accountability, and laying the foundations for a just and free society," she added.

BNP unhappy as Yunus gives no specific timeline

FROM PAGE 1

"We have supported you and would like to have faith in you," the letter reads.

The BNP believes a free and fair national election can be held by December after reforming laws, rules, and provisions, and making changes to the relevant institutions.

"We reaffirm our decision to continue supporting all good initiatives undertaken by your government. We urge... quick announcement of a roadmap to the national parliamentary election by December," reads the letter.

Those who frequently talk about reforms often attempt to label the BNP as an anti-reform party, it adds.

"All changes are not reforms. The purpose of reforms is to make positive and constructive changes."

Democracy is the only way to protect people's rights and improve their lives. Just as the past fascist regime deprived people of rights with a narrative of "development first, democracy later", some people are now saying "reforms first. Democracy later", says the letter.

BNP reiterated its demand for the immediate withdrawal of all "false" cases filed during the "illegal 1/11 government and the fascist regime".

BNP leaders criticised two advisers who had participated in the July-August movement, saying they were using state power to benefit a political party, said a source.

Fakhrul said, "We are fully cooperating with the ongoing reform initiatives taken by the government....

"We have made it very clear that we are willing to draft a charter on the issues where all parties reach a consensus and based on that... we can proceed towards the election.

As for the remaining reforms, the political party that comes to power will take steps to implement them."

LAW ADVISER'S BRIEFING

Asif said, "To me, they [BNP leaders] seemed content. When our meeting ended, I thought they had received answers to many of the questions on their minds. That's how I felt. Fakhrul Bhai might have felt differently."

The BNP secretary general has the right to express how he felt, and different individuals perceive things differently, he said.

December 2025 to June 2026 does not mean the government will deliberately delay the polls to enjoy power, he added.

"If December is feasible, it will be held in December. If not, then January," he said.

There is no way the polls will be delayed beyond June 2026, he added.

The BNP expressed concerns that the reforms might take time, Asif said. They have clearly stated that even if the July charter is ready, there are some legal and policy issues which would take time, he added.

BNP urged the government to immediately initiate trials of the "fascist party and its associates".

The BNP called for prompt and effective measures to ensure compensation and proper treatment of the victims of July atrocities.

It stressed the need for stronger initiatives to control commodity prices, improve the law and order situation, and boost economic activities.

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consensus and based on that... we can proceed towards the election.

As for the remaining reforms, the political party that comes to power will take steps to implement them."

Rahman.

GMG Airlines, United Airways and Regent Airways are vivid examples of private operators that had to ground their fleets as the surcharge dues piled up, according to aviation analysts.

Regent Airways, the latest private airline to cease operations, owes Tk 283 crore in surcharge, United Airways Tk 355 crore and GMG Airlines Tk 368 crore, according to

data from the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

"If the situation remains the same, airlines will come and go. They may sustain for 10 to 15 years but they will have to exit ultimately," he added.

There are regulatory roadblocks such as the high rates of surcharges, aeronautical, landing and parking fees and prohibitive jet fuel prices.

About 40 to 46 percent of the operating costs of an airline are

comprised of jet fuel, according to

At least eight private airlines were

forced to shut down their operations in the last 25 years, according to aviation experts.

The aviation industry in Bangladesh could not grow due to regulatory malfunction, excessive tariffs, high jet fuel prices, undue patronisation of the state-carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines, said Kazi Wahidul Alam, editor of the Bangladesh Monitor.

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চুক্তি এ রিপোর্ট দ্বারা প্রদত্ত
প্রিয়জনের প্রয়োজনে...

যেকোনো শাখা থেকে রোমটিক্যাল গ্রহণ করলেই
পাবেন সরকার নির্ধারিত ২.৫% প্রশ়াদন।

সাথে আরও আরও নিশ্চিত আত্মস্থীর্পণ প্রস্তুত।

* শর্ত প্রযোজ্য।



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Π

Separate secretariat for judiciary in progress
Says chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed yesterday said the process for establishing a separate secretariat for the judiciary is ongoing.

"The structural organogram and concept note are being scrutinised. If there is any constitutional and legal hurdle for its implementation, that will be resolved," he said at the Supreme Court.

On October 27 last year, the SC administration forwarded a proposal, along with a concept paper describing the necessity and objectives of a separate secretariat for the judiciary, to the law ministry.

A draft organogram of the secretariat was annexed to the proposal written by the chief justice. At present, the law ministry acts as the secretariat for the judiciary.

ROAD ACCIDENTS IN 2023

Hit-and-runs dominate DNCC crash data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 123 people were killed in 117 fatal road crashes in 2023 within the Dhaka North City Corporation area, with pedestrians making up the majority of victims, according to a new road safety report jointly prepared by DNCC and Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Pedestrians accounted for 61 percent of the fatalities. The report said 87 percent of these fatal crashes were hit-and-run incidents. Motorcyclists were the second-largest group affected, comprising 24 percent of the total deaths.

Pedestrians accounted for 61 percent of the fatalities. The report said 87 percent of these fatal crashes were hit-and-run incidents. Motorcyclists were the second-largest group affected, comprising 24 percent of the total deaths.

The findings were presented at a road safety meeting held at a hotel in the capital yesterday, organised by the Road Transport and Highways Division and the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS), with support from DNCC, DMP, Chattogram City Corporation, and Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

The data was compiled from FIRs and written complaints filed for each fatal crash in the 25 police stations under DNCC's jurisdiction throughout 2023.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

'A political group trying to delay Ducusu polls'

Alleges Chhatra Odhikar Parishad

DU CORRESPONDENT

A political group is trying to delay the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) election until after the national polls in a bid to control students and misuse power, similar to the previous regime, alleged Chhatra Odhikar Parishad yesterday.

Bin Yamin Mollah, president of the organisation's central committee, made the remarks at a press conference at Ducusu building.

The organisation demanded that an acceptable, participatory Ducusu election be held by June.

The timing of Ducusu elections has always been manipulated to serve the interests of the political parties, he added.



The FDC intersection in the capital experienced severe traffic congestion yesterday, along with other areas such as Farmgate, Bijoy Sarani, Karwan Bazar, Moghbazar, Malibagh, Mouchak, Hatirjheel and Gulshan. This happened due to students of polytechnic institutes starting blockades across the country to press home their six-point demand. Commuters found themselves stuck in traffic for several hours, with many being forced to walk to their destinations.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Sufferings mount as blockades paralyse country

Polytechnic students block roads, railways over six-point demand; announce countrywide rail blockade today

STAR REPORT

Students of polytechnic institutes have announced a rail blockade across the country today to press home their six-point demand.

The new programme was announced more than eight hours after they staged blockades across the country yesterday, halting road and rail communication in more than a dozen districts as part of a coordinated movement.

An organiser of the protest announced the programme yesterday evening in Dhaka's Tejgaon area.

The students said they will continue their movement until their demands are met. They left the area around 6:30pm, ending yesterday's protest programme in the city.

The students' demands include the removal of "controversial craft instructors" recruited after 2021, restructuring the diploma engineering programme into a four-year course with six-month semesters, and reserving 10th-

grade engineering posts -- such as deputy assistant engineer -- exclusively for diploma graduates.

The protests caused widespread disruptions to public transport, leaving commuters stranded in long tailbacks and causing delays or suspensions of several train services.

The capital experienced severe traffic congestion in areas such as Farmgate, Bijoy Sarani, Karwan Bazar, Moghbazar, Malibagh, Mouchak, Hatirjheel, Gulshan, and the FDC intersection.

In Dhaka, over 1,000 students from Dhaka Polytechnic Institute blocked the Satrasta intersection in Tejgaon for nearly eight hours, starting at 10:30am.

The capital experienced severe traffic congestion in areas such as

Farmgate, Bijoy Sarani, Karwan Bazar, Moghbazar, Malibagh, Mouchak, Hatirjheel, Gulshan, and the FDC intersection. The incoming lanes of the Elevated Expressway, especially around Tejgaon and Mohakhali, were also gridlocked.

Siam Almas, a private job holder, said, "I had to get off my vehicle near Hatirjheel and walk all the way to Farmgate amid rain."

Many others echoed him.

Traffic only began to ease after 6:00pm when students left the area, according to a statement from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Gulshan Traffic Division.

In Cumilla, over 500 students blocked the Dhaka-Chittogram highway at Kotbari Nandapur from 11:40am to 1:35pm, resulting in an 8-kilometre tailback and stranding passengers in the intense heat.

Police and highway officials failed to disperse the crowd. The students withdrew after army personnel arrived and fired blank shots. Several students were

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Part of poet Rafiq Azad's Dhanmondi house demolished



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A part of the house of Ekushey Padak-winning poet Rafiq Azad was demolished by the National Housing Authority yesterday morning in the presence of police.

Confirming the matter, the poet's wife, Professor Dilara Hafiz, said, "Without serving any prior notice, police arrived in the morning and demolished the western part of our house. Afterwards, they instructed us to quickly remove our furniture and essential belongings before temporarily suspending the eviction drive."

However, Tayeb-Ur-Rahman Ashik, executive magistrate of the National Housing Authority's Mirpur division 2, said the house of poet Rafiq Azad was not demolished during their operation.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Covered vans remain parked haphazardly, covering a majority of a footpath on Satrasta. As a result, pedestrians have little space to no space to cross. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

TK 1,000CR BOND SCAM
Salman F Rahman,
Shibli Rubaiyat
among 30 sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ACC has filed a case against 30 individuals over allegations of embezzling Tk 1,000 crore through fraudulent bond issuance.

The accused include Salman F Rahman, former private industry and investment adviser to then prime minister, his son Ahmed Shayan Fazlur Rahman, and Shibli Rubaiyat-Ul-Islam, former chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission, said ACC Director General Md Akhtar Hossain yesterday.

The accused facilitated issuance of bonds worth Tk 1,000 crore for a newly registered company -- Shripur Township Limited -- without acquiring a Credit Information Bureau report or assessing the mortgaged land.

Meanwhile, ACC is planning to seek assistance from international agencies to bring British lawmaker Tulip Siddiq, who has been accused of corruption, to Bangladesh so that she can place her statement over alleged plot forgery before a court.

Akhtar Hossain said due legal processes will be followed in cooperation with relevant global organisations to ensure her appearance in court.

Dedicated hospital for expats soon

Says Asif Nazrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asif Nazrul, adviser to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, yesterday announced that a dedicated hospital for expatriates will soon be established in Dhaka's Gulshan.

The hospital will be run by returnee expatriates, and its ownership will also be granted to expatriates through share purchases, he said while speaking at a programme organised by the Wage Earners' Welfare Board in Probashi Kalyan Bhaban.

The event included distribution of cheques for disability allowances, medical aid for ailing expatriates, and financial assistance and compensation to families of deceased expatriates.

European lawyers' body condemns Tureen's arrest

STAR REPORT

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CBE), representing over 1 million lawyers across 46 countries, has voiced concern over the recent arrest and alleged mistreatment of Barrister Tureen Afroz.

In a letter dated April 15 addressed to the chief adviser, CBE President Thierry Wickers wrote, "The CBE wishes to express its concerns over the arbitrary arrest and inhumane treatment of Barrister Tureen Afroz."

The CBE also referenced a prior incident in August 2024, where she was reportedly subjected to a violent and degrading physical assault by unidentified attackers, allegedly in retaliation for her work at the ICT.

ICT to quiz Ansar member over July shooting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal has granted permission to its investigation agency to interrogate Ansar member Omar Faruk, who was caught on video allegedly shooting a protester in Dhaka's Mohammadpur area during the July uprising.

The order came yesterday from the three-member tribunal, headed by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, following a petition by the prosecution.

Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim told the tribunal that investigators have obtained substantial evidence, including photographs and video footage, linked to the incident.

In one such video, Faruk is allegedly seen firing a shot at a protester from a very close range in Mohammadpur.

The footage also reveals the presence of several law enforcement officials and individuals believed to be political activists. The prosecutor argued that Faruk's interrogation is crucial to uncover their role in the incident.

Part of poet Rafiq

FROM PAGE 3

According to Ashik, there are four one-storey buildings on the premises, all of which are occupied by tenants. Of these, two buildings – including Rafiq Azad's residence – are protected by a High Court status quo order.

"We demolished two buildings located at the back of Rafiq Azad's house," he said.

Ashik said although no part of Rafiq Azad's residence was demolished, the executive engineer concerned has assured him that the boundary wall will be rebuilt.

The four-unit house includes one unit occupied by Dilara Hafiz, while the other three are reportedly allocated to different individuals. The western section of the house, located at 139/4A, Road 1, Dhanmondi, covers approximately five kathas of land.

In 1988, the Estate Office temporarily allocated the single-storey house to Dilara Hafiz, then a lecturer at Eden College.

Years later, a man named Syed Nehal Ahad claimed ownership of the property and, in 2012, obtained a court verdict in his favour.

Dilara Hafiz subsequently filed a case against him, the Ministry

Sufferings mount

FROM PAGE 3

reportedly injured following the army's involvement.

A press release from the 33rd Infantry Division of the Bangladesh Army stated that troops were deployed to restore order as the situation became increasingly disorderly. They claimed that blank shots were fired to disperse the crowd and that no injuries occurred.

One student, Saimun Islam Noman, a student from Cumilla Polytechnic Institute, was handed over to the police.

However, Rubai Khanam, upazila nirbahi officer of Cumilla Sadar South, said although the army joined to maintain order, the administration did not authorise using blank fire.

In Chattogram, students blocked CDA Avenue near the Gate 2 intersection around 11:30am, disrupting traffic on both CDA Avenue and Bayezid Road. They also briefly occupied a nearby railway track.

The blockade ended around 2:30pm following an altercation with drivers and police intervention. Protesters later marched to the deputy commissioner's office.

In Rajshahi, students blocked both road and rail communication. In Khulna, students from four polytechnic institutes blocked train services by

occupying the tracks at Baikali Junction around 9:15am. Train services resumed after nearly three hours following discussions with police.

In Barishal, students demonstrated in front of the Nathullabab Bus Terminal from 12:00pm to 12:25pm, halting traffic on the Dhaka-Barishal highway and 22 regional routes. The protest ended after requests from police and army personnel.

Protests were also reported in Narsingdi, Tangail, Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram, Rajshahi, and Cumilla

contributed to this report

Sylhet lost 35,005

FROM PAGE 5

in 2024 – a loss of 35,005 hectares in just five years.

Badrul Huda, assistant director of the Department of Environment (DoE), Sylhet, said this alarming trend is not limited to Sylhet, similar activities are taking place across the country.

"There is a law for protecting agricultural land, but its implementation is severely lacking," said Nurul Mohaimin Milton, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Sangbadik Samitee in Moulvibazar.

He highlighted the particularly damaging practice of removing topsoil – the nutrient-rich layer vital for crop production – and selling it to brick kilns. "Once this fertile layer is stripped, the land's productivity drops drastically and becomes unsuitable for cultivation in the long term."

He emphasised the need for greater public awareness and stricter enforcement of environmental and land use laws.

According to Mohammad Nasir Uddin, senior monitoring officer at the DAE, cultivable land in the division dropped from 7,64,240 hectares in 2019 to 7,29,235 hectares

Shabnam Huq's death anniv today

CITY DESK

Today is the 25th death anniversary of Shabnam Huq, wife of Arham M a s u d u l Huq, former chief executive officer of Dhaka Bank Foundation, said a press release.

Her relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

PRAYER TIMING APRIL 17

Faz	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-35	12-45	4-45	6-24	7-45
JAMAT 5-10	1-15	5-00	6-28	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

7 months on

FROM PAGE 5

"For the journey, we contacted a broker and paid him Tk 5,000. He assured us a safe passage to Tripura through the Lalbari border without any official documents," she said.

"Swarna was holding my hand. We were inside Bangladeshi territory and heading towards the zero line. Suddenly, a bullet hit her in the back – while we were still within Bangladesh.

"My daughter died on the spot. I somehow managed to drag her body back towards our locality, but I don't remember how – I lost consciousness."

Sanjita regained consciousness a day later in a hospital bed.

Following the incident, BSF personnel took Swarna's body into Indian territory. It was returned two days later after several flag meetings between BGB and BSF.

While visiting Swarna's school, this newspaper saw that her classmates and teachers had kept her seat empty in remembrance.

"Swarna was an excellent athlete. She won several awards in long jump, high jump, and sprint events over the years," said Alam Bashar, the school's sports teacher.

On Pahela Baishakh, members of the 52 BGB Battalion in Beanibazar gifted the grieving family a high-yielding Fijian cow raised on the BGB's farm. BGB personnel also spent time with the family, offering comfort and solidarity.

Lt Col Md Mehedi Hasan, commanding officer of the battalion, said, "Swarna's death is a deeply tragic incident. We have supported the family from day one and will continue to do so."

Request for Information: Infra Procurement of SDN (Software Defined Networking) Solution for DC

BRAC Bank PLC. delivers a full array of banking services to individuals as well as business entities with a network of 189 Branches, 74 Sub-branches, 329 ATMs, 446 SME Unit Offices and 1,123 Agent Banking Outlets. Currently, the Bank is seeking for vendor(s) to provide Infra Procurement of SDN (Software Defined Networking) Solution for DC.

A Request for Information (RFI) for Technical Offer Submission is issued for the mentioned purpose. The RFI along with details of the bidding process can be found on the bank's website <https://www.bracbank.com/en/information/e-tender>

Interested eligible bidders are requested to submit the technical offer as per the mentioned bidding process.



ওয়াক্ত অব্যর্থ

Request for Quotation: Data Center Consultancy

BRAC Bank PLC. delivers a full array of banking services to individuals as well as business entities with a network of 189 Branches, 74 Sub-branches, 329 ATMs, 446 SME Unit Offices and 1,123 Agent Banking Outlets. Currently, the Bank is seeking for vendor(s) to provide Data Center Consultancy Services.

A Request for Quotation (RFQ) for Technical Offer Submission is issued for the mentioned purpose. The RFQ along with details of the bidding process can be found on the bank's website <https://www.bracbank.com/en/information/e-tender>

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ওয়াক্ত অব্যর্থ

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Department of Mass Communication
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Tathya Bhaban
112 Circuit House Road, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.
www.masscommunication.gov.bd

Memo No. 15.56.0000.001.07.287.24-426

Date: 16.04.2025

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> for the Procurement of following tender details are given below:

SI No.	Tender package No. and Description	Tender Publication Date and Time	Tender Document last Saving/Downloading Date and Time	Tender Closing Date and Time	Tender ID
1.	DoMC/EGP/2024-2025/PKG/03 Office Equipment (Air Conditioner)	15-Apr-2025 18.00	29-Apr-2025 17.00	30-Apr-2025 14.00	1097601
2.	DoMC/EGP/2024-2025/PKG/04 Desktop Computer, Printer And Scanner	15-Apr-2025 18.00	29-Apr-2025 17.00	30-Apr-2025 14.30	1097624
3.	DoMC/EGP/2024-2025/PKG/05 Spare Parts and Tools for Equipment Workshop	15-Apr-2025 18.00	29-Apr-2025 17.00	30-Apr-2025 15.00	1098155

This is an online Tender. Where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches according to notice.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-Gp helpdesk e-mail ID: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd

16-04-2025

(Md. Uzal Hossain)
Assistant Director (Procurement)
Department of Mass Communication
e-mail: ddtu@masscommunication.gov.bd

GD-897

চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

চট্টগ্রাম

শিক্ষক পদে নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর: ০২/২০২৫ এর সংশোধনা

চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় শিক্ষক পদে নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর: ০২/২০২৫ তারিখ: ১০/০৩/২০২৫ এর আশ্চর্য সংশোধনপূর্বক বিজ্ঞপ্তি পদসমূহের জন্য নির্ধারিত ঘরনমে দরবার্ষিক দায়িত্বের শেষ তারিখ ২৯/০৪/২০২৫ প্রিন্টার্ড পর্যবেক্ষ বৃক্ষ করা হলো।

উক্ত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিমূলে বাংলাদেশ স্টেডিজিভ বিভাগের প্রত্যাষাক (বাংলাদেশ স্টেডিজিভ বিজ্ঞয়) ০২ (দুই) টি ছাত্রী ও ০১ (এক) টি অভ্যন্তরীণ পদের জন্য যাদের ইতিহাস/ইসলামের ইতিহাস ও সংস্কৃতি/সমাজবিজ্ঞান অনুবন্ধভূত অন্যান্য বিভাগের নাটক (শ্রমণ) ও নাটককেতুর পার্টেজমে বাংলাদেশ সম্পর্কিত কের্চ অঙ্গুলীয় আছে এবং শিক্ষক পদে নিয়োগের নীতিমালা/বিজ্ঞাপিত শর্তমতে প্রয়োজনীয় স্থানতম বিভাগ/শ্রেণি/সভিপ্রে/জিপ্রে আছে তারাও আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

উক্ত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

১৫-০৪-২০২৫

(ফরেসের ড. মোহাম্মদ সাইফুল ইসলাম)

মেলিস্টার (ভার্যাক)

চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

যোগাযোগ: ০২৩৬৮৬০৯৬৫-৯৫, ১১-১১

এক্স-৮২০

GD-894

ক্রম	পদের নাম	বেতন	পদ সং
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People in Bhola yesterday took the streets, waving and hoisting Palestinian flags in solidarity with the people of Gaza. Various political and social organisations organised the "March for Palestine", protesting the ongoing Israeli atrocities. The photo was taken from Bhola Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

Sylhet lost 35,005 hectares of farmland in 5yrs

MINTU DESHWARA

Unchecked land filling in Sylhet division is putting the region's future of agriculture at grave risk, as farmlands are rapidly being converted into residential, commercial, and multi-storied structures.

Once known for producing Aus, Aman, and Rabi-season crops, these fertile lands are now dotted with concrete buildings and paved roads. The transformation is particularly noticeable along roadways, where construction continues unchecked, with little regard for long-term environmental consequences or the country's food security.

"Residential and commercial buildings are being built by filling up arable land, especially in areas known for producing three-season crops," said Bimal Chandra Shome, additional director of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Sylhet.

Sadek Mia, a resident of Kamalganj, echoed him.

Md Manowar Hossain, upazila

agriculture officer at Barlekha, said Bangladesh is losing agricultural land at a rate of around one percent per year. This, he warned, not only threatens food security but also disrupts natural habitats, including those critical for fish breeding.

He said about 10 percent of new constructions are taking place on roadside arable lands, with a significant portion of expatriate income being spent on building houses and commercial establishments.

Md Jalal Uddin, deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in Moulvibazar, said, "Establishments are being built rapidly by filling in farmland. If this continues, food shortages are not unlikely."

Local farmer Siddiqur Rahman from Kamalganj said, "In the absence of policy enforcement, people are constructing buildings on farmland however they please."

Jasim Uddin, upazila agriculture

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Ex-DGHS driver Malek, wife jailed in graft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Malek, a former driver of the Directorate General of Health Service (DGHS), and his wife Nargis Begum were yesterday sentenced to five and three years of imprisonment respectively, in a case filed over amassing wealth worth Tk 1.10 crore illegally.

Malek was sentenced to five years in jail for assisting his wife to acquire the wealth, while Nargis was given three years in jail for acquiring the wealth through illegal means.

Judge Md Jakaria Hossain of Dhaka Special Judge's Court-6 pronounced the verdict in the presence of the couple at the courtroom.

The judge also fined Malek Tk 20,000, in default of which he will have to serve five months more in jail.

On the other hand, Nargis was fined Tk 20,000, in default of which she will have to serve three months more in prison.

In the judgement, the judge said the prosecution was able to prove the charges brought against the couple undoubtedly and they were given the punishment for committing the offences.

The judge also ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate Tk 1,10,92,050 earned illegally by them.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments, and the court recorded statements of 16 prosecution witnesses.

KILLING OF SWARNA DAS

7 months on, fear still lingers at Lalarchak border

SHAHEEN MOLLAH, back from Moulvibazar

For the past seven months, farmers in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar have stayed away from their land near the Lalarchak border, fearing attacks allegedly by India's Border Security Force (BSF).

Panic still grips the local farming community and neighbouring villages following the death of 14-year-old Swarna Das, who was shot dead on September 1 last year.

"The farmers have stopped cultivating their land, leaving the fields abandoned out of fear of being shot by the BSF. Since Swarna's death, even locals and children no longer roam or play near the border," said Tajul Islam, a former member of Sharifpur union.

Swarna was holding my hand. We were inside Bangladeshi territory and heading towards the zero line. Suddenly, a bullet hit her in the back -- while we were still within Bangladesh.

SANJITA RANI DAS
Swarna's mother

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw many fields near the border left overgrown and uncared for.

Lt Col ASM Zakaria, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (46 BGB Battalion), said, "We maintain strict security vigilance at the border. There is nothing to be afraid of."

Swarna, an eighth-grader at Nirod Bihari High School in Juri upazila, was reportedly shot and killed by BSF members while attempting to cross the border through Lalarchak.

Speaking at her home, Swarna's mother, Sanjita Rani Das, said she and her daughter were on their way to Tripura to visit her brother.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

DHAKA THURSDAY APRIL 17, 2025

BAISHAKH 4, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

5

Girl raped on moving bus Driver, helper held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped on a moving bus in Chattogram's Bahaddarhat area on Tuesday night.

Police yesterday arrested the bus driver and his assistant in connection with the incident.

The victim, a student, was travelling alone from Cox's Bazar to a relative's home in Chattogram city.

According to police, the incident took place between Tuesday evening and early yesterday.

Chandgaon Police Station Officer-in-Charge Aftab Uddin told The Daily Star that after all the passengers got off the bus, the driver, helper, and supervisor did not allow the girl to leave the bus. They took the bus to an isolated area near the Bahaddarhat flyover and raped her.

Around 4:00am yesterday, the perpetrators dropped her off near the Kaptai Road area. A police patrol team noticed her standing alone, and upon questioning, she disclosed the incident.

The girl was later admitted to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital.

Police said the bus supervisor, identified as Mobarak, remains at large. The victim's mother filed a case with the Chandgaon Police Station.

2 killed as vehicle falls into drain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Two persons were killed and three others injured after a human haulier fell into a roadside drain in Ashulia yesterday.

The deceased are Badrul Alam and Hridoy Mia.

The incident occurred around 7:30pm in Jamgara area, said Kamal Hossain, inspector at Ashulia Police Station.

He said the vehicle fell into the rainwater-filled drain as the driver failed to notice it. The two were declared dead at a local hospital.

Establishment of 6 (Six) Centers of BITAC at Gopalganj, Sunamganj, Barishal, Rangpur, Jamalpur and Jashore District (1st Revised).
Bangladesh Industrial Technical Assistance Centre (BITAC)
116 (kha), Tejgaon Industrial Area,
Dhaka-1208.

Ref: 36.06.0000.025.07.001.25

Invitation for International Tenders

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Industries
2	Agency	Bangladesh Industrial Technical Assistance Centre (BITAC)
3	Purchaser Name	Project Director, Establishment of 6 (Six) Centers of BITAC at Gopalganj, Sunamganj, Barishal, Rangpur, Jamalpur and Jashore District (1 st Revised). 116 (kha), Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208
4	Purchaser Code	224352900
5	Purchaser District	Dhaka
6	Invitation for	1. Procurement of equipment for welding technology for BITAC, Gopalganj. 2. Procurement of equipment for machine shop (Traditional) for BITAC, Barishal. 3. Procurement of equipment for machine shop (Traditional) for BITAC, Jamalpur.

7 Invitation Ref No | 36.06.0000.025.07.001.25 (10) (22) (40) |

8 Date | 16.04.2025 |

9 Procurement Method | Open Tendering Method (International) |

10 Budget and Source of Funds | GOB |

11 Development Partners (if applicable) | N/A |

12 Project / Programme Code (if applicable) | 224352900 |

13 Project / Programme Name (if applicable) | Establishment of 6 (Six) Centers of BITAC at Gopalganj, Sunamganj, Barishal, Rangpur, Jamalpur and Jashore District (1st Revised). |

14 Tender Package No. | GD19 (BITAC-Gopalganj), GD-31 (BITAC-Barishal), GD-49 (BITAC-Jamalpur). |

15 Tender Package Name | Procurement of equipment for welding technology for BITAC, Gopalganj. Procurement of equipment for machine shop (Traditional) for BITAC, Barishal. Procurement of equipment for machine shop (Traditional) for BITAC, Jamalpur. |

16 Tender Publication Date | 17.04.2025 |

17 Tender Last Selling Date | 29.05.2025 |

18 Tender Closing Date and Time | 01.06.2025 |

19 Tender Opening Date and Time | 12.00 p.m |

20 Name & Address of the office(s) | 01.06.2025 |

21 Place / Date / Time of | Accountant, Establishment of 6 (Six) Centers of BITAC at Gopalganj, Sunamganj, Barishal, Rangpur, Jamalpur and Jashore District (1st Revised). BITAC, Admin Building 1st Floor, Room No.- 206, 116 (kha), Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208. |

22 Eligibility of Tenderer | - Selling Tender Document (Others) |

23 Brief Description of Goods | - Receiving Tender Document Admin Building, Ground Floor, Room No.- 112, BITAC, 116 (kha), Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208. |

24 Brief Description of Related Services | - Opening Tender Document Admin Building, Ground Floor, Conference room, BITAC, 116 (kha), Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208. |

25 Price of Tender Document for GD19 (BITAC-Gopalganj) (Tk) | BDT 2000.00 (Two Thousand only) Not refundable |

Price of Tender Document for GD-31 (BITAC-Barishal) (Tk)

Price of Tender Document for GD-49 (BITAC-Jamalpur) (Tk)

26 Package No | Tender Security Amount (Tk.) |

27 Name of Official Inviting Tender | Dr. Md. Jalaluddin |

28 Designation of Official Inviting Tender | Project Director |

29 Address of Official Inviting Tender | Admin. Building Ground Floor, Room No.-112, BITAC, 116 (kha), Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208. |

30 Contact details of Official Inviting Tender | Tel: +88-02-55016448 |

Email: jalal_bitac@yahoo.com

Facsimile number: +88-02-55030046

31 The Purchaser reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings | |

32 The advertisement can be seen at BITAC website address: <https://www.bitac.gov.bd & BPPA website> | |

33 Dr. Md. Jalal Uddin | Project Director |

Establishment of 6 (Six) Centers of BITAC

Tel: +88-02-55016448

Memo No: 22.01.0000.731.002.001.25.1009

Date: 16/04/2025

e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID No.	Package No	Description	Online Notice Publication date & time	Online Tender last selling Date and Time	Online Tender Closing Date
1098249	GR-9	Supply of Seedlings for 85.0 ha. Short Rotation Plantation raising.	20-04-2025 10.00 AM	05-05-2025 17.00 PM	06-05-2025 13.00 PM
1098250	GR-10	Supply of Plantation Materials for 85.0 ha. Short Rotation plantation.	20-04-2025 10.00 AM	05-05-2025 17.00 PM	06-05-2025 13.00 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for selling/downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd, +8809609112233, +8801762625528, +8801762625529)

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Exhibition:
Bangladesh Press
Photo Contest 2025

Drik Picture Library presents the **Bangladesh Press Photo Exhibition 2025** and Award Ceremony at DrikPath Bhabon. The exhibition will showcase powerful visual narratives, feature reflections from distinguished judges, and announce the winner of the BPPC Indigenous Community Grant 2025, celebrating excellence in photojournalism across the country.

Date: Thursday | April 19-30

Time: 3pm-8pm

Venue: DrikPath Bhabon, Panthapath



Ferdous Wahid debuts as host with Habib Wahid as first guest

Veteran musician Ferdous Wahid is set to make his debut as a television host through a show titled **Chena Mukh Dukkho Shukh**. Interestingly, his first episode as a host features an interview with none other than his son, musician Habib Wahid.

The studio recordings for three episodes of **Chena Mukh Dukkho Shukh** took place on Tuesday (April 15). In one of the episodes, Ferdous Wahid interviews his son, Habib Wahid. The other two episodes feature appearances by musicians Hyder Husyn and Agun.

When asked about his first-time experience as a host, Ferdous Wahid told the media, "It was a different kind of experience. I really enjoyed it because I got to work on something new. I interviewed musician Habib in my own way, and he answered in his own way. I noticed that all the



guests really enjoyed the process. That's when I realised—I must have done something right."

In this show, artistes will talk about their experiences in their careers and life. In essence, the programme aims to delve into the

inner world and the reflections of an artiste. The conversations will be interspersed with musical performances by the guests.

The 16 episode series will begin airing on Channel i starting April 30.

'Borbaad', 'Daagi' and 'Jongli' dominate box office, gear up for global release



With packed halls and sustained audience turnout weeks after Eid, local films **Borbaad**, **Daagi**, and **Jongli** have emerged as box office hits, prompting their release in international markets. Due to their overwhelming success, no foreign films have been screened in local

multiplexes post-Eid.

Borbaad, starring Shakib Khan, will be released in the US on April 18 and in Canada on April 19, followed by screenings in Australia, New Zealand, and the Middle East. It is being distributed by SK Films.

Directed by M Raahim,

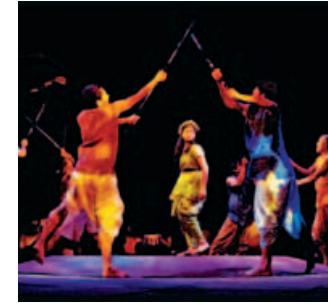
Jongli is set for international release on April 25 across the US, Canada, England, Ireland, Sweden, and Australia.

Shihab Shaheen's **Daagi**, featuring Afran Nisho, is already showing in Australia and is slated for release in New Zealand, the US, and Canada.

'Khona' returns to stage for 92nd show

Acclaimed theatre troupe BotTala will stage the 92nd performance of its celebrated production **Khona** on April 18 at the Experimental Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Directed by Mohammad Ali Haider and written by Samina Luthfi Nitra, the play portrays the life of legendary astrologer Lilabati, known as Khona, exploring gender, class, and power dynamics.

Debuting during International Women's Day centenary celebrations, **Khona** has received critical acclaim both at home and abroad for its powerful critique of patriarchy.



Performed by a large ensemble cast, the show coincides with the Bengali New Year, which BotTala marks as a tribute to the resilience of women and Bangladesh's cultural legacy. The show starts at 7pm.

NEWS

BDR carnage probe report

FROM PAGE 12
Fazlur Rahman, head of the commission.

"We have already interviewed some of those incarcerated. Twenty-three individuals who need to be contacted for the investigation are currently abroad, among whom eight have responded and are willing to be interviewed," he added.

Fazlur, also the former director general of the BGB, said the commission is also focusing on identifying the pattern of killings and torture that unfolded during the mutiny.

"After the director general was killed, others were executed. This was a planned massacre. Such an act cannot take place without careful planning."

"It feels like a repetition of Palashi. We must get to the root of it," he said.

Maj Gen (retd) Jahangir Kabir

Pakistan foreign secy in Dhaka

FROM PAGE 2

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Yunus met twice since then: first on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September last year and later at the D-8 summit in Cairo in December.

Since then, Bangladesh has eased visa rules for Pakistani nationals and launched direct shipping. Pakistan is keen to organise cultural exchange and boost trade, tourism and investment.

Pakistan sees potential for boosting exports to Bangladesh, especially if their products are price competitive," said Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Iqbal Hussain Khan, who is now in Dhaka for the meeting.

Pakistan aims to export products like cotton, sugar, rice and wheat, he said. In fiscal 2023-24, Bangladesh exported \$61.98 million to Pakistan and imported goods worth \$627.8 million.

As Pakistan serves as a gateway for goods from Afghanistan and Iran, Dhaka can export many goods from those countries through Pakistan, Khan added.

Discussions are also underway on starting direct flights between Bangladesh and Pakistan, he added.

In the last FOC in 2015, discussions were held on several issues, including Pakistan's unconditional apology for the 1971 war crimes, compensation for war damages, repatriation of stranded Pakistanis, Bangladesh's rightful share of pre-1971 assets and repayment of foreign aid during the 1970 cyclone.

Provide info on wilful loan

FROM PAGE 12

and confirms a borrower as a wilful defaulter, it must send the information to the CIB and those borrowers must be listed in the CIB as "wilful defaulters".

Banks must submit accumulated information about the defaulters in a detailed report on a quarterly basis, the notice said, adding that this report, along with all relevant documentation, must be submitted to the central bank's Banking Regulations and Policy Department by the 10th day of the month following the end of each quarter.

The notice also mentioned that banks must provide names, mobile phone numbers, and email addresses as provided on their internal identification units responsible for identifying the wilful defaulters.

Trump admin seeks to scrap funding

FROM PAGE 12

decide to restore some or all of the funding the administration has proposed cutting.

The State Department was due to respond to the OMB proposal on Tuesday. During US President Donald Trump's first term, he proposed cutting about a third of diplomacy and aid budgets. But Congress, which sets the federal government budget, pushed back on Trump's proposal.

"There is no final plan, final budget," State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce told reporters on Tuesday when asked about the OMB proposals.

The OMB has proposed ending Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA).

"For example, Passback provides no funding for CIPA, ending contributions for international

peacekeeping due to the recent failures in peacekeeping, such as with MINUSMA, UNIFIL, and MONUSCO, and the disproportionately high level of assessments," according to an excerpt from the Passback.

The United Nations peacekeeping budget funds nine missions in Mali, Lebanon, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Western Sahara, Cyprus, Kosovo, between Syria and the Israeli occupied Golan Heights and Abyei, an administrative area that is jointly run by South Sudan and Sudan.

The OMB Passback also proposed the creation of a \$2.1 billion America First Opportunities Fund (AEOF), which it said would be used to cover a limited set of foreign economic and development assistance priorities.

"Should the Administration seek to pay any assessments for the

United Nations Regular Budget or peacekeeping assessments, we would like to provide that funding from the AEOF," read the OMB Passback.

UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric on Tuesday declined to comment on "what appears to be a leaked memo that is part of an internal debate within the US government."

The US owes - for arrears and the current fiscal year - nearly \$1.5 billion for the regular UN budget and nearly \$1.2 billion for the peacekeeping budget. A country can be up to two years in arrears before facing the possible repercussion of losing its vote in the 193-member General Assembly.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres last month said he is seeking ways to improve efficiency and cut costs as the world body turns 80 this year amid a cash crisis.

Protest rages at Kuet

FROM PAGE 12
sculpture, marching through several academic buildings before circling back to the starting point. Along the way, they chanted slogans against the VC.

Following the march, a press briefing was held at the Student Welfare Centre around 12:15pm, where students accused the university administration of delaying action during and after the February 18 violence. They also alleged that students who were not involved in the violence were unfairly suspended, and many returning students were denied access to their dormitories, forcing them to sleep outside.

"Considering all these factors, the VC should resign immediately," said the protesting students. They also warned of announcing a tougher programme if the VC does not resign immediately.

After the February clash, students launched a movement with a six-point demand, including the resignation of the VC, pro-VC, and the Director of Student Welfare, as well as a total ban on political activities on campus.

On April 10, a local resident filed a case against 22 named Kuet students and 15-20 unnamed individuals in

connection with the violence.

In response, the Kuet syndicate held an emergency meeting on April 14 and decided to reopen residential halls on May 2 and resume academic activities on May 4. It also announced the suspension of 37 students allegedly involved in the incident.

However, the students on Tuesday rejected the syndicate's decision and announced the one-point demand, insisting that the VC must resign.

They also demanded that dormitories be reopened without conditions. Later, around 250 students broke into five dormitories and have been staying there since.

Meanwhile, a section of Kuet teachers, officials, and staff organised a silent march, human chain, and rally on campus, protesting the students' demand. They called for punishment for those involved in the February 18 violence and urged students to vacate the dormitories in compliance with university directives.

In Dhaka, BRAC University students staged a demonstration in front of their Merul Badda campus yesterday, expressing solidarity with the demands of Kuet students.

Arson attack on Ananda Shobhajatra

FROM PAGE 12

minister Sheikh Hasina used in the Shobhajatra."

The artist, who was at home in the Garpara Bazar area of Manikganj Sadar upazila during the arson attack, said the room having the sculptures was set ablaze around 2:30am today [Wednesday], destroying 30 sculptures. "On information, police and fire service members rushed there and brought the fire under control."

"All the sculptures I had made since my training time and all the furniture in the room were damaged by then."

Mohammad Salauddin, an additional superintendent of Manikganj police, said on April 13, a campaign was launched through Facebook page 'Rajya Sabha' that

Manabendra fashioned the face of Hasina like a monster.

"Manabendra then lodged a GD with Manikganj Sadar Police Station. Since then, police have been keeping an eye on his safety. But around 2:30am today [Wednesday], someone set fire to the house. Getting information, we reached the spot and started legal proceedings."

Earlier, quoting Manikganj Police Superintendent Yasmin Khutun, the chief adviser's press wing shared information on Facebook that a police team already visited the spot, and an investigation was underway.

"Swift action will be taken against those responsible," the SP said.

Manikganj Deputy Commissioner Manwar Hossain Molla said a six-

member committee, led by Additional District Magistrate Nazmul Hasan Khan, was formed to investigate the fire and it has been asked to submit a report within three working days.

Meanwhile, Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki in his Facebook page wrote, "Police have started work to detain everyone who attacked the house of artist Manabendra Ghosh. We spoke to the home adviser who has given clear instructions to the IGP."

He alleged that over the past few days, the Awami League has been inciting the attack on Manabendra online for "making an effigy of Hasina".

[Our Manikganj correspondent contributed to this report.]

Mujibnagar Day today

FROM PAGE 12

Around 10:00am that day, the leaders went to a mango orchard in Baidyanathatala, to hold the oath-taking ceremony amid the war.

The Mujibnagar government had been formed seven days earlier, with the prime minister, Baidyanathatala, later named Mujibnagar.

Islam, with MAG Osmani, newly appointed commander in chief of Bangladesh Defence Forces, took the salute and an inspection of the guard followed.

The acting president raised the red, green and yellow flag amid thunderous applause. It was hoisted while the leaders sang Amar Sonar Bangla in unison.

EU tightens asylum rule with list of 7 safe nations

AFP, Brussels

The European Union yesterday published a list of seven countries it considers "safe", in a bid to speed up migrant returns by making it harder for citizens of those nations to claim asylum in the bloc.

The European Commission said it was proposing to designate Kosovo, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, India, Morocco and Tunisia as "safe countries of origin".

The move is set to allow governments to process asylum applications filed from citizens of those countries more quickly -- by introducing a presumption such applications lack merit.

"Many member states are facing a significant backlog of applications, so anything we can do now to support faster asylum decisions is essential," said Magnus Brunner, the EU's commissioner for migration.

WHO members strike deal on tackling future pandemics

AFP, Geneva

Years of negotiations culminated early yesterday with countries agreeing the text of a landmark accord on how to tackle future pandemics, aimed at avoiding the mistakes made during the Covid-19 crisis.

After more than three years of talks and one last marathon session, weary delegates at the World Health Organization's headquarters finally sealed the deal at around 2:00 am (0000 GMT) yesterday.

"Tonight marks a significant milestone in our shared journey towards a safer world," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Five years after the emergence of Covid-19, which killed millions of people, devastated economies and upturned health systems, a sense of urgency hung over the talks, with new threats lurking -- including H5N1 bird flu, measles, mpox and Ebola.

The final stretch of the talks also took place under the shadow of cuts to US foreign aid spending and threatened tariffs on pharmaceuticals.

Right until the last minute, disagreement lingered over a few thorny issues.



Israeli soldiers detain a Palestinian boy after he threw rocks ahead of a visit by Ultra-Orthodox Jews to the shrine of Atnael Ben Kinaz in the city of Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday. Israel's military said it had killed two Palestinians in the West Bank, including one suspected of carrying out an attack that left Israelis dead in January.

PHOTO: AFP

Resist confrontation, protectionism

China's Xi calls on Asian nations amid deterioration of ties with US

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday called for Asian nations to unite in resisting geopolitical confrontation, unilateralism and protectionism, as he aims to consolidate ties with some of China's closest neighbours amid a deterioration of relations with the US.

Xi is in Malaysia as part of a three-nation Southeast Asian trip that includes Vietnam and Cambodia.

China and Malaysia reached a consensus on deepening cooperation in various fields, Xi said after witnessing the exchange of 31 agreements with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, ranging from trade and tourism to railway transportation and agriculture. No details were provided for the agreements.

"In the face of shocks to the current international order and economic globalisation, our two nations will stand united with other countries in the region to

jointly resist the undercurrents of geopolitical and camp-based confrontation, overcome the countercurrents of unilateralism and protectionism, and safeguard the promising prospects for development in our shared Asian home," Xi said at a function with Anwar.

He urged Malaysia and other countries of the Association of Southeast Asian

duties.

Xi did not directly refer to the United States in his remarks in Kuala Lumpur.

As part of his "America First" policy, Trump has also pulled the US out of the World Health Organization, hollowed out USAID and halted international aid.

China has said it is "tearing down walls" and expanding its circle of trading partners amid the trade war.



➤ Resist supply chain disruptions, excessive tariffs: Xi

➤ China, Malaysia exchange agreements on trade, tourism

Nations regional bloc to jointly resist decoupling, supply chain disruptions and "excessive tariffs" with openness and greater cooperation, China's state-run CCTV reported.

Xi's comments come after US President Donald Trump, who took office in January, shocked markets

by imposing sweeping tariffs on countries across the world. While some of the tariffs have since been delayed, Beijing faces 145 percent

With an additional tariff of 24 percent on goods shipped to the US, Malaysia was among several Southeast Asian nations facing hefty US levies before Trump announced his 90-day pause. Malaysian officials have begun reaching out to the US for a reprieve.

Anwar said China remained Malaysia's most significant trading partner and continued to be a "rational, strong and reliable" ally during upheaval in global geopolitics.

'Harvard is a joke' Trump's fresh salvo at Ivy League giant

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday doubled down on a funding standoff with top university Harvard that has become a focal point of his war against elite educational institutions.

"Harvard can no longer be considered even a decent place of learning, and should not be considered on any list of the World's Great Universities or Colleges," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

"Harvard is a JOKE, teaches Hate and Stupidity, and should no longer receive Federal Funds."

On Tuesday, Trump threatened to strip the university of its tax-exempt status as a non profit educational institution, after earlier freezing \$2.2 billion in federal funding.

Trump has demanded that the university change the way it runs itself, including how it selects students and its hiring practices.



GPH Ispat and PWD Share Research on Construction Materials
GPH Ispat and the Public Works Department (PWD) jointly organized a seminar at the PWD Conference Hall to present research on advanced construction materials. The event featured Mohammed Shamim Akhtar, the Chief Engineer of PWD, as the chief guest, along with Mohammed Almas Shimul, GPH Ispat's Additional Managing Director, serving as a special guest. Professors from BUET and senior engineers from both the public and private sectors also attended the seminar.

Advertisement

GD-895

GD-899

'Will Muslims be allowed to be part of Hindu trusts?'

India SC asks Centre during Waqf hearing

NDTV ONLINE

Hearing the bunch of petitions challenging the Waqf Amendment Act, India's Supreme Court yesterday asked the Centre tough questions on multiple provisions of the new law, especially its provisions for 'Waqf by user' properties.

The court also flagged the provision to include non-Muslims on the Central Waqf Council and asked the government if it would allow Muslims to be part of Hindu endowment boards.

The bench, led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and comprising Justice Sanjay Kumar and Justice KV Vishwanathan, was hearing 73 petitions challenging the new Waqf Act, which has sparked protests in several parts of the country.

At the outset, the Chief Justice told the petitioners that two questions needed to be addressed. The first was whether the Supreme Court would send the petitions to a high court and what points the petitioners intend to argue.

Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for one of the petitioners, said many provisions in the new law violate Article 26 of the Constitution, which guarantees the freedom to manage religious affairs.

Iran's right to enrich uranium not negotiable Says FM Araqchi ahead of talks with US

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran's right to enrich uranium is not negotiable, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said yesterday, ahead of a second round of talks in Oman this weekend with the United States about Tehran's disputed nuclear programme.

Araqchi was responding to a comment made on Tuesday by the US top negotiator Steve Witkoff, who said Tehran must "stop and eliminate its nuclear enrichment" to reach a deal with Washington.

"We have heard contradictory statements from Witkoff, but real positions will be made clear at the negotiating table," Araqchi said.

"We are ready to build trust regarding possible concerns over Iran's enrichment (of uranium), but the principle of enrichment is not negotiable."

Iran and the US are due to hold a second round of talks in Oman on Saturday over Tehran's escalating nuclear programme, with President Donald Trump threatening military action if there is no deal.

Before the talks, Araqchi will deliver a

message from Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to Russian President Vladimir Putin on a trip to Russia, Iranian state media reported yesterday.

The Kremlin on Tuesday declined to comment when asked if Russia was ready to take control of Iran's stocks of enriched uranium as part of a possible future nuclear deal between Iran and the United States.

The Guardian reported that Tehran was expected to reject a US proposal to transfer its stockpile of enriched uranium to a third country such as Russia as part of an agreement that Washington is seeking to scale back Iran's nuclear programme.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and White House envoy Steve Witkoff will travel to Europe this week for talks about ending Russia's war in Ukraine and laying the groundwork for a nuclear deal with Iran.

Rubio and Witkoff are slated to meet with European counterparts in Paris today to discuss the Ukraine war, the State Department said in a statement.

CORPORATE BOOKING

Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will be reserved on 17th April (Thursday), 2025 for Corporate Booking.

From 18th April (Friday), 2025 Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will remain open for all.

Contact: 01969-910100



Bangladesh Krishi Bank

Estate & Engineering Department
83-85 Motijheel C/A
Head Office, Dhaka.

Invitation for Enlistment

01. Ministry/ Division	Ministry of Finance/Bank & Financial Institute Division.
02. Agency	Bangladesh Krishi Bank.
03. Procuring Entity Name	Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Estate & Engineering Department.
04. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka.
05. Invitation for	Enlistment Category: (for 2025-2026)

06. Invitation Ref No.	HO/EED-24/L/2024-2025/1022
07. Invitation for Enlistment No.	43/2024-2025
08. Date	13-04-2025

09. Application Closing and Opening (Date and Time)	13-05-2025; Time-12.00 PM
10. Name & Address of the Office (s)	Bangladesh Krishi Bank Estate & Engineering Department (8th floor), Head Office, 83-85 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.

- Application Form Availability	do
- Receiving Application Form	do

11. Eligibility of Applicant	a. Must have valid & updated Trade License. b. Must have valid e-TIN Certificate. c. Must have Updated Income Tax Certificate. d. Must have valid VAT Registration Certificate. e. Must have Bank Solvency Certificate showing Minimum amount of Tk.5,000 Lacs (up-to-date). f. Minimum 3 Years Experience in respective field. g. Affidavit/Article of Association of the Firm for the new applicant of Enlistment. h. Other documents detailed in Application Form for Enlistment.
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12. Price of Application Form (Tk.)	Tk.5,000 Lacs (up-to-date).
13. Enlistment/Renewal Fee (Tk.) (Should be attached a Payment order)	Tk.5,000/- (Non refundable).

14. Name of Official Inviting Application	Md. Anowarul Azim Khan
15. Official Designation	Deputy General Manager

16. Contract details of Official Inviting Application	Do: 0223384539 Email: dgmengineering@krishibank.org.bd
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17. The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept/reject all applications.	
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(Md. Anowarul Azim Khan)
Deputy General Manager

GD-895

GD-899

Remittances not at the cost of lives

Ensure safe recruitment and working conditions for migrant workers

It is unfortunate that we celebrate the remittance earnings of our migrant workers but our actions fall drastically short when it comes to ensuring their safety, dignity, and well-being both at home and abroad. In particular, the steady stream of coffins returning home—with migrants' lives cut short by health issues, workplace accidents, etc.—is a stark reminder of our collective failure to protect them.

According to the Wage Earners' Welfare Board, 4,813 bodies of migrant workers were brought back to Bangladesh in 2024 alone. The number of deaths has been rising steadily since 2020, increasing by more than 50 percent. In total, over the past four decades, at least 57,216 migrant workers' bodies have been repatriated. Many more are buried overseas, with families sometimes choosing not to bring the bodies home. When a body is repatriated, the Welfare Board provides Tk 35,000 for burial and transport costs. Besides, under a 2023 insurance scheme, families of insured workers who paid a one-time Tk 1,000 premium can receive up to Tk 10 lakh in the event of a work-related death.

Ironically, the official causes of death in most cases are listed as strokes, brain haemorrhages, or heart attacks—categorised as "natural causes." But experts have questioned this narrative, pointing out that most deceased workers were between 38 and 42 years old and reportedly had no prior health issues. Unfortunately, bodies are not re-autopsied upon return to Bangladesh. As a government official told this daily, rather unconvincingly, it is "difficult" to probe these untimely deaths further as autopsies conducted in host countries fall under their legal jurisdiction. But the question remains: Why, after all these years, have we failed to ensure a transparent and credible process for investigating the deaths of our migrant workers?

Government data shows that most of these deaths occur in the Gulf region, where extreme heat and gruelling work conditions—especially at construction sites—have taken a severe toll. A 2023 study highlighted the link between excessive heat and poor health outcomes among workers in the Gulf. Yet, there has been little visible effort to negotiate better terms for Bangladeshi workers abroad.

Given these realities, we urge the government to push for safer and more humane recruitment and working conditions in host countries. Employers must be compelled to comply with international labour standards, ensuring not just better wages but also improved living conditions and healthcare access. At the same time, migration costs must be reduced so that workers are not forced to endure dangerous jobs just to recover their investment. The authorities must also ramp up efforts to crack down on fraudulent agents involved in fake recruitment, wage theft, and forced labour. We must remember that migrant workers deserve protection, dignity, and justice. Their lives, health, and the well-being of their families must be as high a priority as the remittances they send home.

Take steps to repair Pirojpur roads

Regular maintenance, provision of funds necessary

It is disheartening to learn about the deplorable condition of roads in Pirojpur municipality, where nearly 90 percent reportedly require urgent repairs. According to sources, aside from around 20 kilometres of paved roads and approximately 70 kilometres of earthen roads, most roads across the nine wards remain damaged. For instance, the Dhuppashar Road has been unfit for vehicular movement for nearly a decade. As a result, vehicles are often forced to navigate carefully due to potholes and uneven surfaces, while many residents choose to walk as a safer alternative. Unfortunately, the municipal authorities have taken no meaningful steps to renovate these roads, citing a lack of funds.

Pirojpur's situation is hardly unique. Roads in districts and villages across the country often suffer from the same fate. In many cases, roads become dilapidated soon after construction due to the use of substandard materials. In others, projects remain incomplete or abandoned for years. Numerous reports have exposed the inefficiency, mismanagement, and corruption within the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) that oversees most of these projects. One such example is a road constructed by LGED in Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila, which collapsed just a day after completion. In another case, an 11-kilometre road in Narayanganj deteriorated within six months of repairs.

The condition of bridges is similarly troubling. For instance, in the Amtali upazila of Barguna, the collapse of 10 iron bridges in just eight months severely impacted around 65,000 residents. Likewise, a concrete bridge built over the Banshbaria canal in Patuakhali remains unused due to the absence of approach roads—another example of poor planning and execution.

These cases reflect a chronic lack of attention towards road infrastructure outside the capital and major cities, particularly in rural and municipal areas. A *Prothom Alo* report from last year noted that about 50 percent of LGED roads required repairs, while many village roads were unusable—a situation that remains largely unchanged to this day. Insufficient budget allocations often delay necessary maintenance, which ends up costing more in the long run. This scenario must change. The government must not only ensure adequate funding for repair but also overhaul its project implementation processes. The practice of awarding contracts to politically connected contractors must end to ensure accountability and quality. For Pirojpur municipality, in particular, immediate fund allocation and repair are paramount.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Canada Act proclaimed

On this day in 1982, the Canada Act (also known as the Constitution Act) took effect, establishing certain individual rights, preserving parliamentary supremacy, and making Canada a wholly independent, fully sovereign state.



EDITORIAL

Post-LDC challenges and the future of our exports



Mamun Rashid,
an economic analyst, is chairman at
Financial Excellence Ltd and founding
managing partner of PwC Bangladesh.

MAMUN RASHID

As Bangladesh approaches its graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category, the anticipated challenges of losing preferential trade benefits are already manifesting. The United States has recently imposed a 37 percent reciprocal tariff on imports from Bangladesh, which is a significant blow to the latter's exports. Though the tariff's execution has been temporarily put on hold, if not resolved in time, this sudden increase threatens to erode the country's competitiveness in its largest export destination.

Concurrently, India has withdrawn the transhipment facility that previously allowed Bangladeshi exports to third countries via Indian ports and airports. This decision, which the Indian authorities claim is aimed at alleviating congestion and costs in India's own export channels, is expected to disrupt Bangladesh's export logistics, particularly affecting shipments to some countries. These developments underscore the urgent need for Bangladesh to diversify its export portfolio, invest in infrastructure development, revisit the trade architecture, and engage in strategic trade negotiations to mitigate the impacts of its LDC graduation.

The path ahead is becoming clearer, and more complicated. While diversification has long been a talking point, it is now a matter of survival. Relying on the export of ready-made garment (RMG) products alone is no longer an option. Bangladesh must invest in building up sectors that have already shown early signs of promise. Pharmaceuticals, ICT, and agro-processing are no longer fringe players. They are contenders, capable of anchoring the next chapter of the country's export story. Take pharmaceuticals, for instance. The

world's appetite for generic medicine continues to grow, and Bangladesh has both the factories and the know-how to meet that demand. The transition from the LDC status could actually open the door for producing patented drugs, a game-changer if handled right.

But shifting what we sell is only half the equation. Where we sell must change too. For years, Bangladesh's

The other force reshaping competitiveness is less visible but equally powerful: technology. Automation, artificial intelligence, and real-time data have changed how factories run and decisions are made. In Bangladesh, these tools have been met with some hesitation, and understandably so. Fear of job losses is not unfounded. But the truth is, technology can enhance jobs as much as it replaces them. A sewing machine operator can become a line technician. A production supervisor can become a systems analyst. What is needed is training—not just any training, but programmes that are fast, focused, and aligned with the real industry needs. If done right, automation does not hollow out the workforce; rather it strengthens it.

a systemic overhaul—faster customs, smarter ports, and better roads—because the supply chain has to move as fast as the market it serves.

As the world grows more demanding, compliance is no longer a choice. It is the ticket to staying in the game. Product safety, labour rights, and environmental responsibility are the new benchmarks. Global buyers want transparency, certifications, traceability, and proof that what they are sourcing is ethical. This means companies must invest in more than just machines. They must invest in processes that show compliance and in people who can manage it. The government must play a part in this as well. Streamlined standards, quicker approvals, and constant engagement with exporters will make the difference between staying competitive and falling behind.

Trade diplomacy, once a quiet background act, now needs a front-row seat. The era of simply receiving trade perks is ending. Bangladesh must learn to negotiate on its own terms. It will not be easy, but the playbook is out there. Vietnam, with its network of deals stretching from Europe to Asia, has shown what is possible when trade is treated as strategy. Bangladesh has the size, the location, and the market to cut its own deals; what it needs now is the will to execute.

Sustainability, once seen as a luxury, is fast becoming a business requirement. Major retailers are making it clear: green practices are no longer treated as an add-on. And Bangladesh, surprisingly, is already ahead of the curve. The country is home to the largest number of certified green RMG factories in the world, which gives us a competitive edge. The next step is to scale that success and make it visible to the global consumer. Sustainability should not just be part of the story. It should be THE story.

The choices Bangladesh makes in the next few years will define the next few decades. Graduation from the LDC status is not the end of the journey, but the beginning of a harder one. A journey that will test the depth of strategy, the speed of execution, and the strength of collective will. But as history has shown, Bangladesh has never lacked resolve. The real question now is whether it can turn that resolve into reinvention.



FILE VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

export playbook has read like a short list: the European Union, the US, Canada—dependable, but limited. The world is bigger than that. Africa, South America, the Middle East and even some large economies in Asia are waking up as consumer markets. These are regions with rising demand, growing populations, and very few Bangladeshi products on their shelves. Cracking these markets will not be easy. It will mean understanding local tastes, building smarter logistics, and pricing with precision. But the opportunity is real, and the timing has never been better.

None of this will matter, though, if the product gets stuck at port. Bangladesh has an infrastructure problem, which has been dragging down competitiveness for years. Roads get clogged too easily, customs clearances move too slowly, and ports often lag behind demand. The result is cost: exporters lose both money and time. According to the World Bank, logistics eat up nearly one fifth of export costs in Bangladesh. That is double what many of our competitors face. Fixing this will take more than patchwork solutions. It will require

Is the BNP really anti-reform?



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H.M. NAZMUL ALAM

In a political climate defined more by slogan than substance, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) finds itself in an ironic predicament. Despite being the first major party in Bangladesh to propose a full-scale roadmap for national reform, it has been accused of being anti-reform, status quo-driven, or politically outdated. The reality, however, deserves careful unpacking.

In as early as 2010, BNP unveiled its "Vision 2030," a document that laid out a comprehensive reform agenda covering governance, decentralisation, electoral transparency, and economic restructuring. During the anti-authoritarian mass uprising and the subsequent transition to an interim government, BNP not only extended support to the movement but also expanded its reform agenda. These were not merely cosmetic additions; they dealt with core state functions—from electoral reforms and institutional balance to judicial independence and decentralisation of power.

And yet, criticisms have continued to swirl around BNP—criticisms that allege resistance to change, a lack of willingness to share power, or a refusal to support reforms such as a bicameral parliament or the redistribution of executive authority.

BNP's position has often been interpreted as reluctance. Take, for example, the proposed reconfiguration of Article 70 of the constitution, which currently disallows MPs from voting against party lines. BNP has voiced support for amending it, but within boundaries: maintaining party discipline during votes of no confidence, money bills, and constitutional amendments, while allowing greater autonomy otherwise. This is not obstructionism—it is a safeguard against returning to the era of chaotic floor-crossing and "horse-trading" that plagued parliamentary

politics in other countries.

Similarly, BNP's reservations about allowing the proposed National Constitutional Council (NCC)—an unelected body—to make major state appointments are grounded in concerns about undermining democratic accountability. In a parliamentary system, if key powers are shifted away from the elected prime minister and parliament, we risk hollowing out the very

core of representative democracy.

As constitutional scholar Vernon Bogdanor observed, "Reform is not the destination of democracy, but its servant. When it begins to undermine representation, it ceases to serve."

BNP agreed with 20 of the 23 recommendations on judicial reform, 19 of the 20 recommendations on Anti-Corruption Commission reform, and even with a significant portion of reform proposals regarding public administration. Disagreements

mostly concern the mechanics of implementation and the preservation of democratic balance. Where the proposals threatened to overempower unelected actors or weakened the mandate of elected officials, BNP argued against them.

That BNP has been selective in accepting certain recommendations is neither new nor irrational. In fact, such behaviour aligns with democratic practice across the globe. In their influential work *Why Nations Fail*, Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson emphasised that reforms succeed only when they emerge from "inclusive political institutions"—that is, reforms must be rooted in legitimacy, debate, and public support, not in theoretical perfectionism or technocratic design.

Therefore, it can be argued that BNP is not opposed to reform. What it resists is impractical idealism dressed up as



Despite being the first major party in Bangladesh to propose a full-scale roadmap for national reform, BNP has been accused of being anti-reform, status quo-driven, or politically outdated.

FILE PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

for elections. Some voices within the civil society have advocated for completing reforms before holding elections. While the intention may be noble, perhaps the prescription is constitutionally and politically impractical. Reforms, in a democracy, are carried out by elected governments through their electoral mandate. As political theorist Adam Przeworski writes, "Democracy does not promise the best policies, but it guarantees the right to change them."

BNP has invested considerable resources in building consensus around its 31-point roadmap—holding dialogues, consultations, and campaigns in every district, upazila, union, and ward across the country. No other political party has engaged the grassroots so comprehensively on the question of reform. This is not just political strategy; it is democratic pedagogy.

It is worth asking why, despite this sustained effort, BNP is so frequently labelled as anti-reform. The answer may lie in the uneasy political ecosystem of Bangladesh—one in which narratives are often manufactured by partisan echo chambers and amplified by select voices. This, unfortunately, has blurred public perception and reduced complex debates to simplistic binaries: pro-reform vs anti-reform, old vs new, mainstream vs movement.

But such binaries ignore a crucial reality. BNP, despite its past mistakes and the political baggage it carries, remains one of the few parties capable of translating reform into governance. Political scientist Larry Diamond's caution is relevant here, "Democratic reforms fail not because of lack of good ideas, but because of the absence of political will and organisational strength."

Bangladesh stands at a critical crossroads today. Reform is necessary, but not at the cost of elections, and certainly not if it sidelines the very concept of democratic choice. In the end, it is not slogans or social media narratives that will rebuild our institutions—it is political courage, strategic clarity, and an unflinching commitment to the people's mandate. BNP, with all its imperfections, remains one of the few forces in Bangladesh today that is capable of doing that.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Canada Act proclaimed

On this day in 1982, the Canada Act (also known as the Constitution Act) took effect, establishing certain individual rights, preserving parliamentary supremacy, and making Canada a wholly independent, fully sovereign state.

The Proclamation of Independence was a beacon for Bangladesh



Priyam Paul
is a journalist and researcher.

PRIYAM PAUL

On the historic day of April 17, 1971, the Government of Bangladesh took its oath at Baidyanathatala in Meherpur, later renamed Mujibnagar. This was the first official government formed to lead Bangladesh's Liberation War, following the declaration of independence on March 26, 1971. Widely known as the Mujibnagar government-in-exile, it operated from outside the occupied territory but had a profound impact on the then East Pakistan. The formation of this government marked a historic milestone—the emergence of the first modern nation-state of the Bangladeshi people.

Prior to that, April 10, 1971 stands as a milestone when Bangladesh formally asserted its independence through the Proclamation of Independence, an act of political defiance amid the war, atrocities, and genocide committed by the Pakistan Army. Emerging from an initial vacuum of leadership and direction, the proclamation laid the foundation for the country's distinct political identity and its eventual path to independence.

In March 1971, while President Gen Yahya Khan was ostensibly engaged in negotiations to resolve the political impasse with the Awami League (AL)—led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's Party and the dominant political force in West Pakistan, the West Pakistani establishment continued to resist acknowledging the AL's electoral mandate. In Pakistan's first general elections that took place in 1970, the AL had secured an absolute majority—not only in East Pakistan but across the entire country. Instead of transferring power to the democratically elected majority and initiating a constitutional process, the military regime

chose the path of violent repression.

On the night of March 25, 1971, the Pakistan Army launched a brutal and unprecedented attack on unarmed Bangladeshi in East Pakistan, seeking to crush the political movement and eliminate its leadership. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested from his residence at Dhanmondi 32 that night. The massacre triggered a period of apparent chaos and uncertainty as the political leadership of Bangladesh was left in disarray amid the full-scale military assault.

However, the widespread and spontaneous resistance from students, civilians, members of the army, EPR, and police across cities and strategic locations provided vital momentum. Within two weeks, the political leadership took a decisive initiative to formally lead the war and establish the Government of Bangladesh, a crucial step in organising the liberation movement.

However, it was not an easy task to act promptly and devise a plan to form a government, along with drafting the Proclamation of Independence, in the absence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Awami League and the symbolic figure of the nation. His absence created confusion and internal divisions within the party, making leadership coordination even more difficult. The first step was to bring together the top AL leaders for discussions after March 26.

Despite these challenges, Tajuddin Ahmad, general secretary of the AL, managed to take charge. When he met then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Delhi along with his associate Amirul Islam, an MLA, Tajuddin informed her that a provisional government had already been formed in Bangladesh. In response, Indira Gandhi assured full support from the Government of India for the

Bangladesh movement.

Tajuddin then entrusted Amirul Islam with drafting a formal Proclamation of Independence. Notably, Amirul drew inspiration from the US Declaration of Independence. It is particularly significant as the US stance on the crisis influenced the tone and structure of the draft that was eventually accepted.

In the Laws Continuance Enforcement

unprecedented non-cooperation movement led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from March 3 to March 25, 1971, following the Pakistani junta's suspension of the National Assembly session that was meant to draft a new constitution.

The core purpose of the Proclamation of Independence was to fulfil the legitimate right to self-determination of the people of Bangladesh, following Pakistan's



Tajuddin Ahmad, the prime minister of Mujibnagar government-in-exile, speaks to journalists on April 17, 1971.

SOURCE: ARCHIVE

Order, dated April 10, 1971, Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam notably emphasised that the establishment of the sovereign and independent state of Bangladesh was a manifestation of the people's will. Accordingly, he exercised his authority to issue the Proclamation of Independence.

The people's aspiration for freedom in Bangladesh was crystallised during the 1970 general elections, shaped by the Six-Point Movement of 1966 and the mass uprising of 1969 against Ayub Khan's dictatorship. These were rooted in the broader experience of political and economic subjugation that East Pakistanis endured under what often resembled a colonial relationship with West Pakistan. This growing aspiration for self-determination culminated in the

declaration of an unjust and treacherous war. It powerfully emphasised the principles of equality, human dignity, and social justice. In response to Pakistan's betrayal, despite ongoing discussions, the elected representatives of Bangladesh—the people's representatives, honour-bound by the public mandate and guided by the supreme will of the people—duly constituted themselves into a Constituent Assembly.

This proclamation served as the legal foundation during the 1971 Liberation War, facilitating international recognition and support, organising war efforts, providing shelter to approximately one crore refugees, and sustaining the nation's morale in its quest for freedom.

For instance, in his book *1971: A Global*

History of the Creation of Bangladesh, Srinath Raghavan highlights a significant development that followed the Proclamation of Independence and the formation of the Bangladesh government. At the time, East Germany did not have formal diplomatic relations with New Delhi, although it had maintained trade missions in India since 1954. East Germany's stance on the crisis was influenced by its long-standing ambition to gain full diplomatic recognition from India. In the second week of April 1971, anticipating the Proclamation of Independence by the provisional Government of Bangladesh, the East German representative in Calcutta swiftly moved to establish contact with the Mujibnagar authorities, underscoring the international dimensions of that critical moment.

Legal experts consider the Proclamation of Independence as the wartime constitution of Bangladesh, which served as the guiding framework until the formal adoption of the national constitution on November 4, 1972. Acknowledging its historical and legal importance, the proclamation has been rightly incorporated into the Constitution of Bangladesh.

The emergence of a successor state from a post-colonial nation was a rare occurrence on the global stage after World War II. Bangladesh stands as a significant exception, having achieved independence following the disintegration of Pakistan. This path to statehood was powerfully affirmed by the historic speech of Tajuddin Ahmad, broadcast on Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra on April 11, 1971, in which he declared, "Pakistan is dead and buried under a mountain of corpses"—a statement reportedly drafted by Rehman Sobhan and Amirul Islam.

The Proclamation of Independence was a timely and decisive act that not only guided the nation during the Liberation War, but also became a lasting beacon in the post-independence era. Beyond its legal standing, the proclamation justified the right to self-determination, addressed the human rights violations during the genocide, and laid a clear political direction for the people of Bangladesh—one that continues to resonate across time.

Dynasties bloom on foreign soil causing Tulip troubles



MIND THE GAP

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NOSHIN NAWAL

It's not every day that you open your morning newsfeed and find a Labour MP from Hampstead and Highgate wanted by the authorities—not in Westminster, but in Dhaka. Tulip Siddiq, niece of ousted Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, darling of North London's progressive set, and former economic secretary to the Treasury, now finds herself tangled in a legal mess that smells suspiciously like a cross-border family drama mixed with post-dictatorship retribution.

A Dhaka court has issued an arrest warrant for Siddiq, accusing her—along with over 50 others, including her mother Sheikh Rehana and brother Radwan Mujib Siddiq—of illegally acquiring land in the diplomatic zone of the city. Not a bad postcode to inherit, one might think, but the allegations are less about location and more about symbolism. Because if you're wondering whether this is about one 7,200-square-foot plot, let me assure you: this is about political karma being served with a side of national catharsis.

To fully understand the implications, one must remember that Tulip Siddiq is not just a British MP. She is the British MP who embodies the soft power of the Bangladeshi ruling dynasty. A Western-educated, well-spoken, multicultural poster child for Labour's diversity credentials, she has long enjoyed the privileges of both proximity to power and distance from the consequences of it. While Sheikh Hasina tightened her grip on Bangladesh's democratic institutions with a precision that would make autocrats weep with envy, Siddiq remained largely unscathed in London, smiling her way through party conferences and ministerial posts. Her loyalty to her aunt was discreet but undeniable. She never bit the hand that buttered her family's legacy.

But Bangladesh is no longer playing the same game. Hasina is gone. The July uprising sent her packing; the student protesters did what international observers and decades of diplomatic side-eyes could not. And now, the country's interim regime—led, almost

ironically, by Nobel laureate-turned-political-plumber Muhammad Yunus—is sifting through the mess. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), armed with more paperwork than subtlety, is rolling out a fully fledged accountability crusade, and the Sheikh family is first on the chopping board.

The arrest warrant for Tulip, though legally impotent due to the lack of a Bangladesh-UK extradition treaty, is politically potent.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS
Tulip Siddiq is not just a British MP, but a British MP who embodies the soft power of the Bangladeshi ruling dynasty.

It sends a message: the age of impunity is over. Or at least, that's the tagline. In reality, this is a high-stakes theatre of justice, a performance calibrated for both domestic rage and international headlines. Whether it leads to actual convictions or fizzles out in bureaucratic ambiguity remains to be seen. But what's certain is this: Tulip Siddiq is now a symbol—not just of multicultural Britain, but of the entangled mess that is globalised nepotism.

She, of course, denies everything, claims she never owned land in Bangladesh and that this is nothing more than a politically motivated smear campaign. And perhaps it is. One doesn't need to be a fan of the Sheikh dynasty to recognise that transitional justice often has the precision of a wrecking ball. But for someone who benefited from the very architecture of dynasty politics, Siddiq's sudden plea for distance and neutrality feels, shall we say, rich.

In the UK, the response has been relatively muted. Some murmurs about reputational risk, a resignation from her Treasury role in January to keep the scandal from distracting the government—how very noble. But one wonders if the British establishment will ever truly grapple with the awkward implications of having democratically-elected officials with familial ties to regimes accused of human rights abuses.

What's even more ironic is the timing. Britain, still recovering from its own post-Brexit identity crisis, now finds one of its

MPs embroiled in a land-grabbing scandal halfway across the world. It's the kind of storyline that writes itself: former colony issues arrest warrant for the niece of a former dictator, who just so happens to be an MP in the imperial centre. Somewhere, a postcolonial studies professor is having a field day.

But let's not get too smug. Because this isn't just about one MP or one dynasty. This is about the consequences of letting familial loyalty trump democratic responsibility. About how diasporic elites often benefit from the best of both worlds—power at home, prestige abroad—and are held accountable in neither. It's about how justice, when delayed or denied for too long, begins to resemble vengeance when it finally arrives.

Tulip Siddiq might survive this scandal. She might stay comfortably nestled in her North London constituency, issuing carefully worded statements about injustice and dignity. But her political sheen is tarnished. The narrative of the polished, progressive MP coexists now with headlines about shady land deals and family empires.

And as Bangladesh hurdles towards its own reckoning—balancing vengeance and virtue, justice and spectacle—Tulip's story serves as a cautionary tale not just for politicians with powerful bloodlines, but for any democracy that lets power pass through the family tree like heirloom jewellery. Eventually, the tree is shaken. And sometimes, the flowers fall the hardest.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



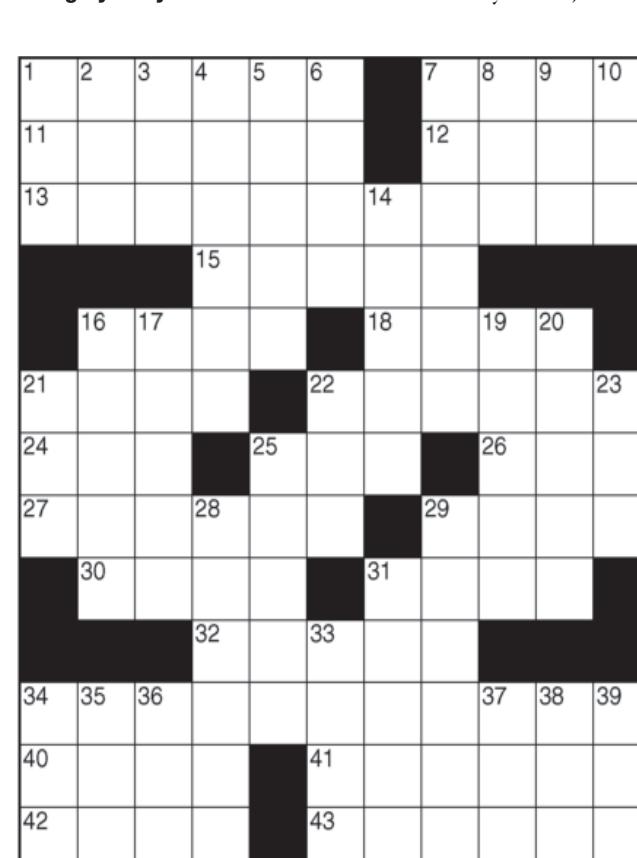
CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Narrow body of water
- 32 Intense beam
- 34 Suggestion
- 40 Carry
- 41 Thorny shrub
- 42 Influence
- 43 Just
- 1 Relaxing site
- 2 Faucet
- 3 Gym unit
- 4 Never before seen
- 5 Homer classic
- 6 Poster holder
- 7 Frank
- 8 Boxing great
- 9 "The Matrix" hero
- 10 Ho from Hawaii
- 14 Fable fellow
- 16 Ship poles
- 17 Admit
- 19 Rockies resort
- 20 Studied (over)
- 21 Filming site
- 22 Gloss target
- 23 Negating word
- 25 City on the Persian Gulf
- 28 Block and tackle part
- 29 Mason's material
- 31 Treaty goal
- 33 Racket
- 34 "— been real!"
- 35 Cut, as hay
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5-30

ESSAY

Aparna Sanyal and the burden of representation in South Asian literature

'Instruments of Torture' (Harper Collins India, 2024) is a compelling critique of the ways in which beauty standards, societal norms, and patriarchal control shape individuals' lives

NAMRATA

Aparna Upadhyaya Sanyal's *Instruments of Torture* is a powerful literary collection that delves into the psychological and societal torments individuals endure, particularly focusing on themes of beauty standards and the representation of women. Each story in the collection is named after a medieval torture device, serving as a metaphor for the emotional and societal pressures faced by the characters.

For instance, in "The Spanish Boot", the protagonist, Poornima, grows up internalising the belief that a woman's value is intrinsically

Sanyal's exploration of these themes aligns with broader discussions in South Asian literature that critique the role of beauty in determining a woman's worth. Writers such as Ismat Chughtai, Kamala Das, and Jhumpa Lahiri have all engaged with these issues, portraying the ways in which women's bodies become sites of control, admiration, and sometimes even rebellion.

Ismat Chughtai's *Lilaaf* (1942), though not directly about beauty standards, challenges the idea of a woman's prescribed role in a patriarchal society. The protagonist, Begum Jaan, is married off to a wealthy man who shows no interest in her, leaving her to find solace in an unconventional

women's appearances are fetishised, whether through colonial exoticism or internalised cultural expectations.

Sanyal's themes resonate with the works of artists and writers from around the world who have critically examined societal perceptions of women and beauty. Frida Kahlo, for instance, used her art to challenge traditional feminine beauty standards and the male gaze. In her self-portraits, Kahlo emphasised features like her monobrow and upper lip hair, embracing unconventional beauty norms and subverting societal expectations. Her painting, "My Nurse and I", candidly portrays the complexities of breastfeeding, highlighting the often overlooked pain and disconnect associated with the experience.

Ana Mendieta's *Silueta Series* also reflects on identity, femininity, and the societal constraints imposed on women's bodies. Mendieta created female silhouettes in natural settings, expressing a deep connection between the female body and the earth. This work mirrors the way Sanyal's stories reclaim the female experience, portraying pain and resilience in equal measure.

Contemporary artists Mickalene Thomas and Linder further explore feminine imagery and societal expectations. Thomas's monumental portraits of Black women celebrate their strength and agency, blending personal and cultural narratives to challenge traditional representations. Linder's post-punk photo collages dissect feminine images from soft porn and fashion photography, offering a critique of the roles and perceptions assigned to women.

In the South Asian literary tradition, beauty has long been a determining factor in women's futures, especially in terms of marriage. The trope of the "dusky" or "dark-skinned" woman struggling for acceptance appears frequently in literature and cinema. From Rabindranath Tagore's *Chokher Bali* (1903) to more contemporary works like Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), women's appearances often dictate their societal standing.

Sanyal's *Instruments of Torture* engages with this theme by exposing the oppressive beauty standards imposed on women from an early age. In "The Spanish Boot", Poornima's life is shaped by the pressure to maintain her looks, a reality that many South Asian women can relate to. In a region where fairness creams are still marketed aggressively and marriage proposals are often contingent on a woman's complexion, Sanyal's critique is particularly poignant.

Moreover, the idea of women's bodies as battlegrounds is not new in South Asian literature. From Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (1950), which deals with the Partition's impact on women's autonomy, to Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi* (1978), where

a native woman is subjected to state violence, female bodies have long been sites of suffering and resistance. Sanyal extends this discourse by linking beauty standards to psychological torture, showing how internalised oppression can be just as damaging as external violence.

While *Instruments of Torture* focuses heavily on beauty standards, its commentary extends to other forms of societal oppression. Sanyal's use of medieval torture devices as metaphors allows her to explore how outdated, yet persistent, structures continue to shape contemporary lives.

For instance, in South Asian societies, the caste system continues to dictate people's opportunities and social mobility. Although not directly addressed in *Instruments of Torture*, the idea of rigid societal expectations forcing individuals into predefined roles aligns with the caste-based discrimination explored in Dalit literature. Writers like Bama (author of *Karukku*) and Perumal Murugan (*One Part Woman*) have similarly highlighted the ways in which societal expectations can become oppressive "instruments of torture".

Sanyal's work also speaks to the universal experience of bodily scrutiny, a theme that transcends geography. Whether through the lens of South Asian marriage markets or Western beauty industries, women are constantly subjected to impossible standards. By framing these struggles through the language of historical torture, Sanyal underscores their severity, making readers question whether so-called "normal" expectations are, in fact, a form of violence.

Aparna Sanyal's *Instruments of Torture* is a compelling critique of the ways in which beauty standards, societal norms, and patriarchal control shape individuals' lives. By drawing from historical torture devices, Sanyal forces readers to confront the brutality of these expectations. Her work aligns with global feminist discourse while remaining deeply rooted in South Asian literary traditions, making it a significant contribution to contemporary literature.

By examining Sanyal's work alongside those of Chughtai, Das, Lahiri, Kahlo, Mendieta, and others, it becomes clear that the pressure of beauty and societal perceptions of women are pervasive across cultures. Artists and writers continue to challenge these norms, offering new ways of understanding identity, femininity, and resistance. Sanyal's work, in particular, stands out for its sharp metaphors and unflinching critique, making it an essential text for discussions on gender, representation, and power in South Asia and beyond.

Namrata is a writer, a digital marketing professional, and an editor at Kitaab literary magazine.



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

tied to her appearance. Her life revolves around maintaining her beauty, a notion instilled by her mother and reinforced by societal expectations. This narrative mirrors the experiences of many women who grapple with the relentless pressure to conform to idealised beauty standards. Similarly, in "The Rack", Sanyal introduces a man subjected to medical interventions aimed at "curing" his dwarfism. His anguish highlights the societal pressure to conform to physical norms, underscoring the psychological toll of such coercion. These stories serve as sharp commentaries on the structures that shape our lives, often to the detriment of the most vulnerable.

relationship. Chughtai exposes how women are often reduced to their physical appeal and expected to conform to societal roles that do not necessarily serve them. Similarly, Kamala Das's poetry frequently grapples with themes of bodily autonomy and the tension between societal expectations and personal agency.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) also provides a nuanced critique of gender roles, particularly in the South Asian diaspora. In the short story "Sexy", a woman named Miranda becomes infatuated with a married Indian man who only sees her as an object of desire. Lahiri, much like Sanyal, interrogates the ways in which

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

A pantheon of parables

'Fit for the Gods: Greek Mythology Reimagined' (Vintage, 2023), edited by Jenn Northington and S. Zainab Williams, is a collection of classic myths with a twist

SABRINA FATMA AHMAD

Given that the newsfeed these days reads like Yuval Noah Harari on a psychedelic trip, it's understandable that a brilliant show like *Kaos* (2024), with its modern depiction of the Greek mythology, complete with not-so-subtle jabs at unequal power structures, corporate greed, and inefficient bureaucracy, would not find enough viewer traction for Netflix to continue investing in it, whereas fluffy, feel-good shows like *Bridgerton* (2020) and *Emily in Paris* (2020) continue to go from strength to strength. Sometimes an escape from reality is just what the doctor ordered.

Sitting through Jeff Goldblum's delicious portrayal of megalomania, however, whetted my appetite for the Greek stories in contemporary settings, and Providence threw a neat little anthology called *Fit for the Gods* my way.

Taking up the challenge of shedding the light on a greater diversity of writers, this collection offers 15 imaginative gems that tell those familiar stories in entirely unexpected ways. From modern contexts to fusions with traditions from other cultures, to experiments with form, there's a little something for everyone.

"The Gorgon Confessionals" by Zoraida Córdova revisits the story of Medusa, framed as a reality podcast. Aside from

the novelty of the conceit, this format also allows the writer to shift the focus of the myth from the bravery of the 'hero' Theseus who defeated the 'monster' Gorgon to the hypocrisy of the gods and goddesses that doubly victimised Medusa. S. Zainab Williams herself takes a stab at the stories with "Dion and the Maenads", re-imagining Dionysus reincarnated as a woman traipsing through Napa Valley, seeking for ways to irk the gods. "Tiresias" by Zeyn Joukhadar explores some of the struggles of trans people in a modern context.

"The Furies Detective Agency" by Mia P. Manansala takes the film noir approach to the story of Oedipus. "The Ship of Thea" is a gender-bent story of the Argonauts, and a story about overcoming generational trauma. Susan Purr's "Pickles for Mrs Pomme" is probably the most light-hearted story in the collection, framing Aphrodite as a lusty senior in a gated community, and a little knowledge of the pantheon and its tales goes a long way in enhancing the fun of this story.

A number of the stories fuse the Greco-Roman myths with other cultures. "Wild to Covet" by Sarah Gailey, written in the traditions of American folklore, tells the story of Thetis' journey from wild girl to wife and mother of Achilles, and is an evocative interrogation of who and what is untameable. "Words from the Mountain" by



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

Wen Wen Yang fuses Chinese lore with Greek to make a case for breaking patterns. "No Gods, No Kings" is Maya Deane's incandescent chronicle to the role of the Amazons in the fall of the Titans. "Pescada" by Julianne Spink Mills puts Penelope, Ulysses and Circe in South America, a story about forbidden desire and repressed longings.

There are also a few exciting sci-fi entries with strong climate conscious themes,

such as "Atlanta Hunts the Boar" by Valerie Valdes which is basically *Fast and the Furious* but with space pod racing, and "Bastion in Spring" by Alyssia Cole, which tells the story of Persephone and Hades as a post-human story about a ravaged planet and two lonely AI's. Jude Real's "A Heart Inured to Suffering" puts Odysseus in your classic space-age horror trope. Marika Bailey's "Trembling Aspen; Or to Shiver" is ostensibly about Apollo and Daphne,

but cleverly mirrors the ecocide and terraforming perpetrated by white settlers in North America.

"The Eagles at the Edge of the World" by Taylor Rae is a standout piece of climate fiction, which chronicles the journey of the last two members of the Kumeyay nation as they drift through the post-apocalyptic seas. The story features only passing references to "Troy", making this the most fitting story to end on.

While some stories are more memorable than others, it is worth appreciating how these retellings are so inclusive and approachable. The tweaks range from gender to race to sexuality, but each new version adds nuance, complexity, and a new perspective to the themes of the original. Familiarity with the classic myths provides readers with fun little 'aha' moments of recognition, especially at some of the witty naming conventions, but you don't have to be a mythology geek to enjoy *Fit for the Gods*.

Whether you're looking to see your favorite stories through a new lens or for stories that defy conventions and which create their own rules, this one's definitely worth a try.

Sabrina Fatma Ahmad is a writer, journalist, and the founder of *Sehri Tales*.

Depleted MSC still eyeing DPL triumph

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club will miss several of their top cricketers in the Super League phase of the ongoing Dhaka Premier League (DPL), but are still hopeful of becoming champions.

Mohammedan roped in several top players such as Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah, Towhid Hridoy and Taskin Ahmed in this year's tournament.

But as the Super League phase starts today, Mohammedan will be without many key players for different reasons.

Still, their manager Sazzad Ahmed Shipon is optimistic of winning their first DPL title since the 2009-10.

"Four of our players left to represent the national team... So, it's become difficult for us to form the playing XI," Shipon told reporters yesterday, a day before their match against Legends of Rupganj in Mirpur.

"The boys have the determination and target of finishing the tournament as champions," he added.

To bolster the depleted squad, MSC have roped in Mustafizur Rahman for the Super League phase.

ASHFAQ UL-ALAM

Bangladesh's two-Test series against Zimbabwe is set to commence in Sylhet on Sunday at a time when fan interest on any sort of cricketing engagement between these two sides is arguably at an all-time low.

The days when the entire country took notice of a Bangladesh-Zimbabwe series are long gone. The level of interest has dipped so much that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has not been able to find a broadcaster for the series at the time this report was filed.

Even though this rivalry has degraded to such an extent that calling it a rivalry feels like a stretch, Zimbabwe, as opponents, have played an important role in Bangladesh's cricketing journey.

In Bangladesh's initial decades as a cricketing nation, it was always playing catch up with Zimbabwe, trying to follow in the footsteps of their African counterparts.

But as the Tigers gained the upper hand, every match against Zimbabwe has become an opportunity to improve their overall record in international cricket, and if one takes the Zimbabwe matches out of the equation, Bangladesh's poor record becomes even poorer, especially in Tests.

Evolution of a rivalry

Bangladesh's dynamic with Zimbabwe in cricket has changed in every decade.

In the 1980s, when Bangladesh were just starting out, Zimbabwe were a top side at the Associate level, having won the ICC Trophy three consecutive times in 1982, 86 and 90.

In the following decade, the Tigers first ventured into the big leagues, having won the ICC Trophy in 1997 to qualify for the

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national women's team will look to confirm their spot in the main event of the ICC Women's World Cup, scheduled to be held in India next year, when they face the West Indies in their penultimate qualifier at the LCCA Ground in Lahore today.

The Tigresses are currently in excellent form, having won all three of their matches so far to sit atop the six-team table.

Even if Bangladesh lose today's match, they will still have a chance to qualify as one of the two teams from the tournament. However, they then might need to beat hosts Pakistan -- the other unbeaten team in the tournament -- in their final game on April 19.

With the best net run rate in the tournament (1.494), Bangladesh could also qualify even if they lose both their remaining matches, provided their net run rate does not suffer a significant blow.

Before the tournament began, Bangladesh were aware that every match would be crucial. They have delivered accordingly, notching wins against lower-ranked teams Thailand, Ireland, and Scotland.



Their path to securing a second consecutive World Cup qualification has also been eased by the overwhelming performance of the West Indies, who have lost two of their three matches so far.

Despite the favorable qualification scenario, Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultan Joty -- currently the tournament's leading run-scorer with 235 runs in three innings -- remains focused on her team's game.

"We plan to go match by match. Yes, we're looking forward to the game, but we play as a team," Joty said following their 34-run win over Scotland on Tuesday.

"We need to concentrate on the things

we've done well as a team. The way we've played in the last few games, we just want to continue that," added Joty, who has been thrilled with her side's batting performances throughout the qualifiers.

Bangladesh have posted two of their highest ever totals in this format during the tournament -- 271 for three against Thailand and 276 for six against Scotland. They also successfully chased a 236-run target against Ireland -- their highest successful chase to date.

"Batting had been our most visible weakness over the past few years. Our bowlers performed well, but the batting often didn't click," she noted.

"But in this tournament, our batters have played wonderfully. They've been getting runs in the top-order and they've been very consistent."

Bangladesh have faced the West Indies four times in this format, winning just once and losing three. Their sole victory came earlier this year, when they beat the Caribbean side by 60 runs in St Kitts, boosting their direct qualification hopes -- only to fall short with a loss in the final game of the series.

This time, the Tigresses will be hoping for a different outcome.

A rivalry on its last legs



Bangladesh players run for joy following their 226-run win against Zimbabwe in the first of a two-match Test series against Zimbabwe -- their first ever victory in the format.

PHOTO: AFP FILE

World Cup the following year and earning their Test status in 2000 -- eight years after Zimbabwe had entered the Test arena.

In the noughties, Zimbabwe were Bangladesh's worthy adversaries, a tough opponent but not a team that can't be beaten, until the mass exodus of top Zimbabwean cricketers in protest of government interference which preceded the Zimbabweans' historic maiden Test and win in 2005.

Soon after that defeat, began Zimbabwe's self-imposed six-year sabbatical from Tests that same year, after which Bangladesh gained the upper hand.

Since the 2010s, the Tigers have mostly dominated the African side with some hiccups along the way, and the scale of the dominance has grown larger with time, especially in Tests.

Bangladesh have won seven out of the last eight Tests they have played against the Zimbabweans, with the only defeat coming in Sylhet in November 2018.

With these victories, the Tigers stamped their authority over Zimbabwe in the five-day format and have also somewhat improved their sorry stats in the format.

Bangladesh in Tests with and without Zimbabwe

Barring Afghanistan and Ireland, among teams that are still new to the Test arena, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe are the worst in the format by a stretch.

Overall, Bangladesh's win percentage in the format is just 14.67, only better than Zimbabwe's 10.74 percent.

But when it comes to draws and losses, Bangladesh have done worse than Zimbabwe overall as the Tigers have drawn 12 percent of their matches to Zimbabwe's 24.79 and have lost 73.33 percent games to Zimbabwe's 64.46.

However, Bangladesh's stats have hugely benefitted from the 18 Tests they have played against Zimbabwe as without those matches, they are far worse off in the format.

Bangladesh have won eight, lost seven and drawn three Tests against Zimbabwe so far. If one takes away the wins against Zimbabwe, the Tigers' win percentage in Tests dips to 10.61 and draw percentage becomes 11.36.

A chance to stat pad?

With the forthcoming series not even being a part of the ICC Test Championship, the only benefit Bangladesh can get out of it is to win both games and slightly improve their overall stats.

However, if Bangladesh slip up against a team that has not won a Test since 2021, it would cause much alarm and maybe spice up an otherwise stale rivalry.

Onana faces date with destiny

AFP, London

Andre Onana faces a potentially make-or-break match for his Manchester United career against Lyon in the Europa League on Thursday as the English giants battle to keep their season alive.

The Cameroon international goalkeeper made himself the main talking point ahead of the first leg of the quarter-final in France, which ended in a 2-2 draw, boldly claiming United were "way better" than their opponents.

That prompted a salty reply from former United midfielder Nemanja Matic, now with Lyon, who labelled him "one of the worst goalkeepers in Manchester United's history".

Onana was given a hostile reception by fans in France and his words came back to haunt him when he was at fault for both of the goals United conceded.

United manager Ruben Amorim dropped him for Sunday's trip to Newcastle, bringing in back-up goalkeeper Altay Bayindir, but the game ended in a 4-1 defeat, with the Turkey international at fault for the fourth goal.

Amorim now has a potentially season-defining decision to make -- does he bring Onana back in or pick Bayindir again?



The stakes are high. Defeat at Old Trafford would effectively end United's season, with nothing left to play for in the Premier League.

Victory would keep them on track to win the Europa League, which would be a passport into the lucrative Champions League for next season.

United, with Erik ten Hag then at the helm, paid around £47 million (\$62 million) to sign Onana from Inter Milan in 2023 as a replacement for David de Gea.

The 29-year-old has shown flashes of brilliance but has lacked consistency and has developed an unwanted reputation as a calamity keeper.

According to Opta figures from before the latest round of matches, since the start of last season no Premier League goalkeeper had made more errors leading to goals in all competitions than Onana (8).

Amorim still has a chance to end United's turbulent campaign with a European trophy, which could prove transformative as he rebuilds.

But whether Onana remains central to his plans both in the short term and the long term remains to be seen.

- Dortmund snatched Barcelona's unbeaten streak across all competitions in 2025. In this period, the Catalans won 20 matches and drew four before losing at Dortmund.

- Serhou Guirassy's 13 Champions League goals this season is the most ever by an African player in a single campaign in the competition. He scored more goals than any other Dortmund player in a single edition of the Champions League, beating Robert Lewandowski and Erling Haaland's joint record (10).

- Villa's debut Champions League campaign ended with eight wins from 12 games (D1 L3) -- the joint-most wins for a side in their first-ever appearance in the competition alongside Lazio and Valencia in 1999-00.

- PSG failed to win a Champions League game despite leading by 2+ goals for the first time since March 2001 (4-3 loss vs Deportivo de La Coruña), having won 56 successive matches before the loss at Villa.



Borussia Dortmund's Guinean forward Serhou Guirassy celebrates one of his three goals against Barcelona during a 3-1 win in their UEFA Champions League quarterfinal second leg fixture in Dortmund on Tuesday. Despite the Guinean's hat-trick, Barcelona advanced to the semifinals of the competition for the first time in six years with a 5-3 aggregate victory.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

DPL
Mohammedan vs Rupganj
Live from 9:00 am
IPL
Mumbai vs Hyderabad

Live from 8:00 pm
SONY SPORTS 1
Europa League
Frankfurt vs Tottenham
Live from 1:00 am (Friday)
SONY SPORTS 2

Man Utd vs Lyon
Live from 1:00 am (Friday)
SONY SPORTS 5
Conference League
Chelsea vs Legia Warsaw
Live from 1:00 am (Friday)

Foreign flavour in U-19 camp after Hamza's debut

SPORTS REPORTER

Following Sheffield United midfielder Hamza Choudhury's debut for Bangladesh against India last month, interest among expatriate footballers in representing the national team has seen a notable rise. Canada-based midfielder Shamit Shome has already expressed his desire to play for Bangladesh.

While Denmark-based Jamal Bhuiyan blazed the trail over a decade ago, Hamza's recent appearance for the senior national team seems to have reignited enthusiasm among foreign-born players, including those at the youth level.

Head coach Golam Rabbani Choton has named three foreign-based players -- Abdul Kadir (Italy), Elman Matin (UK), and Farzad Aftab (USA) -- in the 35-member preliminary squad of the Bangladesh U-19 football team, who are set to start their preparations at Shams Ul Huda Football Academy in Jashore today for next month's SAFF U-19 Championship.

These players were not selected solely based on their overseas background. Instead, they underwent rigorous training alongside the BFF Elite Academy



(From L-R) Elman Matin, Abdul Kadir and Farzad Aftab

PHOTO: STAR

players, who recently completed the first phase of the Bangladesh Championship League.

The exclusion of UAE-based goalkeeper Uzeayyer Chowdhury from the preliminary squad underscores that expatriate status alone does not secure a spot on the team.

Under coach Choton's guidance, most players -- except two, each from BKSP and Bashundhara Kings -- arrived at the academy in Jashore last night to begin nearly two weeks of training. The team will then return to Dhaka for final preparations at the BKSP artificial turf before departing for India on May 6.

Among the expatriates, Abdul Kadir has participated in various youth tournaments in Italy and currently plays for Serie D club Fermana. He prefers to play as a right winger or midfielder and claims to have recorded eight goals and two assists.

Both Matin and Aftab have also competed in different youth-level tournaments in the UK and the USA.

"They joined the Elite Academy players for the Bangladesh Championship League training in the first week of this month. They looked good in training," coach Choton told The Daily Star after a session at the Dhanmondi Club ground on Tuesday.

"I'll be able to assess them more thoroughly when they train alongside players from the Bangladesh Premier League and Bangladesh Championship League during the residential camp," Choton added. He plans to finalise a 23-member squad after training at BKSP's artificial turf.

Bangladesh, the defending champions of the 2024 SAFF U-20 Championship, have been drawn in Group A alongside Maldives and Bhutan. Group B comprises hosts India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The top two teams from each group will advance to the semifinals of the tournament, scheduled to be held in India from May 9 to 18.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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Arson attack on Ananda Shobhajatra artist's home 4 suspects held

STAR REPORT

Four people were arrested over setting fire to the Manikganj house of artist Manabendra Ghosh, who made the tiger motif for the Boro Bonor Ananda Shobhajatra, yesterday.

SM Aman Ullah, officer-in-charge of Manikganj Sadar Police Station, said Manabendra filed a case against unidentified people. "We have already arrested four persons. Drive continues to arrest the others."

The suspects are Al Amin Tomal, 22, finance secretary of banned Chhatra League of Manikganj Sadar upazila unit, and Mainuddin Ahmed Pias, 22, joint secretary of the unit, Babul Hossain, 54, general secretary of ward-3 unit of Awami League, and Meer Maruf, 21, said police.

Manabendra told The Daily Star, "The day before Pahela Baishakh, a [Facebook] page called 'Rajya Sabha' spread misleading information that I made the motif of deposed prime

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UN PEACEKEEPING Trump admin seeks to scrap funding

REUTERS, Washington

The White House budget office has proposed eliminating funding for United Nations peacekeeping missions, citing failures by operations in Mali, Lebanon and Democratic Republic of Congo, according to internal planning documents seen by Reuters.



Washington is the UN's largest contributor - with China second - accounting for 22 percent of the \$3.7 billion core regular UN budget and 27 percent of the \$5.6 billion peacekeeping budget. These payments are mandatory.

The proposed peacekeeping cuts are included in a so-called "Passback," the response by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to State Department funding requests for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins on October 1. The overall plan wants to slash the State Department budget by about half.

The new budget must be approved by Congress, and lawmakers could

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A Palestinian girl walks past the ruins of a building destroyed by Israeli strikes on a residential area in Jabalia's southwestern district of Nazla in northern Gaza yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Efforts to revive Gaza truce stall

Hamas rejects calls to disarm; 13 more
Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israeli troops will remain in the buffer zones they have created in Gaza even after any settlement to end the war, Defence Minister Israel Katz said yesterday, as efforts to revive a ceasefire faltered.

Since resuming their operation last month, Israeli forces have carved out a broad "security zone" extending deep into Gaza and squeezing more than 2 million Palestinians into ever smaller areas in the south and along the coastline.

"Unlike in the past, the IDF is not evacuating areas that have been cleared and seized," Katz said in a statement following a meeting with military commanders, adding that "tens of percent" of Gaza had been added to the zone.

"The IDF will remain in the security zones as a buffer between the enemy and the communities in any temporary or permanent situation in Gaza - as in Lebanon and Syria."

Hamas has repeatedly described calls to disarm as a red line it will not cross and has said Israeli troops must withdraw from Gaza under any permanent ceasefire.

In southern Gaza alone, Israeli forces have seized about 20 percent of the enclave's

- Israel will keep Gaza buffer zone: Israeli minister
- Israeli forces seized about 20pc of Gaza territory
- No humanitarian aid will enter Gaza: Israeli minister
- Medical charity MSF says Gaza is a 'mass grave'

territory, taking control of the border city of Rafah and pushing inland up to the so-called "Morag corridor" that runs from the eastern edge of Gaza to the Mediterranean Sea between Rafah and the city of Khan Younis.

Yesterday, Palestinian medical authorities said an airstrike killed 10 people, including Fatema Hassouna, a well-known writer and photographer who had documented the war. A strike on another house further north killed three, they said.

Medical charity MSF said Gaza had become a "mass grave" with humanitarian groups struggling to provide aid. "We are witnessing in real time the destruction and forced displacement of the entire population in Gaza," Amande Bazerolle, MSF's emergency coordinator in Gaza said in a statement.

Katz also said Israel, which has blocked the delivery of aid supplies into the territory, was creating infrastructure to allow

distribution through civilian companies at a later date. But he said the blockade on aid would remain in place.

He said Israel would push forward with a plan to allow Gaza civilians who wished to leave the enclave to do so, although it remains unclear which countries would be willing to accept large numbers of Palestinians.

Mujibnagar Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the historic Mujibnagar Day, the day Bangladesh's first government took oath in 1971 amidst the Liberation War.

The official announcement, known as the Proclamation of Independence, stated that the government's objective was to ensure equality, human dignity and social justice for the people of Bangladesh.

The Proclamation of Independence mentioned that the "order shall be deemed to have come into effect" on March 26, 1971.

It served as the Constitution of Bangladesh from March 26, 1971 to December 16, 1972.

Senior Awami League leaders assembled at Baidyanath Tala, Meherpur, on April 17, 1971, to form the provisional government of independent Bangladesh, in the absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman who was in prison in Pakistan.

Bangabandhu was declared the first President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and Vice-President Syed Nazrul Islam became the acting president.

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Protest rages at Kuet Students say VC must go

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Students at Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (Kuet) continued their protest yesterday, pressing ahead with their one-point demand -- the immediate resignation of Vice-Chancellor Prof Mohammad Mashud.

The agitating students accused the VC of failing to ensure campus security and acting against student welfare in the wake of the February 18 clash that left at least 40 students injured.

Academic activities at Kuet have remained suspended since the violent clash between activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and another group of students under the banner of 'general students', over the banning of student politics on campus. Kuet was declared closed indefinitely on February 25.

Around 11:00am yesterday, students brought out a procession from the "Durbar Bangla"

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BDR carnage probe report likely by June: commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation into the 2009 BDR (now Border Guard Bangladesh) carnage is progressing in full swing and a report may be submitted by June, said the independent commission set up for the probe.

The Chief Adviser's Press Wing disclosed the matter in a press release yesterday.

Members of the probe commission briefed the chief adviser on the progress of the investigation during a meeting held at the state guesthouse Jamuna.

"We are communicating with various stakeholders. As the incident occurred 16 years ago, reaching out to some of them is taking time. Many of the accused are currently abroad, and we are coordinating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to trace them," said Maj Gen (retd) ALM

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Provide info on wilful loan defaulters every 3 months BB asks banks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday instructed banks to furnish detailed information about wilful loan defaulters.

The central bank issued a notice stating that lenders must submit detailed information on the wilful defaulters to its Credit Information Bureau (CIB) every three months.

It also stated that it is mandatory to include the names, identities, and all relevant details of such defaulters.

In March last year, the banking regulator issued a similar notice, but the new one further refines the reporting process regarding the defaulters.

As per the new notice, once a bank identifies

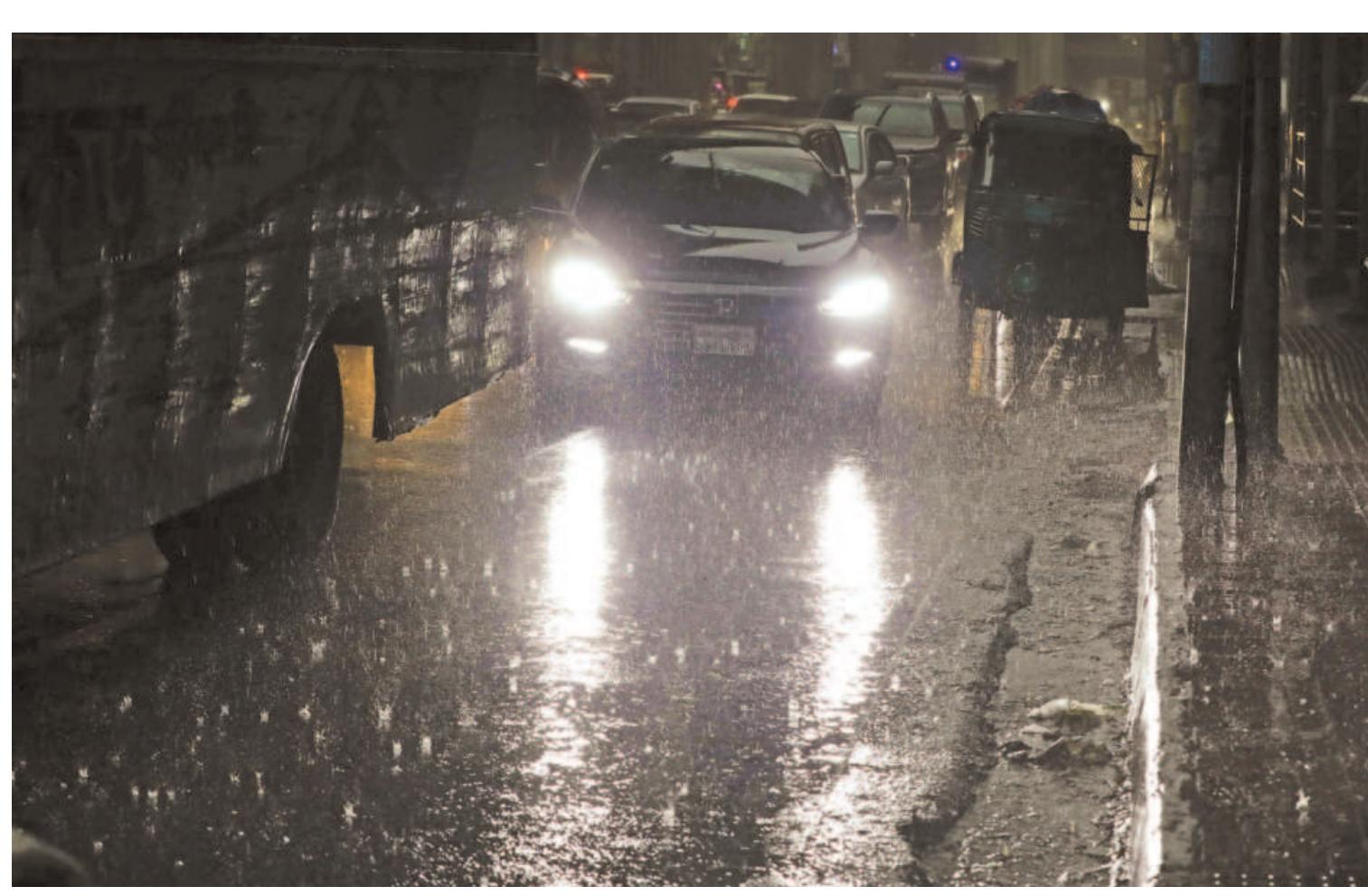
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Vehicles with headlights on stuck in a traffic jam on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue around 4:00pm yesterday, as a nor'wester and heavy rain cast an early darkness over the city. The downpour offered relief from the scorching heat.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

তিতাস গ্যাসট্রান্সিসন এন্ড ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন পিএলসি
(পেট্রোবাল্টার একটি কোম্পানি)

কলম্বেন্ট-১৬৪৯৬

জরুরি গ্যাস শাট-ডাউন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ঢাকা ম্যাস ট্রানজিট কোম্পানি লিমিটেড-এর আওতাধীন এমআরটি লাইন ১-এর ভুগর্ভস্থ স্টেশন (বিমানবন্দর ও খিলক্ষেত) এর অ্যালাইনমেন্ট হতে তিতাস গ্যাস পাইপলাইন স্থানান্তর কাজের জন্য আগামী ১৮ এপ্রিল ২০২৫ তারিখ রোজ শুক্রবার সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে রাত ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত মোট ১৪ (চৌদ্দ) ঘন্টা ব্যবস্রা আবাসিক এলাকাকান্ত হামীলফোন প্রধান কার্যালয়, নর্থ-সাউথ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ইউনিভের্সিটি হোটেল, যুক্তরাষ্ট্র দূতাবাস, অন্তর্ব এনার্জি রিসোর্স, পিনাকল পাওয়ার, প্রগতি সিএনজিসহ কাওলাল বলাকা ভবন হতে শাহজাতপুর সুবাস্ত টাওয়ার পর্যন্ত সকল শিল্প, বাণিজ্যিক ও ক্যাপিটিভ শ্রেণীর যাহাকের গ্যাস সরবরাহ বক্স থাকবে। এছাড়া, নিকুঞ্জ, খিলক্ষেত, বারিধারা, বসুন্ধরা আবাসিক এলাকা, কুঁড়িগ, জগন্নাথপুর, কালাচাঁদপুর, বারিধারা আবাসিক এলাকা ও তৎসংলগ্ন এলাকায় গ্যাসের স্থলচাপ বিরাজ করবে।

সম্মানিত গ্রাহকবন্দের সাময়িক অসুবিধার জন্য কর্তৃপক্ষ আস্তরিকভাবে দুর্ঘটিত।

তিতাস গ্যাস কর্তৃপক্ষ

GD-904