

Aid allocation to be trimmed in next budget

The plan comes as \$42.85b foreign funds remained unused at start of current FY

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

The interim government plans to lower its foreign aid utilisation target by 15 percent to Tk 85,000 crore for the next fiscal year, as sluggish project execution in Bangladesh leaves billions of dollars in development funding unspent.

The proposed allocation under the Annual Development Programme will mark a step down from the Tk 100,000 crore target set for the current fiscal year, testifying to persistent inefficiencies in aid-backed projects.

At a Fiscal Coordination Council meeting on April 15, officials outlined a draft budget proposing an overall ADP

- 1 In first 9 months, 32.50% of the spending target was achieved
- 2 Utilisation of foreign funds in pipeline likely to drop this fiscal year from around 19% in FY 2023-24

outlay of Tk 230,000 crore, including Tk 85,000 crore in foreign funds.

A finance ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the reduced target reflects the spending capabilities of various ministries and divisions.

In the first nine months of the current fiscal year, ministries and divisions managed to spend only Tk 32,411 crore in foreign funds,

or about 32.5 percent of the target. In comparison, spending during the same period a year earlier was Tk 44,066 crore, or 46.8 percent, according to data from the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division.

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Farmers taking their paddy home on a boat after harvest. Many growers have hurriedly reaped their crops fearing early onset of the monsoon and flash floods. Farmers of the haor region in the northeastern part of the country in particular were harvesting early. The photo was taken at Moglabazar in Sylhet's Fenchuganj recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

SHRABAN MURDER CASE Three witnesses named without their consent

MUNTAKIM SAAD and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Three individuals named as witnesses in the case filed over the killing of Mahfuz Alam Shraban during last year's mass uprising said they were unaware of being listed as witnesses.

The case statement lists eight witnesses, including the plaintiff, and mentions the phone numbers of four of them.

This newspaper spoke to all four, and three of them said they had no knowledge of their names being included.

"I didn't know I was made a witness. Who put my name there?" Saiful Islam, 35, told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

Saiful, a grocery trader who lived in the same area as the victim, said he had known Shraban as a pharmaceutical officer for a few months but was not present during the incident.

"No one contacted me to be a witness," he said, adding that he had only heard about the incident later.

Shraban's brother, Mostafizur Rahman Bappy, a trader from Naogaon, filed the case with a Dhaka court in March. Following court directives, Mirpur police registered the case as a First Information Report on April 20.

It accuses ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 407 others of involvement in Shraban killing in the

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JULY UPRISING CASES IN 4 DISTS 137 journalists sued so far

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

At least 137 journalists have been implicated in 32 criminal cases filed in Dhaka, Chattogram, Bogura, and Rajshahi centring the July uprising.

According to case documents and police records, they have been charged with murder, attempted murder, unlawful assembly, rioting, abduction, vandalism, extortion, assault, and in certain cases, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

Implicating them [journalists] in murder cases has been a new phenomenon since August 5. This definitely violates their professional freedom, which is guaranteed by article 29 of the constitution.

JYOTIRMOY BARUA, Supreme Court lawyer

The 32 cases were filed between August 21 last year and April 20 this year. The Daily Star obtained most of the case documents.

Many of the cases name them as co-accused alongside deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Charges have even been brought against the journalists under the Explosive Substances Act.

Dhaka Union of Journalists and a rights activist have raised concerns over press freedom.

Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Omar Faruq Faruqi said

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Many cases being filed for personal gains
Says law adviser; IGP assures that innocents won't be arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The current process for filing complaints at a police station does not allow officers to initially authenticate the claims. As a result, this system is exploited, leading to the filing of many cases intended for personal or financial gain, revenge, or harassment against others.

Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam and Law adviser Dr Asif Nazrul made such remarks at separate events yesterday, days after a murder case was registered against Sheikh Hasina and some 407 others, including an actor, doctors, journalists and lawyers, over the killing of BNP activist Mahfuz Alam Shraban in the capital's Mirpur during last year's mass uprising.

Both the adviser and the police chief said law enforcers have been instructed not to harass or arrest any innocent people implicated in those cases.



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BARISHAL 'GUNFIGHT' Locals contradict Rab claims

Victims had no criminal records

SUSANTA GHOSH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Police have not found any prior criminal records of the two students shot in a "gunfight" with the Rapid Action Battalion during an anti-narcotics drive in Barishal's Agailjhara upazila on April 21.

One of them, Siam Molla, an 11th grade student of Karfa Ideal College, was killed while the other, SSC examinee Rakib Molla, was critically injured.

Siam was 17 years old, and Rakib is 18, according to their birth certificates.

Rab 8, however, in the first information report (FIR) filed with Agailjhara Police Station on April 22, claimed both were 20 years old.

Rakib is now undergoing treatment at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal.

According to the FIR, the Rab conducted the drive at a graveyard in Dakshin Mollapara village under Ratnapura Union at 5:40pm on a tip-off that some people gathered there to trade drugs.

The Rab said in the FIR that its personnel nabbed Siam and Rakib, and found 393 Yaba pills on them while the other suspects fled the scene.

It said the other suspects returned to help Siam and Rakib when they started shouting during the arrest. The Rab members chased Siam and Rakib after they resisted arrest and ran away. At one stage, Siam and Rakib hit two Rab members with sticks and injured them critically, the FIR said.

It said that when someone from the suspects opened fire, one

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 MILTON MONDAL
sub-inspector of
Agailjhara Police Station




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Russia ready to negotiate directly with Ukraine for peace

Says Kremlin; Putin declares 3-day May ceasefire to mark WWII victory

AGENCIES

Russia yesterday said it was ready to negotiate directly with Ukraine, but that recognition of its claims over five Ukrainian regions, including Crimea, was "imperative" to resolving the conflict.

Since launching its Ukraine offensive in February 2022, Russia has seized large parts of four Ukrainian regions and claimed them as its own, in addition to Crimea, which it annexed in 2014.

Ukraine has denounced the annexations as an illegal land grab and says it will never recognise them, while European officials have warned that accepting Moscow's demands sets a dangerous precedent that could lead to future Russian aggression.

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday declared a three-day ceasefire in May in the war with Ukraine to mark the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union and its allies in World War Two.

The Kremlin said the 72-hour ceasefire would run for three days



Relatives and friends mourn during the funeral ceremony of a 17-year-old and his parents -- Oleg and Viktoriia -- killed in a Russian missile strike on Thursday in Kyiv yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Lavrov says accepting its claims over annexed regions key to peace

Trump thinks Zelensky ready to give up Crimea

either side of May 9, when Putin will be hosting international leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping for lavish celebrations to commemorate victory over Nazi Germany.

On Sunday, US President Donald Trump said he believed Volodymyr Zelensky might concede Crimea as part of a settlement -- a suggestion the Ukrainian leader has previously balked at.

"The Russian side has repeatedly confirmed its readiness, as confirmed by the president, to begin negotiations with Ukraine without any preconditions," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told state media yesterday.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in an interview with Brazilian newspaper O Globo published yesterday that "We remain open to negotiations."

"But the ball is not in our court. So

far, Kyiv has not demonstrated its ability to negotiate," he said, adding Moscow's position on the conflict was "well-known".

"International recognition of Russia's ownership of Crimea, Sevastopol, the Donetsk People's Republic, the Lugansk People's Republic, the Kholodivs'ka and Zaporizhzhia regions is imperative," he said, using the Kremlin's names for the Ukrainian regions.

Russia has repeatedly set out its demands for a Ukraine settlement, including that it be allowed to keep the five Ukrainian regions it claims as its own, that Ukraine be barred from the NATO military alliance and that the country "demilitarise".

Zelensky said last Friday that Ukraine would "not legally recognise any temporarily occupied territories", and has previously called the demilitarisation

demand "incomprehensible".

Trump, who boasted before his inauguration he could halt Russia's assault on Ukraine within "24 hours", launched a diplomatic offensive to stop the fighting after taking office in January.

But he has so far failed to extract any major concessions from Russia.

After meeting Zelensky on the sidelines of Pope Francis's funeral, Trump upped his pressure on Vladimir Putin, telling his Russian counterpart to "stop shooting" and sign an agreement.

The White House has said that without rapid progress, it could walk away from its role as a broker. Trump indicated that he would give the process "two weeks."

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio earlier Sunday stressed the importance of the week ahead.

"We're close, but we're not close enough" to a deal to halt the fighting, Rubio told broadcaster NBC. "I think this is going to be a very critical week."

US envoy Steve Witkoff held a three-hour meeting with Putin in the Kremlin last week, where they discussed the possibility of direct talks between Kyiv and Moscow.

Russia and Ukraine have not held direct talks on the fighting since the start of Moscow's offensive in 2022.

Meanwhile, Russia over the weekend announced it had taken full control of its Kursk region with the help of North Korean troops, more than eight months after Kyiv launched a cross border ground assault.

Putin thanked North Korean leader Kim Jong Un yesterday for help with the operation, which has denied Kyiv a key bargaining chip in future talks with Moscow.

The Russian army yesterday said it had taken control of the village of Kamianka in the northeastern Kharkiv region, in its latest battlefield advance.

People did not make sacrifices for a 'superhuman'

Khasru protests CA's polls remark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khasru Chowdhury yesterday said people's 16-year-long fight and sacrifices were to restore democracy, not to hand over the country to any "superhuman."

"The struggle was for democracy, restoring the democratic order, reclaiming voting rights, and ensuring people's ownership of the country," he said after holding meetings with leaders of allied parties -- NAP (Bhasani), Amjanatar Dal, and Bangladesh People's Party.

He was responding to a journalist's query about the chief adviser's recent interview with Al Jazeera, where he claimed that the interim government was not facing public pressure to hand over power quickly.

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Meghna Alam granted bail in extortion case

COURT CORRESPONDENT



A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to model and Miss Bangladesh Foundation Chairperson Meghna Alam in an extortion case filed with Dhanmondi Police Station.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sanullah passed the order after her lawyer Mohima Badhan submitted an application seeking bail.

There is no legal bar for her release from jail, said her lawyer Badhan.

In the petition, lawyer Badhan sought bail on the grounds that no specific allegation was brought against Meghna.

She was implicated in the case filed for "harassment", argued her lawyer, adding that as a

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Many cases being filed for personal gains

FROM PAGE 1

"Nowadays, people write their complaints themselves and bring them in. The police must register these as cases. It does not matter if they are true or false, there is no scope for verification," the IGP said during a press conference at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday, marking the first day of the four day Police Week.

"Later, investigations determine how much of the allegation is true and how much is false. We extract the truth through investigation and submit it to the court," he added.

The IGP further said, "Often, we are faced with unreasonable demands. Requests come in to detain someone, to release someone, to award someone."

He requested that "as far as possible, fewer unreasonable demands" be made to him.

137 journalists sued so far

FROM PAGE 1

the journalists, who encouraged Sheikh Hasina with their speeches and questions in TV talk shows, were being accused in criminal cases.

"Many of the journalists benefited from Sheikh Hasina and became owners of television channels. They aided and abetted her during the uprising," he said.

He added that investigators have been instructed not to harass anyone innocent.

HIGHEST CASES IN DHAKA

In Dhaka, 19 criminal cases have been lodged against 77 journalists in connection with murder, attempted murder, unlawful assembly, rioting, and other charges.

Two of the cases were filed with the International Crimes Tribunal.

Law enforcers have already arrested several journalists, including Rupa, Shakil, Mozammel Babu, Shyamal Dutta, Sheikh Muhammad Jamal Hossain, and Arif Hasan, in connection with the cases.

So far, Jamal has secured bail.

Most recently, on April 20, a case was registered with Mirpur Model Police Station against Sheikh Hasina and 407 others, including 24 journalists, over the killing of BNP activist Mahfuz Alam Shrabani during the July uprising in the capital's Mirpur area.

In Chattogram, two cases were lodged against 33 journalists, accusing them of attempted murder and abduction.

In Bogura, 22 journalists, including four working in Dhaka, were accused in eight cases. Four of the cases involve murder charges.

In Rajshahi, three cases were lodged against 14 journalists for their alleged involvement in vandalism, extortion, and assault.

In August last year, a case was also filed against 28 journalists with

objectivity.

Speaking about the recent case filed against over 400 accused, including actor Iresh Zaker, the adviser said, "There is no restriction under Bangladeshi law on filing cases. People are filing cases as they wish. Many of these cases are harassing and malicious. Cases are being filed to grab land, property, and businesses. This is extremely unfortunate and regrettable."

"Once a case is filed, we try to provide redress through the police and court administration. When too many people are implicated, it becomes difficult for us to manage. However, we cannot prevent people from filing cases," he added.

"You [reporters] have seen; the home ministry has repeatedly said that if a complaint lacks objectivity, no one should be arrested," he said.

the International Crimes Tribunal accusing them of crimes against humanity and genocide.

Referring to a press conference, the complaint said the accused journalists "through different questions, made instigating remarks and provoked Sheikh Hasina to eliminate the protesting students and ordinary people".

It also claimed that these journalists, described as "sycophants" of the then government, published "false news to instigate the genocide and crimes against humanity".

Naeemul Islam Khan, former press secretary to Hasina; Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, former media adviser to Hasina; Farida Yasmin, former president of the Jatiya Press Club; Shyamal Dutta, editor of Bhoror Kagoj; Mozammel Babu of Ekattor TV; Nabania Chowdhury; Subhash Singh Roy of abnews24.com; Ahmed Jobair of Somoy TV; Tushar Abdullah of Ekhon TV; Saiful Alam, editor of Jugantor; Naeem Nizam, editor of Bangladesh Pratidin; and Abed Khan, former editor of Samakal, were among the accused.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka Union of Journalists yesterday condemned and protested the filing of a murder case against 24 journalists.

In a statement, DUJ President Sajjad Alam Khan Topu and General Secretary Akhter Hossain said bringing unspecified and sweeping allegations against journalists poses a serious threat to freedom of expression.

If professional journalists continue to face such cases consistently, the culture of fear within the profession will never be eliminated," the leaders said in a press release.

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Aid allocation to be trimmed

FROM PAGE 1

Officials from the planning and finance ministries said Bangladesh has historically struggled to utilise foreign aid effectively, with the situation worsening this fiscal year due to political shifts following the mass uprising.

At the start of the current fiscal year, unused foreign funds totalled \$42.85 billion. Even if the entire foreign aid allocation is fully utilised this year, only about 16 percent of the available pipeline would be used.

Finance ministry officials said that a 20 percent utilisation rate of the aid pipeline is generally considered satisfactory.

From FY2010-11 to FY2020-21, foreign fund utilisation hovered between 11 percent and 13 percent. However, utilisation improved over the next three fiscal years, rising to as much as 19 percent by FY2023-24.

According to an Economic Relations Division report, slow project implementation results in delayed aid disbursement, leading to time and cost overruns. This, in turn, negatively impacts the balance of payments and increases reliance on domestic borrowing.

The ERD report identified multiple causes of implementation delays, noting: "Projects are often designed without proper planning or feasibility studies." It further observed that those involved in project preparation are frequently inadequately trained.

In many cases, poor project design necessitates revisions of Development Project Proposals (DPPs) or Technical

Project Proposals (TPPs) even before work begins, the report said.

"The lengthy approval process of the DPPs/TPPs takes longer to start projects. Sometimes, projects are not adequately staffed with the right kind of people," it added.

Frequent transfers of project officials, procurement-related bottlenecks, and land acquisition challenges were also cited as major impediments to timely implementation.

Finance ministry officials warned that delays not only drive up project costs but also lead to higher commitment charges paid to lenders.

A recent portfolio review report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said that a commitment charge of 0.15 percent per year is levied on all undisbursed loan balances for ordinary capital resource loans, starting 60 days after loan agreements are signed.

As undisbursed balances are calculated daily, the timing of disbursements significantly affects total commitment charges. Bangladesh paid the ADB \$3.58 million in commitment charges last year, according to the report sent to the government in February.

The ADB report also highlighted multiple factors contributing to project deadline extensions and cost overruns, including underestimated civil works costs at appraisal, changes in scope and design during implementation, delays in land acquisition and relocation of utilities, slow mobilisation, inadequate contractor inputs, and the lingering

impacts of Covid-19.

To illustrate the consequences, the ADB cited three delayed projects. One example, the Greater Dhaka Sustainable Urban Transport Project, was approved in April 2012, with an estimated cost of \$255 million and an original completion deadline of December 2017. The ADB's contribution was initially set at \$160 million.

However, the deadline was later pushed to December 2022, and additional financing was required to cover cost overruns. The project's total cost rose by 94 percent to \$494.39 million, and the ADB increased its loan by 63 percent to \$260 million.

AK Enamul Haque, director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, said that project underutilisation and delays stem from frequent changes of project directors, poor designs and political manoeuvring.

"Usually, foreign funding comes with many requirements that are difficult to meet. The process is much easier when no donor is involved," he said.

He added that over the past two decades, many officials preferred to use government funds, which come with fewer restrictions.

"Good governance, accountability, and transparency are crucial to improve the current challenging situation," he said. "The first suggestion everyone makes is that we need good governance. It is very important to create an environment where laws are followed."

Regarding the number of accused, he said, "It was a mass killing. Maybe 10 people were the main culprits. The others are their associates."

Meanwhile, Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki yesterday termed the naming of Iresh Zaker in the case "deeply troubling and disturbing".

"I personally know Iresh Zaker. He was involved with the July movement. The state did not file the case; someone else did. In the new Bangladesh, everyone has the right to file cases, but some are abusing this freedom," he told reporters at his office at the Secretariat.

NAGARPUR HEALTH COMPLEX

Health service limps due to manpower shortage

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Healthcare services at the 50-bed Nagarpur Upazila Health Complex in Tangail are being severely hampered due to various problems, especially a shortage of necessary workforce.

According to sources at the health complex, only 12 doctors are currently working against 31 posts. Of them, two doctors are on leave.

A couple of doctors come from Dhaka and are often not found at the hospital on time. Only five to six doctors are performing regular duties, they said.

There are no doctors available in the anaesthesia, cardiology, ophthalmology, ENT, surgery, paediatrics, dermatology, sexology and dental departments.

There are also long standing vacancies for ward assistants, nurses and cleaners in the hospital.

Patients complained that toilets are unusable and there is a lack of cleanliness throughout the hospital.

Several patients - Roksona Akter, Saiful Islam and Mohammad Abu Taleb - alleged that they were not getting the right medicines from the hospital. They said they even had to go outside for simple blood, urine, X-ray or ultrasonography tests.

"If necessary workforce is not recruited and other facilities are not installed quickly at the health complex, the quality of healthcare will deteriorate further," said local rights activist Azizul Haque.

Dr Md Hafizur Rahman, upazila health and family planning officer in Nagarpur, who joined the

of manpower. "I have informed the higher authorities about the shortages and other problems," he added.

Contacted, Dr Farazi Muhammad Mabhubul Alam Ranju, civil surgeon of Tangail, who also joined recently, said not only Nagarpur but also other upazila health complexes



hospital recently, said treatment was being hampered and patients were suffering due to various reasons, including shortage of doctors and staff.

"Two doctors are on leave while five others are attached to other workplaces," he said.

He also said necessary tests cannot be conducted due to lack

in the district were facing similar problems.

Despite the shortage, a number of doctors are on leave for different purposes and are also engaged in other workplaces.

"We are trying to cancel their deputation or attachment and bring them back to the local hospitals," he said.

One killed, four injured in Gazipur gas cylinder blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

One person was killed and four others were injured in a gas cylinder explosion caused by a leak at a house in the Mogorkhal area under Basan Police Station in Gazipur on Sunday.

The deceased, Sima, 30, died while undergoing treatment at the National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute in Dhaka yesterday morning, said Gazipur Basan Police Station Sub-Inspector Mohammad Sajib Khan.

The injured Parvin, 35, Taslima, 30, Tanjila, 10, and 18-month-old Ayan, are currently undergoing treatment at the burn institute, the SI said.

Quoting neighbours, SI Sajib said the incident occurred around 7:00pm on Sunday when Parvin was cooking. The explosion was triggered by a gas leakage, according to neighbours.

Dr Md Shawon Bin Rahman, a resident physician at the institute's emergency department, said, "We are providing emergency treatment. Details regarding the severity of their burns will be known shortly."

EC mulls hybrid voting method for expatriates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is exploring a hybrid voting system for expatriate Bangladeshis in the upcoming 13th national elections, combining postal ballots, online voting, and proxy voting - instead of relying solely on the existing postal ballot system.

Under the proposed plan, expatriates would be required to register online for their preferred voting method among the three.

Currently, postal voting is the only option for expatriates, but it has proven ineffective due to time constraints. According to an EC concept paper to be presented at a seminar today, no expatriate has successfully voted through postal ballots from abroad yet.

"The long awaited inclusion of expatriate Bangladeshis in the election process has yet to be realised," the paper notes, citing the impracticality of completing postal voting within the necessary timeframe.

Given these challenges, the EC is considering a hybrid system to better facilitate voting for millions of Bangladeshis living overseas.

The Electoral Reform Commission has proposed two main methods - postal and online voting, both dependent on digital processes. Additionally, the EC is considering proxy voting, allowing a designated voter in Bangladesh to cast a ballot on behalf of an expatriate.

While proxy voting offers a potential solution to logistical challenges, it has sparked debate over security, verification, and transparency.

To further evaluate these options, the EC will hold a seminar today at its headquarters, where experts will discuss the practicality of implementing a secure voting system for expatriates.

The seminar will also feature a detailed presentation of a concept paper on the proposed methods, focusing on postal, online, and proxy voting solutions.

The EC concept paper stresses that no single method alone will be sufficient and that extensive trials, especially for online voting, are necessary before full implementation.



Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

MJL Bangladesh PLC, a leading conglomerate in Bangladesh active in energy, shipping, and financial market, is expanding its business portfolio. It has recently developed a state-of-the-art warehousing facilities, each spanning 13,500 square feet with a clear height of 45 feet having a total capacity of 67,500 square feet.

The company invites EOI from reputable market research firms to conduct a feasibility study with special emphasis on demand and revenue. Interested companies are requested to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) along with its company profile that highlights their credibility and experience in this field by May 20, 2025.

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Contact: Engr. Salah Uddin Ahmed
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পুনর্গুণ্ঠন দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	মন্ত্রিবালয়ের নাম	বিদ্যুৎ, জলাবানি ও বনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়।
২	সংস্থার নাম	ওয়েস্ট জোন পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড, খুলনা।
৩	নিয়ন্ত্রিত আহবানকারী দলের নাম	নির্বাচী প্রযোক্ষণী, আর্কিটিক মেরামত কারখানা, ওজেপাইকো, যশোর।
৪	নিয়ন্ত্রিত মালামালের বিবরণ	আর্কিটিক মেরামত কারখানা, ওজেপাইকো, যশোর দলেরের আভারে রাখিক ক্ষেত্রে ১৫ (পঞ্চাশ) আইসিটেম অব্যবহারযোগ্য নষ্ট মালামাল।
৫	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	খোলা দরপত্র।
৬	পুনর্গুণ্ঠন দরপত্রের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৫/০৫/২০২৫ইং, দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিক পর্যন্ত।
৭	নিয়ন্ত্রিত দায়িত্বের তারিখ ও সময়	২৬/০৫/২০২৫ইং, দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিক পর্যন্ত।
৮	ক) অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী ওজেপাইকোর ওয়েবসাইটে (www.wzpdcl.gov.bd) পাওয়া যাবে।	

মেঝে কার্যকর হোলেন
নির্বাচী প্রযোক্ষণী

GD-1011



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED

395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area,

Dhaka-1208

Corrigendum Notice

Corrigendum to our Tender Ref. No.EDCL(Dhaka)Pur/PT/2025/154 Dated 27/04/2025 for Construction, Supply, Installation & Periodic maintenance of WIP & Airlock Corridor Room extention from existing Building at EDCL, Bogura Plant. Details are given below:

- The above tender will be closed 15/05/2025 instead of 16/05/2025.
- Selling of Tender Schedule is going on.
- Tender schedule will be sold from Accounts & Finance Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited Dhaka & Bogura.
- All other terms & conditions against the above tender will be remain unchanged.

The above Tender was published earlier in The Daily Ittefaq on 28/04/2025 and The Daily Star on 28/04/2025.

General Manager (CC)
Procurement Department
For: Managing Director

(8" x 5)

CAREER OPPORTUNITY: DIRECTOR

For more than 100 years, as a truly global company **Ajinomoto** has developed its business around the world. Founded in 1909 and now operating in 35 countries and regions. Aiming to be a Japan-based global company, **Ajinomoto Bangladesh Ltd** will develop corporate activities in the food and amino acid businesses in the most appropriate way to achieve this aim. Right Now, we are looking for Director to lead the **Sales and Marketing** operation in Bangladesh

- Graduate from a reputed university with a very good academic background
- At least 10-Year(s) experience among which 05 years at top management position
- Age maximum 50(Fifty) years as on April 29, 2025
- Must be fluent in listening, writing and speaking in Japanese and English Language
- Master level knowledge and experience in Japanese Management Tools like-5S, Ho-re-so and STPD
- Must have diverse experience and expertise in Sales and Marketing of a Multi-National Company
- Should be able to continuously maintain contact with Head Office at Japan

Please send your detailed CV along with the application with all documents before

15th May, 2025 to **AJINOMOTO BANGLADESH LTD**

175 Tongi Industrial Area, Gazipur, Dhaka

by addressing to **Tanvir Mahmudul Hasan-Head of HR**

Or Email to tanvir@ajinomotobangladesh.com

CITY

Four lakh children under-immunised

Says joint statement of Unicef, WHO, Gavi on Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marking the launch of World Immunization Week 2025, Unicef, WHO, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, warned that despite Bangladesh's progress in increasing immunisation coverage, significant disparities persist, putting nearly half a million children at risk.

In a joint statement yesterday, the organisations said although the country's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) has achieved remarkable results, around 4,00,000 children remain under-immunised, and about 70,000 (1.5 percent) have received no vaccines at all.

The gap is wider in urban areas, where 79 percent of children are fully vaccinated, 2.4 percent have received no vaccines (zero dose), and 9.8 percent are under-immunised, compared to 85 percent coverage in rural areas, the statement said.

"Since the launch of the EPI in 1979, Bangladesh has raised full immunisation coverage from just two percent to 81.6 percent, reflecting strong national commitment and the efforts of partners, NGOs, and frontline health workers," it added.

"But the final mile remains the hardest. Reaching every child and woman, especially in hard-to-reach and urban poor areas, demands renewed urgency, stronger efforts, and increased investment," said Stanley Gwuya, Unicef representative (officer-in-

charge) in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's EPI is now saving an estimated 94,000 lives and preventing five million child illnesses each year, delivering an impressive \$25 return for every \$1 invested, the statement added.

However, challenges remain in reaching every child. Addressing the needs of the 70,000 zero-dose and 400,000 under-immunised children is critical, as they account for a large share of preventable child deaths in low and middle-income countries, it said.

Ahmed Jamshed Mohamed, WHO representative to Bangladesh, said, "Bangladesh's progress in immunisation, even amid crises, highlights the strong leadership of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Directorate General of Health Services, the dedication of health workers, and the support from partners."

Sam Muller, regional head, Core Countries, at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, said, "The need to maintain investments in immunisation to improve health security and protect populations from vaccine-preventable diseases has never been more urgent if we are to sustain the progress."

Unicef, WHO, and Gavi urged the government to strengthen and sustain the national immunisation programme by ensuring adequate human resources and budgets.

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Strike on Yemen migrant centre kills at least 68

AFP, Sanaa

Huthi rebel controlled media in Yemen yesterday said that US strikes targeted a migrant detention centre in the movement's stronghold of Saada, killing at least 68 people.

The US military has hammered the Iran-backed Huthis with near daily strikes since March 15 in an operation dubbed "Rough Rider," seeking to end the threat they pose to vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

The Huthis launched strikes targeting Israel and Western vessels in the Red Sea, in what they describe as solidarity with the Palestinians.

On Sunday, the military said it has hit more than 800 targets in Yemen since mid-March, killing hundreds of Huthi rebels, including members of the group's leadership.

The civil defence has announced that 68 African migrants were killed and 47 others wounded in the US attack targeting a centre for illegal migrants in the city of Saada," the Huthis' Al-Masirah TV said.

AFP could not independently confirm the veracity of Al-Masirah's claim that the strikes had hit a migrant detention centre, or the toll.

AFP has contacted the US military for comment.

According to a statement cited by Al-Masirah from the Huthi administration's interior ministry, the centre housed "115 migrants, all from Africa".

The broadcaster showed footage of bodies stuck under the rubble and of rescuers working to help the casualties.

Conclave to elect pope starts May 7

AFP, Vatican City

Catholic cardinals will meet on May 7 to start voting for a new pope, the Vatican announced yesterday, a week after the death of Pope Francis.

So-called "Princes of the Church" under the age of 80 will meet in the Sistine Chapel to choose a new religious leader of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics.

The date was decided at a meeting of cardinals of all ages early yesterday, two days after the funeral of Francis, who died on April 1 aged 88.

The Church's 252 cardinals were called back to Rome after the Argentine's death, although only 135 are eligible to vote in the conclave.

The Vatican yesterday closed the Sistine Chapel, where voting will take place under Michelangelo's 16th-century ceiling frescoes, to begin preparations.

So far, there are few clues as to who cardinals might choose.

Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who under Francis was secretary of state, is for many the favourite to succeed him.

British bookmakers William Hill put him slightly ahead of Filipino Luis Antonio Tagle, the Metropolitan Archbishop emeritus of Manila, followed by Ghana's Cardinal Peter Turkson.

First get guarantee for Rohingya return

FROM PAGE 12

would only cover 20 percent of the population's needs. Combined with the near-total halt on trade, over 2 million people were at risk of starvation, it said.

Against this backdrop, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who visited Bangladesh in the middle of March, discussed with Bangladesh authorities the possibilities of a humanitarian corridor to Rakhine via Bangladesh, but added that it requires "authorisation and the cooperation of the parties to the conflict".

A UNSC resolution is required for the deployment of UN Peacekeepers, said Niloy Ranjan Biswas, a professor of international relations at Dhaka University.

"It is unlikely that the UNSC permanent members China and Russia would agree to any such proposal if made ever."

For establishing a humanitarian corridor, it is important to ensure full security in Rakhine, he said.

"Myanmar junta and the Arakan Army must have a full ceasefire," Biswas said.

Every day, 30 to 40 Rohingyas are fleeing to Bangladesh, according to Mizanur Rahman, the refugee relief and

repatriation commissioner.

On the other hand, Bangladesh has to secure a guarantee that the AA, which now reportedly controls about 80 percent of Rakhine, ensures conditions for Rohingya repatriation, he said.

The Rohingya are demanding a guarantee of citizenship, recognition as an ethnic group and safety in Rakhine from where they fled. Neither the Myanmar civilian administration nor the junta government ensured these demands in the past eight years.

"For Bangladesh, it is now very important to understand the position

of the Arakan Army for Rohingya repatriation," Biswas said.

It would have been better if the interim government detailed the conditions for the humanitarian corridor and how the UN proposed to guarantee security and help secure the AA commitment to Rohingya repatriation, he added.

On the sidelines of the BIMSTEC summit in Bangkok in April, Bangladesh's National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman and Myanmar's Foreign Minister Than Swe held a meeting, where Swe confirmed that 180,000 Rohingya living in Bangladesh are eligible to

return.

Bangladesh is informally engaged with the AA.

"Myanmar is our neighbour. We need to consider our future relations with the country -- call it the central government or the Arakan Army -- as we take any policy towards it.

We also need to see how the important countries like the US, India and China look at the issue," Ahmed said.

It is essential to ensure that no armed group can take advantage of the humanitarian corridor and fuel conflicts in the region, said a government official involved with the proceedings.

Hostility towards

FROM PAGE 12

resisting efforts by fundamentalist and communal groups to create unrest, and countering activities opposing state policies aimed at building a just and equitable society.

At the press briefing, Rabeya Khatun Shanti, movement secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, presented the keynote paper.

"A total of 442 women and girls were victims of violence across Bangladesh in March 2025," she said.

"Among the reported cases, 163 women, including 125 girls [under 18 years of age], were raped, with 36 cases involving gang rape, including 18 girls.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fauzia Moslem said eliminating violence against women is not solely the responsibility of women; rather, it must be a collective effort involving both the state and society.

"The persistent failure to

break free from long-standing discriminatory customs and traditions has continued to create opportunities for misogynistic propaganda, alongside attempts to institutionalise these harmful practices within society. Such efforts to intimidate and confine women are absolutely unacceptable."

She added, "No state can afford to neglect Goal 5 -- Gender Equality -- in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]; the state is committed to this cause."

Fauzia also emphasised that efforts to establish women's rights must involve the entire population, not just isolated organisations.

The organisation's General Secretary Maleka Banu noted that demands for women's rights are increasingly being suppressed under the pretext of protecting societal and religious norms.

Lightning strikes

FROM PAGE 12

Another child, Abu Sufian, 7, was injured and later admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital, said Barura Police OC Kazi Nazmul Haque.

In Kishoreganj, three people died in Austagram and Mithamoin upazilas.

The deceased are Indrajit Das, 30, of Halalpur village in Austagram, Swadhin Miya, 14, son of Idris Miya of Khairpur village in Austagram, and Fulesa Begum, 60, of Raniganj village in Mithamoin.

Fulesa was hit by lightning while drying paddy straw near her house at Shantiganj Haor around 8:30am, said Mithamoin Police Sub-Inspector Arpan Biswas.

Lightning struck Indrajit and Swadhin while they were harvesting

paddy in Halalpur Haor of Austagram upazila around 10:00am, said Austagram Police OC Md Ruhul Amin.

In Netrokona, 10-year-old Arafat, son of Abdus Salam of Tiyojhree village, was struck by lightning on his way to a madrasa in Madan upazila around 6:30am, said Madan Upazila Nirbahi Officer Aliduzzaman.

In Sunamganj, lightning struck young man as he was bringing back his cattle from a nearby haor during a thunderstorm around 7:00am.

Rimon Talukder, 20, was an undergrad student at Shalla Government Degree College and a resident of Atgaon village, said Shalla Police OC Shafiqul Islam.

In Habiganj, Durbas Das, 35, died, and three others were injured in separate incidents of lightning strikes in Baniaichong upazila.

The injured were taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital, Azadur Rahman, district relief and disaster management officer, told UNB.

In Shariatpur, Shefali Begum, 35, was hit by lightning while collecting grass for her cattle at a field in Bhedarganj upazila around 3:30pm.

Sakhipur Police Station OC Obaidul Haque said she died at a hospital.

Save the Society and Thunderstorm Awareness Forum (SSTAF), an NGO monitoring lightning-related casualties since 2019, reports that 1,322 people lost their lives to lightning strikes between 2019 and 2023, averaging 264 deaths annually.

Our correspondents from Cumilla, Kishoreganj, Netrokona, Sylhet, and Shariatpur contributed to the report.

Jagannath University

Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences

Master of Pharmacy (Professional) Program

Department of Pharmacy

Admission Circular (Batch: 08P)

Fall 2025 (August-January)

Key Features of the program

Degree/Award: Master of Pharmacy
Major: 1. Industrial Pharmacy, 2. Pharmaceutical Marketing
Course duration: One year (2 semesters)
Class time: Friday and Saturday
Application fee: Tk. 1,000.00
Application open: Till July 16, 2025 (9 am - 3:30 pm, week-days only)
Admission test: July 18, 2025, Friday. Test Result: July 21, 2025
Admission period: July 22, 2025 to July 31, 2025
Orientation: August 01, 2025

Eligibility for submission of application

A. Minimum 16 years of schooling; having S.S.C. (or equivalent) 10 years, H.S.C. (or equivalent) 2 years and Graduation (or equivalent) 4 years. B. Graduated in Pharmacy or Pharmaceutical sciences or relevant areas (CGPA 3.00 or more out of 4.00). C. No third class/division (or equivalent).

Application submission

A. Filled-up application form (available in www.jnu.ac.bd), B. Attested 3 copies of passport size photographs, C. Copies of the certificates and mark-sheets of all the previous examinations (attested by the Chairperson of the department of graduation) and D. Application fee.
Completed application can be submitted to the office of Dean, Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences, Jagannath University. Or, the application fee (1000 taka and transfer charge 20 taka) can be sent to 01717554320 by bKash and then the full application set can be mailed to saydur_pr@pharm.jnu.ac.bd as the PDF file along with the bKash reference number.

N.B. The authority keeps the right to cancel the application/admission at any time due to submission of incorrect application or misleading information

Contact (Application form and further information)

Office of the Dean, Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences
6th Floor, New Academic Building (029587900 Office)
Department of Pharmacy (02226638755, 01731742040 Office)

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Saydur Rahman, Program Director (01717554320)

Prof. Dr. Md. Akram Hossain

Dean

Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences

& Convener, M. Pharm. (Professional) Program Admission Committee

GD-995

Israel using aid blockage as 'weapon of war'

Palestinian official tells ICJ as food runs out in the tiny Palestinian enclave



A Palestinian mother cries, holding the body of her baby, at the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday. The baby was killed in an Israeli air strike.

PHOTO: AFP

Iran port blast toll rises to 46

AFP, Tehran

Firefighters in Iran battled raging fires yesterday at the country's largest commercial port, two days after a massive explosion killed at least 46 people, state TV reported.

The blast took place on Saturday at Shahid Rajaei Port in Iran's south near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, a waterway through which one-fifth of global oil output passes.

"The death toll in the Shahid Rajaei Port fire has reached 46," the official IRNA news agency reported, quoting Mehrdad Hassanzadeh, the crisis management director for Hormozgan province.

Officials had said more than 1,000 people were injured, but Hassanzadeh said most have now been released after treatment.

Only 138 wounded are still in hospital," he said.

Iran's state TV said the damage will be assessed after the fire is fully brought under control.

It was not immediately clear what caused the explosion but the port's customs office said it likely resulted from a fire that broke out at the hazardous and chemical materials storage depot.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered a probe into the incident to determine if there was "any negligence or intent".



CPD'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

How the power and energy sector can come out of constant financial crunch

Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem
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Helen Mashiyat Preoty
is senior research associate CPD.

Faisal Quaiyym
is programme associate at CPD.

**KHONDAKER GOLAM MOAZZEM,
HELEN MASHIYAT PREOTY and
FAISAL QUAIYYUM**

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has put forward a set of recommendations targeting the national budget for FY2025-26, especially with regard to the power and energy sector. There are grave concerns about the sector since it has confronted a vicious cycle of financial crunch over the last several years, which is likely to continue in the next fiscal year unless necessary measures are taken by the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources (MoPEMR) and Ministry of Finance (MoF).

The power and energy sector has faced prolonged financial losses, rising public debt, and increasing fiscal burdens due to faulty policies, lack of transparency, and weak governance during the previous regime. Key challenges include: a) defaults on import bill payments; b) repayment of international loans and dues to international companies; c) disrupted gas and electricity supply; d) a lack of domestic gas exploration; and e) a growing subsidy burden passed onto consumers via higher tariffs. The upcoming national budget should focus on paying off outstanding dues, reducing subsidies, prioritising domestic gas exploration over LNG imports, lowering tariff barriers for renewable energy components, and eliminating discriminatory fiscal benefits for fossil-fuel-based power generation. As of February 2024, the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) has an overdue payment of Tk 29,000 crore, with Tk 21,000 crore owed to locally owned independent power plants (IPPs) and Tk 8,000 crore to foreign-owned IPPs, including Adani Power Jharkhand Ltd. Similarly, Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation, also known as Petrobangla, faces outstanding dues for LNG and coal imports. To address this, the finance ministry plans to clear all arrears within the current fiscal year by reallocating unused ADP funds and raising the power sector subsidy to Tk 62,000 crore. However, this approach highlights a troubling cycle of overdue loans, unpaid bills, and ongoing financial liabilities in the power and energy sector.

Macroeconomic concerns

Fiscal policies directly impact macroeconomic performance. However, one major mistake and overlooked issue of the previous regime was failing to consider the broader macroeconomic context while injecting substantial funds into the power and energy sector, without addressing the effects of rapidly increasing money supply. This sector has been one of the highest recipients of subsidies, contributing to a weak macroeconomic foundation and rising price levels that persist today.

While subsidies may lower energy prices for consumers, they inadvertently increase the overall money supply, raising demand for power and contributing to demand-pull inflation. This inflationary pressure, driven by more money in the economy and artificially low prices, causes general price levels to rise.

Conversely, reducing subsidies would lead to higher prices for consumers at both household and production levels, also contributing to inflation but with different consequences. In this case, the government's fiscal burden would decrease, potentially alleviating pressure on public finances. However, reducing subsidies could also increase the fiscal deficit, adding pressure to inflation. The reality is, there is no straightforward solution; decisions must balance controlling inflation, reducing fiscal deficits, and reallocating subsidies for long-term sustainability in the sector.

Five-year financial recovery plan needed

To break the cycle, the MoPEMR, particularly BPDB and Petrobangla, should design a five-year financial plan to gradually reduce overdue payments. This plan should phase out fossil-fuel-based power plants after current contracts end, removing the "capacity payment" clause from renewed power purchase agreements (PPAs) and new contracts. In the short term, the MoPEMR should work with the finance and planning ministries to allocate additional funds as loans to BPDB and Petrobangla to clear overdue payments. These funds could come from ministries with poor fund utilisation records. The MoPEMR should also coordinate with the finance ministry to secure foreign exchange to clear overdue payments to foreign companies and projects, with the finance ministry and the Economic Relations Division (ERD) negotiating with multinational development banks like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Asian Development Bank (ADB) for budget support. Additionally, the MoPEMR must present a medium-to-long-term financial sustainability plan.

The power and energy sector has faced prolonged financial losses, rising public debt, and increasing fiscal burdens due to faulty policies, lack of transparency, and weak governance during the previous regime.

Developing domestic gas sector is crucial
Despite the plan to drill 35 gas wells across the country by 2025, only one has been drilled so far. While three key projects have been approved and eight new projects are proposed for survey, exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons to boost gas reserves, the number of ongoing and planned projects remains too small to meet the exploration target. To address this, Petrobangla should expedite the explorations of gas wells using its own gas development fund instead of relying on foreign bidders. The Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (BAPEX) can take loans to allocate resources for the exploration of the 10 gas wells, scheduled to be explored using rented rigs. Since supplying energy is one of the topmost priorities for the national economy, the MoPEMR should discuss the necessary allocation of resources for ADP projects on the development of gas fields with the planning ministry.

Such a slow pace of gas exploration, coupled with prompt initiatives to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) continuously from the spot market, has raised concerns regarding the government's commitment to reduce energy import dependency. To address this, the government should start de prioritising LNG imports. In this context, the recent deal signed with the US for LNG supply could undermine the efforts to explore domestic gas resources. Instead, the government may consider welcoming US-based companies to submit their proposals for gas exploration in the off-shore fields.

Reducing import tariffs, other duties for green energy transition

One significant barrier to attracting private and public investment for green energy transition and attaining self-sustenance is the high tariff structure imposed on the import of essential renewable energy components. The total tax incidence on these imported components consists of multiple layers, such as customs duty, supplementary duty, advance income tax, advance tax, and value-added tax (VAT), significantly raising the costs. The overall impact of these tariffs is twofold:

a) they increase the capital expenditure for renewable energy projects; and b) they slow the adoption of clean energy technologies due to higher financial barriers. For example, the total tax incidence imposed on solar panels is 26.2 percent, solar inverters 37 percent, mounting structures 58.6 percent, lithium-ion batteries 58.6 percent, and lead-acid batteries 89.32 percent. Additionally, other key renewable energy technologies such as wind, hydro, geothermal, and biomass-based power generation rely on imported equipment and components that are subject to similarly higher import duties and tax incidence. Similarly, electric vehicles face higher tax incidence. In contrast, the tax incidence is much lower for equipment and other components of fossil-fuel-based power generation.

Custom duties on parts, equipment, and components related to renewable energy supply chains, including generation, transmission, and distribution, should be reduced to five percent. The government should also eliminate taxes on all renewable energy goods to reduce costs and boost wider adoption of renewable energy technologies. Such measures would have only a marginal impact on the government's aggregate revenue generation. Also, VAT on parts, equipment, and components related to renewable energy supply chains should be reduced from 15 percent to 10 percent. In addition, a dedicated Renewable Energy Development Fund should be established to provide financial support for facilitating the establishment of distributed renewable energy systems, under private and commercial solar, wind, and biomass production units. To improve access to clean energy in remote and underserved regions, development funds should be allocated for mini-grid solar, battery storage technologies and wind projects.

Withdrawing benefits for fossil-fuel-based power

Addressing the fiscal benefits provided to fossil-fuel-based power producers is crucial for creating a level playing field for renewable energy producers. Under the Private Sector Power Generation Policy, fossil-fuel-based power plants receive significant tax exemptions, including a 15-year corporate income tax holiday, exemptions on plant and equipment imports, and full customs duty exemptions on imported fuel. The companies are allowed to import plant and equipment and spare parts up to a maximum of 10 percent of the original value of total plant and equipment within 12 years of commercial operation without payment of customs duties, VAT, and any other surcharges. The exemption includes paying import permit fees, except for indigenously produced equipment manufactured according to international standards. For imported fuel, there is full exemption of customs and import duties, and five percent VAT on the imported fuel as it will be used for the power generation process. These advantages have skewed the power sector, making it difficult for renewable energy producers to compete.

To rectify this, the Power Division should work with the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to remove corporate tax exemptions for fossil-fuel-based power plants in upcoming projects. A minimum five percent customs duty and surcharge should be imposed on the import of machinery and steel structures for fossil fuel plants. The Power Division should also review and compare the fiscal benefits given to fossil fuel plants with those for renewable energy producers, taking steps to eliminate discriminatory advantages. The MoPEMR, Power Division, Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC), and Sustainable And Renewable Energy Development Authority should collaborate with the finance ministry and NBR to withdraw these measures, reducing government fiscal expenditure and generating additional revenue.

ISRAEL'S WAR IN GAZA

An alliance that threatens global peace



Anu Muhammad
is former professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University.

ANU MUHAMMAD

A horrifying and almost unbelievable tragedy is unfolding in Palestine. What we are witnessing today is not new. It is the continuation of decades of suffering, oppression, and genocide that began long before many of us were even born. This long-standing injustice includes occupation, systematic displacement, and recurring waves of violent attacks. Since October 2023, a particularly brutal new phase of violence has emerged.

This time, the scale and intent are chilling. While the US, under the Biden administration, has continued to extend unwavering support to Israel, framing its actions as "self-defence," more than 52,000 people have been killed since October 7, 2023, according to Al Jazeera. Of the people killed, 70 percent are women and children. In fact, children alone make up 44 percent of the total casualties. The



More than 52,000 people have been killed by Israel's war in Gaza since October 7, 2023.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

remaining victims are mostly ordinary men, including UN workers, journalists, human rights defenders, and civilians. Israel has bombed schools, colleges, hospitals, libraries, and even designated UN shelters and refugee camps, places that were supposed to be safe zones.

Earlier this year, there was a brief sense of relief. As anti-war sentiment grew, the US administration changed from Biden to Trump. Many believed that Trump, with his various personal controversies, would avoid military entanglements. His words suggested a non-interventionist stance, which encouraged displaced Palestinians to return home and try to rebuild their shattered lives.

Earlier this year, there was a brief sense of relief. As anti-war sentiment grew, the US administration changed from Biden to Trump. Many believed that Trump, with his various personal controversies, would avoid military entanglements. His words suggested a non-interventionist stance, which encouraged displaced Palestinians to return home and try to rebuild their shattered lives.

But the violence resumed. Israel launched a fresh wave of attacks with a chilling objective: to completely depopulate Gaza. Trump's goal is to transform Gaza's coastline into a luxury tourist destination. In his pursuit of power, profit, and imperial dominance, he is backing not war but clear genocide.

Emboldened by such support, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has escalated the assault to a horrifying new level. What makes this even more shocking is that the world is not unaware. The UN General Assembly has repeatedly passed resolutions demanding an end to the war, supported overwhelmingly by member states. Even the UN Security Council, the most powerful body of the organisation, passed a resolution to stop the violence. Yet, Israel continues its assault unabated.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has described Israel's actions as "genocide" and labelled those responsible as war criminals. Still, the killing doesn't stop because of one key reason: the US continues to back Israel. Not only has the US rejected the ICJ's findings, but it has also condemned the court for daring to take such a position against Israel.

It's important to note that the US is not a member of the International

Criminal Court (ICC). Why? Likely because if it were, many former US presidents could be subjected to war crime charges, given their roles in many countries in the world including recent mass killings and destructive roles in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere. To avoid accountability, the US stays outside the ICC and continues to shield Israel from international law and scrutiny. This isn't just about weapons and intelligence. Israel uses Gaza as a testing ground. As shown in the book *Palestine Laboratory: How Israel Exports the Technology of Occupation Around the World* by Jewish author Antony Loewenstein, Israel tests new weapons and surveillance systems on Palestinians. Once proven effective, these technologies are sold worldwide, often to authoritarian regimes. This grim cycle turns the suffering of Palestinians into a

profit-making machine.

Importantly, many Jewish voices including progressive and democratic groups in Israel are speaking out against these atrocities. Around the world, people of all religions and backgrounds are rising in protest. In the US, across Europe, and in other countries, people are condemning their governments' support for Israel's actions. Still, Israel's impunity is not just a result of US protection. A key enabler has been the silence—or worse, the complicity—of many Arab governments. The failure of powerful Muslim-majority countries to take even a moral stand has been deeply discouraging. Most of these states are monarchies, where dissent is crushed and public protest is nearly impossible. These regimes, by aligning themselves with global imperial powers, contribute to the suffering of Palestinians.

What's happening in Palestine is a struggle between oppressed people everywhere and the forces of empire, colonisation, and domination. While many Arab rulers remain silent about Israel's atrocities, people of various faiths and nations stand in solidarity with Palestine. This is not a cause for nearly two billion Muslims alone. It is a concern for all eight billion people on Earth.

Because if such unchecked violence continues, if the mass murder of women and children, the displacement of entire populations, and the destruction of culture and life are allowed, then no one, anywhere, is safe. The Palestinian struggle is part of the larger fight for freedom, dignity, and justice for all of humanity.

Under Trump, Palestine is being reduced to a business opportunity. Gaza is seen as prime real estate. This alliance of Trump and his global supporters is profoundly dangerous. In their world, human life means nothing; only profit and power matter. Even now, protests are erupting in over 50 cities across the US against Trump's policies that show little concern for human rights, democracy, and global norms.

Trump's recent trade policies, such as the proposed global tariffs, are another sign of his disregard for international law and institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO). Economically, politically, and militarily, the current US administration presents a serious threat to global peace and stability.

That's why it is more urgent than ever to build global solidarity across faiths, races, and borders. The alliance between the US, Israel, and their enablers is not just harming people; it is damaging the planet, worsening the climate crisis, and pushing humanity towards a dangerous future.

We must stand united—now more than ever—to amplify the voices of the oppressed, protect our shared humanity, and demand justice, peace, and freedom for all, and to save the Earth.

Kumar Bishwajit
clings to hope for
son's recovery

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Renowned Bangladeshi singer Kumar Bishwajit's only son, Nibir, was severely injured in a car accident in Canada some time ago. While three of his friends lost their lives, Nibir miraculously survived. However, he has had to undergo prolonged treatment ever since.

The celebrated artiste has been staying in Toronto for an extended period, patiently waiting for his son's recovery. His sole purpose for residing abroad is to ensure proper treatment for Nibir.

Speaking to The Daily Star over the phone on Sunday, April 27, Kumar Bishwajit shared his emotions about his son, saying, "There is no choice but to wait. I am waiting—waiting with all my heart. I seek everyone's prayers so that everything becomes alright."

When asked about Nibir's current condition, he said, "He cannot speak. A tracheal tube has been placed in his throat. However, he is growing. Slowly but steadily, he is growing."

In response to whether Nibir can recognise them, the artiste replied, "He does. When he sees us, he smiles a little. But when we leave, he cries."

When asked about how his days are passing in Canada, he said, "I spend my time. I go to meet my son. I pray to the Almighty for him. Time passes like this."

Asked about his own well-being, Kumar Bishwajit said, "I am here. I am fine, living with everyone's love and blessings."

Nibir is currently staying at a rehabilitation centre, where he has been for over a year.

Nibir met with the tragic accident on February 14, 2023, in Canada. Since then, the singer and his wife have been staying there.

Although the artiste briefly returned to Bangladesh once, he soon went back to Canada. Before the accident, Nibir was studying Digital Marketing at a Canadian college, but the sudden tragedy shattered all his dreams.

Despite the hardships, Kumar Bishwajit holds on to hope, dreaming of the day his son will recover and bring joy back to his parents' lives.

Dhaka hosts
'Nrityasudha'
for Int'l Dance
Day

Dhaka celebrated International Dance Day yesterday with *Nrityasudha*, a special dance event organised by Nrityam Nrityashilon Kendra. The programme was held at 7pm at the Bangladesh Mohila Samity auditorium.

Curated by renowned dancer Tamanna Rahman, the evening featured performances by Belayet Hossain Khan, Munmun Ahmed, Kabirul Islam Ratan, Proma Avanti, Tamanna Rahman, and Yang Hui along with their respective troupes.

The fifth edition of *Nrityasudha* showcased classical forms such as Manipuri, Odissi, Bharatanatyam, and Kathak, alongside international dances from Korea, Germany, Japan, Hawaii, and Nepal.

A highlight of the evening was the Chinese traditional and contemporary performances presented by Yang Hui's troupe.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Where The Spirit
Meets The Bone'

Where the Spirit Meets the Bone, curated by Kehkasha Sabah under the *Art Exchange: Moving Image* programme supported by the British Council, is a two-part, multi-sensory exhibition at Satori Academy of Arts. Featuring transnational artists and experimental workshops, it explores moving images, care, embodiment, healing, and sensory ecologies.

Date: Tuesday-Friday | April 29 – May 16, 2025
Time: 4:30-8pm
Venue: Satori Academy of Arts, Banani



PHOTO: COLLECTED

'PRIYO MALOTI'
wins award at London
Bengali Film Festival

Shankha Das Gupta's debut feature film, *Priyo Maloti*, has won the Audience Award at the 8th London Bengali Film Festival, held from April 22 to 27.

The film was screened at the festival's opening ceremony on April 22 at Barbican Cinema and received an enthusiastic response from viewers. Sharing the news on social media, the director expressed gratitude to audiences for their support. Based on real-life events, *Priyo Maloti* follows the emotional journey of a pregnant woman whose life takes a sudden, dramatic turn.

The film stars Mehazabien Chowdhury, Nader Chowdhury, Azad Abul Kalam, Momena Chowdhury, and others. Shankha Das Gupta hopes the film's success will inspire more stories that connect audiences across borders.

Cyndi Lauper, Chubby
Checker among Rock
& Roll Hall of Fame
inductees

Cyndi Lauper, Chubby Checker, and Soundgarden are among the 2025 inductees into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, announced by Ryan Seacrest during *American Idol* on Sunday, April 27.

Other inductees include Bad Company, Outkast, Joe Cocker, and The White Stripes. The induction ceremony will stream live from Los Angeles on Disney+ on November 8.

Inductees were selected by fans and industry experts, with eligibility requiring a first release at least 25 years ago. Checker, 83, popularised dances like the twist and limbo in the 1960s.

Lauper rose to fame in the 1980s with hits including *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*. Soundgarden, led by Chris Cornell, was a key figure in Seattle's 1990s grunge scene.

NEWS

Rohingyas fleeing Arakan Army

they are escaping to Bangladesh after facing persecution by the Arakan Army. In the homes they leave behind, people from other communities are settling. These accounts have been consistently shared by the fleeing Rohingyas. We have not been able to independently verify this information."

Official sources confirmed that Bangladesh authorities and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have taken fingerprints of the 1.13 lakh Rohingyas who entered Bangladesh since November 2023.

With these new arrivals, the total number of Rohingyas officially sheltered in Bangladesh now stands at least 13 lakh.

To arrange accommodation for the new arrivals, UNHCR has sent a letter to Bangladesh. The letter was sent last week to the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation

Commissioner. Regarding the matter, Mizanur said, "We have received a letter from UNHCR requesting arrangements for the accommodation of more than one lakh new Rohingyas. We do not have space to build houses for such a large number."

"This effort to build new shelters will make Rohingya repatriation more difficult, as it will encourage more Rohingyas in Rakhine to come to Bangladesh," Zubair said.

Md Zubair, chairman of Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights, said, "Arakan Army is carrying out atrocities against the Rohingyas living in Rakhine State. Rohingyas are called to Arakan Army camps and forced to work as labourers. They are picking Rohingyas for recruitment into their forces to fight against the military junta."

Until November 2023, around 1.2 million Rohingyas, most of whom fled a brutal military campaign by Myanmar's junta forces, had already taken shelter in Bangladesh.

affected by civil war.

Bangladesh's policy decision to provide a corridor for Myanmar's civilian population was announced yesterday afternoon by Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain.

He stated that the corridor would be under the supervision of the UN and subject to certain conditions.

The context for the proposed corridor dates back to the first half of this year, when the United Nations expressed fears of a potential famine in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Consequently, the UN requested that Bangladesh facilitate a corridor for delivering humanitarian assistance to the region, which has been severely

Locals contradict Rab claims

of the Rab members fired five warning shots in the air, and the suspects fled. The Rab said it rescued the two injured members and later heard that Siam died at Gournadi Health Complex after being critically injured.

Based on the FIR, the Rab filed a case against the duo and 10 to 15 others on drug-related charges. Another case was filed against the fugitive suspects on charges of obstruction of government duties and murder.

FIR WITNESS 'WAS NOT ON SPOT'

The FIR stated that a witness named Sukdeb Baroi, a local union council member, was present on the spot when the Rab searched Siam and Rakib.

When contacted last night, Sukdeb said that he had witnessed no such thing.

"I have not seen the boys, or the dead body. I was not on the spot in the evening, when this incident was said to have occurred. I was called around 11:00pm at night because I am the union parishad member. When I reached there, I only saw shoes lying about," said Sukdeb.

He said that he does not even know Siam and Rakib, and he agreed

to be a witness because he was asked. **WHAT LOCALS SAY**

Conversations with over two dozen locals during a visit to the spot on April 26 revealed that the area where the drive was conducted is known as a drug spot.

Locals, however, said they had not seen Siam or Rakib engaging in any drug-related activities.

Titu Hawlader, who lives near the graveyard, told this newspaper that on the day of the incident, a group led by a local man with reported links to drug-related activities arrived at the graveyard before Maghrib prayers.

Siam and Rakib were chatting at a nearby shop, Titu said.

At the time, some plainclothes Rab personnel surrounded the spot, but the local man leading the group at the graveyard started shouting "robber, robber", Titu said.

"Siam and Rakib, along with eight to 10 other people, rushed to the scene after hearing the shouts. The locals then got engaged in a scuffle with the Rab members in plainclothes," he said.

Titu's wife Mitu Akter said at one point during the scuffle, the Rab members opened fire, and the locals fled.

Locals said Rakib fell into a pond

but managed to swim ashore after being shot.

They said he was first taken to Gournadi Upazila Health Complex and later transferred to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital, where he underwent surgery at 11:00pm on the same day.

The hospital's Assistant Surgeon Akram Hossain said Rakib was shot in the abdomen.

Meanwhile, according to a death certificate obtained from Gournadi Health Complex, Siam was declared dead on arrival around 6:30pm that day.

Family members described Siam as a quiet student who spent most of his time at home or studying. "Siam had no involvement with drugs or crimes. He was simply at the wrong place at the wrong time," said his cousin Mim Akter.

Rakib's sister-in-law Nasrin Begum echoed similar sentiments, saying, "Doctors have forbidden him from talking, but it's clear from the circumstances that he was not involved in any wrongdoing."

The locals demonstrated in front of Saheberh Secondary School on April 23 against the killing of Siam.

"We want justice," said his cousin Mim.

WHAT POLICE SAY

Sub-Inspector (SI) Milton Mondal of Agiljhara Police Station, who is investigating the drug recovery case, told The Daily Star, "We have not yet obtained any information that Siam and Rakib were involved in drug dealings."

Milton also said that they did not find any evidence that Siam and Rakib used firearms. "But our investigation is underway," he added.

SI Abbas Uddin of the police station, who is investigating the other case, told this newspaper that no prior criminal records were found on the two students.

Oliul Islam, officer-in-charge of Agiljhara Police Station, said the Rab had not informed the police about the drive beforehand.

"We had no prior knowledge about Rab's raid," he said.

Contacted, Senior Warrant Officer Sheikh Riazul Islam of Rab-8, also the complainant of the case, declined to comment on a matter under investigation. He suggested contacting higher authorities for queries.

Rab-8 Deputy Commander Major Mahmudul Ahsan told The Daily Star, "An investigation is ongoing. So far, no confirmed criminal record has been found against Siam and Rakib."

People did not make

FROM PAGE 2

"We have not faced any problem where people are saying, 'hand it over as soon as possible,'" Yunus said.

Questioning the claim, Amir Khasru said, "Who are the people? The BNP, as the main opposition party, represents the people."

"The people of Bangladesh did not struggle, protest, or make sacrifices to hand the country's responsibilities to any superhuman," he said.

"There is no reason to believe the people should wait for a superhuman to solve the country's democratic issues," he added.

Khasru noted that nearly 50 allied parties have demanded that elections be held before December.

He also stressed that agreed-upon reforms must be implemented immediately, urging the

Election Commission to set an election date, announce a roadmap, and proceed with preparations.

"If 'people' refers to a privileged group opposing democracy and voting rights, confront them... there should be no confusion," Khasru added.

He expressed hope that the chief adviser would honour his earlier commitments made during meetings with political parties.

Meanwhile, three BNP associate bodies — Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, Sweekchasebok Dal, and Chhatra Dal — will hold four seminars and four rallies to empower youth to build a just state, said Jubo Dal President Monayem Munna yesterday at a press conference at BNP's Nayapaltan central office.

Meghna Alam

FROM PAGE 2

woman, she should be granted bail.

Upon hearing both the

sides, the magistrate granted her bail upon a bond of Tk 5,000 with two guarantors.

In the order, the magistrate said it was not clear whom she was allegedly extorting from.

Moreover, Meghna Alam is a woman. According to the provision of the Criminal Procedure Code, she has a right to get bail as a woman, said the magistrate in his order.

Meghna was shown arrested in the case on April 17 following a petition filed by case investigation officer Md Akhtar Morshed, an inspector of the Detective Branch of police. Police filed the case against Meghna, her associate Dewan Samir and two others on April 15.



Two directors of LOVELLO to buy shares

The company's directors, Muhsinna Taufika Ekram and Muhsinna Sharika Ekram will buy 200,000 shares of Taufika Foods and Lovello Ice Cream PLC, a Food and Allied sector company listed on the stock market.

According to the information given on the DSE website, Muhsinna Taufika Ekram and Muhsinna Sharika Ekram will buy these shares from the public market at the current market price within the next 30 working days. The closing market price of a share of LOVELLO in the stock market yesterday was 81.40 taka. Accordingly, the market value of 200,000 shares stands at almost 1.63 Crore taka. However, if the share price decreases or increases, the value will also decrease or increase.

Muhsinna Taufika Ekram and Muhsinna Sharika Ekram are the daughters of the company's Managing Director, Dato' Engineer Md. Ekramul Haque, and Chairman, Datu' Shamima Nargis Haque. In this regard, the company's Managing Director, Dato' Engineer Md. Ekramul Haque said that after completing their studies from Canada, they will return to the country and will regularly look after the company's business activities. The shares are purchased as part of the company's plan to advance its business by utilizing their education as representatives of the new generation.

Muhsinna Taufika Ekram and Muhsinna Sharika Ekram are directors of Taufika Foods and Lovello Ice Cream PLC, owning 2.41 percent and 3.53 percent of the company's total shares, respectively. Their ownership will increase further by purchasing new shares. It is worth noting that Lovello last paid 20% dividend to shareholders in the financial year 2023-2024. Of which 10% was cash and 10% was bonus dividend.

Political parties

FROM PAGE 12

"We don't want to turn into another Gaza. We don't want to see war anymore. We are already struggling with the Rohingya issue."

Fakhrul made the remarks while speaking at a rally in Khagrabari Sheikh Bazar in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila yesterday as part of a public outreach campaign.

Anisul Huq assaulted on court premises

FROM PAGE 12

Anisul when he was being brought to the court. Those lawyers assaulted him, the witness said.

Video clips of the incident have gone viral.

At the time of the assault, Anisul was seen wearing a police helmet. On duty police personnel swiftly escorted him away and put him inside

No more

FROM PAGE 3

Businesses that continue operating with revoked licences will face legal action.

DSCC Chief Executive Officer Md Zillur Rahman told The Daily Star that the licences of restaurants issued based on false or incomplete information had now been cancelled.

"First, we will identify all illegal restaurants. Then, we will send official notices to inform them of the licence cancellation. They will be given a specified period to cease operations, after which action will be taken if they fail to comply," he said.

On February 29 last year, a devastating fire at the Green Cozy Cottage building in Bailey Road resulted in the deaths of 46 people. Following that tragedy, deficiencies in restaurant approvals and fire safety measures came to light.

The building had eight restaurants, none of which had proper authorisation.

After the Bailey Road fire incident, five government agencies, including Rajuk, DSCC, DNCC, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and the fire service, launched a series of enforcement drives across the city.

These drives led to the demolition of illegal restaurants, business closures, staff arrests, and the imposition of fines.

In addition, other agencies, such as the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection and the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority, have conducted raids throughout the year.

PRAYER TIMING

APRIL 29

Fazr Zohr Asr Magrib Esha

AZAN 4:20 12:45 4:45 6:29 8:00

JAMAAT 4:55 1:15 5:00 6:34 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Concerns genuine, but reforms

FROM PAGE 3

based on seniority rather than merit weakens education standards.

Although the High Court had earlier allowed these promotions, the Supreme Court's Chamber Court recently stayed that order.

Students insist that only a complete abolition of the quota will resolve the issue.

"That's a stay order. We want a full cancellation," said Maslik Islam Dewan, a central student leader.

Other demands also reflect deep concerns.

Committee members agreed that a standardised four-year curriculum and an age limit for admissions could bring more structure and discipline.

However, the demand for an immediate shift to English instruction raised concerns.

Committee members said while English proficiency is essential for global competitiveness, a sudden transition would disproportionately hurt students from rural and underprivileged backgrounds.

Even student leaders admitted the need for a phased approach. "We do not want it implemented right away. It should happen gradually with proper support," said Maslik.

Another demand calls for legal action against organisations that appoint diploma engineers to lower positions despite existing reservations for "sub-assistant engineer" and equivalent Grade 10 posts.

On this point, a committee member said while ensuring fair opportunities is important, it would be difficult to legally stop employers from hiring diploma engineers in lower posts, since hiring decisions often fall outside direct government control.

Students from the Bangladesh University of

Engineering and Technology have also rejected this demand, arguing that both diploma and BSc graduates should compete fairly for technical positions through open examinations.

Other proposals gained more support. Committee members backed the call to appoint only technical personnel to lead technical institutions, saying non-specialists often fail to address sector-specific needs.

However, the demand to create a separate ministry for technical education was considered unrealistic, given the already heavy bureaucratic structure.

Strengthening existing structures within the Ministry of Education would be a more practical approach, they said.

Similarly, the proposal to establish a technical university for diploma graduates was considered important but would require broader consultation with the Secondary and Higher Education Division due to funding and administrative complexities.

Beyond the immediate demands, deeper issues remain. Despite heavy investment in expanding polytechnic institutes, Bangladesh's technical education system continues to lose students.

In the 2023-24 academic year, nearly 60 percent of polytechnic seats went unfilled. Severe staffing shortages persist, with only 2,900 teachers employed against 15,000 approved posts as of October 2024.

These gaps have weakened confidence among students, and if they are not addressed, protests and declining enrolment could worsen, warned officials.

Explaining the decision to resume protests, Maslik said, "We expected action

against those who attacked our protesters in Cumilla, but it didn't happen. Besides, a technical board official made negative comments about our demands after the committee was formed."

Committee members expressed surprise at the students' resumption of protests, warning that impatience could weaken the credibility of their movement.

They stressed that reform is a slow and difficult process requiring consistency and patience.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Shamshur Rahman Khan, head of the committee and additional secretary (development) of the Technical and Madrasah Education Division, said, "We are discussing the matters with utmost importance and a positive spirit. We are not giving less importance to any of the demands."

"After careful review through detailed discussions, if any of them can help improve the sector, even in a small way, we will certainly recommend their implementation," he added.

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River acquires Pathao co-founder Elius' Wind app

NEXT STEP DESK

River, a US-based technology company founded by Bangladeshi-American entrepreneurs, has acquired Wind, a blockchain-based payments application created by Hussain M Elius, the former CEO of Pathao.

Elius, who previously led Pathao, one of South Asia's most widely used ride-sharing platforms, has joined River as co-founder and chief technology officer (CTO). His app, Wind, which enabled blockchain-based transactions, will now be integrated into RiverPay, a new platform designed to provide cross-border financial and digital services for freelancers, migrant workers and international travellers.

According to a press release, RiverPay is aimed at addressing long-standing barriers faced by global workers and expatriates, particularly those from Bangladesh. The platform intends to offer alternatives to traditional banking systems by facilitating global payments through stablecoins, allowing

The initiative is particularly focused on users in Bangladesh, where options for receiving international payments remain limited due to the absence of services such as PayPal and the high transaction costs associated with conventional remittance channels.

lower-cost remittances and providing multi-currency wallets. It will also include eSIM connectivity to support users across various geographies.

The initiative is particularly focused on users in Bangladesh, where options for receiving international payments remain limited due to the absence of services such as PayPal and the high transaction costs associated with conventional remittance channels. RiverPay is licensed in both the European Union and the United Arab Emirates, as per a press release.

Founded by Ruhin Hossain, Mushrath, and Yasser, River has established itself as a telecom solution provider for a globally mobile user base. In its first year, the company reported \$10 million in annual revenue and now serves over 130,000 users across more than 30 countries. With the addition of RiverPay, the company is moving toward a broader "super app" model that combines financial technology and communication services in one platform, adds the press release.



Bangladeshi startup Chhaya wins GITEX Asia Supernova Challenge

Chhaya, a Bangladeshi digital insurance startup, has placed first in the Supernova Challenge at GITEX Asia 2025, a global startup competition, winning a \$50,000 prize.

This year's GITEX Asia marked the regional expansion of the GITEX Global series, with the event's Supernova Challenge bringing together emerging startups with breakthrough potential to pitch before a global panel of investors and industry experts.

Chhaya's winning pitch showcased its solution of accessible, transparent, and hassle-free insurance for everyday Bangladeshis, states the press release. The startup features a digital micro-insurance platform that is serving Bangladeshi communities around the world.

With this international recognition, Chhaya says it is now preparing to scale its presence both within and beyond Bangladesh. The startup is part of the Iterative and Accelerating Asia portfolios and has achieved notable early traction, including regulatory approval in Bangladesh, adds the press release.

Bangladesh's internet future hampered by fragmentation, says APNIC Chief Scientist

Exclusive interview with Geoff Huston on why Bangladesh is falling behind in the internet revolution

MOHAMMAD KAWSAR UDDIN

Geoff Huston, Chief Scientist at the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), believes Bangladesh has made important strides in internet development but faces critical hurdles, particularly in IPv6 adoption and network security. Speaking at the APRICOT 2025 and APNIC 59 conference in Kuala Lumpur, Huston outlined the country's progress, challenges, and opportunities for growth.

In an exclusive interview, he shared his insights into how Bangladesh can strengthen its internet infrastructure.

Q: What is your general observation about Bangladesh's IPv6* uptake compared to the rest of the world?

Geoff Huston: This is a data-driven question, so I'll need to refer to our measurements at APNIC. We use a unique method to measure IPv6 adoption through Google's advertising network. Every day, we run about 30 to 35 million ads across the internet, each containing a script that checks whether users can access IPv6-only resources. This allows us to obtain an accurate, up-to-date view of global IPv6 adoption.

Looking at Bangladesh specifically, we see that the country began its IPv6 journey in late 2021 and early 2022. On 23 March 2022, one of the major providers rolled it out. Currently, Bangladesh has an overall IPv6 adoption rate of about 2%, which is significantly lower than neighbouring India's 78%.

The three major providers in Bangladesh—Grameenphone, Axiata, and Banglalink—show relatively strong IPv6 deployment rates, ranging between 35% and 60%. However, their market share is relatively small. The numerous smaller ISPs in Bangladesh have yet to deploy IPv6. This is a common challenge: large companies with sufficient resources can afford to hire expertise for deployment, whereas smaller operators with limited technical staff struggle to do so.

Q: What initiatives can the government take to expedite IPv6 deployment in the country?

Geoff Huston: Bangladesh has a unique market structure compared to most countries. In many nations, the telecommunications market has consolidated around three or four major ISPs that collectively control about 90% of the market, with only a few niche providers serving specialised segments.

However, Bangladesh has not followed this pattern. The market here is highly fragmented, with numerous small operators. This fragmentation is important because IT operations benefit from economies of scale—larger providers can operate more cost-effectively than smaller ones. A single large ISP serving 100 million users will have a lower cost per user than 100 small ISPs each serving a fraction of that market. Bangladesh has three larger providers, but they are not dominant enough, and the market remains divided into many small segments.

Governments typically avoid intervening in markets, as telecommunications industries have been deliberately deregulated to encourage competition and consumer choice. In most countries, market forces lead to natural consolidation, where larger providers thrive and smaller ones are acquired. This type of consolidation has not yet occurred in Bangladesh, which is unusual from a global perspective.

Q: What advice would you give to ISPs and telecom operators in Bangladesh regarding IPv6 adoption?

Geoff Huston: In a market-driven system, service providers must offer services that customers need at prices they are willing to pay. If your services don't meet consumer demand, your business will struggle.

Interestingly, IPv6 itself is not a selling point for customers—they won't pay extra for it. What they care about is reliable and affordable service, particularly the ability to stream high-quality video without interruptions. If an ISP can provide that at a competitive price, it will thrive. If it cannot maintain service quality at reasonable rates, customers will switch to providers who can. In a competitive market, consumers make rational choices based on price and quality, which ultimately drives market evolution.

Q: Bangladesh has strong RPKI (Resource Public Key Infrastructure) ROA (Route Origin Authorization) uptake, but RPKI origin validation remains low. What is your observation on this?

Geoff Huston: Security is a complex field where decisions are often driven by mandates rather than independent risk assessments. RPKI does not necessarily make networks more secure in a broader sense—it primarily helps prevent accidental misconfigurations.

I understand the hesitation to fully implement RPKI origin validation. Handing over

Geoff Huston.

control of route filtering to an automated system is a significant step, and engineers are naturally cautious about allowing automated systems to control critical infrastructure. This is a standard conservative engineering approach: avoid changes that might cause unexpected failures in the middle of the night. That caution is both professional and appropriate.

Q: What can be done to improve RPKI origin validation?

Geoff Huston: This question touches on a deeper issue. RPKI provides less protection than many people assume. It primarily prevents accidental misconfigurations, but it is not very effective against deliberate attacks.

A major challenge is that the industry implemented partial security measures before completing the full security design. Currently, RPKI focuses on validating the origin of route announcements—ensuring that the entity creating the route is legitimate. However, routing security also requires protecting the path that routing information takes across the network. Existing technologies do not secure this path, allowing attackers to create deceptive yet seemingly legitimate routes.

As a result, while RPKI can catch accidental mistakes, it does little to stop sophisticated attackers from manipulating routes. Efforts to secure routing paths have been ongoing, but early solutions were too complex for widespread adoption, and newer proposals have been stuck in development for over a decade. Since there is no imminent solution, there is little urgency in deploying the current partial approach.

Q: Bangladesh has very low participation in the IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force). What challenges do you see?

Geoff Huston: I don't view this as a major issue. The IETF plays a specific role in the industry—it primarily ensures that network equipment from different vendors adheres to interoperability standards, much like ensuring that all cars can drive on the same roads.

Since Bangladesh does not manufacture network equipment, there is limited need for local participation in IETF activities. Equipment vendors must engage with the IETF, but network operators generally do not.

For professional development in network engineering, organisations like APRICOT and regional network operator groups are more relevant than the IETF. These forums focus on practical engineering expertise rather than equipment standards. Thus, Bangladesh's low participation in the IETF is not necessarily a concern—it may not be the most relevant platform for the country's needs.

Q: What is your view on policymakers and non-technical participants engaging in the IETF?

Geoff Huston: The IETF is not the right place for policymakers. The internet has raised many important regulatory and policy questions regarding industry structure, digital infrastructure resilience, and more. These are critical topics, but the IETF is not designed for such discussions.

In OECD member countries, regulatory and policy discussions occur in forums like the OECD itself. However, this organisation includes only about 40 countries, and I am unaware of equivalent venues for non-member states. Regardless, the IETF is not a substitute for policymaking discussions.

Q: So, would you say that the IETF is meant exclusively for technical professionals?

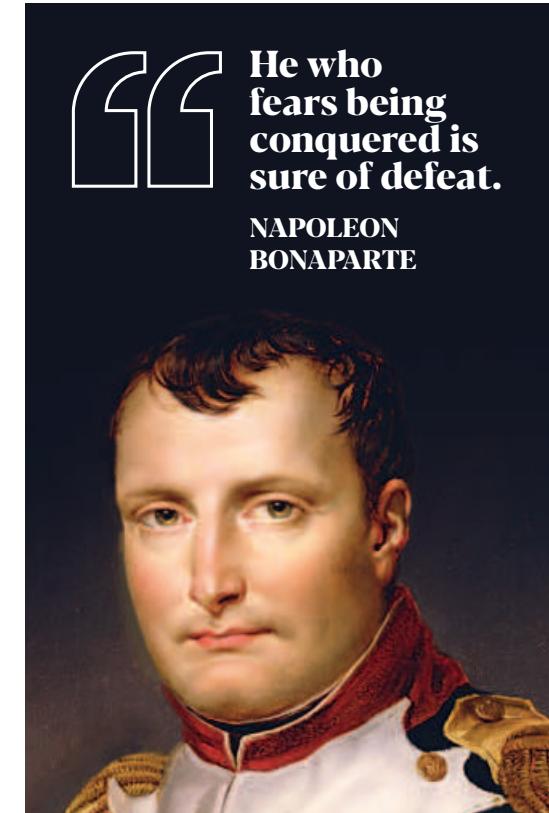
Geoff Huston: The IETF is most effective when it stays focused on technical matters. Some have attempted to bring broader discussions into the IETF, thinking they were missing an important aspect, but they quickly realise that the discussions there are highly technical.

For instance, topics like human rights and digital policy do not fit well within the IETF's framework. The organisation exists primarily to ensure that network equipment is safe, reliable, and interoperable for telecommunications providers.

That is its core mandate, and expecting it to serve a broader role is unrealistic. If it successfully fulfills this mission, then it is doing its job.

*IPv6 or Internet Protocol version 6 is a protocol used to identify and locate devices on networks, and to route traffic across the Internet. IPv6 is the successor to IPv4, offering a larger address space and improved features.

ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ



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4. Embassy of Sweden, Dhaka

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Minimum experience: 4 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



Taijul's statement spell leads TIGERS' REVIVAL

SPORTS REPORTER

After Zimbabwe's strong start on the opening day of the second and final Test in Chattogram, where they built a solid foundation through steady partnerships, Bangladesh needed a hero to spark their comeback yesterday.

Enter Taijul Islam, whose 16th five-wicket haul helped the hosts finish the day on a high, bringing them back into the contest after two challenging sessions.

Taijul's performance in the series opener in Sylhet was underwhelming. He conceded 53 runs from 10 overs without a wicket in the first innings, allowing Zimbabwe to take a crucial lead. In the second innings, he leaked runs at an economy rate of 4.40, claiming only two wickets as Bangladesh failed to defend 174 runs despite Mehedi Hasan Miraz's

remarkable 10 wicket haul.

The frustration for Taijul was immense. A player who had been Bangladesh's leading wicket-taker in Tests since his debut in 2014 found himself under fire from both critics and fans.

At Bir Sreshto Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium, the 33-year-old spinner was determined to respond rather than succumbing to the pressure. As Zimbabwe batted first, the visitors initially looked comfortable, with key partnerships forming between Nick Welch and Sean Williams.

The hosts struggled to make inroads, but debutant Tanzim Hasan Sakib provided a crucial breakthrough by dismissing Brian Bennett. Taijul soon followed, claiming the wicket of Ben Curran. Despite this, Zimbabwe continued to build, and it appeared they would post a significant total.

However, the game began to shift as off-spinner Nayeem Hasan claimed two quick wickets, setting the stage for Taijul to take control. He struck with precision, taking four wickets, including three with the second new ball.

Zimbabwe's batting line-up crumbled under Taijul's relentless pressure, losing

seven wickets for just 40 runs. At stumps, the visitors were reduced to 227 for nine, and the Tigers had regained a strong foothold in the match.

Taijul's exceptional performance -- taking five wickets for 60 runs at an economy rate of just 2.20 -- was a remarkable comeback, especially after his struggles in Sylhet.

"It's a matter of great satisfaction," Taijul said after the day's play.

"When a player plays 50 Tests, he can't be satisfied with the way he bowled in Sylhet. But still, it's a good feeling that I've been able to make a comeback. Most importantly, I could help the team."

"When you bowl in partnership, there's always a chance of taking wickets -- and that's what happened," said the player who was categorised as "underrated" by former Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal in a social media post.

Taijul's words reflected the hard work he had put in between Tests, focusing on consistency and accuracy. He also responded to his critics, noting that "those who criticise someone who has played so many Tests don't understand the game".

Debunking Tamim's 'underrated' Taijul label

Former Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal yesterday described Taijul Islam as "the most underrated bowler in the world," following his impressive five-for against Zimbabwe in the Chattogram Test.

"Look at the stats of the other current bowlers and you will understand my opinion. Well done TAIJUL on another five-wicket," wrote Tamim on Facebook.

However, despite Tamim's praise, the claim of him being "underrated" may not hold up, as The Daily Star's Shabab Chowdhury argues, given Taijul's established role as the team's lead spinner and his regular impact since making debut in 2014.

While Taijul's statistics aren't elite by global standards, with 224 wickets to his credit, his ongoing contributions make him a key figure in the Tigers' spin department.

Asked about Tamim's Facebook post in a press conference, Taijul responded, "Yes, I also believe I am underrated. You guys know it better."

Read the full story on The Daily Star website. The article is titled: Tamim labels Taijul as 'world's most underrated bowler': Is it true?

'Players have basic skills but lack tactical awareness'

Bangladesh failed to qualify for the Asia Cup for the first time in 43 years after finishing third in the AHF Cup -- a tournament which they had won the last four times. The team has come under heavy criticism from various quarters for their lacklustre display, against sides they used to breeze past in previous times. Head coach Mamun Ur Rashid spoke to *The Daily Star's* Anisur Rahman from Indonesia about the reasons behind the failure --

including flawed planning, poor tactical awareness, and the rapid development of other nations.

The Daily Star (DS): How do you evaluate Bangladesh's performance, finishing third instead of defending the AHF Cup title and thus failing to qualify for the Asia Cup?

Mamun Ur Rashid (MR): Obviously, it was a disappointing result. But it's unfair that some people on social media targeted a single individual -- me. Many focused on one player, Jimmy [Rasel Mahmud], who wasn't selected due to his age. Can anyone guarantee we would have won if Jimmy played? Instead of blaming individuals, journalists should investigate deeper: why didn't the team click? What issues existed?

Bangladesh barely played any international matches since the 2023 Asian Games -- almost two years without competitive action.

DS: Bangladesh had previously played the AHF Cup with minimal preparation and amid irregular domestic competition. Where exactly did we fall short this time?

MR: When was our last domestic league properly held? The result is disastrous, and it will only get worse if things don't change. Our so-called development plans are not real plans. Look at Chinese Taipei: they struggled four years ago but responded by building a program, playing regularly in Korea, Japan, and China to prepare for the AHF Cup. Their progress is no accident.

DS: Bangladesh struggled against every opponent. Was it a decline in our quality or an improvement from others?

MR: We have remained stagnant while others have moved forward. If we take two steps, others are taking a hundred. Nobody likes poor results, but we once played World Cup qualifiers -- now we're far from that level. No one even talks about it. Our players only trained for 40 days after 22 months without competitive matches or practice games. Facilities are poor -- players still receive Tk 400 daily allowance, the same as a decade ago.

DS: Bangladesh's defence was vulnerable, and the team lacked build-up play despite your success at age group and domestic levels. What happened?

MR: The conditions were tough -- temperatures around 33°C with high humidity. We also made a mistake: bringing only one set of jerseys. Players were drenched with sweat even before matches began and couldn't change at halftime. Fatigue hit them after 15-20 minutes. Additionally, I had only two drag flickers, (Sohanur Rahman) Sabuj and Ashraful (Alam), meaning I couldn't rotate defenders properly, and they got exhausted.

DS: Do you believe this group of players lacks the quality of previous generations?

MR: Our system heavily depends on BKSP graduates. They have basic skills but lack tactical awareness -- they don't know when or where to use their skills during a match. For example, against Oman, we were leading 2-1, but a simple defensive mistake -- failing to let a ball go out -- led to a penalty corner and a goal against us. Many players don't even understand concepts like full press or half press.

DS: Bangladesh U-21 team have qualified for the Junior World Cup, while the senior team failed to qualify for the Asia Cup. What message does this send?

MR: It's not a good message. The federation must take it seriously. What we are doing now for development isn't enough. People keep looking back at the past instead of addressing what needs to be done now.

DS: What must be done to recover from this situation?

MR: We need long-term planning -- not just one-month preparations. The federation should design one- to two-year plans. Failure isn't the end. It should be used constructively to build a stronger future.



Slot claims glory, chases greater triumphs

AGENCIES

At a roaring Anfield, amid fireworks and songs echoing into the night, Arne Slot stood at the heart of Liverpool's latest triumph -- a Premier League title sealed with four games to spare in his very first season.

Liverpool's crushing 5-1 win over Tottenham on Sunday not only crowned them champions but also pulled them level with Manchester United's record of 20 top-flight titles.

For Slot, the first Dutch manager to win the Premier League, after high-profile names like Louis van Gaal and Frank de Boer struggled here, the victory was sweet -- but also a reminder that at Liverpool, success must be chased relentlessly.

"I don't have to manage expectations because the expectations of this club are always the same," Slot said. "We have to compete for every trophy, and that didn't change when I came in, and it doesn't change next season."

Slot's impact has been immediate and emphatic. Liverpool sprinted from the start and never looked back, losing just two league matches all season while rivals Manchester City, Chelsea, and Arsenal stumbled.



The Dutchman admitted the enormity of his achievement only hit him as the team bus rolled into Anfield, surrounded by thousands of euphoric fans. "The only moment I was emotional today was when we arrived at the stadium -- to see what it meant for the fans," he said. "Immediately, it also felt like, 'We still have to do it.'"

Liverpool's success wasn't without its hurdles. A League Cup final defeat and a Champions League exit briefly cast doubts over their momentum. At that time, the futures of Mohamed Salah, Virgil van Dijk, and Trent Alexander-Arnold were unresolved, fuelling uncertainty. But with

Salah and Van Dijk now re-committed, stability reigns, even as Real Madrid continues to circle for Alexander-Arnold.

Slot made sure to pay tribute to Jürgen Klopp during the celebrations, leading the Kop in singing "Live Is Life," swapping in Klopp's name.

"Klopp helped me even more by the team he left behind and the culture he left behind," Slot said. "The quality of the players was obvious, but the culture of hard work was even more important."

Slot also knows the challenge ahead. He acknowledged that Manchester City's dip helped Liverpool this season and expects the competition to be fiercer next year.

"Next season could be even tougher," he warned. "There are so many great teams in this league and in the Champions League -- it's never going to be easy."

For now, though, Slot allowed himself a brief moment of pride.

"To be part of the history of this club is something I could only have dreamt of," he said. "Winning the league here -- it's very special."

Liverpool's sky high expectations remain. And with Slot at the helm, it feels like the take-off is only just beginning.

what to WATCH

BTV

Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe
Second Test, Day 2
Live from 10:00 am
T SPORTS YOUTUBE CHANNEL
T SPORTS DPL

Abahani vs
Mohammedan
Live from 9:00 am
SONY SPORTS 2
Champions League
Arsenal vs PSG
Live from 1:00 am
(Wednesday)

Bashundhara Kings
Live from 3:30 pm
T SPORTS YOUTUBE CHANNEL
T SPORTS DPL

DHAKA PREMIER LEAGUE Abahani, MSC to go all in

SPORTS REPORTER

Having been billed as a virtual final last week, today's Dhaka Premier League encounter between Bangladesh's two biggest clubs -- Abahani and Mohammedan Sporting Club -- in Mirpur has all the ingredients of a title decider.

Abahani holds a narrow advantage of two points, having won one more match in the Super League than Mohammedan, meaning the latter must win at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

The weather, however, predicts bad news for Mohammedan, with forecasts of rain throughout the day potentially disrupting the match. Their practice was already hampered by rain yesterday, and if the game is abandoned, they will be declared runners-up.

"Abahani-Mohammedan is always a heated match, and there is excitement. Hopefully, that will be the case tomorrow. The weather is a bit gloomy,"



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

and let's see; if the weather is fine, we will have a 100-over game," Mohammedan pacer Ebadot told reporters.

Missing Towhid Hridoy due to a four-match suspension, Mohammedan will look to veterans Mahmudullah Riyad and Rony Talukdar for inspiration.

Opener Anisul Islam, who scored a century in their last meeting, along with bowlers Ebadot Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Nasum Ahmed, and Mohammad Saifuddin, will strengthen the side, who have not won the DPL since gaining List A status.

On the other hand, if Abahani win, they will clinch their third consecutive title and sixth since the DPL got List A status.

A young Abahani team will rely on dynamic openers Parvez Hossain Emon and Shahriar Komol, or Jishan Alam to take charge, with Mohammad Mithun and captain Mosaddeq Hossain providing balance in Najmul Hossain Shanto's absence.

Abahani head coach Hannan Sarkar said, "That Abahani are a club with traditions has continued this year. Yes, [political] circumstances have changed, that's true, and management and coach have changed too, but there's a saying that some names carry weight, and that's what's working for us."

Remainder of Fed Cup final today

STAR SPORTS DESK

Twelve-time winners Abahani and defending champions Bashundhara Kings will play the remainder of the unfinished Federation Cup final today, with the match remaining 1-1 from the 105 minutes of play from the last week.

The match, which will be get underway at 3:30pm at the Mymensingh venue where it was halted for bad light last week, will see the second half of extra time played. If the scoreline doesn't change or there is not an outright winner after regulation time, the match will roll into penalty shootout.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEMIFINAL Arteta up against mentor Enrique

AFP, LONDON

Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta will have to beat one of the most influential figures in his football life when the Gunners face Luis Enrique's Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League semi-finals.

Arteta's side host PSG in the first leg tonight as the Spaniard aims to lead Arsenal to only the second Champions League final appearance in their history.

Standing in his way is a close friend who, along with Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola, played a major role in his compatriot's impressive transition from the pitch to the dug out.

Luis Enrique was a senior star at Barcelona when Arteta started his playing career at the Camp Nou. "He was extremely supportive with the young players, he was one of the main characters by far. I have really good memories of him," Arteta said.

The pupil has already got the better of his mentor once this season, when Arsenal eased to a 2-0 win over PSG in the league phase at the Emirates in October. But PSG have improved dramatically since then. "For me he's one of the best coaches in the world and someone who helped me a huge amount," said Arteta.

The feeling is mutual, with Luis Enrique saying: "He is one of the best coaches at the moment."

Arsenal have never lost to PSG in European competition, having faced them five times previously.

PSG have lost five of their past six away games against English sides in the Champions League.

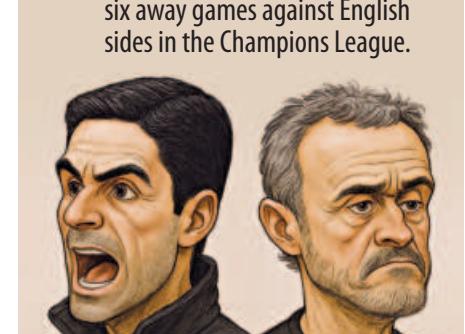


PHOTO: AI-GENERATED

"He changed Arsenal's fortunes from a somewhat winless streak to one of the best teams in the world that is competing for titles."

While Arteta and Luis Enrique are sure to share a private moment together after the tie, they will put their friendship on hold to focus on finally delivering maiden Champions League glory to their clubs.



Hostility towards women 'growing'

Says Mahila Parishad, urges govt to safeguard women's rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday urged the government to take stronger action to establish and safeguard women's rights.

It stressed the need not only for state-led initiatives but also for strong political commitment and greater social awareness to ensure women's rights in the country.

The organisation made the call at an event titled "Current Situation of Women's Human Rights: Statement of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad", held at the capital's National Press Club.

In line with this call, it presented a seven-point recommendation.

These included strict state action to stop misogynistic propaganda; ensuring swift justice for all forms of violence against women; taking necessary measures to end mob violence; and initiating steps to restore discipline in educational institutions.

Further recommendations urged guaranteeing media freedom to ensure the accurate presentation and dissemination of information;

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (MARCH 2025)

TOTAL INCIDENT 442

RAPE 163 females, including 125 under 18

GANG RAPE 36 females, including 18 under 18

ATTEMPTED RAPE 70 females, including 55 under 18



A CLOSE CALL... Deciding to cross a busy road amidst moving traffic, pedestrians find themselves in grave danger. Trapped between two moving buses, they somehow managed to slide out from the tight spot, narrowly escaping what could have been a terrible accident. The photo was taken yesterday at Mirpur Technical area in the capital.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Political parties should've been consulted

Says Fakhrul about aid corridor to Rakhine, warns of implications

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday expressed strong reservations regarding the government's decision in principle to provide a humanitarian corridor to Myanmar's conflict-ridden Rakhine state.

Criticising the government's handling of the issue, he said this decision is linked to the country's independence and sovereignty and the future peace and stability of this region.

The decision regarding the humanitarian passage for communication with the Arakan people should have been taken in consultation with all political parties.



SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

HUMANITARIAN CORRIDOR First get guarantee for Rohingya return

Say foreign policy experts

PORIMOL PALMA

Dhaka must secure guaranteed security and full commitment from Naypyidaw for Rohingya repatriation before establishing any humanitarian corridor to Myanmar's Rakhine State, said foreign policy analysts.

If any country or humanitarian agency provides aid for Rakhine State, Bangladesh can help supply those to the Arakan Army at the border, said Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director of the Centre for Alternatives.

"And there is no problem with that – but the idea of a humanitarian corridor being discussed is not clear," he said.

On Saturday, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain announced that the interim government has agreed in principle to allow a humanitarian corridor under UN supervision with certain conditions. He did not give further details.

As the UN is proposing such a corridor, it is not clear how it will ensure its security as any such issue will require UN Security Council (UNSC) approval, said Ahmed, also a former professor of international relations at Dhaka

University.

"Will the UN take any responsibility if the initiative backfires? Will the UN take responsibility if there is any escalation of conflicts in the humanitarian corridor?" Ahmed said.

"Will the UN take any responsibility if the initiative backfires? Will the UN take responsibility if there is any escalation of conflicts in the humanitarian corridor?"

Imtiaz Ahmed,
foreign policy expert

The UN has been seeking a humanitarian corridor to provide aid to the people in Rakhine State, which, according to a UNDP report in November last year, faces imminent threat of acute famine.

Predictions indicated that by March-April 2025, domestic food production

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Rohingyas fleeing Arakan Army persecution

13 lakh refugees now in Bangladesh

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Amid escalating violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State, Rohingyas are trespassing into Bangladesh every day, crossing the border allegedly to escape the brutality of Myanmar's rebel group, the Arakan Army (AA).

Rohingya sources said back in Rakhine State, they faced killings, enforced disappearances, torture and forced recruitment into the rebel group as human shields against junta forces and were used as forced labourers for construction works.

Md Mizanur Rahman, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), said, "Currently, a large number of Rohingyas are fleeing from Rakhine State and taking shelter in various refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. Since November 2023 until now, 1.13 lakh Rohingyas have entered Bangladesh. Of them, most arrived since June last."

The RRRC said, "Speaking to the fleeing Rohingyas, we learnt that

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK Crackdown in J&K triggers concerns Troops exchange fire along LoC for fourth night

AGENCIES

Concerns in Indian-run Kashmir grew yesterday over sweeping detentions in the hunt for the gunmen who carried out a deadly attack last week that New Delhi blames on arch-rival Pakistan.

New Delhi has accused Pakistan of supporting "cross-border terrorism" after gunmen killed 26 people on April 22, the worst attack on civilians in contested Kashmir for a quarter of a century.

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

Relations between the nuclear-armed rivals have plunged to their lowest level in years, sparking worries by analysts of possible military action.

The attack also sparked a huge manhunt for the gunmen in Kashmir, with Indian security forces blowing up nine homes of suspected rebels, as well as detaining nearly 2,000 people for questioning, a senior police official told AFP.

"Punish the guilty, show them no mercy, but don't let innocent people become collateral damage," Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said in a statement.

Ag Ruhullah, a federal lawmaker from Kashmir, said: "Kashmir and Kashmiris are being given a collective punishment."

Meanwhile, the legislative assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority region, yesterday unanimously passed a resolution denouncing the terrorist attack and resolved to fight resolutely to defeat designs to disturb communal harmony and hinder progress.

Lightning strikes claim 11 lives

STAR REPORT

At least 11 people died yesterday after being struck by lightning during thunderstorms in six districts.

Of them, four died in Cumilla, three in Kishoreganj, and one each in Netrakona, Sumangjan, Habiganj, and Shariatpur. Most of the victims were agricultural workers.

In Cumilla's Muradnagar upazila, two farmers, Jewel Bhuiyan, 35, and Nikhil Debnath, 60, were struck by



lightning while harvesting paddy at a field in Korbanpur village, said Mahfuzur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Bangra Bazar Police Station.

Meanwhile, in Barura upazila, lightning struck two schoolboys while they were flying kites on a field in Poyagachha village.

Md Jihad, 14, son of Billal Hossain, and Md Fahad, 13, son of Khokon Mia, were sixth-graders at Baraharipur High School.

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Pilgrims gather at the entrance of the Hajj Camp in the capital's Ashkona yesterday afternoon. At the camp, they will complete all immigration formalities before boarding the first hajj flight scheduled to depart for Saudi Arabia from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport early today.

Anisul Huq assaulted on court premises

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Former law minister Anisul Huq was assaulted at the exit of a court in Narayanganj yesterday afternoon allegedly by lawyers.

According to witnesses and journalists, Anisul was being taken to a prison van after a hearing when allegedly some lawyers slapped and punched him.

Earlier, Anisul was produced before the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Moinuddin Kadir for a remand hearing in the murder case of Hafiz Soleiman, who was killed during the July uprising, said Inspector Md Kajum Khan, in-charge of the court police outpost.

The court granted the Criminal Investigation Department a four-day remand to interrogate him, he added.

A witness, requesting anonymity, said some lawyers were chanting slogans demanding death penalty for



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