



I think he does.

Donald Trump
US president, on his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin's intention for peace in Ukraine

YOUR RIGHT
TO KNOW

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



DHAKA THURSDAY MAY 1, 2025

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 103

BAISHAKH 18, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

ZILQAD 2, 1446 HJRI

20 PAGES PLUS CAMPUS: Tk 15.00



US backs Israel's ban on UNRWA Gaza aid op

P6



Undermining the CAG's constitutional independence

P12



'Labour reforms must ensure a dignified life for workers'

P13



Reserves reach \$22b after seven months

B1

22 sectors still pay wages below poverty line

At least 18 have not revised pay since as far back as 1983

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

At least 22 sectors in Bangladesh continue to pay their workers much less than what is needed to meet basic human needs.

Anyone earning less than Tk 7,869 a month, according to the Labour Reform Commission's recent report, is officially living below the poverty line by international standards. Labour leaders said this means those workers cannot afford even the bare necessities.

"We used an internationally recognised method to calculate this threshold," said Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, head of the commission, adding, "It's based on the World Bank's \$2.15 per day benchmark, adjusted using the 2017 Purchasing Power Parity."

Purchasing Power Parity is an economic metric that compares the price of a standard basket of goods across countries, helping determine the relative value of different currencies and what people can realistically afford.

The Bangladesh Minimum Wages Board, the statutory body operating under the Labour Law, 2006, is responsible for setting private-sector wages. It reviews and recommends wage rates for 47 sectors. Of these, the Labour Reform Commission has reviewed 39 -- and found that over half had minimum wages below the poverty line.

5 SECTORS WITH LOWEST MINIMUM WAGE

SECTOR	MINIMUM WAGE	YEAR ANNOUNCED
Type foundry	Tk 521	1983
Petrol pump	Tk 791	1987
Unskilled workers in privately owned industrial establishments	Tk 3,000	2012
Hotels and restaurants	Tk 3,710	2017
Iron foundry and engineering workshops	Tk 4,210	2010

"Proper education for their children and access to healthcare have become distant dreams for many workers -- even though they toil hard to keep the wheels of the economy running," said Sultan Uddin, who also serves as executive director of the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies. "Eventually, their productivity declines, and that affects the industries they work in."

The 22 sectors where the officially declared minimum wage is below Tk 7,869 include type foundries (Tk 521), petrol pumps (Tk 792), privately owned industrial establishments (Tk 3,000), hotel and restaurant (Tk 3,710), iron foundries and engineering workshops (Tk 4,240), ayurvedic factories (Tk 4,350), match industry (Tk 4,560), jute press and belling (Tk 4,850), tailoring factories (Tk 4,850), cotton textiles (Tk 5,710), and bakery, biscuit and confectionery (Tk 5,940).

(A foundry is a place where things are made by melting or shaping

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

MAY DAY HOLIDAY

The Daily Star offices will remain closed today on the occasion of May Day. Therefore, the newspaper will not come out tomorrow. We will serve our readers 24/7 through our website. Stay tuned to our web coverage in English and Bangla.

Dhaka in touch with Naypyidaw, Arakan Army Says Khalilur

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh is in contact with the Myanmar junta government in Naypyidaw and Arakan Army in Rakhine state on the issue of stability, humanitarian aid, and Rohingya repatriation, National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman said yesterday.

"As the UN wants to provide humanitarian aid, we would like to support that. This can help stabilise the Rakhine state and create conditions for Rohingya repatriation," he told The Daily Star.

He said Dhaka is directly engaged with Naypyidaw, and via the UN with the Arakan Army, a non-state actor which controls about 80 percent of the Rakhine state that borders Bangladesh.

Khalilur said the humanitarian channel that

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



A sudden afternoon shower cooled the city yesterday, but caught many passengers and boatmen off guard on the Buriganga. The photo was taken from Sadarghat.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A Keraniganj dockyard worker has his face shielded but hands and body exposed while working yesterday. The lack of safety gear for such labourers remains a perennial issue. International Workers' Day is being observed today.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BASHUNDHARA CHAIR, FAMILY Freeze 70 bank accounts, shares in 22 companies

Dhaka court orders authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the relevant authorities to freeze 70 bank accounts of Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan Shah Alam and seven of his family members, including his son and Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir, in

Sonia Ferdowshi Sobhan; Anvir's wife Sabrina Sobhan; and Safwan's wife Yeasha Sobhan, according to the ACC filings.

The court also ordered to freeze more than 75.46 crore shares in 22 companies whose market value stands at over Tk 1458.75 crore, as per the ACC application.

The shares are held in the name of the Bashundhara Group chairman, his

They laundered money from Bangladesh by illegally transferring, converting, and layering funds to acquire assets in Slovakia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Switzerland, the British Virgin Islands, the UK, the UAE, Singapore, and Cyprus. -- According to ACC

connection with corruption allegations.

According to an application by the Anti-Corruption Commission placed before the court, Shah Alam and his seven family members had deposited Tk 2,075.40 crore and \$1,92,034 in these accounts, where the current balance is Tk 19.81 crore and \$10,538.

The other family members whose bank accounts were ordered to be frozen are Shah Alam's sons Sadat Sobhan, Shafiat Sobhan and Safwan Sobhan; Sadat's wife

wife Afroza Begum as well as four sons and three daughters-in-laws mentioned above.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order following an application by ACC Assistant Director Md Sajid-Ur-Roman, who is heading the inquiry, said Aktarul Islam, the public relations officer of the ACC.

The ACC application said, "Shah Alam

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

'India may strike within 24 to 36 hrs' Says Pakistan after Modi gives 'operational freedom' to forces

AGENCIES

Pakistan yesterday said it had "credible intelligence" that India was planning an imminent military strike and vowed to retaliate, as worries of spiralling conflict grew over a deadly attack in Kashmir.

Relations between the nuclear-armed neighbours have plummeted since New Delhi blamed its arch-rival Pakistan for last week's assault on tourists in Pahalgalam in Indian-administered Kashmir, the deadliest attack on civilians there in a quarter of a century.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave the military "complete operational freedom" to respond to the attack during a closed-door meeting on Tuesday, a senior government source told AFP.

Pakistan's government has denied any involvement in the shooting, and information minister Attaullah Tarar said overnight that "any act of aggression will be met with a decisive response".

"Pakistan has credible intelligence that India intends to launch a military strike within the next 24 to 36 hours using the Pahalgalam incident as a false pretext," Tarar said in a statement early yesterday.

However, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said Pakistan would not strike first. Leaders around the world have expressed deep concerns and urged restraint by the uneasy neighbours who have fought several wars.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

- India closes airspace to Pakistani airlines
- Pak PM talks to US secy of state
- Delhi warns against ceasefire violations as India, Pakistan DGMs hold talks

ROHINGYA INFLOW Strain on already crammed camps



MOKAMMEL SHUVO

The refugee camps in Cox's Bazar have become overwhelmed with the recent inflow of Rohingyas arriving since November 2023, with authorities now scrambling to arrange accommodation and food for them.

More than 1.6 lakh Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh over the past year or so, a reliable government source at the camps told The Daily Star.

As such, managing housing has become a major challenge for officials at the already overcrowded camps in Teknaf and Ukhiya upazila.

The Rohingyas continue to flee Myanmar's Rakhine State to escape various forms of oppression allegedly committed by the Arakan Army, a rebel group that now controls over 80 percent of Rakhine following more than a year of intense fighting with junta forces.

Earlier, before December 8 last year, Rohingyas were

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4