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Smoke billows after an artillery shell from Pakistan landed in the main town of Poonch district in India's Jammu region yesterday. PHOTO: AFP



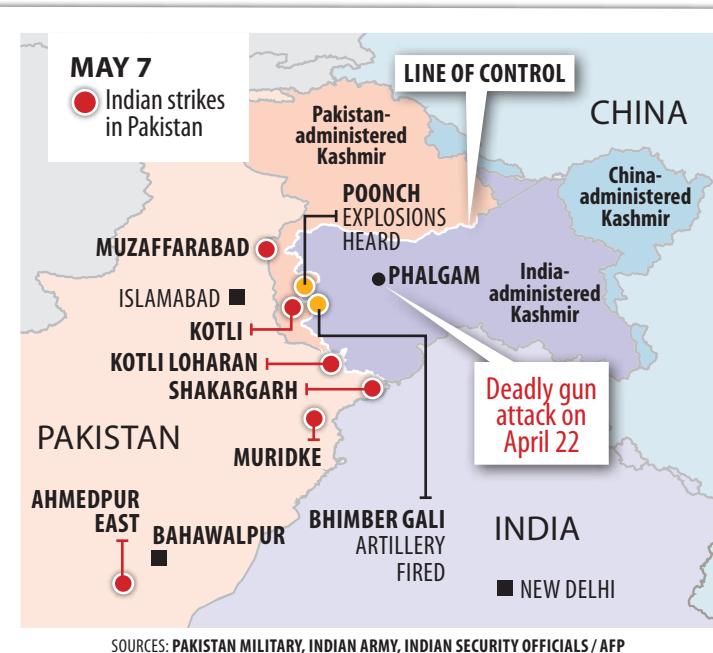
Locals inspect debris of destroyed structures of the Government Health and Educational complex in Muridke, about 30km from Lahore. PHOTO: AFP

World urges calm as India strikes Pakistan

At least 31 killed in Pakistan, 12 in India in worst cross-border violence in decades

INDIA'S CLAIMS

- India claims hitting 9 'terrorist camps' in Pakistan
- Says strikes were 'right to respond' after Pahalgam attack
- Claims carried out 'precision strikes', which were 'non-escalatory in nature'
- Says three fighter jets 'crashed' in India's J&K
- New Delhi briefed US after strikes



PAKISTAN'S CLAIMS

- Pakistan claims five Indian aircraft shot down
- Rejects 'terrorist camp allegation', says civilians hit
- Says world must hold India 'accountable' for attacks
- Claims hydropower plant in PoK damaged in strikes
- Summons Indian charge d'affaires

AGENCIES

India and Pakistan exchanged war of words and also heavy artillery fire along their contested frontier yesterday, hours after New Delhi launched deadly missile strikes on its arch-rival.

The worst violence between the nuclear-armed neighbours in two decades sparked alarm and calls for restraint from around the world.

At least 43 deaths were reported, with Islamabad saying 31 civilians were killed by the Indian strikes and firing along the border, and New Delhi adding at least 12 dead from Pakistani shelling. Dozens were also injured in both countries.

The Indian army said "justice is served", reporting nine "terrorist camps" had been destroyed, with Delhi adding that its actions "have been focused, measured and non-escalatory in nature".

Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif refuted

the claims, saying civilian areas were attacked.

He accused Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi of launching the strikes to "shore up" his domestic popularity, adding that Islamabad "won't take long to settle the score".

Later, in an interview with GEO TV, he said Pakistan will retaliate and will only hit military targets, not civilians.

Later last night, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a televised address to the nation, said India "will have to suffer the consequences" of its air strikes.

Shehbaz said that it "took only a few hours" for the Pakistani military to bring the enemy to its knees.

He also claimed that the Pakistani military shot down five Indian jets and once again "proved their superiority over the enemy in conventional warfare".

He also vowed to avenge "every drop of blood" spilt in the Indian air strikes early yesterday.

HISTORY OF ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN - PAGE 5 RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 3, B4

Pakistan's DG ISPR said that the National Security Committee authorised the country's armed forces to respond to Indian aggression at "time and manner" of their choosing.

"In consonance with article 51 of the UN charter, Pakistan reserves the right to respond, in self defence, at a time, place, and manner of its choosing to avenge the loss of innocent Pakistani lives and blatant violation of its sovereignty," said the DG, quoting a statement issued after the NSC meet.

The South Asian neighbours have fought multiple wars over the divided territory since they were carved out of the subcontinent at the end of British rule in 1947.

Pakistan military sources said they succeeded in shooting down five jets, including three Rafales, without crossing into the Indian airspace.

An Indian senior security source, who asked not to be named, said

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India pushes 123 individuals into Bangladesh

BGB sends protest note to BSF; border on high alert

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) yesterday detained at least 123 individuals, including Rohingyas and Bangla-speaking individuals, after India pushed them into Bangladesh through Kurigram and Khagrachhari border points.

BGB currently has them in its custody and is verifying their identities. It has also issued a high alert along the border and lodged a strong protest note with Border Security Force (BSF), advising against such push-ins, said BGB Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashraffuzzaman Siddiqui.

Flag meetings with the BSF have also been called at various levels.

Meanwhile, the Police Headquarters alerted the superintendents of police in 31 bordering districts to ensure that national security is not compromised amid the escalation of the India-Pakistan conflict.

"Dhaka is trying to establish contact with New Delhi on the reported push-ins of people from India through the Indo-Bangladesh borders in Kurigram and Khagrachhari," said National Security Adviser Dr Khalilur Rahman yesterday.

Speaking to journalists after a meeting with Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain at the foreign ministry, he said Bangladesh authorities are verifying each of the cases separately.

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The Khulna-Satkhira highway has been in a dismal condition for a long time. Due to constant movement of vehicles, the road remains shrouded in dust, tormenting pedestrians, residents, and local businesses. The photo was taken in the Zero Point area of Khulna city.

S Alam, associates laundered money thru shell firms

ACC probe finds; they bought properties with 'illegal loans'

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and DIPAN NANDY

(eight acres), according to the land deeds reviewed by investigators.

"We have already seized these properties through the court. Now, a receiver will be appointed as per the law," ACC Deputy Director and Public Relations Officer Aktarul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, the appointment of a receiver (a custodian) would take some time as

S Alam Group Chairman Mohammed Saiful Alam, other entities related to him and his associates linked to those entities illegally took anonymous loans from various banks and embezzled the money, and acquired vast wealth in his and his family's name at home and abroad, according to the ACC filing.

Some of his associates, including his former domestic help and her husband, also acquired wealth beyond known sources of their income and laundered money abroad, it said.

Additionally, the business tycoon and a network of his affiliates bought more than 130 acres of land in Chattogram and Gazipur alone in the last few years. The land is worth around Tk 325 crore, the ACC found.

Most of the land - about 7,770 decimals (77.7 acres) - was bought in 2019. Alam acquired another 15 acres the next year, the ACC found in an investigation into money laundering allegations against the businessman and his associates.

Of the total 130 acres, nearly 47 acres were bought in Chattogram's Patiya upazila, S Alam's hometown.

Entities that own some of the land include S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd (12 acres), S Alam Vegetable Oil Ltd (eight acres), and S Alam Cold Rolled Steels Ltd

the commission is now investigating dozens of graft allegations involving high-profile Awami League politicians, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her family members, as well as businesses known to have enjoyed her blessings during her authoritarian rule.

Over the last 15 years, S Alam took over one bank after another and allegedly took thousands of crores in loans from these banks, in some cases in the name of companies that exist only on paper, according to ACC findings and newspaper reports.

On April 8, 2025, ACC Deputy Director Tahsin Munabeel Haque applied to the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court, Dhaka, for permission to seize some of the properties owned by S Alam and his associates and entities under Section 14 of the Money Laundering Prevention Act.

The ACC also submitted that attempts

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More gas for industries, less for power generation

Energy adviser tells business leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Energy Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan yesterday said that industries would soon get an additional 250 million cubic feet of gas per day (mmcf/d).

The authorities will do this by cutting gas supplies to the power sector and by importing additional liquefied natural gas (LNG).

At a special meeting with business leaders, the adviser assured them that gas supplies would improve.

After the meeting at his office, Fouzul told reporters that the authorities will cut gas supply to the power sector by 150 mmcf/d.



Fouzul Kabir

The power sector will receive around 1,050 mmcf/d, down from 1,200 mmcf/d during Ramadan, he said.

Additionally, the government will import one extra cargo of LNG each month from May to August, increasing the supply by another 100 mmcf/d, he added.

According to Petrobangla data, the power sector has received 1,050 mmcf/d in recent weeks. The gas-fired power plants produced up to 6,000 megawatts (MW). The national power generation, around 15,000MW, fell short of meeting demand by only 100MW to 150MW.

Asked whether there would be power

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Freeze shares of Salman F Rahman, family in 94 entities

Court orders ACC

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission to freeze all shares of 94 companies owned by Salman F Rahman, his wife Syeda Rubaba Rahman, son Ahmed Shayan Fazlur Rahman, elder brother Ahmed Sohail Fasihur Rahman, and Fasihur's son Ahmed Shahriar Rahman.

Salman was the private industry affairs adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, while Fasihur is the chairman of Beximco Group of Industries.

The court also asked the anti-graft body to freeze 79 Beneficiary Owners' (BO) accounts owned by them. The court came up with the orders following corruption allegations against them.

Judge Md. Zakir Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Muhammad Jaynal Abedin, who is leading the inquiry team, sought the order.

In the application, Salman and others have been accused of embezzling billions of taka from shareholders through share manipulation and fraud, taking loans of about Tk 36 billion from various government and private banks of the country by using illegal influence, and laundering billions of taka abroad.

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BRIHATTA PAAL

Moving through memories, myths and motion

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

Art studios and exhibitions are great storytellers. We often say that a picture is worth a thousand words. In that sense, any sort of visual art has a lot to say. Brihatta Art Foundation's exhibition, called "Paal", has that same essence.

Paal and Gangaburi

Gangaburi is a river heritage-focused art project that exhibits the rich heritage of the river Buriganga through artistic expressions. This project, named after Kafil Ahmed's song "Gangaburi", is curated and directed by Shehzad Chowdhury and Bishwajit Goswami, respectively. The landmark cultural initiative "Gangaburi" is reaching its conclusion after two years.

The British Council and the EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture) Bangladesh Cluster jointly celebrate the completion of the project, and the project's culmination is being celebrated through a public exhibition at Brihatta Art Space, Hazaribagh, that was exhibited from April 25 to May 2.

"This journey has led me to reflect on the collectiveness amongst us -- where 'us' extends beyond people -- it encompasses the nature, the unseen forces, and elements shaping our existence," said Bishwajit Goswami, project director of Gangaburi.



The exhibition

Goswami said, "it is a symbol of movement, of journeys taken..."

Land, water, and air -- three fundamental elements of existence -- come together through collaboration on creating the sails, reflecting the delicate balance between survival and spirituality, between nature and human intervention."

And the exhibition is an artistic expression of these words. There are three pieces, but intertwined within each of the pieces there are so many untold stories, and the way they represent our people's relationship with rivers, as well as the fundamental elements of existence, really implores one to look through the art. It's as if watching the pieces lend you a magical

pair of glasses, through which you can visualise the untold stories.

The first sail conceptualises Bhumi (Land). Patches of fabrics sewn together, while forming a visual and tactile representation of Ail (ridges) and furrows of lands, where verses from Khona has been inscribed. Khona-r Bochon as they are known, has been part of our culture for as long as we can remember. The artwork reminds one of our farmlands from a bird's eye view. Perhaps, a more accurate description would be poet Jasimuddin's Nakshi Kantha Math.

A parallel narrative on Jol (Water) unfurled on the second sail. Verses from folk poetry and music, and verses of the boatmen inscribed by urban traditional artists who reside near the Buriganga, became a part of the composition. Much like the "Gamchha",

Maa, Mati, Manush, Bhasha, Swadesh, Prokriti -- these six words are inscribed on wall of the garden. That's right, Brihatta welcomes you with a rooftop garden. To pay tribute to the name of the locality -- Hazaribagh, meaning thousand gardens.



PHOTO: COURTESY

which is a woven everyday textile, this piece imbued with profound cultural implications through the weaving acts, where the act of weaving becomes an act of remembrance.

The last sail completes the dialogue by adding air to earth and water. Paban (Air) blends the themes through bold, expressive strokes. The installation of the sail structure, majorly reflected through the painting of Bishwajit Goswami transforms the physical form of the sail to become a vibrant testament to nature's expressions. There is a veil in front of the sail, which captures the fluidity of the river, the motion of the air -- weaving these elements into a visual narrative.

Brihatta itself

Of course, aside from the art pieces, the art space itself deserves its own recognition, given that it's an experience itself. Located in the heart of Hazaribagh, Dhaka, a place well known for tannery industries, an unexpected place for an art foundation, Brihatta uses all that to emphasise the point it is trying to make -- art is for everyone.

Once you are here, you become one of them, and Brihatta becomes yours. "To connect -- with others, nature, and ourselves -- is both an artistic pursuit and a human necessity," said Bishwajit Goswami, who invites everyone to Brihatta.

Maa, Mati, Manush, Bhasha, Swadesh, Prokriti -- these six words are inscribed on wall of the garden. That's right, Brihatta welcomes you with a rooftop garden. To pay tribute to the name of the locality -- Hazaribagh, meaning thousand gardens.

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ACC summons Hasina for quizzing today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has summoned ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina for questioning today over allegations of embezzling Tk 812 crore from development projects at three major airports across the country.

Hasina fled to India on August 5 last year amid a mass uprising.

ACC officials said she has been asked to appear at the commission's headquarters in Dhaka at 10:30am.

It also summoned Mahbub Ali, former state minister for civil aviation and tourism, and Mokammel Hossain, ex-civil aviation secretary, for interrogation.

Speaking to journalists yesterday, Akhtarul Islam, ACC deputy director and public relations officer, said letters summoning Hasina were sent to her addresses in Dhanmondi's Sudhasadan and in Tungipara, Gopalganj. The summons was signed by ACC Deputy Director Monirul Islam.

"She has been summoned for questioning over allegations of misappropriating thousands of crores of taka over the past 15 years in the name of airport development. The charges include collusion, fraud, forgery, irregularities, and large-scale corruption," Akhtarul Islam said.

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All prosecution witnesses testify in Magura child rape, murder trial

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

The hearing of prosecution witness testimonies in the case over the rape and murder of a child in Magura's Nijnanduli village ended yesterday after eight working days.

Testimonies of 29 witnesses were recorded by the District Women and Child Repression Prevention Tribunal.

Two doctors from Dhaka Medical College Hospital's forensic department testified on the final day.

The hearing ran from 10:00am to 11:00am.

All the accused, including the prime suspect Hitu Sheikh, were brought to court from Jhenaidah District Jail.

Hitu, the father-in-law of the victim's sister, allegedly raped the child on Mar 6.

She died a week later at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka while receiving treatment.

The victim's mother filed the case.

Police submitted the charge sheet on Apr 13, and the court began the trial by framing charges on Apr 23.

Witnesses started testifying on Apr 27.

World urges calm as India strikes Pakistan

FROM PAGE 1
three of its fighter jets had crashed on home territory.

However, the Indian embassy in Beijing called reports of fighter jets downed by Pakistan "disinformation".

At a media briefing in Delhi, India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri detailed India's rationale for the attack.

Misri said the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22 that claimed 26 lives aimed to "undermine normalcy returning to Kashmir," making a firm response imperative.

"Our intelligence indicated that further attacks against India are impending. Thus, compulsion, both to deter and prevent and hence earlier this morning, India exercised its right to respond to deter such more cross-border terrorism," he said.

Misri also briefed 13 foreign envoys in New Delhi on the strikes, an Indian source familiar with the developments said.

"India made it clear that if Pakistan responds, India will respond," a source who attended the meeting said.

The largest Indian strike was on an Islamic seminary near the Punjabi city of Bahawalpur, killing 13 people according to the Pakistani military.

A government health and education complex in Muridke, 30 kilometres from Lahore, was blown apart, along with a mosque in Muzaffarabad -- the main city of Pakistan-administered Kashmir -- killing its caretaker.

Four children were among those killed in yesterday's attacks, according to the Pakistan military.

Pakistan also said a hydropower plant in Kashmir was targeted by India, damaging a dam structure, after India threatened to stop the flow of water on its side of the border.

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the overnight operation was New Delhi's "right to respond" following the Pahalgam attack.

"The targets we had chosen were destroyed with great precision and sensitivity, ensuring that no civilian population or area was affected," Singh told reporters in New Delhi.

"We only targeted terror camps,

exercising our right to respond to the attack on our soil."

Pakistan had denied any involvement in the Pahalgam assault and called for an independent probe.

India said it hit militant groups Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Jaish later said 10 relatives of its leader Masood Azhar -- who was released from an Indian jail in 1999 in exchange for 155 hostages from a hijacked Indian Airlines plane -- were killed, with no mention of the fate of Azhar himself.

"There were terrible sounds during the night, there was panic among everyone," said Muhammad Salman, who lives close to the mosque.

"We are moving to a safer place... we are homeless now," added 24-year-old Tariq Mir, who was hit in the leg by

across the "line of control", their de facto border in Kashmir, officials there said.

In Muzaffarabad, United Nations military observers arrived to inspect a mosque that Islamabad said was struck by India.

"There were terrible sounds during the night, there was panic among everyone," said Muhammad Salman, who lives close to the mosque.

"We are moving to a safer place... we are homeless now," added 24-year-old Tariq Mir, who was hit in the leg by

based group Lashkar-e-Taiba, a UN-designated terrorist organisation.

The two nations have traded days of threats and tit-for-tat diplomatic measures, while Pakistan has conducted two missile tests.

"Escalation between India and Pakistan has already reached a larger scale than during the last major crisis in 2019, with potentially dire consequences," International Crisis Group analyst Praveen Donthi said.

Diplomats have piled pressure on leaders to step back.

"The world cannot afford a military confrontation between India and Pakistan," the spokesman for UN chief Antonio Guterres, Stephane Dujarric, said in a statement.

US President Donald Trump told reporters in Washington he hoped that the fighting "ends very quickly".

"I want to see it stop. And if I can do anything to help, I will be there," he told reporters in the Oval Office.

Concern poured in, including from China -- a mutual neighbour of both nations -- as well as from the EU, Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Turkey, while airlines have cancelled, diverted or rerouted flights.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was expected in New Delhi yesterday, two days after a visit to Islamabad, as Tehran seeks to mediate.

EU's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said the India-Pakistan situation is very concerning, adding that the EU was trying to mediate the crisis.

China's foreign ministry called on "both India and Pakistan to prioritise peace and stability, remain calm and restrained and avoid taking actions that further complicate the situation."

Russia's foreign ministry called on the parties to exercise restraint to prevent further "deterioration".

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan talked with Shehbaz Sharif to convey his solidarity.

During the call, Erdogan told Sharif that Turkey supported what he called Pakistan's "calm and restrained policies" in the crisis, his office said in a statement.



Villagers carry their belongings as they move to safer areas after authorities ordered evacuation near the border at Jeora Farm on the outskirts of Jammu in Indian-occupied Kashmir yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

shrapnel.

In Indian-held Kashmir, residents fled in panic from the Pakistani shelling.

"There was firing from Pakistan, which damaged the houses and injured many," said Wasim Ahmed, 29, from Salamabad village.

"They were taken to hospitals in Uri and Baramulla towns. There has been extensive damage here, everything is destroyed, and people are fleeing the area."

India had been widely expected to respond militarily to the Pahalgam attack, which it blamed on Pakistan-

Meanwhile, Modi yesterday briefed Indian President Droupadi Murmu about the cross border operation.

India has called for an all-party meeting today to brief them about the military strikes in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, according to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's National Security Committee called on the international community to hold India "accountable" for the violation of its sovereignty.

The neighbours also exchanged intense shelling and heavy gunfire

resources ministry has reactivated its online visa system for skilled workers.

Visas for marketing managers, hotel staff and others have been issued through this route in recent weeks.

Furthermore, 500 visas for security guards have already been issued, with another 1,000 pending issuance.

UAE Ambassador to Dhaka Abdulla Ali Abdulla Alhmodi and Bangladesh Ambassador to the UAE Tareq Ahmed were also present at the meeting, after which the UAE delegation concluded its visit.

The UAE has recently begun issuing 30 to 50 visas daily, while bulk visas for business delegations have also been expedited in recent weeks.

Additionally, the country's human

Refrain from any steps

FROM PAGE 1
situation in India and Pakistan.

"In the spirit of regional peace, prosperity and stability, Bangladesh remains hopeful that tensions will be defused through diplomatic endeavours, and that peace will ultimately prevail for the benefit of the peoples in the region."

Early yesterday, India attacked nine sites in Pakistan and Pakistani Kashmir.

Pakistan said it was mounting a response, as the worst fighting in years erupted between the longstanding rivals.

At least 26 people were killed in Pakistan, according to its military. Meanwhile, 12 have reportedly been killed in India.

On Monday evening, Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar called Bangladesh's Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain.

On Tuesday, Touhid told the media that he had conveyed Bangladesh's

India pushes 123 individuals

FROM PAGE 1
commissioner of Khagrachari, said, "BGB is monitoring the situation; all of them are currently under BGB custody. The local administration is in close coordination with the BGB."

BORDER ON ALERT

BGB Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafulzaman Siddiqui told The Daily Star yesterday, "Some Bangla speaking people have illegally entered Bangladesh from India, and BGB has taken them into custody."

"These people have no IDs or passports. Their identities are being verified. After verification, appropriate action will be taken in coordination with police."

"We have lodged a strong protest note with BSF and told them not to undertake any such push-ins. Flag meetings have been called at various levels, too."

"We have also asked the home and foreign ministries to communicate with the Indian authorities concerned. We have strengthened border security and enhanced surveillance. We are on high alert and maintaining vigilance, too."

Inspector General of Police Abdul Alam said, "Our borders are indeed very porous, so this kind of possibility is always there. In light of the ongoing conflict [India and Pakistan], we have already issued warnings to the superintendents of police in the 31 border districts, including those along the Indian and Myanmar borders."

He was speaking with reporters after a programme in the capital's Gulshan yesterday.

"We will make every possible effort to ensure that our national security is not compromised in any way as a result of this."

[Our correspondents in Chattogram and Lalmonirhat also contributed to this report.]

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HASINA CASE
ICT probe report by this month
Says a prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation into the case filed against Sheikh Hasina over alleged crimes against humanity during the July uprising is nearing completion, and the probe report will be submitted "very soon", said a prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) yesterday.

ICT Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim told reporters that the case against Hasina is "the biggest investigation ever" conducted by the tribunal's agency.

"Hopefully, the investigation agency will submit its report within a short time," he said while talking to reporters at the tribunal premises.

When asked for clarification, Tamim told

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Volunteers hold up signs saying "Honking not allowed" and "Please don't honk" while vehicles wait at the Gulshan-2 intersection. Under a new initiative from the environment ministry, volunteers from several green organisations are raising awareness at traffic signals in various areas of the capital. The aim is to reduce noise pollution by informing drivers that unnecessary use of horns is not allowed. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CONSENSUS COMMISSION

IAB opposes gender quota in parliament

Nagorik Oikya disagrees with 50% civil society representation in upper House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) yesterday stressed the restoration of "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah" in place of the proposed principle of pluralism in the constitution during a meeting with the National Consensus Commission (NCC).

The 11-member delegation, led by Secretary General Hafez Maulana Yunus Ahmad Sheikh, presented the party's detailed reform proposals at the meet held at the LD Hall of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

IAB proposed that both chambers of the suggested bicameral parliament be elected through proportional representation. It opposed gender quotas in elections, advocating instead for equal competition between men and women.

They recommended direct presidential elections with a two term limit and proposed that no one simultaneously hold



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Govt to scrap Tk 5,651cr haor road project

Points at environmental concerns, cost effectiveness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Road Transport and Bridges Ministry has decided to cancel a Tk 5,651 crore project for building a 15.31-kilometre elevated road in the haor region of Kishoreganj.

The decision was made due to environmental concerns and questions about the project's cost-effectiveness, said Mohammad Abdur Rouf, secretary of the Bridges Division, at a programme yesterday.

He said the project was still in its early stages, with only Tk 150 crore disbursed for land acquisition, which could be recovered.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved the project in January 2023.

It aimed to construct a road from Mithamoin upazila headquarters to Karimganj upazila in Kishoreganj, establishing direct road links between the district and Dhaka, Sylhet, and other parts of the country, ensuring smooth, all-weather communication.

Rouf said the ministry made the decision after reviewing various aspects of the project following the assumption of office by the interim government after the July uprising.

"The process to formally cancel the project

is underway," he added.

He was speaking at a views-exchange meeting at the Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), attended by Sheikh Moinuddin, special assistant to the chief adviser for the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry; heads of different agencies under the ministry; and members of Reporters for Rail and Road -- a journalist platform covering the transport sector.

FOCUS ON BETTER COORDINATION

Moinuddin pointed out long-standing coordination gaps among agencies under the ministry, with little data-sharing or collaboration.

This has persisted for decades, but they now intend to initiate positive changes, he said.

To address various issues, weekly meetings will be held with top officials of the agencies concerned.

Representatives from the Dhaka city corporations and other road management bodies will also participate, said the special assistant.

He also said a website will be launched to host details of all transport-related projects, allowing agencies to easily access information

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Several unauthorized U-turns have been created on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway by cutting through the road dividers. Risking a collision, a three-wheeler, which is not allowed to ply the highway, uses one such U-turn at Kumira area in Sitakunda upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

'Reinstate us or restore our pension benefits'

Urges group of dismissed armed forces personnel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of armed forces personnel dismissed under the previous government yesterday called for reinstatement or the restoration of their pension benefits.

At a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters Unity, former personnel from the army, navy, and air force urged their respective service chiefs to consider their plea for a general amnesty and fair treatment.

They said if their demands were not met within the next seven working days, they would be compelled to go on a hunger strike along with their families.

The speakers alleged that under the previous government, many officers and employees from different government agencies lost their jobs due to internal power struggles and political favouritism.

They claimed they were among those unjustly dismissed as a result of such circumstances.

"We respectfully appeal to our respective chiefs to grant a general pardon for past mistakes and reinstate us in service or at least provide due pension benefits," said Md Hanzala, a former soldier at the army.

Speakers mentioned that on September 15, 2024, they submitted formal applications, outlining their

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Tarique, NCP call for restraint amid regional tensions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman has condemned the military attacks in the region and expressed condolences to the victims' families.

In a post on his verified Facebook page at 7:27pm yesterday, Tarique wrote, "We condemn the military attacks and extend condolences to the victim families."

Urging all stakeholders to exercise restraint, he called for taking steps towards a peaceful solution to the conflict.



A stable and peaceful region, built on shared interests and aspirations, is in the best interest of all.

TARIQUE RAHMAN, BNP acting chairman

"A stable and peaceful region, built on shared interests and aspirations, is in the best interest of all," the post read.

In another development, the National Citizen Party (NCP) expressed concern over the missile strike by India on Pakistan, stating that the attack has further escalated tensions between the two countries and pushed them to the brink of war.

"This development has dealt a direct blow to regional

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'75% people want polls right now'
Says BNP leader Farroque

UNB, Dhaka

Claiming that about 75 percent of the people want the election to be held now, BNP Chairperson's advisory council member Zainul Abedin Farroque yesterday urged the chief adviser to take steps in this regard instead of "wasting time in the name of reform".

"About 75 percent of the people want elections right now," he told a token sit-in programme.

Bangladesh Jatiya Nagorik Parishad organised the programme in front of the Jatiya Press Club, demanding a roadmap for the parliamentary election, and the arrest of those of the Awami League regime who used illegal weapons on people and their trial before the polls.

Farroque, also a former opposition chief whip in parliament, said the government's reform initiative is almost at its final stage.

He urged the interim government not to take any such reform agenda that could delay the election through a 1/11-style conspiracy.

The BNP leader urged the chief adviser to take the final decision on holding the election by December this year. "Please make arrangements for that," he said.

Opposing the government's decision to provide a corridor for Myanmar's Rakhine, he called upon the chief adviser to leave the matter to the party that will come to power and form the government through the election under him.

HC verdict on Ramna Batamul attack today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court is set to deliver its verdict on the death references and appeals of the 2001 Ramna Batamul blast case today.

The HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice Nasreen Akter on April 30 fixed today for delivery of the judgement.

The bench on February 18 kept the death references (trial court documents for confirmation of death sentences), and the appeals, filed by the convicted accused in the cases, as curia avisari vult (meaning the verdict will be delivered any day), after concluding hearing on those.

On April 14, 2001, two bombs went off during 1408 Pahela Baishakh celebrations organised by Chhayanaut at the capital's Ramna Batamul. The bomb blasts left 10 people dead

SEE PAGE 10 COL 8



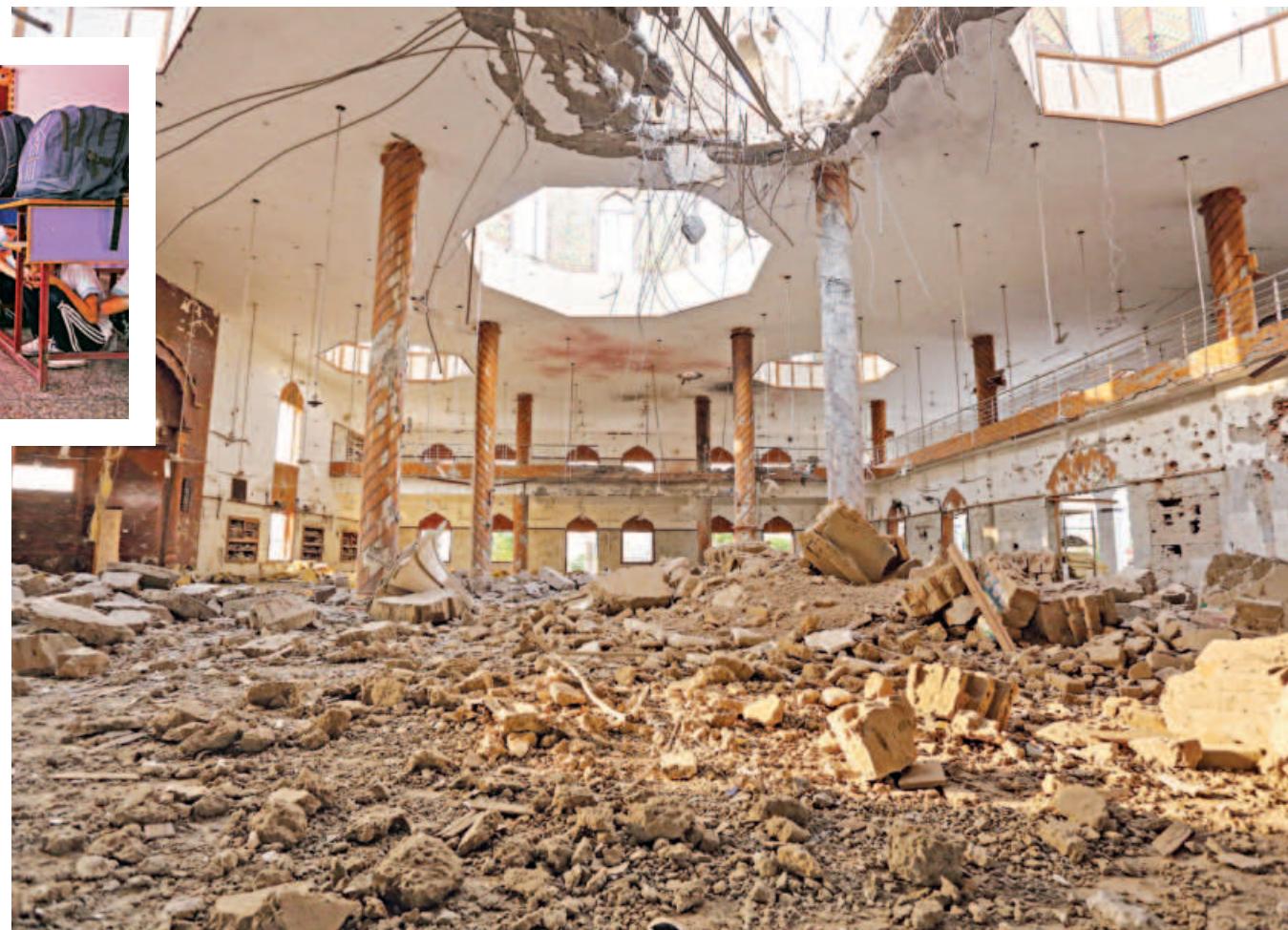
India used SCALP, HAMMER to hit Pak camps

NDTV ONLINE

India utilised a suite of high-precision, long range strike weapons in the operation. Among these were the SCALP and the HAMMER.

The SCALP, also known as Storm Shadow, is a long range, air-launched cruise missile with a range exceeding 250 kilometres and designed for deep-strike capabilities.

The HAMMER, short for Highly Agile Modular Munition Extended Range, smart bomb was used to strike hardened infrastructure such as multi-storey buildings used as logistical centres by LeT and JeM.



A broad view of a damaged Islamic seminary following Indian strikes in Ahmedpur Sharqia, approximately 7 kilometres from Bahawalpur in Pakistan's Punjab province, yesterday. Inset, students participate in an emergency mock drill as part of the nationwide civil defence exercise at a school in New Delhi, amid rising border tensions.

PHOTO: AFP

INDIA-PAKISTAN CLASHES What happens next?

AGENCIES

Weeks of tension erupted early yesterday morning when India fired missiles into Pakistan and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, escalating the likelihood of a full-blown military confrontation between the nuclear-armed South Asian neighbours.

a cowardly attack on five locations within Pakistan. This heinous act of aggression will not go unpunished. Pakistan reserves the absolute right to respond decisively to this."

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif claimed five Indian planes had been shot down and that Indian soldiers had been captured,

"Much depends on the Pakistani response, and if they stay true to their word, then their retaliation may be substantial and potentially escalatory," he said.

WHAT ARE THE BROADER GLOBAL RISKS?

The two countries possess comparable nuclear arsenals, with



Pakistani authorities said at least 26 people, including a child, were killed overnight, decrying a "blatant act of war".

Speaking to Bloomberg TV, Mr Asif denied that there were terrorist training camps in the areas struck by India and that it was civilians who were suffering. "This has been initiated by India ... If India backs down we will definitely wrap up this thing," he said.

"But as long as we are under attack, under fire, we have to respond. We have to defend ourselves."

Experts said the course of the conflict depended on the scale and nature of Pakistan's response. RAND Corporation defence analyst Derek Grossman told the ABC that the air strikes were "a very serious escalation in India-Pakistan tensions that could, if taken to the extreme, result in nuclear war".

reports abc.net.au.

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Israeli strikes kill 15 in Gaza school

REUTERS, Gaza

Israeli strikes on a school housing displaced families in northern Gaza killed 15 Palestinians yesterday, local health authorities said, as Israeli forces continued to demolish homes and buildings in Rafah in the south of the enclave.

Medics said two strikes targeted the Karama School in Tuffah, a suburb of Gaza City. Among those killed was a local journalist, Nour Abdu, Palestinian media said. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli army.

Two Israeli airstrikes on another school, housing displaced people in Bureij camp in central Gaza, killed at least 33 people.

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|---|-----------|-----------------|---|----------------------------|--|
| <p>Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Project Director National Disaster Management Research and Training Institute Construction Project (1st Phase) Department of Disaster Management 92-93, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka-1212 www.ddm.gov.bd</p> | | | | | |
| <p>e-Tender Notice</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Invitation No: 51.01.0000.031.14.18.24-220 Date: 05.05.2025</p> | | | | | |
| <p>e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of the following:</p> | | | | | |
| SL No | Tender ID | Package No | Name of Work | e-GP Published Date & Time | Closing & Opening Date & Time |
| 01 | 1093749 | DDM/NDMRTI/W-01 | Construction of 10 storied Foundation Academic cum Administrative Building up to 2nd floor and 6 Storyed Foundation Hostel building up to 2nd floor and Boundary wall of National Disaster Management Research & Training Institute (1st Phase) under Gazipur district. | 07 May 2025 10.00 A.M | Please see the online e-GP Tender Notice |

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We don't want to see another war

Eruption of fighting between India-Pakistan worrying

We are extremely concerned by the eruption of fighting between India and Pakistan in a sharp escalation of hostilities between the two nuclear-armed neighbours following the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack, in which 26 people were killed. Reportedly, India launched "precision strikes" on what it claimed were nine sites of "terrorist infrastructure" in Pakistan early Wednesday. Declaring the attack to be an "act of war" and vowing retaliation, Pakistan also claimed to have downed five Indian Air Force jets during the attack. At least 38 people were reported killed in these incidents—Islamabad said 26 civilians were killed by India's missile strikes and firing, while New Delhi said at least 12 died from Pakistani shelling.

We must say this turn of events—while not exactly shocking given the recent escalations marked by harsh rhetoric and retaliatory measures from both sides—is as tragic as it is dangerous. If India continues its campaign and Pakistan acts on its pledge of "corresponding actions," there is no telling where this will end and at what cost. If left unchecked, it could lead to a wider conflict that could inflict untold suffering across the region. The two countries have fought three wars in the past, and the current fighting already promises to be the deadliest confrontation in decades. Even though India claims its actions under the so-called Operation Sindoar have been "non-escalatory in nature," and that "no Pakistani military facilities have been targeted," nationalist sentiments festering within the countries could make it difficult to adopt a reconciliatory gesture or turn away from aggression.

As we know, the momentum for the latest flare-up has been building for some time. In the two weeks since the Pahalgam attack—for which India blamed Pakistan, which the latter denied—both sides took various tit-for-tat measures against each other, including expelling diplomats, suspending visas, and closing border crossings. Many, therefore, expected these developments to escalate to some sort of cross-border confrontation—as seen after the Pulwama attacks which had left 40 Indian paramilitary personnel dead in 2019. While world leaders have urged restraint and de-escalation after Wednesday's attacks, both countries have yet to show any willingness to take the first step toward compromise or even negotiation.

We don't need to remind them of the dangers of continuing along this path. The longer they delay meaningful dialogue, the closer they risk edging toward a catastrophic conflict. Moreover, this is not just their problem anymore—it threatens to affect all of us in the surrounding regions. Already there are fears, and early signs, of disruptions in many shared sectors and services. It is, therefore, imperative that both governments urgently pull back from the brink, heed international calls for restraint, and engage in direct talks. The international community, headed by the UNSC, also have a responsibility to mediate and convince them to focus on pursuing the real terrorists, instead of fighting among themselves.

Will road fatalities go on without end?

Remove chaos in transport sector, make our roads safe

We are deeply concerned about the lack of meaningful initiatives from the relevant authorities to ensure road safety, as crashes continue to claim lives across the country. According to the Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity (BJKS), 583 people were killed and 1,202 injured in 567 road accidents in April alone. BJKS has identified several major causes of these crashes, with motorcycle accidents contributing to the highest number of casualties last month. Other causes include the operation of battery-powered rickshaws on highways, a lack of signs, markings, and lights on national roads, disobedience of traffic rules, unfit vehicles, unskilled drivers, and reckless driving. Although these reasons are well known, and experts and road safety advocates have long urged action, we have yet to see any effective measures from the authorities.

The current situation reflects the failure of successive governments to treat road safety with the urgency it deserves. Particularly during the 15 years of Awami League rule, corruption, mismanagement, and political influence plagued the transport sector. Powerful figures in transport associations, working hand in glove with police and political leaders, sustained a corrupt system that served their interests. Even though a student-led movement in 2018 led to the enactment of the Road Transport Act (RTA) 2018, it remains largely unimplemented to this day.

We had hoped for improvements under the interim government, but disappointingly, little progress has been made since it took office nine months ago. Extortion and anarchy still dominate the sector, with transport associations now run mostly by BNP leaders and activists instead of their Awami League predecessors. Meanwhile, unlicensed and non-compliant drivers continue to cause accidents. One example of the government's lack of impact is that although it had announced a decision to remove outdated vehicles from roads by May, there has been little visible interest from owners or government effort to enforce it. Such a lacklustre response to a national crisis is unacceptable.

We urge the authorities to take a holistic approach to restoring order on our roads. Implementing the RTA is essential, but we must also tackle the pervasive extortion and political interference in the sector. Establishing a commission to reform the transport system is also an option that should be considered. The BJKS and other organisations have already identified the main causes of disorder and proposed solutions. The government must take these recommendations seriously and act without delay to ensure road safety.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

World War II in Europe ended

On this day in 1945, following Germany's unconditional surrender, World War II in Europe officially ended at midnight, although the war in the Pacific continued until the Japanese surrendered in September.

EDITORIAL

India-Pakistan tensions and the risks of war



Ramisa Rob
is Geopolitical Insights Editor at
The Daily Star.

RAMISA ROB

Two weeks after the terror attacks in Pahalgam, India-administered Kashmir, India launched missiles into Pakistan-administered Kashmir and Pakistan under "Operation Sindoar," described as a precision strike. At the time of writing, India and Pakistan have polar opposite claims regarding the strikes. From Pakistan's perspective, Indian strikes have killed 26 people, including a child, as reported by *The Guardian* and Reuters. On the other hand, the Indian government said in a statement that attacks were directed at nine non-military targets, and "terrorist infrastructure."

It is too early, and rather preliminary, to conclude that India-Pakistan tensions have escalated to a "war." But it is also impossible to rule out further escalations, and that uncertainty is what makes the current situation all the more concerning.

The scale of the attacks has surpassed historical precedence where the tit-for-tat exchanges did not result in a wider war. Prior to Indian strikes on Wednesday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced on Tuesday, without specifically mentioning Pakistan, that India's water will flow and "be conserved for India's benefit." Withdrawing from the 65-year-old Indus Water Treaty has been India's fiercest diplomatic offensive in response to the Pahalgam attacks, and Pakistan has vowed that any attempt by India to stop water flow would constitute "an act of war."

Pakistani military spokesperson Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, in an early morning news conference, said Indian missiles targeted four locations in Punjab, and two in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it summoned the Indian chargé d'affaires in Islamabad, and stated that India's "blatant act of aggression constitutes a clear violation of Pakistan's sovereignty. Such actions are in contravention of the UN Charter, international law and established norms governing interstate relations," as reported by CNN.

India has not yet publicly provided evidence of the claims that Pakistan was directly linked to the terror attacks in Pahalgam, to justify Wednesday's attacks on the premise of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Retaliating to the Indian strikes, Pakistan has already launched heavy artillery shelling along the de facto border between the two nations, reports BBC. India has claimed the



Metal debris lies on the ground in Wuyan in India-administered Kashmir's Pulwama district, May 7, 2025.

PHOTO: REUTERS

artillery shelling along the de facto border is unprovoked.

At least 12 people were killed and dozens wounded on the Indian side in Poonch, local government official Asfandyar Mir, a senior fellow in the South Asia Program at the Stimson Center in Washington, told *The New York Times* that the Indian strikes under Operation Sindoar so far "have crossed two significant thresholds in its military action," by hitting a large number of sites in Pakistan and by striking Punjab. Pakistan's military claims that Indian strikes have hit the densely populated province of Punjab, and are the deepest India has struck inside Pakistan since 1971, according to CNN.

but according to analysts, the previous military responses in 2019 and 2016 (Uri) were more measured. Asfandyar Mir, a senior fellow in the South Asia Program at the Stimson Center in Washington, told *The New York Times* that the Indian strikes under Operation Sindoar so far "have crossed two significant thresholds in its military action," by hitting a large number of sites in Pakistan and by striking Punjab. Pakistan's military claims that Indian strikes have hit the densely populated province of Punjab, and are the deepest India has struck inside Pakistan since 1971, according to CNN.

The role of powerful nations who would act as mediators, and with

whom both nations share relations—namely the US—is key. JD Vance had suggested they would support an Indian "response" that would not lead to a larger conflict in the region. One could infer that Vance's statement suggests supporting a kinetic response that would not be overly escalatory. After the overnight strikes, the Indian army posted a video on X, saying "Justice is served." According to *The New York Times*, India has said its military actions have been "measured, responsible and designed to be non-escalatory in nature." At the White House, US President Trump has so far called the escalation between India and Pakistan a "shame," and said he hoped "it ends very quickly." Trump had said earlier that both are "friends" of the US. The UN, Western nations, and China stepped up the calls for restraint for both nations.

Beyond statements, the current escalation requires active engagement and mediation. The rapid escalation has gone far, and renegotiating the Indus Water Treaty, rather than calibrated "responses," must be encouraged by geopolitical actors already navigating two wars and a Cold War between China and the US, with heightening tensions.

Ultimately, a protracted conflict harms both countries. On May 5, Moody's stated that a persistent increase in tensions with India could impair Pakistan's access to external financing and pressure its foreign exchange reserves, which remain well below what is required to meet its external debt payment for the next few years. For India, a full-scale war with Pakistan threatens its geopolitical position in the Indo-Pacific region, as a net security provider in the region. "An outright war with Pakistan... would only indirectly put us [India] against China, one of the world's largest economies... which has strategic investments in the Belt and Road Corridor that runs through Pakistan," writes Saba Naqvi, a Delhi-based journalist, in an article in *Frontline* magazine.

Time and time again, history has shown that wars exact a price. Further military actions from either nation can no longer be rationalised by their governments' need to "save face" and flex muscle power to their rival in order to tend to their domestic audience. Both nations stand to lose more than they would gain with outright war, and realising that sooner rather than later would serve their people.

VOTER EDUCATION

The missing link in govt's democratic reform



Saifur Rahman
is a senior IT specialist and
certified professional.

SAIFUR RAHMAN

Political education is not a luxury. It is essential for the very survival of democracy. Plato cautioned that democracy turns perilous when citizens are uninformed. In Bangladesh, many voters sell their votes for a few thousand takas. If they truly grasped the profound socio-economic significance of their vote, would they still make such a choice?

A vote is not merely a token. It is a social contract between the citizen and the state, an agreement that, in exchange for the vote, the voter should receive security and good governance.

By selling their vote upfront, individuals essentially forfeit access to critical public services such as free, publicly funded healthcare, state-guaranteed fair wages, employment opportunities, quality education for their children, fair prices for their produce, and access to justice. Over the course of a five-year term, the cumulative loss from being deprived of these entitlements could amount to several lakhs of taka.

Though free and fair election should guarantee democracy, this is only a half-truth. When voters are swayed by short-term gains, such as monetary incentives, democracy becomes a commodity rather than a process of genuine representation. Moreover, Bangladesh faces another problem rooted in the patron-client leadership model. Leadership positions often stem from family ties or patronage rather than merit or competence,

perpetuating a cycle of incapable governance time and again.

In any society, the struggle for democracy must begin with the political education of the masses. Yet neither the Election Commission (EC), political parties, intelligentsia, nor social activist groups have seriously prioritised or worked towards this most fundamental requirement. The interim government has pledged to reform state institutions and conduct a free and fair election, but it has shown no visible initiatives in promoting civic education or political awareness among voters, thereby risking the reversal of whatever changes they implement.

Although transforming an entire population into politically engaged, fully empowered "active citizens" is a long-term endeavour, the interim government can take a vital first step by launching a comprehensive voter education programme. Even instilling a basic awareness that selling one's vote for immediate gain is, in effect, sacrificing far greater entitlements for a fleeting benefit, can begin to shift public consciousness.

The EC and the interim government are uniquely positioned to lead an impartial, nationwide voter education campaign. They can leverage the existing administrative infrastructure, including local government bodies, publicly funded schools and colleges, upazila land administration, agricultural extension services, and

cooperative departments, where such programmes can be seamlessly integrated.

It is also possible to implement a meaningful voter education programme within the limited time available to the current interim government.

Between 1996 and 1997, Bangladesh successfully implemented a grassroots initiative known as the Local Democracy Education Programme (LDEP), funded by USAID and supported by the Asia Foundation and BRAC. The programme, carried out by dozens of NGOs across 12 different districts, aimed to promote voter education through both innovative and practical means. These included distributing educational materials such as posters and leaflets and organising public gatherings, workshops, and courtyard meetings to raise awareness among voters.

Maintaining political neutrality, LDEP urged voters to reject candidates linked to religious extremism, candidates with criminal records, and corruption. The programme's impact was remarkable: in the December 1997 Union Parishad elections, in LDEP's area of operation, voter turnout exceeded 90 percent, women participated in unprecedented numbers, and both vote rigging and the influence of money declined significantly. Notably, NGO assessments found that 43 percent of elected candidates were honest and capable, making it one of the most credible and memorable elections in the public memory of those areas.

Similar success stories have emerged from countries like Kenya, Indonesia, Mexico, and South Africa, where election commissions and various NGOs implemented voter education programmes with notable success.

These examples reveal several key factors for the successful

implementation of such programmes: maintaining a non-partisan attitude is essential for building public trust; using simple and accessible language is more effective than relying on academic jargon; combining mass media platforms such as radio, television, and SMS with community-level workshops maximises outreach; and emphasising both "how to vote" and "why voting matters" significantly strengthens voter engagement.

In the current political landscape, major political parties are unlikely to support a non-partisan voter education programme. This situation presents an opportunity for smaller political parties, which often struggle to compete within the existing framework. By promoting voter awareness through their own networks and communication channels, these smaller parties can not only strengthen democratic participation but also help create conditions that may eventually allow them to compete on a more level playing field.

Large NGOs with strong rural networks can also play a critical role. The interim government can actively engage with these organisations, encouraging them to integrate voter education into their ongoing programmes. Many international development partners provide funding for democracy-related initiatives, which NGOs can explore to support these efforts. Civil society organisations and concerned citizens must also be part of this process.

By mobilising NGOs, civil society organisations, and ordinary citizens around a shared agenda of voter education, the government can lay the groundwork for lasting democratic reform. If pursued with sincerity and collaboration, this collective endeavour could yield meaningful results, not only in the upcoming election but in all future ones as well.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

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WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Chhayanaut's 'Rabindra Utsab'

Chhayanaut will commemorate the 164th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore with a two-day Rabindra Festival on May 8 and 9.

Featuring performances by Chhayanaut's eminent artistes, the festival will celebrate

Tagore's contributions to Bengali literature, music, and arts through poetry recitations, musical renditions, and dance dramas. The event is open to all.

Date: Thursday- Friday | May 8-9

Time: 6:30pm onwards

Venue: Chhayanaut Shongshkriti Bhabon



Star-studded releases on the horizon again

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The joyous atmosphere of Eid tends to bring with it the excitement of big-screen blockbusters, and this Eid-ul-Azha is no exception. As theatres continue screening films from Eid-ul-Fitr, producers and directors are shifting focus toward the next festive release window. Several high-profile titles are preparing to hit cinemas during Eid-ul-Azha, with some already generating significant buzz through posters, social media promotions, and star-studded casts.

As has been tradition for years, Eid releases are incomplete without a Shakib Khan starrer. This year, audiences will see the superstar next in Raihan Rafi's

Taandob. The film, which is currently in production, stars Sabila Nur opposite Shakib and also features Jaya Ahsan in a special role. Promising action and suspense, **Taandob** is expected to be one of the upcoming Eid's main draws.

Another film generating anticipation is **Insaaf**, starring Mosharrif Karim, Sariful Razz, and Tasnia Farin, adding to the ensemble cast's appeal. This Sanjoy Somadder directorial revealed its first look last week in a poster showcasing a fresh avatar of Karim leaving fans intrigued. The actor himself teased, "We want to keep the film's narrative surprises alive so I won't share much. However, the audience will see me in a new light."

Veteran actor Zahid Hasan is set to return to the silver screen after a long hiatus with the film **Utsob**, directed by Tanim Noor. "It's a unique story," Hasan said about the project. "We have been hoping to release it during a major festival like Eid."

Meanwhile, Arifin Shuvoo is also set to make a comeback to the big screen with the thriller **NeelChokro**, co-starring rising star Mondera Chakraborty. Directed by Mithu Khan, the film is being regarded as a family-friendly Eid thriller. "It's the kind of story audiences can enjoy together," Mondera said.

Also in the lineup is **Esha Murder**, led by **Rehana Maryam Noor** actress Azmeri Haque Badhan, who plays a police

officer in this crime thriller directed by Sunny Sanwar. Though unconfirmed, it's likely to hit cinemas this Eid.

Other potential upcoming releases include **Tagar**, directed by Aalok Hasan and starring Ador Azad alongside Puja Chery; and **Panic**, helmed by Zahid Jewel, with Shobnoma Bubly and Ador Azad in lead roles. In **Panic**, Bubly steps into an uncommon antagonist role, showcasing a different facet of her acting range.

While the full Eid release slate is yet to be finalised, the list is shaping up to be both diverse and promising. More titles may be added in the coming weeks, but it's clear that Eid ul-Azha 2025 is poised for a cinematic celebration.

'Helen Keller' takes the spotlight at Shilpkala for Rabindra Jayanti



Swapnadal will present its acclaimed production **Helen Keller** today at 7pm at the Studio Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy, marking Rabindranath Tagore's 164th birth anniversary.

Directed by Zahid Repon and written by Apurba Kumar Kundu, the monodrama stars Juana Sobnom in a riveting solo performance. Beyond Keller's remarkable

story, the play explores her profound intellectual connection with Tagore, highlighting how his ideals of dignity and universalism shaped her worldview.

Featuring minimalist staging, Sobnom portrays Keller's journey from isolation to international acclaim. **Helen Keller** has earned accolades at theatre festivals in Japan and India, resonating with global audiences.



Ferdous Ara to receive Lifetime Achievement Award



Renowned Nazrul Sangeet artiste Ferdous Ara has been confirmed as the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award at this year's Channel i Music Awards. The ceremony is scheduled to take place on May 19 at a five-star hotel in Dhaka.

Channel i Music Awards producer Iftekhar Munim confirmed the news and commended Ara for her valuable contributions to the music industry. In response, Ara expressed her gratitude, "Receiving recognition while still actively working serves to reinforce an artiste's path and motivates them to continue creating."

The revered singer lauded Channel i's role in promoting diverse musical traditions. Ara also reflected on the scarcity of dedicated music events in Bangladesh.

Following her Ekushey Padak win earlier this year, Ara emphasised the importance of timely recognition for artistes to truly honour and empower their ongoing contributions to society.

NEWS

EC to start redrawing soon

FROM PAGE 12

reform commission's recommendations, Akhtar said, "If there is any development on this matter, we will proceed accordingly."

According to the Delimitation of Constituencies Act 2021, the boundaries of Jatiya Sangsad constituencies are based on the population distribution as per the latest census.

The EC publishes a list of constituencies whose boundaries will be redrawn, and voters have the opportunity to file appeals against the decisions. The EC finalises the demarcation after resolving these appeals.

Asked about whether the current EC would follow this process and set a deadline, Akhtar said, "We have to begin the task. Regarding the timeline, I can say it will be decided by our commission. It is too early to comment on the timeline."

The previous EC, led by Kazi Habibur Awal, demarcated 10 constituencies ahead of the 12th national election; before that, the KM Nurul Huda-led commission demarcated 25 in 2018; the Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed-led commission demarcated 87 in 2013; and the ATM Shamsul Huda-led commission demarcated 133 in 2008.

Transparency International

Bangladesh, in a report published in May 2024, stated that controversies, lawsuits, and legal complications resulted from the demarcation of 198 constituencies in recent national elections.

After the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government, the EC received complaints regarding demarcation processes between 2008 and 2024.

In another development, the EC suspended NID verification authority of Ansar and BRAC Bank and launched an investigation after finding evidence that data was being leaked from the two institutions, said ASM Humayun Kabir, director general of the NID wing.

Meanwhile, Mushfiqur Rahman, chairperson of SME Foundation, stressed the importance of training and workshops to improve the financial literacy of female migrant workers.

He also called for policy support to resolve the issues confronting them.

The crisis surrounding female migration is preventable if the country adopts gender-responsive migration policies, said Sheeba Hafiza, chairperson of Migration, Inclusion & Justice Activist.

Shaeen urged policymakers, civil society and international partners to collaborate in addressing the structural vulnerabilities faced by Bangladeshi women throughout the migration process.

"Why do we send unskilled female

workers who have no capacity to bargain? We need policies to ensure that no unskilled migrant workers are sent abroad."

She also called for a national strategy to provide psychosocial support, skill development and community reintegration for returnee female migrants.

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"When we seek an order to freeze the overseas assets of an individual or institution, whether that order is enforceable depends on the laws of that particular country. This is because an act considered a crime in our jurisdiction may not be regarded as such there," said the official, seeking anonymity.

Citing an example, the official added, "Illicit money transfer from Bangladesh to Singapore is a crime under our money laundering laws. But in Singapore, it may not be considered a crime because they view that money as an investment."

Besides, S Alam surrendered his Bangladeshi citizenship in 2020, and holds a Singaporean passport.

A RICH DOMESTIC HELP

The ACC also sought a court order to freeze 262 bank accounts linked to

S Alam, associates laundered

FROM PAGE 1

to transfer or hand over the properties are underway, and that it was necessary to seize the properties for the sake of the investigation and the subsequent recovery of the assets.

The court directed the deputy commissioners and land registrars of Chattogram and Gazipur to take actions in this regard.

"S Alam Group Chairman Mohammed Saiful Alam, other entities related to him and his associates linked to those entities illegally took anonymous loans from various banks and embezzled the money, and acquired vast wealth in his and his family's name at home and abroad," the ACC filing says.

Alam and his wife Farzana Parveen own movable and immovable properties in Singapore, Cyprus, the British Virgin Islands, and other places, according to a case filed by the ACC on March 25 this year. This case is unrelated to the April 8 submission.

An investigator told The Daily Star that the ACC is yet to apply for the seizure of S Alam and his family's reported wealth abroad due to some legal complications.

"When we seek an order to freeze the overseas assets of an individual or institution, whether that order is enforceable depends on the laws of that particular country. This is because an act considered a crime in our jurisdiction may not be regarded as such there," said the official, seeking anonymity.

Citing an example, the official added, "Illicit money transfer from Bangladesh to Singapore is a crime under our money laundering laws. But in Singapore, it may not be considered a crime because they view that money as an investment."

Besides, S Alam surrendered his Bangladeshi citizenship in 2020, and holds a Singaporean passport.

A RICH DOMESTIC HELP

The ACC also sought a court order to freeze 262 bank accounts linked to

individuals and entities related to S Alam Group.

Investigators found that at least 29 of these bank accounts are held by Marzina Akter, who was once a domestic help at S Alam's residence. These accounts had a deposit of over Tk 1.09 crore during the investigation. Another 10 accounts are held by Saddam Hussein, Marzina's husband. The couple were later employed at Islami Bank, which was taken over by S Alam in 2017, allegedly at gunpoint.

At least 24 bank accounts belonging to S Alam's associate Almas Ali and others had deposits worth Tk 1,374 crore at the time of investigation, the ACC filing shows.

According to documents obtained during the ACC investigation, large sums were misappropriated through fake loans and investments in the names of S Alam's relatives and associates.

These funds were then deposited in various accounts at home and abroad, violating money laundering laws and resulting in the accumulation of wealth beyond known sources income.

"Based on credible intelligence, the Anti-Corruption Commission believes that S Alam and his family members recently attempted to relocate or transfer funds from specific bank accounts, raising concerns that the assets could vanish before the investigation concludes," the ACC submission reads.

The court ordered the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) and the relevant banks to freeze the accounts.

Since the fall of the Hasina government in August 2024, ACC has so far filed two cases against S Alam and his wife over possession of "illegal wealth" worth Tk 1,539.85 crore.

The anti-graft body also sued two of their sons – Ahsanul Alam and Ashraful Alam -- for alleged embezzlement of nearly Tk 2,200 crore from Islami Bank.

ACC summons Hasina

FROM PAGE 2

A senior ACC official, requesting anonymity, said failure to appear before the commission may cost Hasina the opportunity to defend herself.

Summons were also sent to the known addresses of Mahbub Ali and Mokammel Hossain in Dhaka and their respective hometowns. Mahbub Ali is behind bars while Mokammel is absconding, law enforcement sources said.

On January 27 this year, the anti-graft body filed four cases against 19 individuals, including Hasina's former military adviser Tarique Ahmed Siddique, over alleged misappropriation of Tk 812 crore from various airport development projects in Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet.

Other accused in the cases include Mohibul Haque, former civil aviation senior secretary, who is in jail, and M Mofidur Rahman, ex-chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

Tagore's 164th birth anniv today

such as Gora, Chokher Bali, and Shesher Kobita, and plays including Raktakarabi and Dak Ghar.

As a composer, Tagore created over 2,000 songs—collectively known as Rabindra Sangeet—which continue to shape Bengali cultural and musical identity.

Tagore's contributions extend beyond literature, he composed the national anthems of both India and Bangladesh and founded Visva-Bharati University.

5,500 new govt jobs likely

FROM PAGE 12

and finalising recruitment rules. Any matter requiring cabinet-level approval is forwarded by the committee after preliminary scrutiny.

Officials said that the agenda for today's meeting has already been distributed to the relevant ministries and divisions.

In addition to proposals for new posts, the committee is expected to consider an amendment to the Bangladesh Civil Service (Age, Qualification and Examination for Direct Recruitment) Rules, 2014. The proposed change follows a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Public Administration held on April 20, which decided to recruit candidates through a special BCS examination.

A senior public administration

Freeze shares

FROM PAGE 1

During investigation, information on shares and BO accounts in the names of Salman, his family members, and other close associates was discovered, it said.

"Salman and others were attempting to transfer the shares and other assets elsewhere. So, an order is needed to prevent them from doing so," said the ACC in the application.

On March 10, the same court ordered the ACC to take steps to confiscate immovable properties owned by Ahmed Shayan Fazlur Rahman in London.

It also directed the authorities concerned to freeze two accounts of Fazlur Rahman and Shahrir Rahman at Barclays Bank PLC in the UK and shares in a company, RR Global Trading, located in the United Arab Emirates.

On February 24, the same court ordered the anti-graft body to freeze 358 bank accounts belonging to Salman, his family members, and associates.

Only one ballot was scheduled for yesterday. Thereafter, there can be as many as four votes a day.

The cardinals walked slowly into the chapel, taking part in a solemn Latin chant called the litany of the saints.

They beseeced nearly 100 men and women believed to reside in heaven to pray for them as they prepare to make what arguably will be the most

momentous decision of their lives.

After the cardinals have pronounced their oath, Archbishop Diego Ravelli, the Vatican's master of ceremonies, will pronounce the Latin command "Extra omnes!" (Everyone out!), telling all those not involved in the gathering to leave.

The chapel's heavy wooden doors will then slam shut.

The only expected signal from the cardinals during the conclave will come

in the form of smoke from a chimney atop the chapel, as the clerics burn their ballots.

Black smoke will mark an inconclusive vote; white smoke and the pealing of bells will signal that the 1.4-billion-member Church has a new leader.

At a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica yesterday before entering the conclave, the cardinals prayed that God would help them find a pope who would exercise



The footpath from Rajshahi Rail Gate to Bhadra has been entirely occupied. It is now taken over by various types of vendors who are running their businesses there. As a result, pedestrians are forced to walk on the road. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHLA UDDIN

Govt to scrap Tk 5,651cr haor road project

FROM PAGE 3
and review existing projects before launching new ones.

Talking about the high cost of different development projects, he said a committee comprising representatives from different agencies will be formed to assess project costs.

Moinuddin stressed that

no future project would be approved without securing the necessary land first, as land acquisition remains a key challenge in project implementation.

On the long delayed bus route rationalisation initiative, he said the project will be launched soon.

"Now that there's no

at this moment, there's no political pressure in implementing the project. This is the right time to move forward," he said.

Moinuddin also said a pilot project is underway to install a traffic signalling system from the High Court intersection to the Airport to ease congestion.

As part of the plan,

trained students will be deployed to help manage traffic, ensuring vehicles follow signals properly and stop at designated points.

Regarding battery-run autorickshaws, he said the LGRD Ministry is preparing a guideline. Once finalised, these vehicles will be allowed only on designated roads.

Tarique, NCP call for restraint amid

FROM PAGE 3
peace and stability in South Asia, which is deeply concerning," the party said in a statement.

"In the interest of peace and stability in the region, NCP urges both sides to exercise utmost patience and restraint," it said.

The party also alleged that amid this situation,

thousands of fugitive Awami League leaders and activists currently staying in India pose a serious threat to Bangladesh's national security.

"They are reportedly engaged in subversive activities and illegal border crossings with the intention of harming Bangladeshi lives and property. These

attempts are deliberate acts to sow chaos and anarchy," the statement added.

In light of these concerns, NCP called on the interim government and national security forces to strengthen vigilance, enhance institutional capacity, and carry out their responsibilities with the utmost professionalism.

Workers party also echoed similar sentiment.

Expressing concern over India's missile strikes, Saiful Haque, its general secretary, said war hysteria would bring no benefit to either India or Pakistan as innocent civilians in both countries would end up suffering the consequences of such conflict.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়, স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ
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নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাস্তু ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়, স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগে নিয়োগাদীন ন্যাশনাল ইলেক্ট্রো-মেডিকাল ইন্সিটিউট এন্ড স্টেটেনাম্প এন্ড ট্রেনিং সেন্টার (নিমিট এন্ড টিপি), মহাবালী, ঢাকা এবং রাজার স্বাস্থ্য বিভাগে নিয়োগের মাধ্যমে পৃথক্করণ জন্য পদের পাশে বিশিষ্ট শর্করা প্রক্রিয়া এবং নাগরিকদের নিয়ন্ত্রণ হতে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

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Sommer time spells bummer for Barca

San Siro stages a European night for the ages



** The aggregate scoreline of 7-6 in the Champions League semifinal tie between Inter and Barca is the joint-highest in the competition, equal with the game between Liverpool and Roma in the 2018/19 season.

** Inter have reached the Champions League final for the second time in the last three seasons, having done so in just one of their previous 17 European Cup/Champions League campaigns.

AGENCIES

Inter Milan goalkeeper Yann Sommer produced a number of saves, including a decisive save deep into extra time, to help his side secure a dramatic 4-3 extra-time victory over Barcelona and book a place in the Champions League final, drawing comparisons to club great Julio Cesar.

The 35-year-old Swiss international denied Barcelona teenager Lamine Yamal in the 113th minute with a fingertip stop as he flung himself high to his left to paw away a vicious, curling effort, preventing an equaliser that would have forced a penalty shootout.

The save came from a similar position to where Lionel Messi had famously been denied by Cesar at the Camp Nou in a semifinal in 2010, during the Nerazzurri's treble-winning campaign.

"I'll remember the save for rest of my life," Sommer told reporters after

Inter advanced 7-6 on aggregate at rain-soaked San Siro.

Sommer's performance was crucial on a night when Inter overturned a

What we have witnessed has been something very special. Everything about this semifinal has been pure entertainment.

Former England captain Alan Shearer.

I think that football was very cruel with us.

Barcelona's Eric Garcia, who scored their opening goal.

3-2 deficit, with Francesco Acerbi and Davide Frattesi finding the back of the net to seal one of the club's most memorable European victories.



Sommer completed 61 touches -- second only to defender Alessandro Bastoni -- and made seven saves.

Inter ended Barca's hopes for the quadruple and are with a chance to lift their first trophy since 2010.

Meanwhile, for the first time since 2019, Barcelona made the final four, but they were dreaming of more.

INDIA-PAKISTAN CONFLICT

BCB and other sports bodies observe situation

BCB is closely monitoring the evolving security situation. The safety and well-being of Bangladeshi players currently playing in the Pakistan Super League remain the board's top priority.

BCB press release.

The PSL will go on as per the schedule. The players are getting state protocol, which has been provided during international series.

PCB media official Shafqat Shabbir.

The board has been in regular contact with Bangladesh National Team players Rishad Hossain and Nahid Rana, who are participating in the ongoing PSL. BCB President Faruque Ahmed is also personally keeping track of the developments and has spoken directly with PSL.

"The PSL will go on as per schedule. The players are getting state protocol which is provided during international series. We are giving it to ensure the safety of the players," Shafqat Shabbir, a PCB media official, told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, the next edition of

U-19 BOOTERS IN ARUNACHAL UNFAZED BY BORDER HEAT

As global attention remains fixed on rising tensions between India and Pakistan, Bangladesh's U-19 footballers have kept their eyes firmly on the fast-approaching SAFF U-19 Championship.

Bangladesh will open their campaign against Maldives tomorrow. The venue, in Arunachal Pradesh, is more than 2,500 kilometres from the India-Pakistan border.

"I heard about the India-Pakistan tensions from hotel staff this morning, but I'm not sure if the players are even aware of it," Bangladesh head coach Golam Rabbani Choton told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

"Security at the hotel and practice ground has been thorough."

Six nations – Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and hosts India – are set to compete for the regional title.

Choton reported that spirits were high as the squad shook off travel fatigue during their first training session. "We've stayed focused on our work, and the boys looked lively today (yesterday). We're optimistic about our chances."

CEO Salman Naseer and Rishad to ensure the players' safety and peace of mind," the press release added.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) also announced yesterday that PSL will go on as scheduled. PCB sources confirmed that state protocol is being given to the two Bangladeshi cricketers, both of whom are currently in Islamabad, with Rana's Peshawar Zalmi set to play today against Karachi Kings.

the South Asian Games has also been thrown into uncertainty as it is scheduled to take place in Islamabad in next year's January.

"It is too early to make comments on the future of next year's SA Games in Pakistan... After Eid-ul-Adha, we will communicate with other Olympic committees in the sub-continent but we will be observing the situation," said a BOA official requesting anonymity.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Punjab vs Delhi
Live from 8:00 pm
NAGORIK TV
PSL
Karachi vs Peshawar
Live from 9:00 pm

SONY SPORTS 2
Europa League semifinals
Man Utd vs Athletic Bilbao
Live from 1:00 am
(Friday)
SONY SPORTS 1
Bodo/Glimt vs Tottenham
Live from 9:00 pm
(Friday)

Live from 1:00 am (Friday)
SONY SPORTS 5
Conference League
semifinals
Chelsea vs Djurgarden
Live from 1:00 am
(Friday)

India's Rohit bids adieu to Tests

AGENCIES

India's Rohit Sharma announced his retirement from Test cricket on Wednesday, but said he will continue to play the shorter format of the game.

Taking to Instagram, Rohit, the incumbent Indian Test captain, stated: "Hello everyone, I would like to share that I am retiring from Test cricket."

"It's been an absolute honour to represent my country in whites. Thank you for all the love and support over the years. I will continue to represent India in the ODI format."

Rohit represented India in 67 Tests, scoring a total of 4301 runs with 12 hundreds and 18 fifties. His career-best Test score of 212 came against South Africa in Ranchi in 2019.

The aggressive right-handed opener scored north of the 150-mark on three occasions, including a 177-run innings as a middle-order batter in his very first Test innings in a game against the West Indies in 2013 at Eden Gardens.

He took over Test captaincy back in 2022 and led India in 24 Tests, winning 12, losing nine, and drawing three.

Rohit retired from the T20I format after leading India to their second T20 World Cup title in 2024.

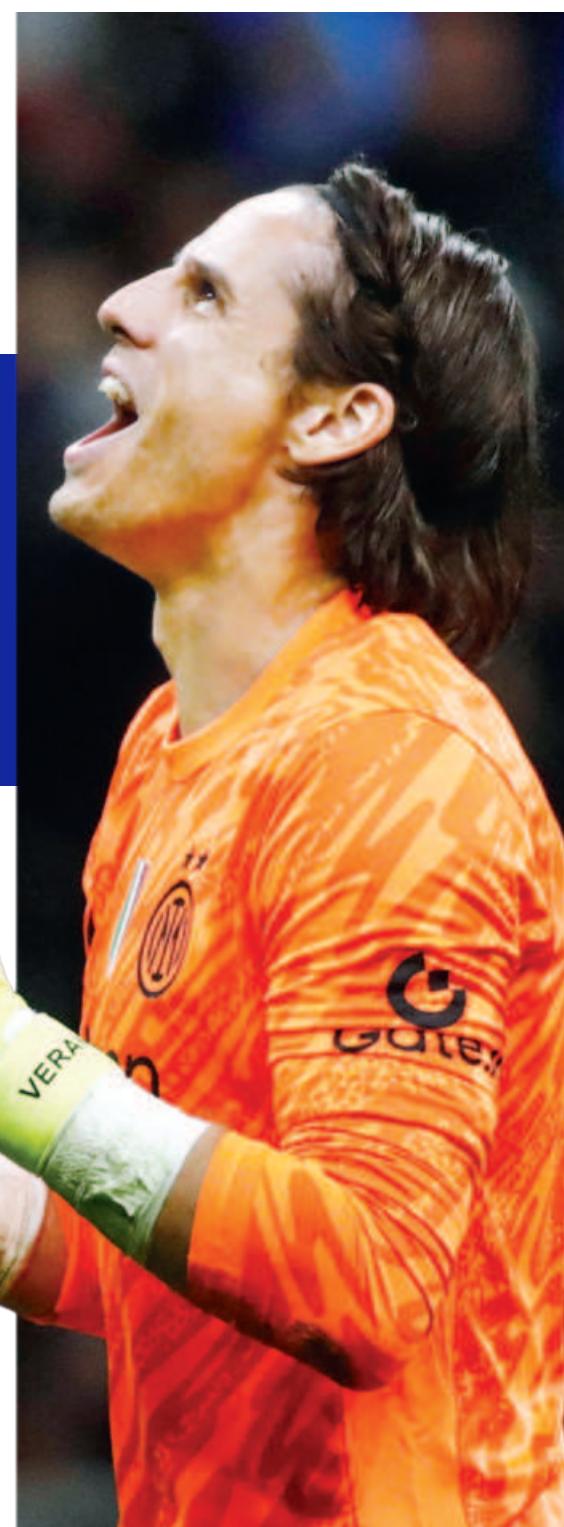
Man Utd, Spurs seek Europa final berth

AGENCIES

Manchester United are preparing for the second leg of their Europa League semifinal on Thursday night against Athletic Bilbao, knowing only a calamity will prevent a likely showdown with Tottenham later this month.

Ruben Amorim's men came away from the first leg in northern Spain last week with one foot firmly in the final, also in Bilbao, after an impressive 3-0 win.

Tottenham are also on the same boat as United as they have a 3-1 advantage over Bodo/Glimt.



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Jamuna Bank PLC. is a leading financial institution committed to providing top-tier banking solutions while ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks. To further strengthen our legal operations, we are looking for a highly experienced and competent professional to join as Chief Legal Officer (CLO) under the Law Division. This is an excellent opportunity for individuals with strong legal acumen and leadership skills to contribute to the bank & legal excellence.

Position Details:

* Position Title: Chief Legal Officer (CLO).

* Rank: Senior Asst. Vice President (SAVP) / Vice President (VP) based on experience.

Key Responsibilities:

* Provide strategic legal guidance to the bank's management, ensuring compliance with Bangladesh Bank regulations and other relevant laws.

* Oversee legal affairs, including litigation, contract management, regulatory compliance and dispute resolution.

* Manage and coordinate with external legal counsels and law firms for legal proceedings.

* Lead and supervise the legal team, ensuring effective risk mitigation strategies.

* Formulate policies for handling default cases, loan recoveries and other legal matters.

* Represent the bank in legal forums, arbitration proceedings and negotiations.

* Ensure the legal rights and interests of the bank are well protected.

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* Educational Background:

* LLB (Honors) and LLM from a UGC-approved or recognized foreign university.

* BAR at-Law or PhD will be preferred.

* Enrollment as an advocate with the Bangladesh Bar Council.

* Having no 3rd division is allowed.

* Experience Requirements:

* Minimum 10 years of experience in legal practice along with minimum 05 years in any Banks or Financial Institutions.

* At least 5 years of experience in a senior legal leadership role.

* Extensive knowledge of banking laws, loan recovery processes and regulatory compliance.

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* Incomplete applications will not be considered.

* Age limit 45 years as on May 24, 2025.

* Any misrepresentation of information will result in disqualification.

* Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for further steps.

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