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BANGLADESH'S COSMETICS Industry on the Rise

PRIYAM PAUL

Once reserved for special occasions and elite circles, beauty and personal care in Bangladesh are now everyday essentials for millions. From bustling city malls to quiet village shops, cosmetics and toiletries have woven themselves into the fabric of daily life. As consumer aspirations evolve and the thirst for self-expression grows, Bangladesh's beauty market is undergoing a fascinating transformation—bursting with innovation, variety, and promise. Local brands are rising, global names are expanding, and a once modest industry is now flourishing into a vibrant landscape of skincare, haircare, and wellness.

SEE PAGE J2



Experience a Milk
Bath Every Day

Meril
milk soap bar

Soft & Smooth
skin after every shower



Prioritising affordability for Bangladeshi consumers

The Daily Star (TDS): Could you provide an overview of your company's current position and performance in the cosmetics and toiletries sector?

Rezaul Karim (RK): The cosmetics and toiletries industry in Bangladesh has faced significant challenges in the post-Covid-19 era, further aggravated by the global economic recession. Volatility in international supply chains has led to rising costs of raw materials, packaging, and transportation. Consequently, high inflation in both food and non-food sectors has restricted consumer's spending power, thus creating an unfavourable environment for the consumption of cosmetics and toiletries products.

Despite these challenges, Kohinoor Chemical Co. (BD) Ltd. (KCCL) has consistently maintained reasonable product prices, prioritising affordability for Bangladeshi consumers. Upholding customer satisfaction as a core value, we remain committed to delivering superior products with strong value propositions at accessible price points. Our trusted brands—TIBET, SANDALINA, BACTROL, FASTWASH, TYFOON, ICE COOL, BEAUTINA, XPERT, CLEAN MASTER, and AMPM—have earned the loyalty of millions of consumers across Bangladesh.

TDS: How would you assess the current position and performance of local brands?

RK: The Bangladeshi market has long been dominated by global giants. Backed by international celebrity endorsements and aggressive marketing, these international players captivate

REZAUL KARIM
Managing Director
Kohinoor Chemical
Co (BD) Ltd. and
Group Reedisha



and undermining domestic industries. The government could impose higher supplementary duties on all imports to raise import barriers and thus create a level playing field for local entrepreneurs.

TDS: What are your company's current strategic priorities and future growth plans in the cosmetics sector?

RK: Kohinoor Chemical Co. (BD) Ltd. (KCCL) remains committed to expanding its reach, ensuring our products are accessible to more households across Bangladesh. As part of this mission, we are intensifying our distribution network to cover around 600,000 retail outlets, including rural markets, while also diversifying into new product categories to offer consumers greater choice.

TDS: What policy changes or government support are needed to drive further industry growth?

RK: The cosmetics and toiletries industry currently faces regulatory uncertainty, with no clear decision on whether oversight will remain with the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (Bsti) or shift to the Drug Administration Authority of Bangladesh. For better relevance and compliance, retaining the sector under BSTI's supervision is advisable.

Frequent gas and electricity shortages severely disrupt production and efficiency in the industry. To sustain growth, uninterrupted power supply is essential. Additionally, the government's decision to raise gas connection rates by 33% for new users discourages existing businesses from expanding their operational capacity.

consumers with bold and direct benefit claims and cross-border media influence. In an increasingly globalised landscape, Bangladeshi consumers often exhibit a preference for foreign brands, swayed by perceived superiority in product innovation and performance—reinforced by these companies' heavy investments in R&D.

TDS: What are the major challenges or barriers limiting the growth and expansion of the local cosmetics industry?

RK: The current taxation and duty structure in Bangladesh poses significant challenges for local investors, creating an unfavourable business environment. Additionally, the lack of firm government policies to curb imports has led to a surge in foreign products entering the market, fostering unregulated cross-border trade

Local brands know consumers best of all

The Daily Star (TDS): Could you provide an overview of your company's current position and performance in the cosmetics and toiletries sector?

Malik Mohammed Sayeed (MMS): Square Toiletries Limited has been a leading FMCG company in Bangladesh since 1994. Over the years, we have earned the trust of millions of Bangladeshi consumers through consistent quality and a strong commitment to our customers. Our broad range of products spans hygiene, hair care, skin care, baby care, and home care. In many of these categories, we lead the market with some of the country's most popular brands, such as Meril, Senora, Jui, and Maya.

TDS: How would you assess the current position and performance of local brands?

MMS: Globally, local companies are giving international brands tough competition. No one understands the needs of local consumers better than domestic manufacturers. For example, Senora proudly pioneered menstrual hygiene practices in Bangladesh, while Sepnil touched millions of lives during COVID-19.

Bangladeshi brands have evolved significantly over the years. They are now competing neck-and-neck with international brands, and we see this reflected in the market. In recent years, local brands have contributed over 40% to the FMCG market. We are leading in many categories such as hygiene, sugar substitutes, and baby care, and are highly competitive in others.

MALIK MOHAMMED SAYEED
CEO
Square Toiletries Ltd.



by around 50% over the last 3-4 years, this has created serious profitability issues. To counter this, we are increasingly sourcing and extracting quality local raw materials, particularly herbs, and infusing them into our product portfolio.

TDS: What are your company's current strategic priorities and future growth plans in the cosmetics sector?

MMS: Square Toiletries has achieved double-digit growth over the past few years, making strong business progress. Through effective product innovation and consistent quality, we are experiencing remarkable growth and traction in the soap, detergent, and hair oil markets. Moving forward, we plan to expand our product portfolio by infusing more natural ingredients, responding to the growing consumer demand for such products.

TDS: What policy changes or government support are needed to drive further industry growth?

MMS: To accelerate industry growth, targeted policy support is essential. Customs duties on certain bulk items used in the production of essential products like soaps, hair oils, and aerosols should be reduced. For example, reducing customs duty on soap noodles from 25% to 5% would make these products more affordable for 99% of Bangladeshis, especially those at the grassroots. Similar reductions should be considered for raw materials like RBD coconut oil and pressurised cans.

Bangladesh's Cosmetics Industry on the Rise

FROM PAGE J1

Yet, alongside the glamour and growth, the industry also faces challenges that will define its future journey.

Malik Mohammed Sayeed, CEO of Square Toiletries, shares, "Local brands are the key driving force of the growth of the FMCG market in Bangladesh. Square Toiletries is a frontrunner in this progress. The FMCG industry is ever-changing due to the varied demands of consumers and, as brand owners, we hold the responsibility to cater to such needs. To meet these evolving demands, Square Toiletries Limited focuses on 360-degree innovation across products, processes, packaging, and supply chains."

"At ACI Consumer Brands, our current market focus centres around delivering high-quality, innovative, and trustworthy products that cater to the everyday needs of Bangladeshi households. We operate across multiple categories such as personal care, home care, baby care, hygiene and wellness with a strong commitment to health, safety, and environmental sustainability," says Md. Quamrul Hassan, Chief Business Officer, ACI Consumer Brands.

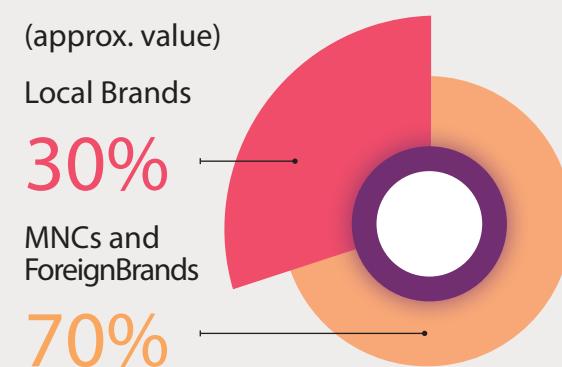
According to market insiders, Bangladesh's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) market is valued at around Tk 50,000 crore annually, with toiletries and cosmetics accounting for approximately Tk 25,000 crore. The market is experiencing a value growth trend of about five percent per year. This industry employs approximately 20,000 workers—a number that continues to grow. Currently, multinational and foreign brands account for approximately 70 percent of Bangladesh's cosmetics and toiletries market, while local brands hold the remaining 30 percent.

Previously, Bangladesh's premium cosmetics market was almost entirely dependent on imports. However, local brands are now making inroads with their own premium offerings, alongside basic cosmetic products, aiming to better understand and cater to local needs, preferences, and price sensitivities. Consumers, in turn, are increasingly relying on both local and international brands to meet their personal care demands.

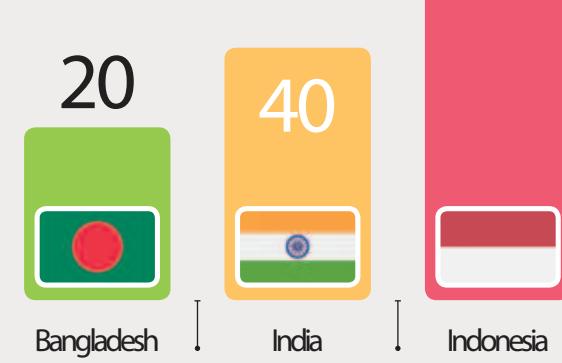
At present, per capita consumption of cosmetics in Bangladesh stands at Tk 2,400—lower than that of neighbouring countries. Nonetheless, experts predict a rise in spending as cosmetics continue to gain popularity for both essential use and luxury appeal. If navigated carefully, the industry holds significant potential for further growth.

Bangladesh's cosmetics market has yet to make a significant mark in exports. However, industry insiders believe that with consistent and adequate support, the sector holds strong potential for entering international markets. Some local companies have already begun receiving orders from abroad, indicating growing interest in Bangladeshi

Market Share of Cosmetics and Toiletries Products (approx. value)



Country-wise Per Capita Consumption of Cosmetics in USD



KEYSTATISTICS

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) market in Bangladesh:

Tk 50,000 crore

Cosmetics and toiletries market in Bangladesh:

Tk 25,000 crore

Workforce in the market:

20,000



cosmetic products.

Remark HB Limited has secured several export orders for their colour cosmetics, skincare, and medicated skincare products. Recently, at an international dermatology fair held in Dubai, the company confirmed orders worth over USD 2 billion for the Middle Eastern and Indian markets.

"Beyond domestic growth, we are actively exploring cross-border business opportunities to introduce our trusted Bangladeshi brands to international markets, further strengthening KCL's presence beyond national boundaries," says Rezaul Karim, Managing Director at Kohinoor Chemical Co. (BD) Ltd.

In terms of market size for cosmetics and toiletries, urban areas currently account for about one third of total consumption. However, this scenario is gradually shifting. With rural areas receiving significant inflows of remittances, the purchasing power in these regions is rising. According to business insiders, the rural market holds strong

potential, prompting companies to develop targeted strategies for this growing segment.

While the rural market presents promising opportunities, rising costs across the sector are simultaneously straining consumer purchasing power nationwide. Recent price hikes in toiletries and homecare products have placed additional pressure on consumers.

Over the past six months, prices of soaps, shampoos, toothpastes, detergents, and toilet cleaners have risen by 10-27%, driven largely by increased import costs and the devaluation of the taka.

In the post-COVID era, economic hardships, supply chain disruptions, and persistent inflation have constrained consumer spending on cosmetics and toiletries. Even so, business insiders remain optimistic as the demand for essential care products shows signs of recovery.

Rezaul Karim, Managing Director at Kohinoor Chemical Co. (BD) Ltd., shares, "Despite various challenges, Kohinoor

Chemical Co. (BD) Ltd. (KCL) has consistently maintained reasonable product prices, prioritising affordability for Bangladeshi consumers. Upholding customer satisfaction as a core value, we remain committed to delivering superior products with strong value propositions at accessible price points."

Innovation is seen as a key factor in attracting consumers, with companies investing in research and insights to align with changing customer behaviour along with their product quality and customer trust.

"We continuously innovate to enhance product performance, functionality, and design, ensuring they meet evolving consumer expectations. As a company with a proud 70-year heritage, KCL is recognised as one of Bangladesh's most prestigious companies," notes Rezaul Karim.

The cosmetics industry in Bangladesh relies heavily on imported raw materials, primarily from countries like China, South Korea, Thailand, the USA, and various European

countries. However, rising import costs and the ongoing dollar crisis have posed significant challenges for companies, making it difficult to sustain operations without passing the burden of price hikes onto consumers.

"Since the majority of necessary components are not made domestically, the industry's significant reliance on imported raw materials is one of its main problems. Due to this, the industry is extremely subjected to changes in the USD exchange rate, which have an immediate effect on import prices and costs," notes Md. Quamrul Hassan.

To address these challenges, some companies have started exploring local alternatives for certain raw materials. However, many essential ingredients—such as minerals and palm oil, which are key components in toiletries—cannot be produced locally due to the country's limited natural resources, aside from salt and water. For example, Square has begun sourcing aloe vera through contract farming in Natore, a northwestern district, to extract specific components for its products.

In addition, the cosmetics market grapples with several challenges, including the illegal entry of products through various channels and the widespread circulation of adulterated and counterfeit items—both foreign and local—which pose serious risks to public health. Consumers are often misled by these fake products, undermining trust across the industry. Business insiders argue that the BSTI should implement stricter testing standards and conduct regular market inspections to ensure product authenticity, thereby safeguarding consumers and supporting legitimate companies.

"Counterfeit products remain an enduring problem in this industry, affecting the entire ecosystem. Moreover, fake and low-quality products available in the informal grey market undermine brand equity and erode consumer trust," mentions Malik Mohammed Sayeed.

"The cosmetics and toiletries industry is currently facing regulatory uncertainty, with no clear decision on whether oversight will remain with BSTI or shift to the Drug Administration Authority of Bangladesh," adds Rezaul Karim.

In short, government incentives and effective monitoring are crucial to sustaining the industry's growth, maintaining quality standards, and building the capacity needed for successful export.

"Compared to neighbouring countries, there is less government support for the export of cosmetics and personal care products from Bangladesh. The cosmetics industry in Bangladesh is facing several challenges in entering the international market. To be competitive in the global market, the simplification of the export process and government policy support are essential," says Jamal Uddin, General Secretary of the Association of Skin Care and Beauty Products Manufacturers & Exporters of Bangladesh (ASBMEB).

Local brands poised for global competition

The Daily Star (TDS): Could you provide an overview of your company's current position and performance in the cosmetics and toiletries sector?

Md. Quamrul Hassan (MQH): Our cosmetics and toiletries portfolio at ACI is constantly evolving to meet the ever-changing needs of today's consumers. We offer a wide range of products across the personal care, hygiene, and skincare segments—each designed with a strong focus on quality, safety, and relevance. Within our toiletries portfolio, we proudly feature trusted household names such as Savyon—a flagship brand that spans multiple categories, including handwash, soap, liquid antiseptic, and antiseptic cream.

Our lineup also includes Septex Soap and Handwash, the elegant Leona Beauty Soap, and Baby Soft—our dedicated baby care brand, formulated with the gentlest ingredients for delicate skin. We also address specific consumer needs with herbal soaps and handwashes enriched with neem, SkinZEN and Savyon Men Shower Gel, as well as cutting-edge skincare products like Angelina Hyaluronic Booster.

TDS: How would you assess the current position and performance of local brands?

MQH: In Bangladesh's cosmetics and toiletries sector, local brands are gaining significant traction. While historically dominated by global players, the market is now witnessing the rise of homegrown brands that better understand local needs, preferences, and price sensitivities.

However, challenges remain—including limited access to R&D facilities, insufficient branding expertise, and the scarcity of high-quality raw materials. With the right support and strategic

must be addressed.

TDS: What are your company's current strategic priorities and future growth plans in the cosmetics sector?

MQH: Our current cosmetics initiatives at ACI are firmly anchored in the concepts of wellness, health, and enhancing consumers' lifestyles. Our goal is to provide safe, skin-friendly, and aesthetically pleasing products that meet the needs of contemporary consumers who seek self-expression and self-care.

Our future plans include incorporating more natural and functional ingredients, expanding into derma-cosmetic solutions, and strengthening customer education through digital platforms. We aim to build a cosmetics portfolio that not only enhances beauty but also promotes overall well-being, empowering consumers to feel good, inside and out.

TDS: What are the major challenges or barriers limiting the growth and expansion of the local cosmetics industry?

MQH: Since the majority of necessary components are not produced domestically, the industry's heavy reliance on imported raw materials is a major issue. As a result, the industry remains highly vulnerable to fluctuations in the USD exchange rate, which have an immediate impact on import prices and overall costs.

Government investment in technology-driven education could also help nurture a new generation of professionals, supporting smarter, more sustainable industry growth. Companies like ACI are well positioned to lead the development of a more competitive and resilient cosmetics industry—provided the right support mechanisms are in place.

**MD. QUAMRUL
HASAN**
Chief Business Officer
ACI Consumer Brands



investment, these local brands have the potential to emerge as strong contenders, both within the domestic market and on international platforms.

TDS: What are the major challenges or barriers limiting the growth and expansion of the local cosmetics industry?

MQH: Policy support is essential to unlocking the industry's full potential. Reducing taxes and VAT on raw materials, simplifying import procedures for quality ingredients, and strengthening regulatory frameworks for product safety would significantly accelerate innovation and responsible scaling.

Government investment in technology-driven education could also help nurture a new generation of professionals, supporting smarter, more sustainable industry growth. Companies like ACI are well positioned to lead the development of a more competitive and resilient cosmetics industry—provided the right support mechanisms are in place.

Regulatory gaps hold back global competitiveness

The Daily Star (TDS): Could you provide an overview of Bangladesh's cosmetics and toiletries industry?

Jamal Uddin (JU): The annual market for cosmetics and skincare products in Bangladesh exceeds Tk 24,000 crore. Although this sector holds significant potential for the country, the presence of counterfeit and smuggled products poses a serious challenge to the market for quality goods.

Despite notable growth in Bangladesh's cosmetics and skincare industry in recent years, there remains a lack of a proper regulatory framework for import, production, and marketing. Compared to the guidelines of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) in neighbouring countries, several important regulations and controls are absent in Bangladesh. In many countries, even at the supplier level, manufacturers are required to declare whether harmful chemicals are being used as raw materials in products. However, no such system exists in Bangladesh, posing a threat to the domestic industry.

Furthermore, the existing process for product approval after production, overseen by BSTI, is extremely complex and disproportionately more burdensome compared to imported goods. While a CM (Certification Mark) licence for imported products can be obtained within 3–5 working days, it takes a minimum of 38 working days—sometimes extending to 44 to 46 working days—to obtain a CM licence for domestically produced goods. As a result, imported products are marketed easily, while domestic manufacturers face unequal competition.

TDS: How would you assess the

JAMAL UDDIN
General Secretary
Association
of Skin Care &
Beauty Products
Manufacturers
& Exporters of
Bangladesh (ASBMEB)



current position and performance of local brands?

JU: Under the import policy, only 79 out of the 299 products mandated by BSTI for licensing require a CM licence for import.

However, many cosmetic products, including those related to skin protection, fall outside this mandatory list, putting public health at risk.

This disparity extends to customs duties as well. The Tariff Commission has noted that a local manufacturer must pay a 10% supplementary duty on the unit price per piece. This results in a much higher duty burden for local producers, as the dutiable value of domestically produced goods is significantly higher than that of imported ones. Such disparities threaten investment by local manufacturers in an increasingly competitive market environment.

TDS: What are the major challenges or barriers limiting the growth and expansion of the local cosmetics industry?

JU: The export process for cosmetics and personal care products from Bangladesh is extremely complex and time-consuming, making it difficult to compete in international markets. Compared to Bangladesh, countries such as India, China, and South Korea have far more simplified and business-friendly export policies and facilities. As a result, the global expansion of Bangladeshi brands is being hindered.

TDS: What types of policy revisions or government support could help further develop the industry?

JU: In Bangladesh, the absence of mandatory registration and quality control systems for cosmetics has led to the unregulated establishment of substandard and adulterated factories, posing serious health risks. Warehouses are also set up haphazardly, creating further safety concerns and opportunities for storing unregistered products.

Moreover, there is no requirement for international quality standards, such as GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices), allowing substandard products to flood the market. These regulatory gaps significantly hinder Bangladesh's ability to compete internationally.

To be globally competitive, the cosmetics industry urgently needs simplified export processes, stronger policy support, and adoption of frameworks similar to CDSCO and FDA standards. Additionally, there are limited tax exemptions, subsidies, and cash incentives for cosmetic exports, leaving Bangladesh far behind neighbouring countries in government support for industry growth.

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Match Makeup to Your SKIN TYPE

AYMAN ANIKA

On a sweltering afternoon in Dhaka, your makeup feels like it's melting off by the minute. By the time you reach your destination, what was once a flawless base is now a blotchy mess — oily patches on the T-zone, dry flakes around the cheeks, and irritation you didn't see coming. Sound familiar? For many, beauty routines are often at war with the country's unforgiving climate. With heatwaves, humidity and pollution, even the best global cosmetic brands can backfire if they're not suited to our unique skin needs.

The key? Choosing cosmetics not just by brand or trend, but by your skin type, and understanding how it reacts to the environment around you.

Step 1: Identifying your skin type
Before diving into the cosmetics aisle, the first step is to understand your skin type. This is important because what works for one skin type may not work for another.

Dr Mehran Hossain, an Associate Professor and Senior Consultant at City Hospital Ltd, shares, "In our climate, excessive sweating is common, and this leads to a range of issues such as irritation, redness, and acne. People with different skin types must be aware of these factors to choose cosmetics that help rather than harm their skin."

Broadly, skin types generally fall into five categories. Oily skin is shiny and prone to breakouts, especially in the T-zone. Dry skin feels tight and can become flaky. Combination skin is oily in some

areas (like the forehead and nose) and dry in others. Sensitive skin reacts easily, often showing redness or irritation. Normal skin is balanced and low-maintenance, though it's quite rare — especially in Bangladesh's harsh climate.

Once you know your skin type, it becomes easier to select products that address specific needs.

Step 2: Makeup recommendations for different skin types

Not all skin is created equal, and in Bangladesh's heat, what you wear on your face matters just as much as what you wear on your body. The wrong makeup can clog your pores, dry you out, or leave your face feeling like a grease trap by noon.

If your skin gets shiny and breaks out easily, then welcome to the oily skin club — and yes, humidity can make it worse. For you, less is more, and matte is magic. "Heavy, oil-based products can make oily skin worse," says Dr Hossain. "Instead, opt for lightweight, water-based foundations and non-comedogenic products." Avoid cream-based blushes or anything with too much shine. Instead, stick to powder formulas and translucent blotting powders to keep midday greasiness at bay. A primer can also be a game-changer.

However, if your skin feels tight, dull, or flaky, then you have dry skin. Dry skin can be tricky, especially when the AC is on full blast or your face has taken one too many sun hits. For you, hydration is the holy grail. Cream-based highlighters and blushes will give your skin a dewy glow without clinging to dry patches. And don't skip moisturising before makeup — it's not just a skincare step, it's part of your canvas prep.

And if you're both oily and dry, then you have combination skin.

Generally, combination skin often means you're battling

an oily T-zone and dry cheeks at the same time — frustrating, but manageable with the right routine. Customising your base is key. A mattifying primer for your forehead, nose, and chin, and a hydrating one for your cheeks, will help even things out. Stick with powder blushes and bronzers — they'll stay put without adding unnecessary weight.

General tips for all skin types

No matter your skin type, the weather in Bangladesh has a way of testing your skincare game. From sticky humidity to searing heatwaves, even the most expensive products can lose their magic if your routine doesn't account for the climate. This is where simple habits can make a big difference.



Dr Hossain stresses the importance of staying clean and sweat-free throughout the day. After all, it's not just makeup that clogs pores — sweat and dirt are guilty too. "During a heatwave or in our daily humid environment, it's important to wipe away sweat regularly with a clean towel to prevent irritation," he advises.

That doesn't mean constantly scrubbing your face, though. Gentle dabbing with a clean cloth and a mid-day rinse with water can help refresh your skin without stripping it.

And don't forget the oldest and most underrated beauty tip in the book: drink water. "Drinking plenty of water helps keep the skin hydrated from the inside out, especially in hot and humid conditions," Dr Hossain reminds us.

These small but powerful practices support whatever cosmetics you use, helping your skin stay resilient, calm, and ready for that flawless finish.

Look for products with natural, gentle ingredients like aloe vera, chamomile, or hyaluronic acid, and avoid harsh chemicals such as parabens, sulfates, and artificial fragrances, which can irritate the skin or disrupt the natural skin barrier.

formulation designed to be gentle on sensitive skin — ideal for adults seeking sophisticated yet skin-friendly solutions," mentioned Md. Quamrul Hassan, Chief Business Officer, ACI Consumer Brands.

For sensitive skin, hypoallergenic or dermatologist-tested products are often the safest choice. For instance, Sirol from Remark HB Ltd. is a doctor-recommended brand that offers a wide range of skincare products

MIFTAHL JANNAT

In a world increasingly obsessed with flawless skin and impeccable hygiene, the skincare aisle can feel like both a promise and a potential minefield. From miracle creams and trendy serums to hand washes and antiseptic bars, not all products are created equal — and some may be doing more harm than good. As consumers, it is crucial to distinguish between what nurtures your skin and what quietly wreaks havoc beneath the surface.

Dr Mehran Hossain, Associate Professor and Senior Consultant at City Hospital Ltd points out the fatality of choosing the wrong products. "Many skincare products contain steroids and heavy metal like mercury and lead which can cause permanent damage to the skin, with long-term exposure potentially increasing the risk of cancer," he said.

"Steroids have a bleaching property, which can leave your skin looking temporarily shining, however in the long term it erodes the epidermal layer," added Dr Hossain. When the skin's top layers are eroded over time, it can thin out and lose its natural cushion, causing veins to appear more prominently.

When choosing personal care products, it is important to consider a few key factors to ensure both safety and effectiveness. Dermatologists generally classify these products into two broad categories: over-the-counter (OTC) products and those prescribed for therapeutic use. According to experts, it is generally safe to use well-reputed OTC products such as face washes, moisturisers, and other personal care items. However, always check the ingredient label first.

Look for products with natural, gentle ingredients like aloe vera, chamomile, or hyaluronic acid, and avoid harsh chemicals such as parabens, sulfates, and artificial fragrances, which can irritate the skin or disrupt the natural skin barrier.

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For sensitive skin, hypoallergenic or dermatologist-tested products are often the safest choice. For instance, Sirol from Remark HB Ltd. is a doctor-recommended brand that offers a wide range of skincare products



skin. It is a supercharged water magnet. The best hyaluronic acid serum is fragrance free, paraben free, dye free, very watery and dermatologist tested," mentioned Dr Tauhid Rahman Ereen, Dermatologist at Rejuva Wellness.

Water-based serums help unclog pores and minimise their appearance. Rich in antioxidants, they also help fade hyperpigmentation and dark spots. "We introduced hyaluronic acid-infused products, such as the Angelina Hyaluronic Booster, which delivers intense hydration and a radiant glow through a

targeting specific concerns, including anti-acne, brightening, depigmenting, moisturising, sun protection, as well as eye and hair care.

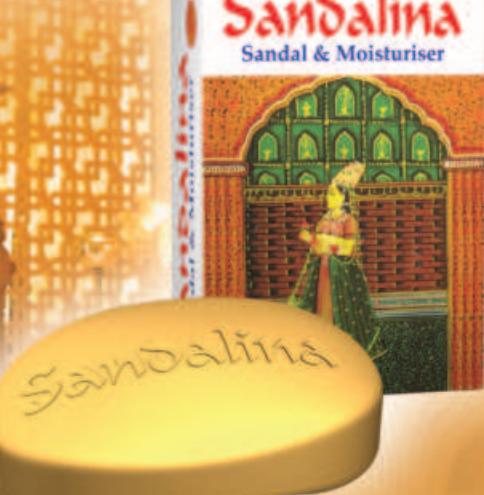
Choosing products according to your skin type, and ensuring their authenticity, is also crucial. "Lack of mandatory registration system has led to the unregulated establishment of unregistered, substandard, and adulterated factories, putting consumer health at risk," highlighted Jamal Uddin, General Secretary, Association of Skin Care & Beauty Products Manufacturers & Exporters of Bangladesh (ASBMEB). Hence, never skip checking whether the product is genuine before buying.

For hygiene products like hand washes, antiseptic creams, or disinfectants, ensure they contain active ingredients such as alcohol, chlorhexidine gluconate, cetrimide for effective germ protection, but be mindful of their drying effects on the skin. If you are using these products frequently, opt for those with moisturising agents like aloe vera, glycerin or vitamin E to prevent skin damage and maintain hydration.

Regardless of the brand, always patch-test a new product before fully incorporating it into your routine to avoid irritation or allergic reactions, and consult with a dermatologist if you are uncertain about what's best for your skin's health. Ultimately, glowing skin starts from within — nourish your body with colorful vegetables, get quality sleep, and embrace a healthy lifestyle to keep your skin always radiant.

ম্যান্ডালিনা সোপ

রূপচর্চার আড়িজ্ঞাত্ম্য...



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SECOND EDITION

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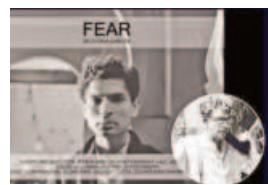
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FTII restores and releases Ritwik Ghatak's film 'Fear' in 4K
P8



The unspoken trauma of journalists
P7



Rising gas prices threaten our investment prospects
P6



BTRC approves licence for Starlink

B1

UP CHAIRMEN'S ABSENCE People suffer amid service disruptions

HELEMUL ALAM and BAHARAM KHAN

Many union parishads across the country are still struggling to provide essential services as the chairmen of the local government bodies either went into hiding or were arrested in the aftermath of the July mass uprising.

Though the government has appointed administrators to fill the leadership void, there have been complaints of delays in getting birth and succession certificates that require approval from UP chairmen.

The situation worsened after the launch of "Operation Devil Hunt" in early February when several UP chairmen were arrested over alleged links to criminal activities, prompting many others to go into hiding.

Out of 4,575 UP chairmen across the country, at least 1,535 remain absent from work. Panel chairmen are handling the responsibilities of UP chairmen in 885 unions, while administrators have been appointed in 650 unions, according to officials at the LGRD ministry.

Moreover, 245 chairmen and 335 members were suspended till January, they said.

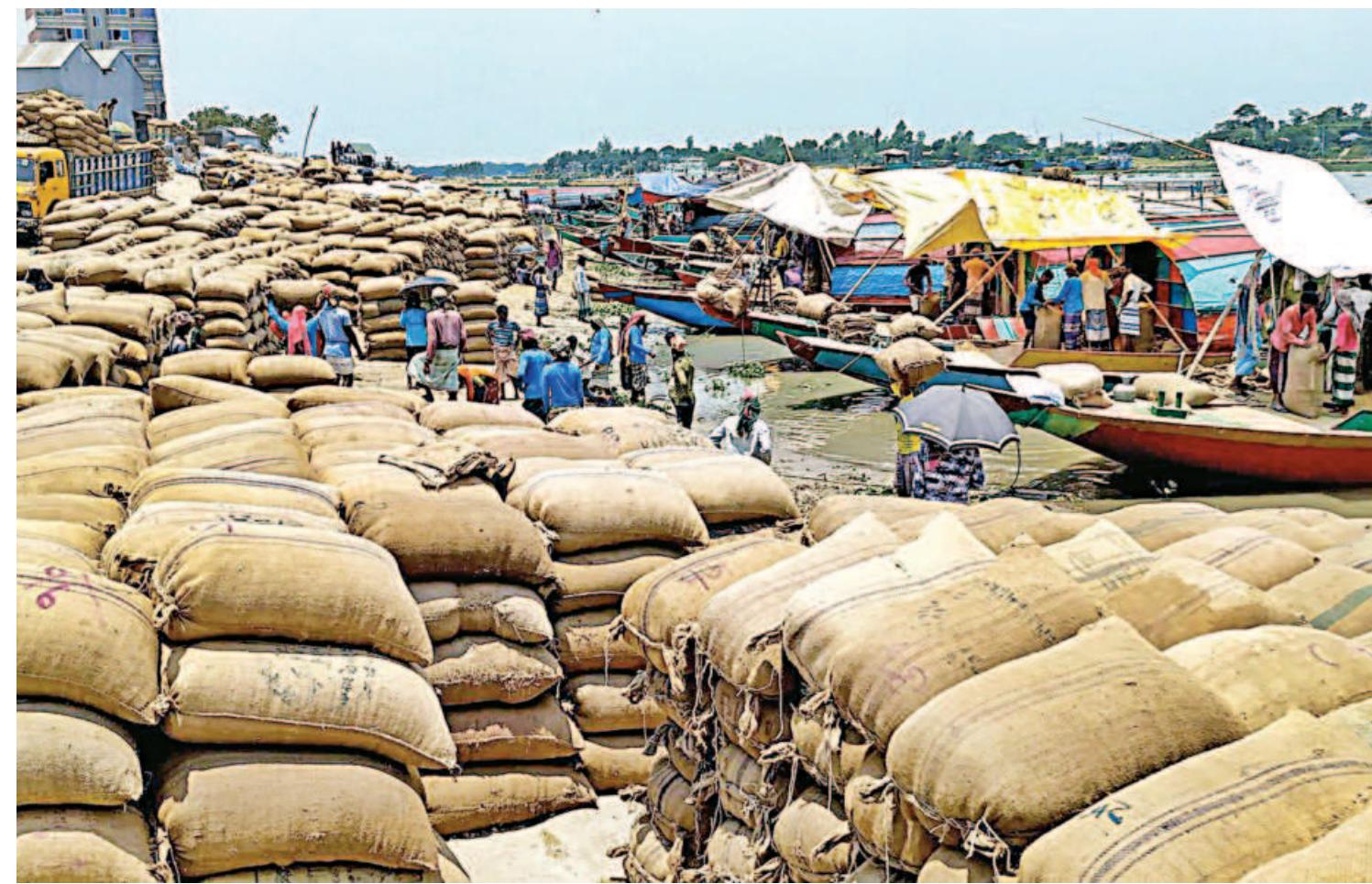
Besides running the government's social safety net programmes and village courts, implementing rural development projects, and ensuring law and order, union parishads issue birth, death, character and citizen certificates, among other services.

Talking to this newspaper, residents, officials and UP members in several districts said the absence of elected representatives caused disruptions to services.

They said many of the administrators are unfamiliar

- 1,535 out of 4,575 UP chairmen absent from work
- Panel chairmen working in 885 unions
- Administrators appointed in 650 unions
- 245 chairmen suspended till January

Source: LGRD ministry officials



The BOC Ghat paddy market in Brahmanbaria's Ashuganj is buzzing with activities as farmers from nearby riverside regions bring boatloads of freshly harvested crops for sale. Daily trading volume currently ranges between 80,000 and 100,000 maunds at this major paddy trade hub by the Meghna. Meanwhile, farmers are frustrated, saying an increased supply has caused paddy prices to fall by Tk 500 per maund.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOV

Hasina, 407 others sued over BNP man's killing
36 ex-ministers, 41 former MPs, 24 journos among accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 407 others have been sued over the killing of BNP activist Mahfuz Alam Shrabani in the capital's Mirpur during the mass uprising last year.

The accused individuals include 24 journalists, at least 36 former ministers and state ministers, more than 41 former lawmakers of the Awami League government, and six former advisers to Hasina, including her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy.

Businessmen of seven groups, five former election commissioners and former Election Commission secretary Muhammed Sadique, three former top officials of Bangladesh SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

with the people and infrastructure in their new places of deployment and are often burdened with additional work.

Besides, some panel chairmen, picked from among UP members to perform the duties of UP chairmen in their absence, are finding it hard to play their new role due to a lack of leadership experience.

In Chattogram, 134 out of 191 UP chairmen remain absent from office. Now, 46 UPs are managed by upazila nirkabi officers (UNOs), 39 by assistant commissioners of land, and 49 by panel chairmen.

Scores of service seekers in these unions said they had faced difficulties in obtaining documents from UP offices.

Recounting her ordeal, Ruma Akter, a resident of Ward-1 in Barahatia Union, said, "I had to visit the parishad office multiple times to get my daughter's birth certificate. I was told that UP Chairman Bijoy Kumar, an Awami League leader, remains absent. It took 15 days and a lot of hassle to get the certificate."

Milton Chowdhury, secretary of Popadia union parishad, said, "Our chairman, SM Jasim Uddin Chowdhury, has not come to office since August 5. For his approval, we have to send documents to the port city where he is staying now. What used to take a day now takes two or three."

Out of the 146 UP chairmen in Mymensingh, 77 are absent, with government officials or panel chairmen filling their positions, said district administration sources.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Family faces double blow

Rape victim laid to rest next to her July martyr father

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

After the killing of her husband, the sole breadwinner of the family, in last year's uprising, the woman pinned her hopes on the eldest daughter. The girl's death, reportedly by suicide following the trauma of being gang raped, shattered the mother's new dreams.

With two young children, the woman now wonders how the family will survive.

"Oh my daughter! Where have you gone, leaving us behind?" the inconsolable mother wailed as crying relatives tried to soothe her at Shaheed Suhrwardy Medical College Hospital in the early hours yesterday. She was losing consciousness repeatedly.

Through her sobs, she described the tragedy of losing her husband as the first blow to the family.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

No place to heal

Rape survivors struggle amid a lack of mental health support

NILIMA JAHAN

Lamia, a 18 year-old girl and the eldest daughter of a July martyr, vowed to rebuild her family's life for her grieving mother. Following the death of her father, she would often say, "We will stand again, Ma. I will take care of everything."

Lamia's mother, overwhelmed by the situation, confided in Sabrina Afroz Sabonti, an executive member of the July Smriti Foundation, who had been in contact with the family

"Without mental support, survivors can sink into deep guilt and primal shame, which can lead to PTSD or even suicidal tendencies."

Dr Sunjida Shahriah, a psychotherapist working with rape survivors.

Despite her quiet strength, grief lingered as a constant presence in their home. Then, on March 18, after visiting her father's gravesite, Lamia was gang raped by men, who filmed the assault and threatened to release the footage if she reported the crime.

As she struggled to cope with the trauma after returning to her home in the capital's Shekhertek, since the death of her father.

Sabonti recalls the mother mentioning that once Lamia finished her exams, they planned to leave the area.

However, Lamia did not wait.

Before her exams even began,

she took her own life on Saturday night.

Her death by suicide highlights the critical lack of mental health

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Polls no later than June 2026

Yunus tells Al Jazeera

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has said that next national polls will be held within June 2026.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, he also said the timeline will depend on how many reforms all agree or disagree on.

"They're not saying let the interim government go, have the election today... We have not faced any such problem of people saying that 'hand it [power] over as soon as possible'."

PROF MUHAMMAD YUNUS



If the consensus is on a larger number of reforms, then it will take longer. "If we can focus on a smaller version of the [reform] implementation, then we will have an early election in December," he said in the interview that was aired yesterday.

"However, if the process takes longer, we go up to June, but we will not go beyond June," he added.

Yunus promised that the next election will be best ever election in the country's history.

Asked if the Awami League will be allowed to take part in the polls, Yunus said, "We don't know yet, they [AL] have not declared anything."

He said once the declaration comes, then the matter of the response from the Election Commission and other factors will arise. Then there are other parties who may say that under this law they cannot participate and so on, he added.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

CONFlict-TORN RAKHINE

Dhaka agrees to aid corridor, but with conditions: Touhid

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka agrees in principle with the UN proposal for a humanitarian corridor to Myanmar's Rakhine State, but certain conditions must be met for its implementation, said Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain yesterday.

Talks over the corridor intensified after UN chief Antonio Guterres, during his 4-day Bangladesh visit last month, said that he discussed with authorities the option of sending humanitarian aid into Myanmar via Bangladesh.

Guterres said such a move will help Rohingya repatriation to Rakhine. However, he admitted it would require the "authorisation and the cooperation of the parties to the conflict".

Yesterday, Touhid, while interacting with reporters at the foreign ministry, did not elaborate on the conditions, but a diplomatic source said a major one is to ensure a conducive environment for Rohingya repatriation.

Foreign adviser urges talks to ease Indo-Pak tensions
'Bangladeshis' arrested in India will be repatriated after verification

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

DEFAULT LOANS

Bank puts 3 S Alam factories up for auction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three firms owned by Chattogram-based S Alam Group are going under the hammer for defaulting on around Tk 2,180 crore loans from the Islami Bank.

They are S Alam Steel Mills, S Alam Power Generation, and S Alam Vegetable Oil Industries, according to a notice published in local newspaper Dainik Purbokone by the bank's Khatunganj Corporate Branch in the port city yesterday.

To recover the dues, the bank has invited bids from interested buyers for the mortgaged properties under section 12(3) of the Money Loan Court Act 2003.

The notice says that the auctioned assets cover approximately 1,149 decimals of land.

It has held 15 individuals, including S Alam Group Chairman Mohammed Saiful Alam, responsible for the defaulted loans.

Others include Alam Cold Rolled Steels Ltd's Chairman Abdus Samad, Managing Director Osman Gani,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

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গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের আওতাধীন এলাকায় কতিপয় আবাসিক/বাণিজ্যিক ভবনের অভ্যন্তরে রাজউক কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নকারায় রেস্টুরেন্ট নাথাকলে বিধি বিভূতভাবে রেস্টুরেন্ট পরিচালনা করায় ইতোমধ্যেই বিভিন্ন ছানে দূর্ঘটনায় সম্পদ ও প্রাণহানির ঘটনা ঘটেছে। এসব ক্ষেত্রে অনেকে অবৈধ ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠান অনৈতিক উপায়ে কর্পোরেশনের ট্রেড লাইসেন্স গ্রহণ করেছেন।

বর্ণিত অবস্থায় সম্পদ ও জনমালের ক্ষতির ঝুঁকি এড়াতে নকার বিহুর্ভূতভাবে রেস্টুরেন্ট এবং ভবনের ছানে অবৈধ ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠান করা হলো। বাতিলকৃত লাইসেন্স দ্বারা কোন ব্যবসা পরিচালনা করা হলো তাদের বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবসা গ্রহণ

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কর্তৃপক্ষ
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

Maiden cargo flight departs Sylhet airport

RASHIUD HASAN and SHIMUL NAZRUL

Sylhet's Osmani International Airport sent off its first-ever cargo flight to Spain last night, becoming the second airport in the country, after Dhaka, to currently offer freighter services.

A chartered Airbus A330-300 freighter of Galistar Aviation carrying around 60 tonnes of readymade garments intended for Inditex, a Spanish multinational clothing company and the world's largest fast fashion group, departed for its European destination at 8:00pm.

The consignment also included RMG goods exported by MGH Group.

Biman provided cargo and ground-handling services for this maiden flight.

Civil Aviation and Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin inaugurated the flight, alongside Bangladesh's Ambassador to Mexico M. Mushfiqul Fazal Ansary and Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Nasreen Jahan.

This is a historic moment as Sylhet becomes operational for cargo flights, Sk Bashir Uddin told the inaugural ceremony.

Earlier, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) Chairman Air Vice Marshal Md Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan said that explosive detection systems, X-ray scanners, and additional security arrangements had been installed to meet international freight handling standards at the Sylhet airport.

Authorities have decided to operate two cargo flights per week initially and urged businesses to avail themselves of this facility so that the number of flights could soon be increased.

This move to launch cargo flight services at Sylhet airport is part of a race to expand air cargo capacity after India suspended transhipment facilities it had previously provided to Bangladesh earlier this month, upending a logistics route for garment exporters.

The decision, announced without warning on April 8, cut off a vital land-air corridor that allowed Bangladeshi goods to move overland to Kolkata and Delhi airports and onwards to global markets. The disruption has forced Dhaka to fast-track efforts to diversify export channels and reduce dependence on India.

To that end, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) is also actively working to resume cargo flight services at Chattogram's Shah Amanat International Airport, which have remained dormant since 2022.

China Eastern Airlines, a major Chinese carrier which operates an extensive network with 1,031 routes and serves 223 destinations worldwide, has expressed interest in operating cargo flights via the airport, Md Ibrahim

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

- 60 tonnes of RMG goods on the way to Spain
- Ctg airport to resume freight flights soon



This aircraft being loaded with goods for export departed for Spain last night, inaugurating cargo flight services from the Osmani International Airport in Sylhet.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

FAILURE TO SEND 17,777 WORKERS TO KL Recruiting agencies to blame

Expat ministry tells HC; workers' frustrations grow

MD ABBAS

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment has told the High Court that recruiting agencies are responsible for the failure to send 17,777 Bangladeshi workers to Malaysia.

During yesterday's hearing, the HC sought details from the government regarding the action taken against the agencies involved.

It also enquired whether the affected workers had been refunded and whether there had been any progress in resolving the issue.

The court directed the expatriates' welfare ministry secretary and other relevant authorities to submit a report by August 27. The bench of Justice Fahmida Quader and Justice Mubina Asaf passed the order.

On June 24 last year, the HC issued a rule asking why the authorities' negligence and inaction, which put burden on the affected workers, should not be declared illegal.

It also asked why the workers should not be refunded their money with interest.

Lawyers Md Tanvir Ahmed and Biplob Kumar Poddar represented the petitioners during yesterday's hearing.

Earlier in January, Prof Asif Nazrul, adviser to expatriates' welfare ministry, assured the workers on several occasions that they would be sent to Malaysia in phases, starting in March or early April. Following the assurances, the workers suspended their several-month-long protest on February 22.

However, their frustration is now growing.

They could not leave the country before deadline imposed by Malaysia despite securing visas and clearances from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training after paying hefty sums to recruiting agencies.

The situation was triggered by a shortage of airline tickets, their overpricing and "negligence of the recruiting agencies" ahead of the May 31 deadline last year.

In some cases, workers who had tickets were unable to travel because the Malaysian government blacklisted the companies that had hired them.

"I have given the money after taking loans at high interest rates. Every month, I'm paying that interest," said Alamgir Hossain from Narsingdi, who along with his cousins Rakib Miah and Md Bashedur, paid two recruiting agencies Tk 10 lakh.

The aggrieved workers warned that if their demands were not met, they would launch tougher protests from May 18.

Asked, Neyamat Ullah Bhuiyan, senior secretary to the of expatriates' welfare ministry, said, "Nothing will be effective unless the Malaysian labour market opens again."

"We held a joint working group meeting with the Malaysian government last year. We have another meeting scheduled for mid-May," he said and hopes that a solution might come from that meeting.

People suffer amid service disruptions

FROM PAGE 1

Ebadul Haque, a resident of Char Sirta union, said he had to wait for 10 days to get a succession certificate. Rokon Hossain from the same union shared a similar experience.

Seeking anonymity, a UP secretary in Gouripur upazila said panel chairmen often struggle to run parishes due to a lack of leadership experience. In the unions where administrators have taken charge, service delivery has slowed down because they are burdened with too many tasks.

A UP member in the same upazila said many documents are pending, as the administrator usually visits the office twice a week.

In Rajshahi, 41 out of 72 UP chairmen are absent with 24 panel chairmen and 17 administrators playing their roles.

Parvez Rayhan, director of Local Government in Rajshahi Division, said, "Those who remained absent since August 5 without taking leave have been replaced by administrators."

In Sylhet, 18 of the 105 UP chairmen remain absent, with panel chairmen

and administrators managing parishes.

Talking to this newspaper last week, Talukder A Hossain, a resident of Dargapasha Union, said, "Our chairman has been absent for months ... I applied for a succession certificate over a month ago. I finally got it a couple of days back."

At least 17 of the 88 union parishes in Barisal are running without chairmen.

Acting chairman of Charbaria union parishad Md Al Mamun said beneficiary lists for VGF and VGD programmes have not been updated, causing delays in providing support to new recipients.

Contacted, LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan said, "In the unions where UP chairmen have been suspended or absent, government officials are carrying out administrative duties. This arrangement will continue for the time being."

The government refrained from removing any UP chairmen (elected between 2021 and 2022 during the Awami League government's tenure), considering the potential sufferings this could cause to people, he told The Daily

Star on April 17.

Earlier at the DC Conference on February 18, Asif said, "In the absence of elected representatives, government officers are forced to multitask, making it difficult for them to provide services properly."

"No matter how diligently government officers work, it is nearly impossible for them to fully manage a ward's responsibilities. They don't know the people there, nor are they familiar with the area's infrastructure."

Asked, Rezaul Maksud Jahedi, secretary of the Local Government Division, said, "The absence of chairmen in different unions caused some temporary problems but the local administration is resolving them through alternative measures ... Administrators have already been appointed in many UPs."

He further said the development of an app for birth registration is nearing completion. It'll allow citizens to submit applications by following a few simple steps on mobile phones.

[Our correspondents in Chattogram, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Barishal and Sylhet contributed to the report]

— we're simply trying to keep the service running."

Since its inception, the NTCC has served 7,516 clients, including 2,249 children. Meanwhile, RTCCs, established in the one-stop crisis centres of eight divisional medical college hospitals, have served 27,982 victims of violence, including 9,400 children. They mainly receive referrals from NGOs, hospitals, and schools.

Of the eight RTCCs, only three — in Dhaka, Chattogram and Rangpur — are functional. Moreover, in divisions where there is no RTCC, survivors usually have to receive counseling over phone.

However, none of these centres track data specifically on rape survivors.

Meanwhile, the 24/7 National Helpline Centre (109), launched in 2012, has provided counselling to 17,776 victims of violence.

At Dhaka Medical College Hospital's One Stop Crisis Centre, medical officer Dr Tayeba Sultana explained that continued counselling is offered only when survivors or psychologists feel it is necessary.

"Not everyone needs long-term support. Those with severe trauma receive our contact and can return if needed."

Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, noted that recognising rape as a criminal offence took years of activism, as society often blamed victims.

"Rape can destroy a woman's life. Rebuilding survivors' mental strength is crucial," she said, adding, "Counsellors also need counselling and specialised training."

Moslem also criticised project-based interventions: "While many initiatives exist, most are project-based. Once a project ends, the focus fades. This practice must change."

During holidays, my colleagues visit their families, but I have no one to go to."

She also faces frequent questions about marriage. "When I say I'm single, many don't believe me. Some even bring marriage proposals, but I'm too afraid to trust anyone."

"I live in constant fear. If my employer finds out [about my rape], I could lose my job. The fear doesn't leave me, even in my sleep."

Helen's experience is far from unique, and mental health professionals stress

Family faces double blow

FROM PAGE 1

The man, who worked as a driver for a private company, was shot by police in Dhaka on July 23 last year during the uprising. He succumbed to his injuries two days later at the same hospital where his daughter was declared dead.

"My husband's death was a blow to us. We were worried about how we would survive with three children? Now, it's a double blow," the woman said.

After the man's death, the family received support from different sources, including political parties, the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation and the company where the man worked.

They had promised that her eldest daughter would be given a job after completing her Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations.

The dream was shattered as the family found the girl hanging from the ceiling fan of her room at their house in Adabor's Shekhertek on Saturday night.

"I used to tell her to study hard so that she could take care of the family," the mother said. "Now, everything is ruined!"

The girl's body was handed over to the family yesterday after an autopsy at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue. An unnatural death case was filed with Adabor Police Station in this regard.

She was buried yesterday beside her father's grave in Patuakhali's Dumki upazila.

The family said that she used to live with her grandparents in Dumki and was preparing for her HSC examinations.

In the evening of March 18, she was allegedly gang-raped near the Munshibari area of Dumki while returning to her grandparents' house after visiting her father's grave, according to the statement of a case filed over the incident with the local police station.

Suspects Salki Munshi, 19, and Sifat Munshi, 20, forcibly took her to a secluded area and raped her in turns. The suspects also allegedly took photos of the victim and threatened to spread them online if she reported the incident, added the case statement.

Police later arrested the two suspects,

and they were in jail, the girl's uncle told this newspaper yesterday.

The girl, however, was worried whether they would secure bail, the uncle said.

"She was strong even after the rape. She filed the case herself and sought justice," he said. "But gradually, she was breaking inside. Late, she had been deeply traumatised, worrying whether she would ever see justice, or whether the accused would be released on bail."

According to him, she returned to her house in the Shekhertek area of Adabor in Dhaka from Patuakhali for treatment three days ago.

He said, "She began suffering from headaches and neurological problems. That's why she came to Dhaka for treatment."

"She was meant to return to the village with us alive. Instead, we are carrying her body on our shoulders," the uncle said, demanding exemplary punishment for the perpetrators.

"We want the maximum penalty for them, so that no one dares to commit such a crime again."

the assistance of Nobel Prize winning German writer Günter Grass, he flew to Germany in 1987. Since then, he had been residing in Berlin.

Daud, a bachelor, left behind three brothers, four sisters, and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was born on February 21, 1952, in Pabna. Some of his famous works are Janmo i Amar Jannmo Pap, Sampanna Manush Ami Noi, Narokiya Bhuboner Kobita, Je Deshe Sobai Andho, Dhusor Ghodhuli Dhuylimoy, Ami Bhalo asi, Tumi?

Daud also wrote children's book Babui Pakhi, autobiography Illin Jhillin, and satire tilted Bilomboer Deri Holo Keno.

Ask Interpol to issue arrest warrant against Putul Dhaka court orders authorities

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered authorities to take steps to get an arrest warrant issued through Interpol against Saima Wazed Putul, daughter of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, in connection with charges of irregularities in plot allocation in Purbachal New Town.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order following an application by the Anti-Corruption Commission, said its Public Relations Officer Md Aktarul Islam.

On April 10, the same court issued arrest warrants against 18 people, including Hasina and Putul, after accepting the charges against them over the plot allocation irregularities.

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

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Truck runs over, kills SSC examinee in Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An SSC examinee was run over by a truck in Uttara yesterday, shortly after he came out of the examination centre.

Nayeem, 17, was crossing the road near Azampur BNS Centre around 1:30pm when a truck hit him, said OC Shamim Ahmed of Uttara East Police Station.

Nayeem's classmate Pallab Kumar Shil said they were Uttara High School students and were sitting for the SSC exams this year. Their exam centre was at Uttara Rajuk School and College.

Nayeem, a commerce student, had appeared for his Finance and Banking exam earlier in the day.

"We first took Nayem to a private hospital and later to DMCH, where he was declared dead around 3:15pm," he added.

The OC said locals seized the truck but the driver fled. Inspector Md Faruk, in charge of the DMCH police camp, said the body was kept at the morgue.

According to him, she returned to her house in the Shekhertek area of Adabor in Dhaka from Patuakhali for treatment three days ago.

He said, "She began suffering from headaches and neurological problems. That's why she came to Dhaka for treatment."

"She was meant to return to the village with us alive. Instead, we are carrying her body on our shoulders," the uncle said, demanding exemplary punishment for the perpetrators.

"We want the maximum penalty for them, so that no one dares to commit such a crime again."

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Philippines, US launches drills as China seizes reef

AFP, Manila

Missiles fired off the coast of the northern Philippines yesterday as US and Filipino forces conducted their first integrated defence drills, hours after China said it had seized control of a reef claimed by Manila.

The Philippines and China have been engaged in months of confrontations over the South China Sea, which Beijing claims nearly in its entirety despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

As many as 17,000 personnel are participating in the annual "Balikatan" exercises, which this year will simulate a "full-scale battle scenario" as the treaty allies seek to deter



China's ambitions in the disputed waterway.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV on Saturday reported that the country's coast guard had "implemented maritime control" over Tiexian Reef, also known as Sandy Cay, this month.

DEATH OF POPE FRANCIS All eyes turn to conclave

AFP, Vatican City

With Pope Francis laid to rest, all eyes turn now to the conclave, the secretive meeting of cardinals set to convene within days to elect a new head of the Catholic Church.

Mourners were permitted to visit his tomb for the first time yesterday, a day after an estimated 400,000 people including world leaders turned out for the Argentine's funeral at the Vatican and burial in Rome.

The crowds were a testament to the popularity of Francis, an energetic reformer who championed the poorest and most vulnerable.

Many of those mourning the late pope, who died on Monday aged 88, expressed anxiety about who would succeed him.

"He ended up transforming the Church into something more normal, more human," said Romina Cacciato, 48, an Argentinian translator living in Italy.

"I'm worried about what's coming."

On Monday morning, cardinals will hold their fifth general meeting since the pope's death, at which they are expected to pick a date for the conclave.

Cardinal-electors at the secret vote will cast four votes per day until one candidate secures a two-thirds majority, a result broadcast to the waiting world by burning papers that emit white smoke.

Luxembourg Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich said last week he expected the conclave to take place on May 5 or 6 -- shortly after the nine days of papal mourning, which ends on May 4.

German Cardinal Reinhard

Marx told reporters on Saturday the conclave would last just "a few days".

Francis's funeral was held in St Peter's Square in bright spring sunshine, a mix of solemn ceremony and an outpouring of emotion for the Church's first Latin American pope.

More crowds gathered on

understand. I don't think the next pope can be the same but I hope he will have an open mind and be realistic about the challenges in the world right now."

A couple of hours after opening, the large basilica was heaving, the crowds periodically shushed over speakers.

Many of the mourners expressed



People attend mass for the Vatican workers, following the funeral for Pope Francis, in St Peter's Square at the Vatican yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Sunday to view his simple marble tomb at the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, his favourite church in Rome.

Francis was buried in an alcove of the church, becoming the first pope in more than a century to be interred outside the Vatican.

It was very emotional" to see his tomb, said 49-year-old Peruvian Tatiana Alva, who wiped away tears after joining hundreds of others filing past the burial place.

"He was very kind, humble. He used language young people could

hope that the next pope would follow Francis's example, at a time of widespread global conflict and growing hard-right populism.

More than 220 of the Church's 252 cardinals were at Saturday's funeral. They will gather again on Sunday afternoon at Santa Maria Maggiore to pay their respects at Francis's tomb.

Only cardinals under the age of 80 are eligible to vote in the conclave. There are 135 currently eligible -- most of whom Francis appointed himself.



PANAMA, SUEZ

Trump seeks 'free' transit for US ships

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump on Saturday urged free transit for American commercial and military ships through the Panama and Suez canals.

Trump has for months been calling for the United States to take control of the Panama Canal but his social media post also shifted focus onto the vital Suez route.

"American Ships, both Military and Commercial, should be allowed to travel, free of charge, through the Panama and Suez Canals!" he wrote on his Truth Social platform.

He claimed both routes would "not exist" without the United States and said he had asked Secretary of State Marco Rubio to "immediately take care of" the situation.

The United States and China are two of the top users of the Panama Canal.

Egypt's Suez Canal, a key waterway linking Europe and Asia, accounted for about 10 percent of global maritime trade before attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels on shipping routes in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

DHAKA MONDAY APRIL 28, 2025

BAISHAKH 15, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

5

VANCOUVER CAR RAMMING

Cops rule out terrorism link after 9 killed

AFP, Vancouver

A driver killed at least nine people when he ploughed a vehicle through a crowd at a Filipino cultural celebration in Vancouver, police in the Canadian city said yesterday.

The Filipino community had gathered in Vancouver's Sunset on Fraser neighbourhood on Saturday evening when festivalgoers were hit.

"We can confirm nine people have died after a man drove through a crowd at last night's Lupu Lupu Festival," Vancouver police said on X.

The festival, which commemorates a Filipino anti-colonial leader from the 16th century, falls this year on the weekend before Canada's election.

Police said they have arrested a "lone suspect" -- a 30-year-old man from Vancouver who was known to them -- and were not treating the incident as an "act of terrorism."

Prime Minister Mark Carney said he was "devastated" by the "horrific events."

Footage posted online and verified by AFP shows a black SUV with a damaged hood parked on a street littered with debris, meters from first aiders tending to people lying on the ground.

Eyewitness Dale Selipe told the Vancouver Sun that she saw injured children on the street after the vehicle rammed into the crowd.

"There was a lady with her eyes staring up, one of her legs was already broken. One person was holding her hand trying to comfort her," Selipe told the newspaper.

"We are still finding the words to express the deep heartbreak brought on by this senseless tragedy," community group Filipino BC, the organizer of the Saturday event, said in an Instagram statement.

Canadians go to the polls today after a frenetic election race where candidates have wooed voters on issues including rising living costs and tackling US President Donald Trump's tariffs.

Carney is favoured to win after assuring voters he can stand up to Washington's barrage of sweeping tariffs.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Jail Super
Bhola District Jail, Bhola.

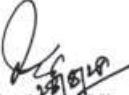
Date : 24.04.2025

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the national e-GP portal:

Sl No	Tender ID No.	Tender/Proposal Package Name	Publishing and Closing Date & Time
03.	1102432	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-3 for the Period of 01 January'2025 to 30 June'2025	Publishing : 24-April 2025 Time 17:00 Closing : 08 May 2025 Time 12:10 Opening : 08 May 2025 Time 12:10
10.	1102432	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-11 for the Period of 01 January'2025 to 30 June'2025	Publishing : 24-April 2025 Time 17:00 Closing : 08 May 2025 Time 12:10 Opening : 08 May 2025 Time 12:10

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 Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)


Shawkat Hossen Mia
Jail Super
Bhola District Jail.

GD-1001

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Dev. Board

Directorate of Purchase
WAPDA Building (9th Floor)
Motijheel C/A, Dhaka
Phone No. 223383081
E-mail: dir_purchase@bpdb.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of:

Sl No	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Reference No.	Description of Goods/ Works	Last Selling Date and time	Closing Date and time	Opening Date and time
01	1103617	EE-GRL-13 Lot-1 FY-24-25	27.11.0000.304.25. 123.25 Date: 27/04/2025	11/0.4kv,250kVA Dist. Transformer-50 Nos (Tongi Store)	22-May-2025 13:00	22-May-2025 14:00	22-May-2025 14:00
02	1103634	EE-GRL-13 Lot-2 FY-24-25	27.11.0000.304.25. 124.25 Date: 27/04/2025	11/0.4kv,200kVA Dist. Transformer-50 Nos (Fauzderhat Store)	22-May-2025 13:00	22-May-2025 14:00	22-May-2025 14:00

These are online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted.

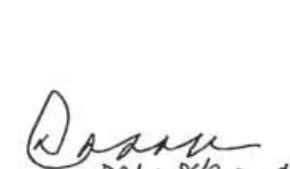
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank Branches.

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

For more details please contact to the PE's Support Desk (01768595879).

বিদ্যুৎ / জন-১১১৮(৩)/২৭/০৪/২০২৫


Md. Nurul Miah
ID No. 1-01304
Director
Directorate of Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka

KHULNA SHIPYARD LIMITED
BANGLADESH NAVY, KHULNA

PHONE NO: PABX 02-47772003
E-mail: ocimf.ksl@gmail.com, Web: www.khulnashipyard.gov.bd

BABE (F) - 337/PPGHMB/2024-2025/07
DATE: 27 April 2025

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

01	Procuring Entity Name	Khulna Shipyard Limited, Bangladesh Navy, Khulna	
02	Invitation For	Pipe & Fittings, Bottom Plug, Zinc Anode, A-Bolard, Rope, Galley Items, Hatch, Manhole, Lighting Arrangement & Fire Alarm	
03	Invitation Reference No.	BABE (F) - 337/PPGHMB/2024-2025 DATE: 27/04/2025	
04	Procuring Method	Open Tender (Two Envelope System)	
05	Budget & Source of Funds	Khulna Shipyard Limited Fund	
06	Tender Last Selling Date	27 May 2025	
07	Tender Closing Date & Time	28 May 2025 Time:1115am	
08	Tender Opening Date & Time	Date: 28 May 2025 Time:1130am	
09	Name & Address of the Office for Selling of Tender Documents:-	(i) Cash Section, Khulna Shipyard Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Khulna. (ii) Naval Store Sub Depot, Khilkhet Nama Para, Khilkhet, Dhaka.	
10	Receiving & Opening Tender	Khulna Shipyard Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Khulna (Tenderer's and their Authorized Representatives are allowed to attend)	
11	Price of Tender Document	Per set 3,000.00 (Tk. Three Thousand) Non-refundable.	
12	Contact Details of Official	Mob: +8801674950715 Email: ocimf.ksl@gmail.com	
13	Special Instructions	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all or any Tenders prior to acceptance without showing any reason.	

GD-1006 Manager Admin

Laws alone can't save women from rape

Mass awareness campaigns vital to prevent gender-based violence

Yet another young life has been lost because of society's failure to protect women and girls. A college student, who had been gang raped six weeks ago, was found dead at her parents' home in Dhaka on Saturday night. Police suspect that the girl—daughter of a martyr of the July-August uprising—died by suicide. Reportedly, she had been raped by two men in Patuakhali's Dumki upazila on March 18 when she was returning to her maternal grandparents' home after visiting her father's grave. A case was later filed, and the accused were arrested. However, they had allegedly also taken photos of the victim and threatened to post them online if she reported the incident, according to the case file.

Prothom Alo reported that following her death, the girl's family filed an unnatural death case with the Adabor police station in Dhaka, quoting a police source who said they would investigate whether she had received threats from the alleged perpetrators. According to a report in this daily, the incident had left the girl deeply traumatised and she had been undergoing treatment. But is counselling enough when society at large constantly points fingers at rape survivors?

It is this very attitude—the deeply entrenched misogyny—that gives criminals the power to use rape and sexual violence as a weapon. How else can we explain the 105 gang rapes recorded last year and the 64 in just the first three months of this year (according to *Ain o Salish Kendra*)? Among the survivors of rape or gang rape, seven died by suicide in 2024, while two deaths by suicide were recorded between January and March. What's worse is that the majority of the victims are girls under 18.

We can blame our justice system—the slow legal process, the extremely low rape conviction rate, or the state's failure to provide comprehensive and free legal, medical, and psychological support—for the situation. But an unspoken truth remains: we, as a society, have failed to teach our men to respect women and see them as human beings, not commodities, not objects on which they can exercise power at will. As parents, we have failed to instil the right values in our sons, while simultaneously creating an environment where our daughters feel ashamed of their very existence.

While we hope the government takes appropriate measures to ensure that the Patuakhali victim's family gets justice swiftly, it must do much more for the millions of girls who do not feel safe or respected enough as human beings. Patriarchy must be fought and toxic masculinity uprooted through mass campaigns, education, and proper enforcement of laws to prevent misogynistic content and behaviour online, in social settings, and in religious sermons. Unless men learn to see women as equals, which they are, we will continue to lose precious lives like that of this college girl.

Address water crisis in Rangamati hills

Pliage of women carrying pitchers calls for interventions

When we discuss water crisis in rural Bangladesh, we often talk about the coastal belt where approximately three crore people across 19 districts are said to lack access to safe drinking water. Women in these districts, including Khulna, Satkhira, and Bagerhat, often walk for miles carrying pitchers in search of water, their pliage exacerbated by rising sea levels and erratic weather patterns that have pushed saltwater further inland, contaminating more groundwater sources. While this crisis is rightly recognised, even if solutions continue to be elusive, the pliage of communities in the hills—including women—who also suffer from a similar crisis remains largely absent from national conversations.

A recent report by this daily rightly turns the focus on women in Rangamati hills. Aptly titled "Drops of water, waves of suffering," the report highlights the dual crisis involving shrinking water sources and women's backbreaking journeys to them. Women and girls in remote villages and hamlets have to walk for hours and miles to fetch water from wells that are steadily drying up. There are physical and emotional toll to be paid for these exhaustive trips: chronic back and knee pain, injuries, and dangers from wild animals and slippery trails. Another toll of this invisible labour involves risks of gender-based violence and missed opportunities for female students. In some areas, the crisis is so severe that villagers must cross rivers by boat to reach water sources.

Unfortunately, this daily grind of women carrying heavy pitchers remains largely unrecognised, and unaddressed. Even though people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have historically struggled with water scarcity, thanks to limited or unequal access to wells, springs, and streams, the crisis has been exacerbated by deforestation and environmental degradation, unsustainable agricultural practices, and, of course, climate change. The lack of more reliable water sources like tube wells or rainwater harvesting infrastructure, as well as the challenges of transporting water across mountainous terrains, are adding to their struggles. This should be addressed with priority. People in the hills need long term solutions, not scattered efforts. For them, the crisis is not just of water. Given how profoundly it impacts them, it is also a life crisis, a public health emergency, and a human rights issue.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



CBS airs Abu Ghraib prison photos

On this day in 2004, American TV network CBS aired photos taken at the American-run Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad, depicting harsh treatment of Iraqi inmates that goes against the Geneva Conventions.

Rising gas prices threaten our investment prospects



M. Shamsul Alam
is energy adviser at the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), and professor of electrical and electronic engineering at Daffodil University.

M. SHAMSUL ALAM

On April 13, 2025, despite objections from businesses and consumer rights organisations, the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) set new gas prices for new industries, raising the tariff from Tk 30 to Tk 40 per unit. For captive power plants, the tariff has been increased from Tk 31.50 to Tk 42 per unit. This increased rate will also apply to existing customers if they use more than 50 percent of their approved load.

At a time when the government has presented the country as an attractive destination for global business through the Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025, this gas price hike has caused concern among industrial consumers who are worried about investments getting stalled by increased gas prices. A business leader pointed out that the method used to determine gas prices was flawed; VAT is being imposed at both the import and distribution stages. Meanwhile, gas theft continues without effective measures to prevent it. Instead, to cover the losses, the gas price is being increased, he remarked.

This differential pricing has caused discrepancies in energy costs for similar operations, disrupted the level playing field, and weakened national competitiveness in industrial sectors—posing a threat to both domestic and foreign investments. A transparent and fair energy pricing is essential to maintain investor confidence and ensure industrial growth. The said BERC order to increase gas prices is inconsistent with the goals of economic development and attracting investment. No effective initiatives have been taken to explore our own gas resources. Instead, the government has become overly dependent on LNG imports, which primarily benefit an oligarchic class. One of the core foundations for attracting foreign investment is energy security. Repeated abnormal hikes in gas prices disrupt energy security and create uncertainty in investment security.

In Bangladesh, the ratio of private investment in terms of GDP, which has been historically underwhelming, is now on the decline. In FY2021-22, the private investment to GDP ratio was 24.52 percent. By FY2023-24, it fell down to 23.96 percent, according

to a Prothom Alo report. In the first six months of FY2024-25, foreign direct investment in the country amounted to only \$213 million, a significantly lower amount than the \$744 million during the same period the previous fiscal year. If investment cannot be increased, employment will decline, people's income will decrease, and young people will not get the jobs they hope for.

Statistics on private bank loans and the import of capital machinery also reflect stagnation in investment. In February 2025, private sector credit growth dropped to 6.82 percent—the lowest in the past 10 years. Between July 2024 and February 2025, capital machinery imports shrunk by nearly



EDITORIAL

could have been saved annually.

VAT is being charged twice in gas pricing. The BERC technical committee recommended charging VAT only once, which would reduce annual predatory expenses by approximately Tk 3,548 crore. In contrast, a 33 percent hike in gas prices for industrial and captive power use is expected to generate only about Tk 713 crore in additional annual revenue.

These figures clearly demonstrate that simply making VAT and system loss fair and reasonable could prevent predatory expenses, potentially saving Tk 14,418 crore annually. Yet, instead of eliminating these predatory costs, BERC has arbitrarily raised industrial gas prices under a separate gas pricing structure—beyond its jurisdiction.

Domestic gas supply in FY2022-23, FY2023-24, and FY2024-25 was 22,651, 21,082, and 20,067 (projected) million cubic metres, respectively. This consistent decline indicates a deepening energy crisis. Currently, LNG accounts for 25 percent of the total gas supply—a figure projected to rise to 75 percent by 2030. In light of this, the government is now

electricity, it was 209 percent. Under the current government, a 33 percent hike has already been implemented. In this context, BERC stated that gas distribution companies had proposed raising prices by over 150 percent for new industries, but acknowledged that such a jump would be too difficult to bear at this moment.

In the public hearing held in 2022, it was revealed that 65 percent of the Gas Development Fund remained unspent. Only 35 percent was used to pay foreign contractors. National capacity development was not prioritised. As a result, by 2030, 75 percent of gas supply is projected to come from LNG. This trend remains unchanged under the current administration.

Earlier on February 13, 2025, the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) sent a letter to BERC. In a press conference on February 22, CAB proposed postponing the public hearing on gas price hikes and reducing energy prices by eliminating predatory expenses. During the hearing held on February 26, CAB recommended rejecting the unjust and unreasonable gas price hike proposal. In the post-hearing report dated March 4, the following recommendations were forwarded:

i) Under the amended Section 34 Ka of the BERC Act, all pricing orders issued by the ministry concerning energy should be revoked, and new prices should be set by BERC.

ii) The total amount of predatory costs adjusted into energy pricing during the previous government's tenure should be determined, and existing rates should be reduced by excluding such costs and excessive government revenue.

iii) A tribunal led by a retired Supreme Court judge should be formed to bring energy criminals to justice.

iv) The BERC Act should be amended to ensure energy justice and protect consumer rights.

v) A reform commission under BERC, comprising stakeholder representatives, should be formed to restructure the energy sector, ensuring affordability and availability for consumers.

BERC did not respond at all to these proposals. Instead, it showed particular interest in aligning industrial gas pricing with the high cost of LNG, leading to discriminatory pricing.

It indicates that the previous government not only turned the country into a net importer of energy, but also initiated a process to make it an import-dependent market for industrial goods. Is the current government going to continue following the same trajectory?

We must diversify our trade infrastructure after India's ban



RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin
is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

Just recently, India revoked a key transhipment facility that allowed Bangladesh to export goods to third countries via Indian land borders. This is a fresh blow to Dhaka at a time when it is already potentially facing steep US tariffs on its exports, although that story is still unfolding.

In a circular, India's customs department announced the withdrawal of a 2020 provision that had permitted the movement of Bangladeshi goods through Indian land customs stations to ports and airports using containers or closed-body trucks.

Citing rising delays and logistical costs that were reportedly hampering India's own exports and creating congestion, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs defended the move as a necessity. However, the timing of the move, with so many Asian countries facing major trading challenges, is unfortunate, to say the least.

The revocation is expected to disrupt trade flows to neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar. These are routes on which Bangladeshi exporters have increasingly relied for accessing regional markets.

Bangladesh's garment industry,

the largest contributor to our export economy, typically prioritises direct sea routes to key western markets. However, the development curtails opportunities for regional integration and logistics flexibility. While the direct impact on garments may be limited, the decision nonetheless restricts regional trade potential. India remains a major trading partner for Bangladesh, and the decision signals a troubling shift in bilateral relations.

These developments have unfolded against a backdrop of political instability in Bangladesh, where former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reportedly sought temporary refuge in India following mass protests last year. The context may further complicate an already tense diplomatic environment.

What this decision ultimately means for Bangladesh's ready-made garment (RMG) industry is not so much a direct disruption to our largest export channels, but a broader signal of geopolitical vulnerability and logistical fragility.

The RMG sector, which accounts for the vast majority of Bangladesh's foreign earnings, thrives on the predictability of access. This includes access to raw

materials, ports, stable shipping routes, and markets. The removal of India's transhipment privilege undercuts one such access point, even if it is not the most critical. It introduces an element of uncertainty and reinforces the importance of transport diversification at a time when our country is being buffeted by rising global protectionism.

While most Bangladeshi garments are exported directly to the US and Europe by sea, land-based transhipment through India has been important for accessing niche markets in South Asia. For smaller and medium-sized exporters, particularly those serving Nepal and Bhutan, the now-closed facility offered a cost-effective and faster alternative to more circuitous sea and air routes. The loss of this infrastructure introduces delays, reroutes shipments, and adds financial pressure, especially on firms already operating on tight margins in a highly competitive industry.

The move also reflects an erosion of the regional trade optimism that had accompanied past agreements. For Bangladesh, whose growth increasingly depends on diversifying markets and building intra-Asian supply chains, India's decision is not just an operational hindrance; it is also a strategic setback. The promise of a more connected South Asia, where goods could flow seamlessly across borders and regional markets could develop complementary strengths, now seems further away. This is particularly frustrating for Dhaka, which has worked toward liberalising trade relations in recent years, positioning itself as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia.

In light of these changes, Bangladesh must rethink its diplomatic and industrial strategies. We can no longer afford to rely heavily on a small group of export markets and limited transit agreements. There is now an urgent need to deepen relations with alternative trade partners, particularly in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. At the same time, we must invest more heavily in domestic port infrastructure and explore regional maritime routes to bypass dependency on Indian land.

The garment industry, for its part, will need to future proof its operations by embracing resilience across multiple dimensions. This includes strengthening supply chain management to accommodate unexpected transit disruptions, enhancing factory compliance to attract new buyers under stricter sourcing standards, and adopting digital tools to gain real-time visibility into logistics networks. Garment manufacturers may also consider vertical integration or collaboration with regional partners to offset the higher costs imposed by disrupted trade corridors and protectionist tariffs.

The move by India serves as a wake-up call. The interconnectedness of geopolitics and trade logistics is becoming more pronounced, and Bangladesh's RMG sector sits squarely at the crossroads. To navigate the new terrain, we must move swiftly and decisively to position Bangladesh not just as a low-cost supplier but as a smart, adaptable, and strategic partner in global value chains.

WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

The unspoken trauma of journalists

Md Abbas
is staff reporter at The Daily Star. He can be reached at
md.abbas@thedailystar.net.

MD ABBAS

As we observe the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, attention turns to garment workers, factory safety, and workplace reforms. In Bangladesh, this day also invariably brings back haunting memories of numerous disasters, including the Rana Plaza collapse, which claimed more than 1,100 lives. It is a day dedicated to workers' rights, safety, and remembrance.

But there is another group of workers who, while not inside factories or construction sites, also live through trauma, violence, and suffering. Their pain, however, is largely invisible, unacknowledged, and rarely addressed because, typically, their workplace extends beyond the concrete walls of buildings. As such, generic workplace definitions and regulations do not apply to journalism. They witness pain, often at the frontlines of disasters, tragedies, and conflicts. Yet in Bangladesh, while we cover trauma, our own trauma remains undocumented, untreated, and mostly undiagnosed.

Consider the July 2016 Holey Artisan Bakery massacre that changed Dhaka forever. As the horror unfolded in the heart of Dhaka's diplomatic zone, reporters scrambled to cover the siege. They thronged the cul-de-sac, standing there for hours in confusion and chaos, fearing that they too might be caught in crossfire. The ones who covered the attack vividly remember the smell of gunpowder and the sound of screams. The image of bodies being carried out, and the wails of family members, remain etched in their memory.

"We stood outside for more than 14 hours. When the shooting started, we all crouched

behind walls, praying. I had to write a breaking story while shaking inside," said one photojournalist, requesting not to be named. "After that, I couldn't sleep for weeks. The sound of gunfire haunted my dreams."

A similar wave of trauma swept through the media fraternity during the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013. Reporters watched as rescuers pulled mangled bodies out of the debris, many of them children and young women. For days, journalists worked without sleep, consoling bereaved relatives, and narrating scenes too horrific for most people to imagine.

"I still remember the sound a lifeless body made when it was being pulled out. I smell dust and blood when I close my eyes," said a senior reporter who covered the Rana Plaza incident. "I had nightmares for months. Nobody ever asked how I was doing."

More recently, in 2024, journalists covered a violent conflict when the streets of Dhaka and other major cities turned into battlegrounds. Law enforcers and Awami League members turned on quota reform protesters in July and went on a shooting spree. Hundreds of students and ordinary citizens were killed, thousands more were injured. The UN estimates at least 1,400 deaths. At least five journalists were killed, and many were injured. Those who managed to make it through continue to cope with their trauma. Some will probably never recover from it.

Unlike aid workers or emergency responders, journalists have little institutional recognition when it comes to mental health

support or trauma care. In Bangladesh, there is hardly any form of psychological assistance, debriefing sessions, or even basic mental health leave. There are no safe space to talk, heal, or process the emotional toll of the job.

The first step is simple yet powerful: acknowledge that journalists, too, are workers. And they, too, deserve safety, health, and dignity at work.

The need for mental health leave, meaning days off specifically for psychological recovery after covering traumatic events, should be recognised. Just as firefighters are debriefed and given downtime after a big operation,

heart is breaking.

The first step is simple yet powerful: acknowledge that journalists, too, are workers. And they, too, deserve safety, health, and dignity at work.

The need for mental health leave, meaning days off specifically for psychological recovery after covering traumatic events, should be recognised. Just as firefighters are debriefed and given downtime after a big operation,

and others. This would help them cope, flag signs of distress or acute stress, and more sensitively cover the trauma of victims and survivors.

Media outlets and journalist unions can establish peer support groups, where journalists can meet periodically to talk, share experiences, and decompress. Sometimes, healing begins simply by talking to someone who understands.

The Press Council of Bangladesh, journalist associations like the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFU), etc must actively push for national-level guidelines recognising journalism as an emotionally high-risk profession. The information ministry can collaborate with health experts to launch media mental health initiatives.

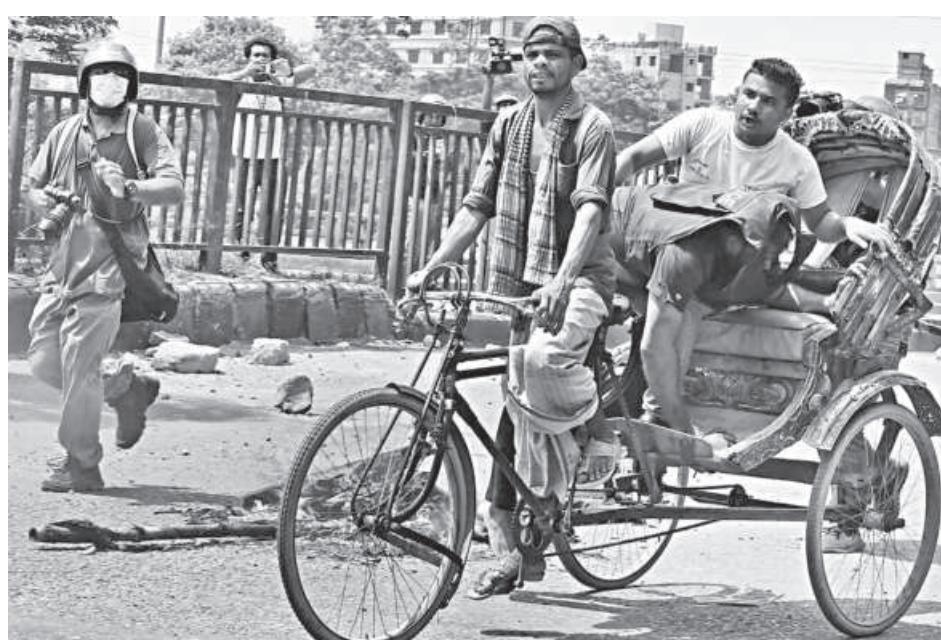
Recognising trauma is not just a matter of empathy, it impacts the quality of journalism itself. A burnt-out, emotionally fatigued journalist cannot ask the right questions or connect with the people. Trauma clouds judgement, kills curiosity, and numbs the storytelling instinct.

Moreover, untreated trauma leads to high dropout rates, especially among women journalists who face added layers of emotional stress. When the brightest and most compassionate voices leave journalism due to pain and burnout, democracy suffers.

It is also time to change the narrative. Journalists are not mere bystanders in national tragedies—they are active participants, navigating between chaos and deadlines. We document grief so others can understand it. We hold microphones in bloodied spaces. We stare at trauma, then look at the camera and hold it over to the anchor in the studio with a simple, "Back to you." The trauma, however, stays with us.

But who turns the camera on us?

So, on this World Day for Safety and Health at Work, let us expand our lens. Let us remember the survivors of Rana Plaza. Let us remember the victims of Holey Artisan. But let us also remember those who documented their stories, often at the cost of their own mental well-being.



FILE PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A man tries to save an injured journalist on a rickshaw during the July uprising in 2024.

time, the mind grows tired, the heart heavy.

The impact of vicarious trauma is well-documented globally. Journalists may develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suffer from depression, anxiety, insomnia, or emotional numbness. Some develop addictions; others quit the profession entirely.

Yet, in Bangladesh, the stoic culture of "just carry on" dominates. There is almost a macho pride in being unfazed, even when the

journalists should be also be allowed to rest. Media organisations can provide access to professional counsellors so that journalists have the option to avail therapy sessions after covering events like murders, suicides, rape cases, and disasters. Newsrooms should normalise counselling, availing which should not be perceived as weakness but as a strength.

Journalists, especially those on crime and disaster beats, should be trained on how to identify the signs of trauma in themselves

Biochar: A climate solution from the ground up

Dr Quamrul Haider
is professor emeritus at Fordham
University in New York, US.

QUAMRUL HAIDER

It is now a foregone conclusion that global warming caused by a buildup of carbon dioxide, the most important climate-warming greenhouse gas humans have been adding to the atmosphere, is, for all practical purposes, irreversible. That is because the current concentration of carbon dioxide will keep the engine of climate change running on a scale of centuries to millennia. As a result, halting our planet from heating up more will be extremely difficult to achieve, unless we go "carbon negative" as soon as possible.

Going carbon negative means removing more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than adding it. It requires effective use of carbon dioxide removal technologies,

Another area of concern with DAC is energy efficiency. Carbon dioxide is not a very reactive molecule, so extracting it is both energy and resource intensive.

At its most basic, BECCS involves growing crops, burning them to generate electricity, capturing the carbon dioxide emitted during combustion and storing it deep down into the Earth's crust. However, it is essential to exercise caution to ensure that the emissions resulting from the cultivation, harvesting, transportation, and processing of biomass do not exceed the amount of carbon dioxide captured by the crops. Besides, there are concerns for the safety of the storage of carbon dioxide in huge volumes over a long

mitigation, and environmental sustainability.

Biochar is a durable, carbon-rich substance created via pyrolysis, which involves the thermal breakdown of organic materials in an environment with limited oxygen. It has long been recognised for its ability to improve the health of soil and sequester carbon dioxide. Most importantly, biochar can help address climate change because it is one of the several techniques that target carbon dioxide.

As plants grow, they breathe in carbon dioxide from the air, using the carbon they absorb to build their tissues. Then they die and rot or decompose, releasing carbon dioxide into the air again. But if the decomposed plants are turned into biochar, carbon dioxide is instead converted into a solid, which can stay locked in the soil for many years. In this way, plants become one kind of carbon removal engine, drawing climate-warming carbon dioxide out of the air and storing it in the ground.

Biochar can be produced from various types of waste materials,

catch fire, and their carbon does not turn into carbon dioxide and escape into the air. Instead, the wastes are converted into biochar.

Depending on the operating temperature, the process also yields a liquid called tar or a gas called syngas. These byproducts can be combusted to generate the necessary heat for the continued functioning of the pyrolyser. Consequently, a pyrolyser can sustain its operation or generate additional fuel or energy for commercial purposes.

Once produced, biochar can be added to the soil. It can be applied in various ways, including being sprinkled on the surface, incorporated into the soil in layers or holes, or blended with compost or seeds. The carbon contained in the biochar has the potential to remain in the soil and be sequestered for a prolonged duration. According to Our World in Data, a non-profit online publication that focuses on global problems and trends, biochar can offset the equivalent of up to three gigatons of carbon dioxide each year by 2050, which is like shutting down 800 coal-

fired power plants.

The most significant characteristic of biochar is its capacity to enhance the structure of the soil, retain water, and increase the availability of nutrients. It functions similarly to a sponge, effectively retaining vital nutrients and minimising the reliance on chemical fertilisers. Furthermore, its porous structure supports microbial activity, thus promoting healthier soil ecosystems.

Biochar presents an environmentally friendly approach to improving characteristics of the soil, especially in sandy, acidic, and nutrient-deficient soils that typically experience challenges with water retention and loss of nutrients.

The production of biochar commonly utilises feedstocks such as rice husks, cassava peels, and various agricultural by-products, which are favoured for their accessibility and effectiveness in generating high-quality biochar. These biochars, sourced from agricultural waste, are particularly valued for their environmental sustainability and low production costs. For example, rice husk biochar is recognised for

its ability to enhance the fertility of soil and improve water retention capabilities. Likewise, cassava peel biochar is extensively employed in tropical areas due to its capacity to improve soil structure and nutrient availability. Moreover, biochar derived from agricultural residues like straw, sawdust, and coconut shells is increasingly utilised for sequestering carbon dioxide and enhancing the quality of soil, particularly in regions where the management of organic waste is a significant concern.

The primary obstacle facing biochar is its cost and the fact that it is not a universally applicable solution. Compared to other soil amendments such as fertilisers or compost, biochar is generally more expensive, which complicates its mass production. For biochar to develop into a significant industry capable of contributing meaningfully to the mitigation of climate change, it will be essential to pursue innovative methods that enhance its affordability and efficiency.

Finally, biochar fits the bill *kanta tola!*



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

A worker in Peru prepares to grind biochar made from bamboo residues.

such as direct air capture (DAC), or bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), or biochar fuel to mitigate residual emissions.

A challenge for DAC is that the atmosphere blanketing the Earth is very big, and carbon dioxide is a relatively small part of it, about 0.04 percent. Hence, the technology will work effectively only in the vicinity of power plants where carbon dioxide is emitted in large concentrations.

timescale at a single location due to the possibility of leakages, which can lead to contamination of the environment.

Lately, biochar has gone from being a highly theoretical proposal to being one of the most viable negative emissions technologies. It has gained considerable attention in recent years for its potential to address pressing challenges in agriculture, climate change

ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208
PRESS TENDER NOTICE

Tender Ref.: EDCL (Dhaka)/PUR/PT/2025/154

Date: 27/04/2025

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from the reputed Contractor / Organization / Construction firm for Construction of WIP & Airlock Corridor Room extention from existing Building for successful completion of related similar works in any single work worth of Govt. / Semi Govt. / Autonomous bodies /private organizations during the last 5(five) years.

Name of the Item	Ernest Money	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & Opening
Construction, Supply, Installation & Periodic maintenance of WIP & Airlock Corridor Room extention from existing Building at EDCL, Bogura Plant. (Details as per Tender Schedule)	TK.5% of quoted amount	Tk.1,250.00/set (Non-Refundable)	Closing : 16/05/2025 at 12.00PM Opening : 20/05/2025 at 12.30PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL), Bogura on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money as mentioned above in the form of Bank Draft/ Pay Order from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of "Essential Drugs Company Ltd." without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive.

The interested bidder may drop their offer along with relevant paper to the tender box kept of Purchase Department of EDCL, Dhaka & EDCL, Bogura.12:00 PM on 16/05/2025. Which will be opened on 20/05/2025 at EDCL, Dhaka office at 12:30PM (Subject to receive of offer from Bogura).

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

General Manager (CC)
Procurement Department
For: Managing Director

(5" X 8)

Coppola receives AFI Life Achievement Award, 'The Godfather' stars pay tribute

Francis Ford Coppola has been honoured with the prestigious AFI Life Achievement Award, the American Film Institute's highest accolade. The 86-year-old filmmaker, known for *The Godfather* franchise, *Apocalypse Now* and *Megalopolis*, received the award from Steven Spielberg and George Lucas.

At the ceremony, veteran actors Al Pacino and Robert De Niro paid tribute. Pacino, 85, recalled almost being fired from *The Godfather* before Coppola fought for him, thanking him for believing in him more than he believed in himself. De Niro, 81, said not being cast in the first film allowed him to star in *The Godfather Part II*, changing his career and life.

Spielberg praised *The Godfather* as the "greatest American film ever made", while Lucas admired Coppola's fearless spirit.

Celebrities such as Adam Driver, Harrison Ford, Morgan Freeman, Dustin Hoffman, Ron Howard, Spike Lee and Diane Lane also shared their admiration for the filmmaker. Past AFI honourees include Orson Welles, Meryl Streep, and Denzel Washington.



FTII restores and releases Ritwik Ghatak's film 'Fear' in 4K

The Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) has released a newly restored 4K version of *Fear* (1965), a lesser-known short film directed by legendary filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak.

Now available on FTII's official YouTube channel, this restoration offers cinephiles and students a rare look into Ghatak's haunting early work.

Originally conceived as a training project for acting students, *Fear* features performances by

Subhash Ghai, Sudha Rani, Urvashi Dutta, Govardhan Sharma, and Asrani – all of whom later became significant names in Indian cinema.

FTII's restoration of *Fear* is part of its effort to preserve alumni works through the National Film Heritage Mission, digitising and sharing rare early films on YouTube.

They notably unearthed rare early works featuring talents like Irrfan Khan and Rajkumar Hirani.

Bangladeshi short 'Another World' headed to Golden FEMI Film Festival

Bangladeshi short film *Another World*, directed by KM Sohag Rana, has been selected as a finalist for Bulgaria's prestigious Golden FEMI Film Festival.

The festival's Artistic Director Efemja Fard confirmed the selection in an official letter on April 19.

The awards ceremony will be held on June 7 at the Royal Hall of the Sofia Balkan Palace Hotel, with Bulgaria's Vice President Iliana Iotova attending as honorary patron.

Another World tells the story of two orphaned brothers, portrayed by real-life street children from Dhaka's Uttara area. The film also stars GM Masud and Marzia.

Fuad Bin Alamgir served as the cinematographer for the film, while Mahfuz Leon was responsible for editing and colour grading.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Play: 'Ekti Loukik Athoba Aloukik Steamer'

Dhaka Theatre's 49th production, *Ekti Loukik Athoba Aloukik Steamer*, written by Anon Zaman and directed by Shahiduzzaman Selim, explores a city gripped by a pandemic. Set at a ferry terminal where a steamer never arrives, the play symbolically unveils fear, corruption, and social decay in a collapsing society.

Date: Today | April 28

Time: 7pm-8:35pm

Venue: National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy



'Neelchokro' receives 'U' certification

A few days ago, through the release of a 19-second video, Arifin Shuvoo subtly hinted that he would appear on the silver screen this Eid-ul-Azha. Although Shuvoo did not explicitly mention a release during Eid in the video clip, it was later understood that the clip was a strategic announcement regarding the release of the film *Neelchokro*.

Following the video's release, the film's director, Mithu Khan, confirmed that *Neelchokro* has received a 'U' (Universal) certificate from the Film Certification Board. This means *Neelchokro* will be suitable for audiences of all ages.

Advances in technology have fuelled new addictions, with many falling into traps set for personal gain—*Neelchokro* explores this very theme.

Apart from Arifin Shuvoo, the film stars Mondera Chakraborty, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Priyonee Urbi, and Shahed Ali, amongst others.

Greta Gerwig's 'Narnia' finds its White Witch in Emma Mackey

Emma Mackey is set to reunite with director Greta Gerwig for Netflix's upcoming *Narnia* series adaptation, playing the White Witch in *The Magician's Nephew*.

Mackey, who appeared in Gerwig's *Barbie*, will portray the iconic villain first brought to life by Tilda Swinton in the 2005 movie *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Gerwig, who is writing and directing the film, will focus on the White Witch's rise to power.

The movie will have a two-week IMAX release on Thanksgiving 2026 before streaming on Netflix for Christmas.

Netflix has been developing its *Narnia* projects since 2018, officially bringing Gerwig on board in 2020 after her success with *Lady Bird*, *Little Women*, and the billion-dollar hit *Barbie*.

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NEWS

Qatar PM

FROM PAGE 12

March, with the two sides unable to agree on the next steps, Israel resumed air and ground attacks across the Gaza Strip on March 18 after earlier halting the entry of aid.

Since then, Israeli strikes across Gaza have killed at least 2,151 people.

Meanwhile, the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza yesterday announced that the death toll from the war had risen to more than 52,000 people, after hundreds previously listed as missing

were confirmed dead.

"An additional 697 martyrs have been added to the cumulative statistics after their data was completed and verified by the committee monitoring missing persons," the health ministry said in a statement, giving the overall toll of 52,243.

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli strikes yesterday killed at least eight people, including a 17-year-old who died in an attack on a southern town. Dozens were also injured in the strikes, it added.

2025, the outstanding dues, including interest, stand at Tk 2,179.95 crore.

The same branch of the bank on April 20 called for the auction of 11 acres of land, including S Alam Group's sugar mills, to recover Tk 9,948 crore in unpaid loans.

Repeated attempts to reach Jamal Uddin, manager of Islami Bank's Khatunganj branch, via mobile phone were unsuccessful.

The bank claims that as of April 20,

Bank puts

FROM PAGE 1

directors Halima Begum, Sampad Kumar Basak, and Hasan Iqbal, S Alam Power Generation's Chairman Touhidul Alam, Managing Director Mohammad Shahidul Alam, directors Mohammad Abdullah Hasan and Eklhasur Rahman, S Alam Vegetable Oil Chairman Shahidul Alam and Managing Director Farzana Parveen.

The bank claims that as of April 20,

India eyes 'retaliation'

FROM PAGE 12

The Indian military yesterday held naval drills – releasing images of warships firing missiles – while the country's security forces pressed on with their hunt for those behind the April 22 attack at a tourist hotspot in Pahalgam.

The military also blamed Pakistan for the "unprovoked" firing of small arms along Kashmir's Line of Control that separates the two countries.

"(Our) own troops responded effectively with appropriate small arms fire," it said of the latest incident, which has not been reported by Pakistan.

Indian police have issued wanted posters for three men – two Pakistanis and an Indian – who they say are members of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba group, a UN-designated terrorist organisation.

Meanwhile, India's federal home ministry has handed over the attack probe to the National Investigation Agency, which focuses on counter-terrorism.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday reiterated his pledge that the Pahalgam victims "will get justice".

Modi, in his monthly radio address to the nation, also said that those behind the terror attack in Pahalgam would face the "harshest response" and that the whole world was standing with India in the fight against terrorism.

On Saturday, Pakistan's Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the country was "open to participating in any neutral, transparent and credible investigation" into the attack. However, he warned against any provocations.

Yesterday, Pakistan's army said its soldiers killed "54 militants" who had tried to enter the country by crossing its northwestern border with Afghanistan.

The "group of jihadis was specifically infiltrating on behalf of their foreign masters" to undertake high-profile terrorist activities inside Pakistan, it said, adding that 54 militants had been killed.

"Such actions by (jihadists), at a time when India is levelling baseless accusations against Pakistan, clearly imply on whose cues (the jihadis are) operating," it said.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947. Both claim the territory in full but govern separate portions of it.

In the aftermath of the attack, New Delhi suspended a water-sharing treaty, announced the closure of the main land border crossing with Pakistan, downgraded diplomatic ties, and withdrew visas for Pakistanis.

In response, Islamabad has ordered the expulsion of Indian diplomats and military advisers, cancelling visas for Indian nationals – with the exception of Sikh pilgrims – and closing the main border crossing from its side.

Dhaka agrees

FROM PAGE 1

Currently, around 1.2 million Rohingya are living in Bangladesh.

Touhid said while Dhaka cannot officially maintain contact with the Arakan Army, which controls over 80 percent of Rakhine, it "cannot remain detached even if we want to" due to security concerns along the Myanmar border.

Asked about the ongoing tensions between nuclear armed neighbours India and Pakistan, Touhid said Dhaka seeks a negotiated settlement.

"Our position is very clear. We want peace in South Asia. We are aware of the longstanding rivalry between Pakistan and India. We would expect the two countries to resolve the problem through dialogue," he said, responding to media queries at the foreign ministry.

"We have good relations with both India and Pakistan," the adviser added.

India-Pakistan relations deteriorated sharply after a terrorist attack last week killed 26 people and injured 17 in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

India accused Pakistan of supporting "cross-border terrorism," while Islamabad denied any involvement, calling the allegations "frivolous".

The Resistance Front (TRF), a coalition of organisations, said some countries had already proposed mediation.

"I don't think, at this moment, we should try that. If any party wants, then we can go for mediation. We don't want to do anything on our own."

"In whatever ways, through mediation or bilateral discussion, we want the tension to diffuse and peace established," he added.

ARRESTS OF 'BANGLADESHIS' IN INDIA

Asked about the reported arrests of suspected undocumented Bangladeshi workers in India, the adviser said the foreign ministry had not yet received any official communication from New Delhi.

On Saturday, international outlets reported that over a thousand "undocumented Bangladeshi" were arrested in Ahmedabad and Surat in India.

"Even if there is official communication, whether they are Bangladeshi or not is subject to verification. There are also Bangladeshi people in India. If they are from Bangladesh and that is proven, we will bring them back," Touhid said.

Although there is no travel advisory against visiting India, he advised Bangladeshi to avoid travelling there unless necessary.

In the aftermath of the attack, New Delhi suspended a water-sharing treaty, announced the closure of the main land border crossing with Pakistan, downgraded diplomatic ties, and withdrew visas for Pakistanis.

In response, Islamabad has ordered the expulsion of Indian diplomats and military advisers, cancelling visas for Indian nationals – with the exception of Sikh pilgrims – and closing the main border crossing from its side.

Maiden cargo flight departs Sylhet airport

FROM PAGE 2

Khalil, public relations officer at Ctg airport, told The Daily Star yesterday.

To facilitate cargo flight operations, the airport authority has begun installing scanners, improving infrastructure, constructing cold storage facilities, and recruiting additional manpower, Ibrahim added.

Shakil Meraj, Director (Cargo) of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, told The Daily Star, Biman has already recruited necessary manpower to provide ground handling services on cargo flights.

The airport is already prepared for exporting cargo items to different

countries except for EU destinations. Now, necessary steps are being taken to export goods to EU countries."

Welcoming the initiative, Khairel Alam Suzan, vice president of the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association, told The Daily Star, "The government's move to start direct cargo flights from Chattogram opens the door to a new opportunity. To fulfil this initiative, all stakeholders, both public and private, must work in unison."

Several Chattogram-based businesspeople noted that the region is the second-largest hub for

Bangladesh's ready-made garment industry. Due to the lack of direct cargo flights, exporters from this area previously had to route shipments through Dhaka or third countries, increasing time, cost, and hassle.

Emirates SkyCargo, Etihad, Kuwait Airways, Thai Airways, and SilkAir once operated cargo flights via Shah Amanat International Airport. However, these operations gradually ceased, and the last remaining Emirates SkyCargo flight service was also discontinued in 2022.

[Our Sylhet correspondent contributed to this report.]

Ishraque new DSCC mayor

FROM PAGE 12

previous announcement made by the EC that had declared Awami League's candidate Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh as the elected mayor.

A notification was issued in this regard today signed by Akhter Ahmed, senior secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat.

According to the notification, following an order issued on March 27, by the Election Tribunal and Dhaka Joint District Sessions Judge 1st Court, the election win of Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, who contested with the "boat" symbol in the mayoral election held on February 1, 2020, has been cancelled.

In his place, Ishraque Hossain, who contested with the "sheaf of paddy" symbol, has been officially declared the

elected mayor.

Earlier, on April 22, the EC had sought the opinion of the law ministry whether a gazette notification should be issued declaring Ishraque as mayor of Dhaka South.

After receiving a positive response from the law ministry, the chief election commissioner held a meeting with other commissioners and officials, during which the decision to issue the amended gazette was finalised later that night.

On March 27, a court verdict annulled the results of the 2020 DSCC election and declared Ishraque Hossain, son of former mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, as the new mayor.

The DSCC election was held on February 1, 2020, alongside the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC)

election.

Taposh secured 424,595 votes while Ishraque received 236,512 votes.



A worker tends to lichies at an orchard in Rajshahi yesterday. According to the owners, lichies will be available in the markets within a week. They said the yield has been good across the district, and they expect a good profit.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

N 88, 08, 2680, 060, 02, 007, 25, 22

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
স্বাক্ষর মন্ত্রণালয়
বাংলাদেশ কোস্ট গার্ড
আগারগাঁও প্রশাসনিক এলাকা
শের-ই-বালো নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭
www.coastguard.gov.bd

তারিখ: ২৪ এপ্রিল ২০২৫

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ কোস্ট গার্ড অসমীয়াক জনবলের নিয়ন্ত্রিত রাজস্বাত্ত্বে শূন্য পদে অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে বিদ্যমানভাবে সরাসরি নিয়োগের জন্য শর্তাবলীকে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিয়ন্ত্রিত হিতে অনলাইনে (<http://bcg.teletalk.com.bd>) নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে আবেদনপত্র আহান করা যাচ্ছে। অনলাইন (Online) বাস্তুত অন্য কোন রাখাখে প্রেরিত আবেদন প্রাপ্ত করা হবে না:

ক্র. নং	গোবর নাম, প্রেত ও বৈতান ক্ষেত্র	গোবর সংখ্যা ও ধরণ	প্রযোজনীয় মোক্ষ্যতা
(ক)	(খ)	(গ)	(ঘ)
১।	সীটলিপিকার-কাম- কলিপ্টার অপারেটর (প্রেত- ১০) ১১০০০-২৬৫৯০	০১(এক) টি স্বার্যী পদ	(ক) কোনো শীকৃত বিদ্যবিদ্যালয় হিতে অনুন দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিজিপিএতে মাত্রক বা সমমানের তিনি; এবং (খ) কলিপ্টার ব্যবহারে দক্ষতা।
২।	সীটম্বুক্সুরিক-কাম- কলিপ্টার অপারেটর (প্রেত- ১৪) ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০	০২(দুই) টি স্বার্যী পদ	(ক) কোনো শীকৃত বিদ্যবিদ্যালয় হিতে অনুন দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিজিপিএতে মাত্রক বা সমমানের তিনি; এবং (খ) কলিপ্টার ব্যবহারে দক্ষতা।
৩।	ইউ.ডি.কলিপ্টার অপারেটর (প্রেত- ১৪) ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০	০৩(তিনি) টি স্বার্যী পদ	(ক) কোনো শীকৃত বিদ্যবিদ্যালয় হিতে যে কোন বিভাগে অনুন ২য় শ্রেণির মাত্রক তিনি; এবং (খ) কলিপ্টার পরিচালনায় মানসম্পর্ক জ্ঞান।
৪।	ধর্মীয় শিক্ষক (প্রেত- ১৪) ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০	০১(এক) টি স্বার্যী পদ	(ক) কোনো শীকৃত মাধ্যমা বোর্ড হিতে অনুন ২য় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিজিপিএসহ ফাইজিল পর্যায় উত্তীর্ণ হিতে হিতে; (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কামে অনুন ২ (দুই) বস্তরের বাস্তৰ অভিজ্ঞতা; (গ) হাফেজ বা বারীগানকে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হিতে; এবং (ঘ) সুন্নিতি বক্তরে অধিকারী হিতে হিতে।
৫।	অটোমেকানিক (প্রেত- ১৪) ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০	০২(দুই) টি স্বার্যী পদ	(ক) কোনো শীকৃত বোর্ড হিতে মাধ্যমিক কুল সার্টিফিকেট (এস.এস.সি) বা সমমানের পর্যাকার্য অনুন ২য় বিভাগে উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) কোন শীকৃত কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (টি.টি.সি) বা ইনসিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান হিতে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিদ্যমান ১(এক) বৎসর সেয়ানি অনুন ২য় শ্রেণির ছেড় কোর্স সনদপ্রাপ্ত।
৬।	ড্রাইভার (প্রেত- ১৫) ৯৭০০-২৩৪৯০	১০(তেরো) টি স্বার্যী পদ	(ক) কোনো শীকৃত বোর্ড হিতে জুনিয়র কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পর্যাকার্য উত্তীর্ণ; (খ) ভারী গাড়ি চালনার বৈধ ভারী ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্স; এবং (গ) অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পর্কে চালকগন অগ্রাধিকার পাইকেনে।
৭।	ইলেক্ট্রিশিয়ান (প্রেত- ১৬) ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০	০১(এক) টি স্বার্যী পদ	(ক) কোনো শীকৃত বোর্ড হিতে জিআন বিভাগে মাধ্যমিক কুল সার্টিফিকেট (এস.এস.সি) বা সমমানের পর্যাকার্য অনুন ২য় বিভাগে উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) কোন শীকৃত কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (টি.টি.সি) বা ইনসিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান হিতে অটো ইলেক্ট্রিশিয়ান সনদপ্রাপ্ত।
৮।	অফিস সহকারী-কাম- কলিপ্টার মুদ্রাকরিক (প্রেত- ১৬) ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০	০১(এক) টি স্বার্যী পদ	(ক) কোনো শীকৃত বোর্ড হিতে অনুন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পর্যাকার্য উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) কলিপ্টার ব্যবহারে দক্ষতা।
৯।	অফিস সহযোগী (প্রেত- ২০) ৮২৫০-২০০১০	০৩(তিনি) টি স্বার্যী পদ	কোনো শীকৃত বোর্ড হিতে অনুন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের পর্যাকার্য উত্তীর্ণ।

আবেদনের শর্তবিলি:

- প্রার্থীকে অবস্থাই বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিক হতে হবে।
- ০১/০৪/২০২৫ টারিখে প্রার্থীদের বয়সমীলা ১৮-৩২ বছর হতে হবে। ক্রঃ নং ১,২ এবং ৮-এ উল্লিখিত গোবরের জন্য বিভাগীয় প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে
বয়সমীলা ৪০(চারিমাত্র) বৎসর পর্যন্ত নিখিলযোগ। তবে,
(ক) বয়স নির্ধারণের ক্ষেত্রে আবেদনের শেষ তারিখের মধ্যে সরকার কর্তৃক জারিকৃত সর্বশেষ প্রজ্ঞাপন প্রযোজ্য হবে।
(খ) বয়স প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে কোন কোর্ট প্রকার এক্ষেত্রে প্রক্রিয়া হবে না।
- আবেদনকারীকে তার সর্বশেষ অভিজ্ঞতা ব্যোগাত্মকভাবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
- নির্ধারিত ভর্তুল অনুযায়ী সকল পদের লিখিত ও মৌখিক পর্যাকার্য এবং প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহারিক পর্যাকার্য অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। লিখিত/মৌখিক/
ব্যবহারিক/অন্য কোন পর্যাকার্য অংশগ্রহণের স্বাক্ষর করার টিএভিড্বিল্ডেন্ট প্রদান করা হবে।
- অসভা/কুল তথ্য সংবলিত উল্লিখিত আবেদনপত্রে কোন কারণ দর্শনার ব্যাখ্যাকে আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন হবে।
প্রার্থী কর্তৃক মাধ্যমিক কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পর্যাকার্য উত্তীর্ণ এবং
কোন প্রকার প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে।
- মৌখিক পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কিত সকল প্রকার সুযোগসূচীক সম্পর্কে, অভিজ্ঞত হতে হবে:
(ক) প্রযোজ্য পর্যাকার্য ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে;
(খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কামে অনুন ২ (দুই) বস্তরের বাস্তৰ অভিজ্ঞতা;
(গ) হাফেজ বা বারীগানকে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হিতে; এবং
(ঘ) সুন্নিতি বক্তরে অধিকারী হিতে হিতে।
- মৌখিক পর্যাকার্য ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে:
(ক) বয়স প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে;
(খ) কোন শীকৃত কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (টি.টি.সি) বা ইনসিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান
হিতে অটো ইলেক্ট্রিশিয়ান সনদপ্রাপ্ত।
- মৌখিক পর্যাকার্য ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে:
(ক) বয়স প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে;
(খ) কোন শীকৃত কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (টি.টি.সি) বা ইনসিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান
হিতে অটো ইলেক্ট্রিশিয়ান সনদপ্রাপ্ত।
- মৌখিক পর্যাকার্য ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে:
(ক) বয়স প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে;
(খ) কোন শীকৃত কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (টি.টি.সি) বা ইনসিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান
হিতে অটো ইলেক্ট্রিশিয়ান সনদপ্রাপ্ত।
- মৌখিক পর্যাকার্য ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে:
(ক) বয়স প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে;
(খ) কোন শীকৃত কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (টি.টি.সি) বা ইনসিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান
হিতে অটো ইলেক্ট্রিশিয়ান সনদপ্রাপ্ত।
- মৌখিক পর্যাকার্য ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে:
(ক) বয়স প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে;
(খ) কোন শীকৃত কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (টি.টি.সি) বা ইনসিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান
হিতে অটো ইলেক্ট্রিশিয়ান সনদপ্রাপ্ত।
- মৌখিক পর্যাকার্য ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/কুল প্রয়োজন হলে তার দর্শনার প্রয়োজন হবে:
(ক) বয়স প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে কোন পর্যাকার্য সম্পর্কে অসভা/ক

Raja Pratapaditya Charitra and the Birth of Bengali History Writing

The reception of Raja Pratapaditya Charitra by later formal historians has been intriguing—not only for its pioneering role in historical writing but also for its own historical merits.

PRIYAM PRITIM PAUL

The writing of history in the Bengali language by a Bengali began around 225 years ago with the publication of *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra* in 1801. The book was printed by the Serampore Mission Press, under the commission of Fort William College, which had been established just a year earlier, in 1800, by Governor General Lord Wellesley. That same year, the founding of the Serampore Mission Press ushered in a new era of book printing in Bengal. *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra* was authored by Munshi Ramram Basu (1757–1813), a native scholar at Fort William College, and commissioned by William Carey (1761–1834), who headed the newly founded Bengali department. The book holds both historical importance and literary significance, as it was the first Bengali prose work written by a Bengali and the first Western-style historical narrative in Bengali.

Sajani Kanta Das mentioned that Ramram Basu wrote this book just two months after being assigned the task. What drove him was sheer courage, as he had no prior model of Bengali prose or historical writing in the language to guide him.

The book narrates the story of Raja Pratapaditya, a sixteenth-century ruler of Jessoro who lived in the Mughal era. Nearly two centuries later, it was adopted as a textbook at Fort William College to help students—who were being trained for administrative roles under the British East India Company—learn the local history and vernacular of Bengal.

and Thomas to believe that he would eventually embrace Christianity. However, this did not happen.

In 1796, an incident occurred in which Ramram had secretly become infatuated with a young widow, and when her child was found dead, Carey regarded it as a serious lapse in Ramram's moral integrity.

He was not heard from for several years after that. In 1800, Carey came to Serampore and met many people, including Ramram Basu. He was reappointed, as Carey recognized that preaching was not possible without the help of such a talented person as Ramram. Later, Carey was appointed as the principal of the Bengali department at Fort William College, where Ramram Basu was employed under him with a salary of 40 rupees.

For his work on *Pratapaditya Charitra*, he received 300 Taka from Fort William College. Before *Pratapaditya Charitra*, two of Ramram Basu's books, written in a poetic style, were published from Serampore in 1800 and 1801. Additionally, he assisted William Carey in refining the Bengali translation of the Bible. Ramram Basu passed away in 1813.

There is an assumption that Ramram Basu was familiar with Rammohan Roy, the pioneer of the Bengali Renaissance, as Basu was inspired by Roy's anti-idolatry writings. It is also believed that Ramram Basu sought help in finalizing the manuscript of *Pratapaditya Charitra* from Roy. However, both Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay and Sajani Kanta Das refuted this claim, pointing out that Roy's Bengali prose works only began to be published after 1815. Notably, his first book, written in Persian, was published in 1803–4.

Stories of Raja Pratapaditya Charitra

Pratapaditya was one of the foremost landowners among the 12 famous landowners known as the Bara Bhuyans of Bengal, with Isa Khan being the most prominent among them. Ramram Basu narrated the history of Pratapaditya chronologically, relying on what he found in previous Persian texts and oral traditions from his family about the 16th-century king, as they belonged to the same caste. In doing so, he blended both fact and fiction, with his writing reflecting both objective and subjective positions.

The story starts with Ramchandra, a Kayastha from East Bengal, who left his ancestral home in search of fortune and settled in Saptagram, where he found work in the tax collector's office. He had three sons—Bhabananda, Gunananda, and Sibananda—of whom Sibananda was the most promising.

For a time, the family lived together harmoniously. However, when Sibananda had a disagreement with a senior officer, they were compelled to relocate to Gaur. There, they were warmly received by King Solaiman, who granted them permission to settle.

Among the brothers, Sibananda, being the most astute, distinguished himself and gained special favor from the king. His two nephews formed a close friendship with Bajid and Daud, the nephews of Solaiman. Daud, in turn, promised to make them his ministers if he ascended the throne. Following his father's death, Bajid became king but was soon assassinated by Solaiman's son in law. However, the assassin was later slain by a loyal friend of Daud, who then ascended the throne.

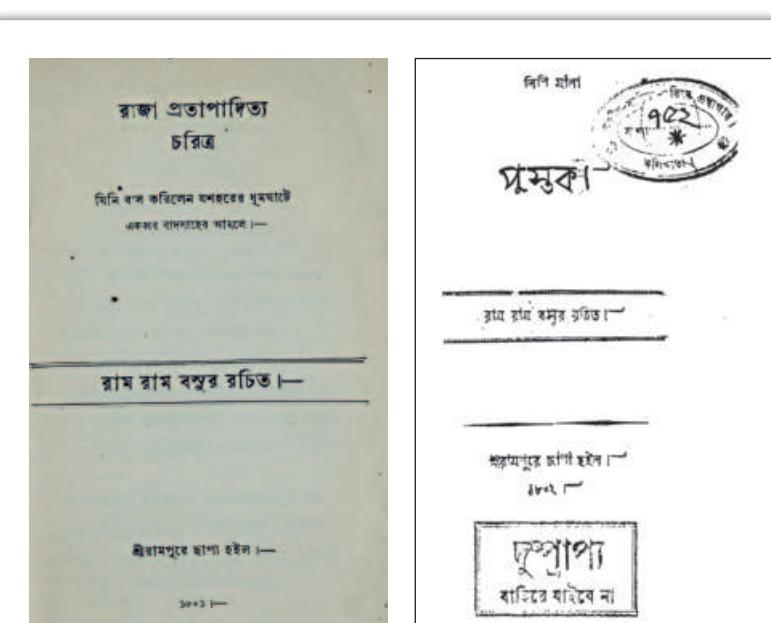
This Daud was none other than the famous Daud Khan Karrani, the last independent Sultan of Bengal. Keeping his promise, he conferred the titles of Maharaja Vikramaditya and Raja Basanta Ray upon Srihari and Janakiballabha, the nephews of Sibananda.

However, Daud soon grew ambitious and refused to pay tribute to the Mughal emperor Akbar. Realizing that the emperor would take punitive action against Daud, the brothers wisely decided that remaining in Gaur would be too dangerous. They, therefore, built a permanent residence in what was then the remote maritime wilderness of Jessoro and developed it around 1575.

In response to Daud's defiance, Akbar dispatched his general, Todar Mal, to subdue him. Terrified, Daud attempted to flee but was eventually captured and executed in 1576. Following his death, the Mughal general entrusted Srihari and Janakiballabha with governing the region.

Anticipating an invasion, Daud had previously sent his wealth and a significant stockpile of food to Jessoro. As a result, after his execution, the two brothers became extremely wealthy and powerful. They were crowned with great pomp and splendor, inviting all their relatives, granting them land, and settling them in the area—thus marking the origin of the *Bangiya Kayastha Samaj* of eastern Bengal.

Srihari had a son named



(L) Title page of the book *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra*. (R) Title page of the book *Lipimala*.

Pratapaditya, who, from an early age, displayed traits of cruelty and an insatiable thirst for power. To keep him at a distance and instill discipline, Srihari sent him to Delhi to be trained in state affairs.

In Delhi, Pratapaditya impressed Emperor Akbar with his talent for extempore poetry. However, he also seemed against his father, distorting facts to such an extent that the emperor ultimately granted him the authority to govern his father's domain.

Despite this betrayal, Srihari and his brother welcomed Pratapaditya back without outward resentment, seemingly untroubled by the humiliation he had caused them in the emperor's eyes.

A few months later, Pratapaditya relocated his capital to Dhumghat, transforming it into a grand city with magnificent mansions, a massive fort, and bustling marketplaces. In 1604, he ceased sending taxes to Delhi and became virtually independent. He significantly strengthened his naval power and was regarded as the last king of Sagur Island, even minting coins in his name.

Though Pratapaditya possessed admirable qualities, his flaws were equally pronounced. He was known for his generosity, but he was also ambitious, ruthless, arrogant, and intolerant. He built a formidable army and refused to pay tribute to the Mughal emperor. Driven by his thirst for power, he conspired against his own relatives and sought to suppress the kings who ruled estates in the province.

News of his treachery reached Delhi, enraging Emperor Jahangir. After a prolonged and sporadic series of battles, Pratapaditya ultimately surrendered. He died in Banaras while being taken to Delhi in 1606.

Following his downfall, the emperor appointed Raghbab Ray, the eldest son of Basanta Ray, as the new ruler. However, when Raghbab Ray returned to Jessoro from Delhi, he found the once-glorious city devastated and desolate and maintained the Jessoro Samaj.

Significantly, Ramram Basu's account of the death of Pratapaditya greatly varies from the depiction by the poet Bharatchandra Ray (1712–1760) in his *Annadamangal*, who was a closer contemporary of Pratapaditya. Although Basu did not specify the exact time and date of the events, later editors painstakingly added approximate dates based on the details he narrated in his book.

Reception as a Literary Text
Gulam Murshid noted that while Ramram Basu's contemporaries in Bengali literature were primarily Sanskrit scholars who wrote in a Sanskritized style, Ramram's prose reflected his inclination toward Persian. The early reception of *Raja Pratapaditya*

thought, or discursive in justifying or rejecting different creeds. This transformation was significantly influenced by Christian missionaries and professors at Fort William College. *Pratapaditya Charitra* embodies both instructive and informative genres in this regard.

Moreover, the character of *Pratapaditya* gained significant importance, and numerous biographies and works of fiction were written about him. He became a figure of both admiration and controversy in nineteenth-century Bengal, particularly as the nationalist movement gained momentum. As a result, Clinton B. Seely characterizes *Raja Pratapaditya* as a "problematic hero."

The Legacy as a Historical Text

Both the sixteenth century, when *Pratapaditya* ruled, and the early nineteenth century, when the book was written, were pivotal periods for Bengal and India, marked by significant societal and political transitions. Moreover, the book played a pioneering role in the writing of history in Bengal, laying the foundation for future historical literature in the language.

Although Ramram Basu didn't explicitly mention that he was writing history in this book, he stated that he undertook the task due to the lack of a detailed account of the rise and fall of any kings in the region. Significantly, his employer, Carey, was quick to identify Basu's work as "history," as he wrote, "I got Ram Boshu [Ramram Basu] to compose a history of one of their kings."

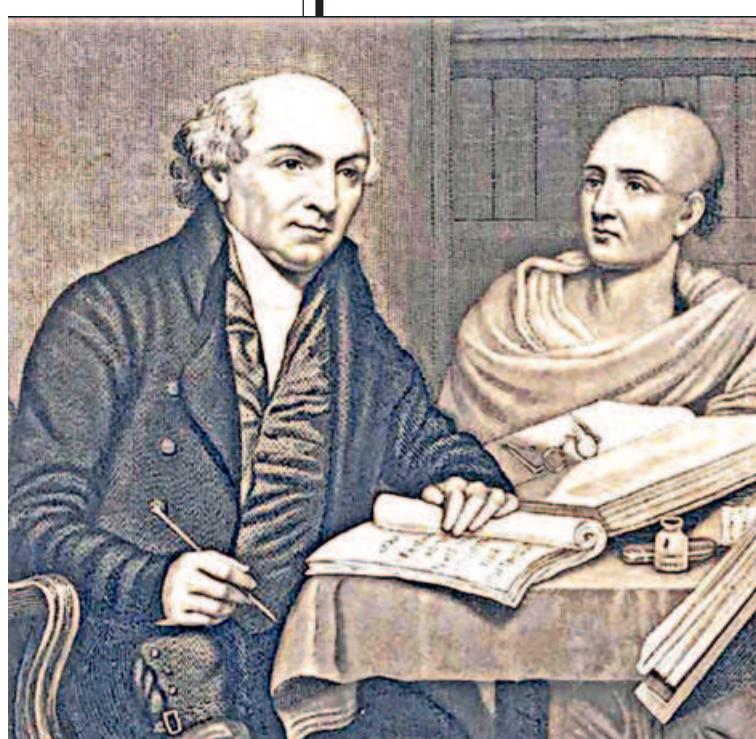
Ramram Basu did not attempt to write a comprehensive history of India or Bengal in a chronological manner, as Mritunjay Bidyalankar did in Rajaboli (1807), a Bengali work from the same Fort William enterprise. Instead, he focused on the local but significant figure of King Pratapaditya, with whom he felt an affinity due to their shared Kayastha lineage within Bengal's Hindu caste system. Later, historical writings on both local rulers, such as Krishna Chandra, the king of Krishnanagar, and detailed chronological narratives of regions gained popularity, emerging from both the college's initiatives and private efforts, which would become increasingly significant over time.

The reception of *Pratapaditya Charitra* by later formal historians has been intriguing—not only for its pioneering role in historical writing but also for its own historical merits. For instance, Jadunath Sarkar found the first part of *Pratapaditya Charitra* to be entirely historical, while other historians regard the book as a valuable sourcebook, as Ramram Basu blended both fact and fiction in his narrative. While Ranajit Guha, one of India's foremost historians, noted that Ramram Basu's narrative occasionally lapses into myth and fantasy, many historians agree that this flaw—almost unavoidable under the circumstances—has done little to undermine the overall authenticity of the work as an exercise in modern, rationalist historiography.

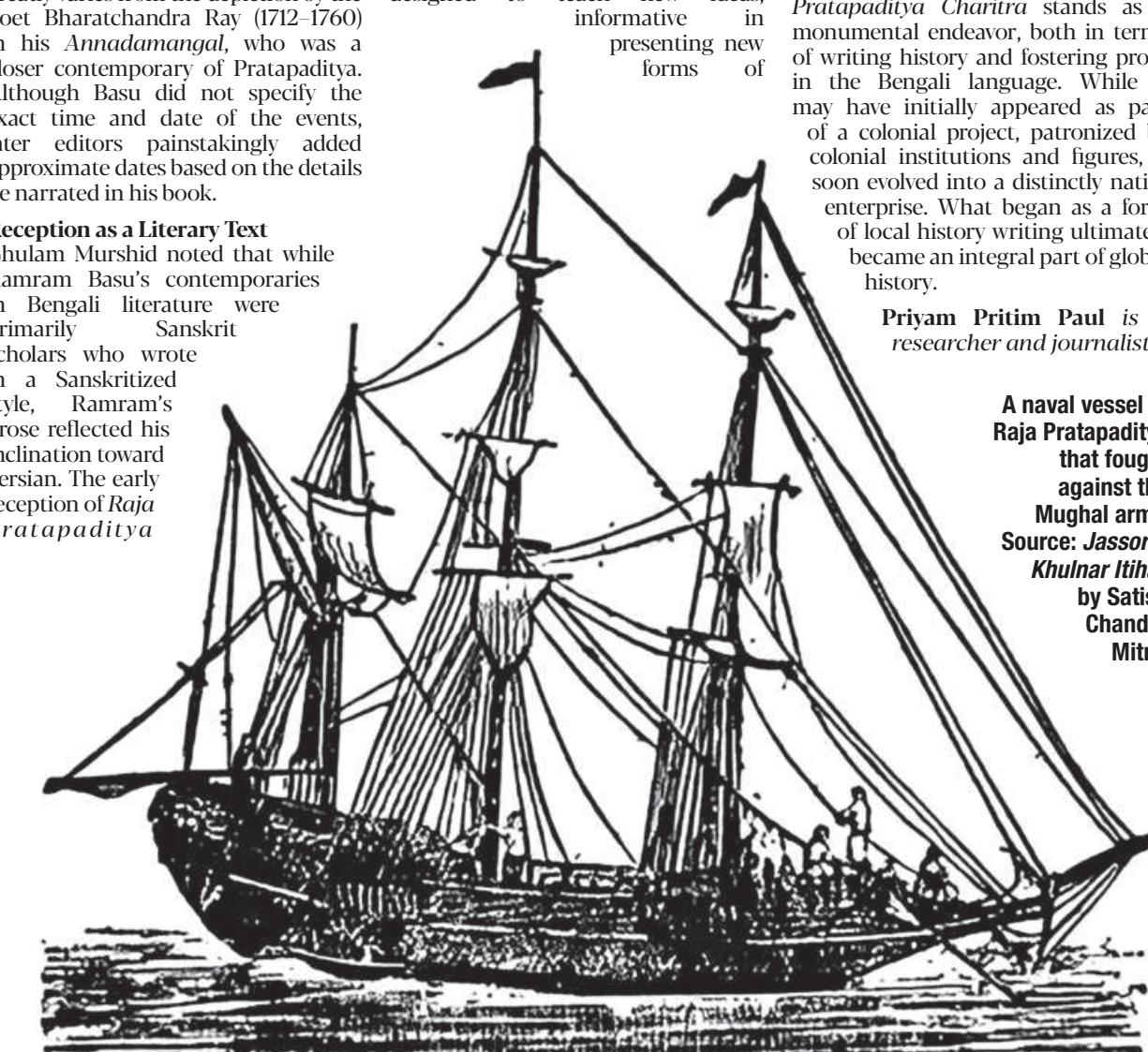
The Indian subcontinent was regarded as a historyless and stateless society, where the absence of prose writing in vernacular languages was seen as a sign of underdevelopment. From this perspective, *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra* stands as a monumental endeavor, both in terms of writing history and fostering prose in the Bengali language. While it may have initially appeared as part of a colonial project, patronized by colonial institutions and figures, it soon evolved into a distinctly native enterprise. What began as a form of local history writing ultimately became an integral part of global history.

Priyam Pritim Paul is a researcher and journalist.

A naval vessel of Raja Pratapaditya that fought against the Mughal army.
Source: Jassore-Khulnar Itihas by Satish Chandra Mitra.



William Carey and his pupil Mrityunjaya Bidyalankar.



Spin to win for Tigers?

EKUSH TAPADER from Chattogram

Bangladesh team's senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin was seen in deep discussion with Anamul Haque Bijoy and Shadman Islam beside the nets at the Bir Shreshtho Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. Shortly after, the duo began batting side-by-side in adjacent nets, indicating a likely change at the top of the order for the second Test against Zimbabwe, which starts today.

Mahmudul Hasan Joy, who featured in the Sylhet Test which Bangladesh lost by three wickets, was notably absent — a strong signal that Bijoy is set to replace him following his poor run.

Bangladesh, desperate for a series saving win, are likely to make changes not just in batting, but also in the bowling department. With Nahid Rana leaving to play in the PSL, left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam has been called up, though he is unlikely to make the playing XI. Off-spinner Nayeem Hasan, however, appears to be in contention. The Chattogram local was actively involved in both bowling and batting drills and boasts a solid record at this venue. With Zimbabwe expected to field at least four

"In Test cricket, you need five bowlers. Especially here, where we've played before, five bowlers are essential."

Bangladesh coach Phil Simmons

left-handers, the team is considering pairing him with Mehidy Hasan Miraz.

Despite Taijul Islam's underwhelming performance in Sylhet, he might retain the team's backing as their most experienced spinner. However, the strategy this time will differ. Unlike previous home Tests where Bangladesh occasionally played only four bowlers to strengthen their batting, head coach Phil Simmons confirmed that the team will field five specialist bowlers:

"No, not at the moment (regarding an extra batter). In Test cricket, you need five bowlers. Especially here, where we've played before, five bowlers are essential."

While the final composition is yet to be announced, Simmons said the team is weighing two possible combinations — either three seamers and two spinners, or two seamers and three spinners. Team sources suggest the latter is more likely, especially with Chattogram's surface expected to favour spin as the match progresses.

If the team opts for two pacers, Hasan Mahmud is almost a certainty. He may be joined by Tanzim Hasan Sakib, who is in line for a Test debut. Though Khaled Ahmed performed reasonably well in Sylhet, Tanzim is being considered for his extra pace and added batting depth.

"I think he (Tanzim) can shine in any format," Simmons said. "His bowling is deceptive, and he hits good areas consistently. He also adds some batteing depth, which is a bonus."

The Chattogram wicket is expected to differ from Sylhet's. Bangladesh's coaching staff anticipate a harder surface conducive to high scores in the early days, while Zimbabwe captain Craig Ervine expects a slower track favouring spinners. Despite differing views, both teams agree that Chattogram will not offer the extra bounce seen in Sylhet. If cracks develop as expected later in the match, spinners like Miraz and Taijul could be key to Bangladesh's success.

Djokovic's early exit marks new reality

AGENCIES

Novak Djokovic's storied journey at the Madrid Open may have come to a quiet, emotional end. The 24-time Grand Slam champion crashed out in the second round on Saturday, falling 6-3, 6-4 to Italy's Matteo Arnaldi.

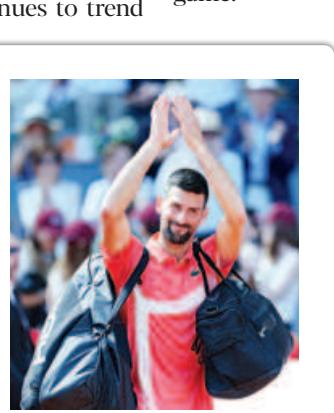
It marked another early exit for the Serbian legend, whose form in 2024 continues to trend worryingly downward.

In a candid post-match press conference, Djokovic admitted that this could very well be his final appearance in Madrid. "It could be. I'm not sure if I will come back," he said, suggesting a future visit might be as a guest, not a player.

The loss was Djokovic's second consecutive opening-round defeat, after a similar early exit in Monte Carlo two weeks prior, and his third straight straight sets loss following a Miami Open final setback.

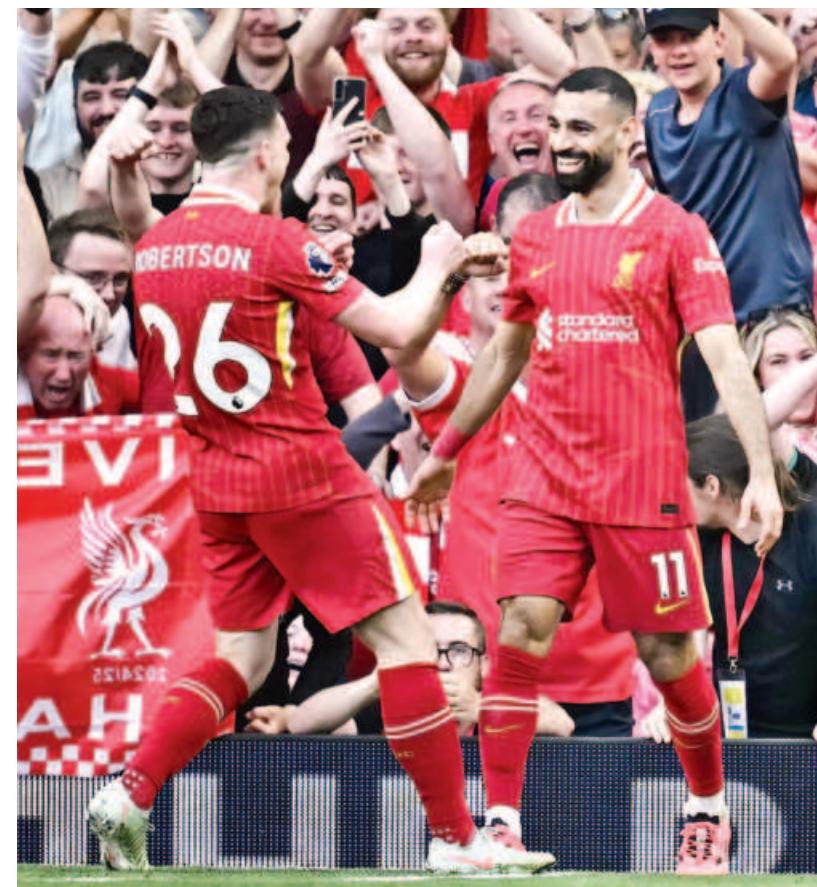
For a player who once dominated the sport with unrivalled consistency, this "new reality" of modest expectations and early goodbyes is a stark shift.

Arnaldi, ranked 44th in the world, showcased fearless all-court tennis and capitalised on Djokovic's struggles. The 24-year-old Italian, who



owns countless ATP records—from most Masters 1000 wins (414) to most titles (40)—the future looks increasingly uncertain.

Whether or not he returns to Madrid again, one thing is clear: Djokovic is coming to terms with a new phase of his career—one that even the greatest must eventually face.



Liverpool demolished Tottenham 5-1 to clinch the Premier League title at an impassioned Anfield yesterday, sealing a record-equalling 20th English top-flight crown. With four games still to go, Arne Slot's side (with 82 points) have attained an unassailable lead over second-placed Arsenal (67 points), and are now level with bitter rivals Manchester United as the joint-most successful club in English top-flight history. The league's top-scorer Mohamed Salah was amongst the scorers as he netted his 28th goal of the season. Meanwhile, Slot became the first Dutchman to win the Premier League and only the fifth manager to win the competition in his debut season, after Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti, Manuel Pellegrini and Antonio Conte.

PHOTO: AFP



Taskin leaves for England to consult ankle specialist

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed left for England yesterday to consult an ankle specialist regarding the Achilles injury that ruled him out of the ongoing Test series against Zimbabwe.

"The injury first started in West Indies. I carried on playing with it. At the latter end of the BPL [Bangladesh Premier League], the soreness increased a lot more and I had to rest for a few matches.

"During the Premier League [Dhaka Premier League], the pain increased a lot more and it became difficult to put effort. That's when I informed the board and they wanted me to rest and undergo rehab since there are important assignments ahead. That's why I have been undergoing rehab without playing this [Zimbabwe] series," Taskin told The Daily Star before his departure yesterday.

Taskin is scheduled to consult Doctor James Calder, a renowned specialist in treating Achilles Tendinopathy, on April 29. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief physician Debasish Chowdhury is expected to join the right-arm quick in England ahead of the consultation.



"Right now, we are consulting someone very high-profile. Many footballers from the English Premier League and other athletes also consult with him," Taskin said.

Prior to his departure, Taskin bowled a session with very short run-ups at the Academy Ground in Mirpur on Saturday. He felt positive about his condition, suggesting that surgery might not be necessary, although a consultation would determine the next course of action.

"I felt comfortable [bowling on Saturday]. With some rest, at times, there seems to be no problem at all."

"Surgery might be required if there is something major but as far as our understanding, it is not major but after the consultation, we will get a better idea."

RULES BEND, REPUTATIONS BREAK

How Bangladesh cricket shot itself in the foot over Towhid Hridoy's ban.



SCAN QR CODE TO READ FULL STORY



Zimbabwe as hosts. The narrow margin of the defeat in the Sylhet Test gives an impression that it was an evenly-matched contest, but that is far from the truth. Barring the stutter in the last hour or so of the match, Zimbabwe controlled the game and came out as the deserved winner.

The fact that a full-strength Bangladesh could not beat a team that had not won a Test in almost four years is alarming. What is even more alarming is that they have now lost their last six Tests at home.

Ironically, their form away from home has been encouraging, as they have defeated New Zealand and the West Indies once and Pakistan twice in away Tests in the last 18 months.

But while the away Test wins make it seem like Bangladesh have taken a step forward in the five-day format, their six-match losing streak at home, which last happened to them from December 2008 to March 2010, indicates they have gone two steps back.

If their home woes continue for one more game, it will become their second-longest losing streak at home behind the 13 straight defeats on home soil right up until their maiden Test win in 2005, which ironically had come against Zimbabwe and that too in Chattogram.

Instead, the hosts got outplayed by Zimbabwe and are at risk of suffering their first home Test series defeat to Zimbabwe in over 23 years, spicing up the series that should have been a dull affair in the process.

The last time the Tigers lost a Test series at home to Zimbabwe was in 2001, when they suffered a 1-0 defeat in the two-match series. It also remains their only Test series defeat to



Barcelona players celebrate with the trophy after a Jules Kounde goal in the dying minutes of extra time handed the Catalans a dramatic 3-2 win over fierce rivals Real Madrid in an enthralling Copa del Rey final in a raucous atmosphere at Seville's La Cartuja stadium on Saturday. It was one of the most heated Clasicos in recent times, that came hot on the heels of Real Madrid complaining about referees and saw Antonio Rudiger receiving a red card for throwing an object at the referee from the bench after the defender was substituted.

PHOTO: BARCELONA

What to WATCH

BTV
Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe
Second Test, Day 1
Live from 10:00 am

T SPORTS
IPL
Rajasthan vs Gujarat
Live from 8:00 pm



J&K TERROR ATTACK India eyes 'retaliation'

Says Indian media as troops exchange gunfire along Kashmir LoC for third day

AGENCIES

Troops from Pakistan and India exchanged fire in disputed Kashmir for a third night in a row, officials said yesterday, as Indian media reported that New Delhi is mulling military retaliation over the Kashmir terror attack.

The Indian Express newspaper yesterday quoted a top government source as saying "there will be military retaliation" and officials "are discussing the nature of the strike".

"There will be military retaliation, and we are prepared. We are discussing the nature of the strike... Since 2019, we have taken a series of measures to modernise our



Battery-run rickshaw vans carrying iron rods on the Barishal-Dhaka highway. Such vehicles are not allowed on highways, as they pose a serious risk to other road users. The photo was taken in Barishal's Kashipur area.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Ishraque new DSCC mayor Gazette issued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The Election Commission has issued an amended gazette notification declaring BNP-nominated candidate Mohammad Ishraque Hossain as the mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation.

The gazette cancelled the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

weapons. We have the option of targeting the terrorists from within our territory," the newspaper quoted the source as saying.

India has accused Pakistan of supporting "cross-border terrorism" after gunmen killed 26 people in the worst attack on civilians in contested Muslim-majority Kashmir for a quarter of a century.

Relations between the nuclear-armed rivals plunged to their lowest level in years after the attack.

Islamabad has denied any involvement, calling attempts to link Pakistan to the attack "frivolous" and vowing to respond to any Indian action.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4