

## Water crisis

FROM PAGE 5  
Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of the Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon Habiganj unit, said deforestation is the main cause of water shortages.  
He said during the last rainy season, large amounts of soil eroded and filled up the streams in the forest, drastically reducing their capacity for water retention.  
Zahangir Alam, divisional forest officer in Sylhet, said not only wild boars, but also barking deer, monkeys, porcupines, and snakes, are coming to drink from the artificial reservoir.  
“We are now taking swift steps to build a large pond in a quieter area inside the forest,” he added.

## Return power

FROM PAGE 3  
where the sovereignty and power of the people are paramount, not that of the state.  
“The ultimate authority should not lie with the state; if so, then the bureaucrats will govern us,” he said.  
“The main point of democracy is local government, not the central government,” he added. He also advocated for decentralising power through district administrations.  
He also criticised the interim government for failing to understand the public will.

## Star journo

FROM PAGE 3  
Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, and International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Director in Bangladesh Tuomo Poutiainen spoke.  
Sushanta Sinha of Ekattor TV won the award in the electronic media category, while Md Imdad Ullah of Khoborpotro (Cumilla) won in the still photography category.

PRAYER  
TIMING

MAY 3

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:15	12:45	4:45	6:31	8:00
JAMAAAT 4:50	1:15	5:00	6:35	8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Bangladesh's first MINISO Blind Box Store was launched at Ventura Mall in Gulshan-2 recently. The event drew fans of all ages, eager to explore surprise-packed collectibles featuring popular characters like Pokémon, Doraemon, and One Piece.

PHOTO: COURTESY

# Farmers rush to harvest boro amid pest attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Boro rice fields in several areas of Kalmakanda upazila in Netrakona have been infested by brown planthoppers, locally known as “current poka”, raising serious concerns among farmers over harvesting their ripened crops.  
To limit losses, many farmers have started harvesting their paddy before it fully ripens, while others are applying pesticides as advised by the Department of Agricultural Extension.  
During visits to various areas of Nazirpur and Lengura unions recently, half-ripe Boro paddy fields were seen swaying in the breeze,



PHOTO: STAR

A pest infested boro field in Kalmakanda upazila of Netrakona.

**Forty-five percent of the total Boro crop in Kalmakanda upazila, both haor and non-haor, has already been harvested.**

SAIFUL ISLAM  
Upazila agriculture officer

their stalks bent under the weight of the grain. In some patches, the plants had already withered. Several farmers were seen spraying pesticides.  
According to the Kalmakanda

Upazila Agriculture Office, Boro rice has been cultivated on 21,065 hectares of land this year, 4,630 hectares in haor (wetland) areas and 16,435 hectares in non-haor areas.  
So far, 85 percent of the haor fields and 30 percent of the non-haor fields have been harvested.  
Abdul Hakim, a farmer from Nazirpur, said he grew Boro rice on six acres of land this year. Planthoppers attacked two acres before the paddy fully ripened, forcing him to begin harvesting early.  
He is now applying pesticides to the greener, less mature areas of his field.

Saiful Islam, upazila agriculture officer, said the pest generally targets fields with poor light and air circulation.  
“At an early stage, the planthopper can be controlled by spraying insecticides,” he mentioned.  
Only a small portion of fields in the upazila have been affected so far, he added.  
He said the agriculture office is continuing to guide farmers, and 45 percent of the total Boro crop in the upazila, both haor and non-haor, has already been harvested.  
Farmers have been urged to harvest the remaining ripe crops without delay, he said.

## Two youths killed in Gaibandha road crash

UNB, Gaibandha

Two youths were killed as a speeding truck crashed into their motorbike in Palashbari upazila of Gaibandha district, said police yesterday morning.  
The deceased were identified as Koushik and Shrabon, hailing from Bishwopur and Shyampur villages under Palashbari upazila.  
Witnesses said the bike driven by one of the victims was trying to overtake the Palashbari-bound truck on a bridge in Dholbhanga area around 11:00pm.

But, after losing control the youths fell on the bridge in front of the truck which later ran over them leaving them dead on the spot, they said.  
Seeing this, the trucker and his helper fled the scene leaving the vehicle.  
Officer-in-Charge of Palashbari Police Station Zulfiqar Ali Bhuttu said they recovered the bodies from the spot and seized the truck. Legal action will be taken in this regard, he added.



## IKRIMIKRI hosting exhibition

CITY DESK

IKRIMIKRI is hosting a six-day exhibition of picture-based books and illustrations at the Alliance Française gallery, said a press release.  
Starting on May 2, the event will continue till May 7.  
The event showcases a range of picture books published by IKRIMIKRI, highlighting their visual storytelling and handcrafted illustrations aimed at children and adults alike.  
The exhibition features original artworks, alphabet displays, and photography exploring river themes.  
Visitors can attend puppet shows, theater performances, storytelling sessions, and hands on drawing activities. Interactive workshops will also be held for children, teenagers, and university students interested in illustration and book-making. IKRIMIKRI's team of writers, illustrators, and publishers aim to inspire creativity, curiosity, and a love for reading through their collaborative work. The exhibition celebrates the role of picture books in developing empathy, imagination, and early literacy skills.

## Vegetable prices see

FROM PAGE 3  
secretary of the Karwan Bazar Brihattar Paikari Kancha Bazar Arot Byabshayi Malik Samiti, said over the past seven to 10 days, the supply of vegetables to the capital's markets has slightly declined.  
As a result, the prices of several items have increased over the week, he added.  
He further said that during the winter, both production and supply of vegetables were sufficient, which kept prices at a tolerable level in the capital's markets.  
Saiful also said the supply of potatoes to the capital's markets remains smooth, which has helped keep their prices low.  
However, despite satisfactory onion production, many people are hoarding this essential cooking ingredient, which has reduced its supply compared to the demand in the markets, he also said.  
As a result, onion prices have increased in the capital's markets, he added.

## Ensure safety

FROM PAGE 3  
Response Cell” under the labour ministry and called for regular monitoring.  
To the Expatriates' Welfare Ministry, the organisations demanded mandatory “Safety and Rights Training” for women migrant workers before migration, the establishment of round-the-clock “Women Support Desks” with hotlines at all Bangladeshi missions abroad, and the provision of rehabilitation, psychological support, and legal assistance for women migrants returning after experiencing sexual abuse.

## Rain sparks fresh

FROM PAGE 3  
control units across the country and treat dengue as an endemic threat.  
“A specialised department involving entomologists and epidemiologists must be formed without delay. Without proactive steps, the burden of dengue could soon become unbearable,” he warned.  
He also pointed out that while last year's mosquito control efforts by city corporations were poorly coordinated, there has been some improvement this year, though still far

from adequate.  
“Early detection of Aedes hotspots is vital. Once the rains begin, immediate action is needed to eliminate breeding grounds and larvae. Preventive measures now are key to avoiding a major outbreak,” he said.  
Meanwhile, the Dhaka South City Corporation has started a special mosquito control and cleanliness drive.  
DSCC Administrator Md Shahjahan Mia said such drives will be held across all DSCC zones to combat the dengue outbreak ahead of the monsoon season. The campaign officially began in Dhanmondi.  
The DNCC is also continuing its regular drives in this regard, said officials.

## Redefining engineering

FROM PAGE 3  
have helped institutions like Harvard, Yale, and Stanford receive funding and resources to achieve various academic and research goals. In Bangladesh, such collaboration is rarely seen, that too on this scale.  
This collaboration aligns with the BSRM's different social responsibility initiatives and BRAC University Founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed's belief that education must be inclusive, impactful, and deeply connected to human dignity.  
The school is already running critical academic initiatives such as funding advanced research, establishing laboratories, and providing inspirational scholarships for meritorious and financially insolvent students.  
At Wednesday's event, Professor Arshad M Chowdhury, dean, School of Engineering, gave the welcome speech.  
In his speech, Alihussain Akberali, chairman, BSRM, said businesses, regardless of size, can play a vital role in shaping society and should actively collaborate with the government and other sectors in driving national development.  
“Stay here, work here, and build here. Your knowledge, your energy, and your ideas are needed here. If you build a legacy now, it will serve generations to come,” he told students.  
“We hope that in this partnership between BRAC University and BSRM, you will see a powerful example of what becomes possible when two strong, value-

driven organisations come together,” added Akberali.  
“We believe that this school and partnership will serve as a platform for nurturing the next generation of engineers – young minds who will be equipped not only with technical knowledge, but with strong moral values, a sense of responsibility, and a passion to serve the nation.”  
Tamara Hasan Abed, chairperson of the Board of Trustees, BRAC University, added, “Today, as we inaugurate the BSRM School of Engineering, we reaffirm that education must be a force for dignity, justice, and opportunity.”  
“We commit to fostering an environment where curiosity is celebrated, where diversity is cherished, and where every student believes they can be a driver of positive change,” she said.  
Professor Syed Ferhat Anwar, vice-chancellor, BRAC University, said, “I believe that this partnership will ensure that knowledge of the industry is put together in a meaningful way by the academia and shared with the entire world.”  
“This partnership is an example for Bangladesh and, hopefully, for the global South,” he added.  
“This is what the BRAC and BRAC University synergy is about, and it reflects how BSRM not only does business but also focuses on safety for humanity.”  
Following the speeches by the guests, an experience-sharing session was held where alumni, faculty members, and students talked about their experiences at the School of Engineering.

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