



"The political mutual trust between China and Russia is becoming deeper, and the ties for pragmatic cooperation are becoming stronger."

Chinese President Xi Jinping tells Putinduring Moscow visit

YOUR RIGHT  
TO KNOW

SECOND EDITION

# THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

DHAKA FRIDAY MAY 9, 2025

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 110

BAISHAKH 26, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

ZILQAD 10, 1446 HIJRI

16 PAGES: TK 15.00



BBS gets full authority to publish data

B1



Dozens of students arrested in pro-Gaza protest

P5



Bangladesh's export dilemma post-trans shipment ban

P6



Polan Sarkar's philosophy drew me to 'Solte'

P8

INDO-PAK ESCALATION

## Rivals trade drones, missiles

India reports major strikes across J&K; Pakistan denies role, claims downing 25 Indian drones

AGENCIES

India and Pakistan yesterday accused each other of carrying out waves of attacks using drones and missiles, as deadly confrontations between the nuclear-armed foes raised the fear of escalation.

New Delhi yesterday said Pakistan carried out strikes targeting three Indian military stations in Kashmir with missiles and drones. No casualties were reported.

Pakistani Information Minister Attaullah Tarar denied that his country's military had carried out strikes in Jammu. Pakistan also rejected allegations that it launched attacks on Indian cities of Pathankot, Jaisalmer, and Srinagar.

India said "the threat was neutralised ... with kinetic and non kinetic means," adding that the bases targeted were in "Jammu, Pathankot and Udhampur in proximity to the international boundary".

Blackouts were reported from a swathe of cities in Kashmir, including Jammu, as well as cities in the neighbouring state of Punjab such as Amritsar and Jalandhar.

"We can hear loud explosions, it feels like bombs are going off everywhere," said Varinder Jeet Singh, a senior member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), speaking about Jammu.

"There is a complete blackout."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Rubio holds talks with Pakistan PM, Indian FM, urges de-escalation

Blackout in Indian border areas; schools shut

India claims 100 terrorists killed in Wednesday's attack

Pakistan claims killing 40-50 Indian soldiers along LoC

A site where Pakistan claims to have shot down a drone in Karachi yesterday. Inset, the debris of a missile is pictured in a field on the outskirts of Amritsar in India.

PHOTO: AFP

PHOTO: AFP

Hamid off to Thailand, chaos in his wake

2 cops withdrawn, 2 suspended; actions follow home boss's warning

STAR REPORT

Two police officials have been withdrawn and two others suspended for negligence in duty regarding former president Md Abdul Hamid's departure from the country.

Hamid left Dhaka for Bangkok early yesterday. He boarded a Thai Airways flight that departed from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) around 3:00am, confirmed an SB official.

The officials withdrawn are Hasan Chowdhury, special superintendent of Kishoreganj police, and Tahsin Arif, additional superintendent of police of the Special Branch's immigration wing.

Those suspended are Sub-Inspector Azharul Islam of Kishoreganj Sadar Police Station, also the investigating officer in the case against Hamid, and trainee Sub-Inspector Md Soleiman of



SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bulk carriers are anchored in the middle of the Dhaleshwari river, obstructing other vessels. The vessels are anchored there for weeks on end, as the designated place for mooring nearby has space constraints and requires fees. Boats from Dhaka and the surrounding districts rely on this crucial riverway for transportation. The photo was taken in Muktarpur of Munshiganj.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

JULY ATROCITIES

## Govt forms ICT-2 to speed up trials

Adviser Mahfuj says law to be amended to try AL; NCP demonstrates in front of CA's residence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has established a second International Crimes Tribunal to expedite ongoing trials and address the increasing number of cases filed over atrocities committed during the July mass uprising, said a gazette issued last night.

The law ministry appointed former High Court Division Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury as the chair of the ICT-2 and named former district and sessions judge Manjurul Bashid and current Madaripur District and Sessions Judge Nur Mohammad Shahriar Kabir as its members.

Meanwhile, Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam wrote on Facebook that the government was going to incorporate a new provision into a law to try the Awami League as a party.

"Trial of fascist [Awami] League must be held. Tribunal 2 is being formed to expedite the trial proceedings," he wrote on his verified page.

The development comes around seven months after the formation of the first tribunal.

At 10:44pm, local government Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain wrote on Facebook that AL's affiliated organisations Jubo League and Sweekhhasebok League would be banned.

'Bureaucrats loyal to fascists running country'

Says Fakhrul, wants election for sake of reform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said fascist bureaucrats are still running the country and claimed that the majority of the officials at the Secretariat are fascist loyalists.

"Many are saying that reforms must come first before elections. But reforms are a continuous process. Some reforms might take five years, even 10. So does that mean there will be no election in that period? And during these 10 years, will the country continue to be run by these fascist bureaucrats?" Fakhrul asked.

He made these remarks at a discussion held at the Supreme Court auditorium marking the first death anniversary of former attorney general and the BNP chairperson's lawyer Abdul Jamil Mohammad Ali.

"We are currently being run by fascist bureaucrats; 90% of the bureaucrats at the secretariat are fascists."



SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Protesters stage a sit-in outside the chief adviser's residence on Hare Road in the capital last night, demanding a ban on the Awami League.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Robert Prevost of Chicago now Pope Leo XIV

REUTERS, Vatican City

Cardinal Robert Prevost, a little known missionary from Chicago, was elected in a surprise choice to be the new leader of the Catholic Church yesterday, becoming the first US pope and taking the name Leo XIV.

Pope Leo appeared on the central balcony of St Peter's Basilica after white smoke had billowed from a chimney atop the Sistine Chapel signifying the 133 cardinal electors had chosen a new leader for the 1.4 billion-member Catholic Church.

"Peace be with you all," he told the cheering crowd, speaking in fluent Italian. He also spoke in Spanish during his brief address but did not say anything in English.

Prevost, 69, and originally from Chicago, has spent most of his career as a missionary in Peru and has dual Peruvian nationality. He became a cardinal only in 2023. He has given few media interviews and rarely speaks in public.

President Donald Trump swiftly congratulated Prevost on becoming the first US pope. "What excitement, and what a Great Honor for our Country. I look forward to meeting Pope Leo XIV. It will be a very meaningful moment!"

Prevost becomes the 267th Catholic pope after the death last month of Pope Francis, who was the first Latin American pope and had led the Church for 12 years.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



TIME 100  
Health names  
Dr Tahmeed  
of icddr,b

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, executive director of icddr,b, has been named to the 2025 TIME100 Health list -- the annual list by TIME magazine recognizing 100 most influential individuals in global health -- published yesterday.

Under Dr Tahmeed's leadership, icddr,b has strengthened its global impact through cutting-edge research and lifesaving interventions that have reached millions across Bangladesh and beyond, according to icddr,b press release.

On May 13, Dr Tahmeed will join fellow honourees at the TIME100 Impact Dinner: Leaders Shaping the Future of Health in New York, where he has also been invited to deliver a toast -- a TIME tradition spotlighting voices shaping the future of global health. His remarks will be featured editorially and



SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

# Russia, China reject 'unilateralism, bullying'

In Moscow, Putin, Xi cast themselves as defenders of a new world order no longer dominated by US

REUTERS, Moscow

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday told Russia's Vladimir Putin their two countries should be "friends of steel", as they pledged to boost cooperation to a new level at a time of heightened confrontation with the West.

At talks in the Kremlin, the two leaders cast themselves as defenders of a new world order no longer dominated by the United States.

Xi is the most powerful of more than two dozen foreign leaders who are visiting Moscow this week to mark Thursday's 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two -- a celebration of huge significance for Putin.

Xi's participation is an important boost to Putin at a time of acute geopolitical



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping look at each other during a signing ceremony at the Kremlin in Moscow yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

"be true friends of steel that have been through a hundred trials by fire", Xi told Putin in televised comments.

The two countries should solidify the foundations of their cooperation and "eliminate external interference", said Xi, whose country is currently engaged in a tariff war launched by US President Donald Trump.

Putin and Xi have met dozens of times and signed a "no limits" strategic partnership in February 2022, less than three weeks before Putin sent his army into Ukraine. China is Russia's biggest trading partner and has thrown Moscow an economic lifeline that has helped it navigate Western sanctions.

Putin said the two leaders would personally oversee all key elements in the relationship, aiming for a substantial boost to trade and investment by 2030.

Domestically, the World War Two anniversary offers Putin a chance to rally Russians in remembrance of a historic feat that is central to the country's national identity. The Soviet Union lost 27 million people in the war, including many millions in Ukraine, which was also devastated.

On the world stage, Putin aims to show that he has powerful allies and to demonstrate that years of Western sanctions have failed to isolate Russia.

In opening remarks after greeting Xi in one of the Kremlin's most opulent halls, Putin thanked him for coming to Moscow to mark 80 years since the "sacred" victory over Adolf Hitler.

"The victory over fascism, achieved at the cost of enormous sacrifices, is of lasting significance," Putin said.

"Together with our Chinese friends,

we firmly stand guard over historical truth, protect the memory of the events of the war years, and counter modern manifestations of neo-Nazism and militarism."

Putin has portrayed his war in Ukraine as a struggle against modern-day Nazis from the start. Ukraine and its allies reject that characterisation as a grotesque falsehood, accusing Moscow of conducting an imperial-style invasion.

Xi said the two countries, as world powers and permanent members of the UN Security Council, would work together to counter "unilateralism and bullying" - an implied reference to the United States.

Putin last week announced a unilateral three-day ceasefire in the war with Ukraine, beginning yesterday. Ukraine has not committed to abide by it, calling it a ruse by Putin to create the impression he wants to end the war. Instead, it has declared its willingness to join a ceasefire lasting at least 30 days.

Both countries are under pressure from Trump to reach a peace deal, and Washington has threatened repeatedly to walk away from talks unless there is clear progress.

Ukraine targeted Moscow with drones for three days earlier this week, but the skies above the capital were calm yesterday. With so many foreign leaders present, any attacks during the May 9 events could embarrass Putin and would likely draw a tough response from Moscow.

Chinese troops will take part in today's military parade on Red Square, the centrepiece of the commemorations. Xi has called for talks to end the conflict in Ukraine and has accused the US of stoking it with weapons supplies to Kyiv. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has in the past urged him to try to persuade Putin to halt the war.

Step down Mahfuj, Asif  
NCP Jt Convener Tajnuva  
urges them to stand by the  
people once more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahfuj Alam and Asif Mahmud, the two student representatives in the interim government's advisory council, should step down from their positions and stand with the people on the streets, opined National Citizen Party (NCP) Joint Convener Tajnuva Jabeen.

"I'm saying this not as an NCP member but as Tajnuva -- someone who was among the general public before July. Mahfuj and Asif should step down from the government and stand beside the people on the streets once again," she wrote in a post on her verified Facebook page yesterday.

Tajnuva believes the government the two are a part of is no longer pro uprising.

"You no longer belong there. Step down and reassure the people. Be accountable to the July martyrs. I myself am deeply distressed -- how must the [families of] martyrs and the injured feel, seeing the perpetrators get away with their heads held high."

## Arson at Khulna daily for referring to Hasina as PM

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A mob set fire to the office of Desh Sanjog, a Khulna-based daily newspaper, allegedly for referring to Sheikh Hasina as the incumbent prime minister in a news report.

The incident took place around 7:00pm yesterday in the city's Chhoto Mirzapur area. The identities of the perpetrators remain unknown.

According to witnesses, after the Magrib prayers, a group of 30 to 40 people broke the lock of the office's shutter, brought furniture and other materials out onto the street, vandalised those, and then set them on fire.

Locals later managed to bring the fire under control. Upon receiving information, police and journalists arrived at the scene.

Khulna Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Hawlader Sanowar Hossain Masum told The Daily Star, "I visited the office and informed higher authorities. We are trying to find those behind the arson."

tensions from the Middle East to South Asia, and as Russia comes under pressure from the United States in faltering talks aimed at ending the war in Ukraine.

China and Russia should safeguard international fairness and justice and

## Rivals trade drones, missiles

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier yesterday, Pakistan said it shot down 25 drones from India, while India said its air defences had stopped Pakistani drone and missile attacks on military targets, dashing hopes they would soon bow to pressure to end their worst confrontation in more than two decades.

World powers from the US to Russia and China have called for calm in one of the world's most dangerous and most polluted nuclear flashpoint regions.

Yesterday's reported exchanges came a day after India said it hit nine "terrorist infrastructure" sites in Pakistan in retaliation for what it says was a deadly Islamabad-backed attack in Indian Kashmir on April 22.

Pakistan says it was not involved and denied that any of the sites hit by India were militant bases. It said it shot down five Indian aircraft on Wednesday, a report the Indian embassy in Beijing dismissed as "misinformation".

However, two US officials yesterday told Reuters that a top Chinese-made Pakistani fighter plane shot down at least two Indian military aircraft on Wednesday.

One US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there was high confidence that Pakistan had used the Chinese-made J-10 aircraft to launch air-to-air missiles against Indian lighter jets -- bringing down at least two.

According to another official, at least one of them was a French-made Rafale fighter aircraft.

The escalation came after Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, in an interview with Reuters, said Pakistani retaliation "is increasingly becoming certain now" after Wednesday's Indian missile attacks.

"I will still refrain from saying it is 100 percent. But the situation has become very difficult. We have to respond," he added.

Earlier, Indian Foreign Minister

Hamid off to Thailand

FROM PAGE 1

the Special Branch.

The actions followed a warning from

Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, who said

those who facilitated Hamid's departure would not be spared.

According to a notification issued by Police Headquarters, disciplinary action was taken after it was found that the officials had failed to perform their duties properly in this regard.

The PHQ said it has formed a three-member inquiry committee, led by the additional inspector general (admin), to investigate the matter.

The former president went to Thailand for medical treatment. We allowed it as there is no court restriction or any embargo by any agency against him," an HSIA source told The Daily Star.

Hamid's family sources confirmed to The Daily Star that he had travelled to Thailand for medical treatment and was accompanied by his younger son, Barrister Riyad Ahmed Tushar, and his brother-in-law, ANM Naushad Khan, principal of President Abdul Hamid Medical College.

They said he went abroad following

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said New Delhi did not intend to escalate the situation.

"However, if there are military attacks on us, there should be no doubt that it will be met with a very, very firm response," he said at an India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar yesterday told Reuters that there have been contacts between the offices of the national security advisers of the two countries, and the hotline between their heads of military operations was also working. He did not give more details.

Before yesterday's attacks, analysts said there were signs that the conflict may not escalate. However, the drone attacks by India and Pakistan's retaliation have put that hope in doubt.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar yesterday told Reuters that there have been contacts between the offices of the national security advisers of the two countries, and the hotline between their heads of military operations was also working. He did not give more details.

His comment came a day after Khawaja Asif told the New York Times that Pakistan reserved the right to strike to the Pakistani army's heavily fortified headquarters, he added.

One drone hit a military target near Lahore, and four personnel of the Pakistan army were injured in the attack, Chaudhry said.

The Indian defence ministry, in a statement, said Pakistan attempted to engage a number of military targets in northern and western India from Wednesday night into yesterday morning, and they were "neutralised" by Indian air defence systems.

In response, Indian forces targeted air defence radars and systems at a number of locations in Pakistan yesterday, the ministry said. The "Indian response has been in the same domain with the same intensity as Pakistan," it added.

The Indian ministry accused Pakistan of increasing the intensity of its firing across the ceasefire line, the de facto border, in Kashmir. Sixteen people, including five children and three women, were killed on the Indian side, the statement said.

Pakistan said at least 31 of its civilians were killed and about 50 wounded on Wednesday's strikes and in cross-border shelling across the frontier.

Yesterday, Indian ministers told a meeting of all political parties in New Delhi that the strikes on Pakistan had killed more than 100 militants and that the count was still ongoing, government sources said.

Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar told parliament that Pakistani forces had killed 40-50 Indian soldiers on the de-facto border in Kashmir and had "blown" Indian military installations.

Pakistan military spokesperson Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said Pakistan

al-yaesterday shot down 25 Israeli-made drones from India at multiple locations, including the two largest cities of Karachi and Lahore.

One drone was also shot down over the garrison city of Rawalpindi, home to the Pakistani army's heavily fortified headquarters, he added.

One drone hit a military target near Lahore, and four personnel of the Pakistan army were injured in the attack, Chaudhry said.

The Indian defence ministry, in a statement, said Pakistan attempted to engage a number of military targets in northern and western India from Wednesday night into yesterday morning, and they were "neutralised" by Indian air defence systems.

In response, Indian forces targeted air defence radars and systems at a number of locations in Pakistan yesterday, the ministry said. The "Indian response has been in the same domain with the same intensity as Pakistan," it added.

The Indian ministry accused Pakistan of increasing the intensity of its firing across the ceasefire line, the de facto border, in Kashmir. Sixteen people, including five children and three women, were killed on the Indian side, the statement said.

Pakistan said at least 31 of its civilians were killed and about 50 wounded on Wednesday's strikes and in cross-border shelling across the frontier.

Yesterday, Indian ministers told a meeting of all political parties in New Delhi that the strikes on Pakistan had killed more than 100 militants and that the count was still ongoing, government sources said.

Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar told parliament that Pakistani forces had killed 40-50 Indian soldiers on the de-facto border in Kashmir and had "blown" Indian military installations.

our system."

Hours after Hamid left the country, controversy erupted on social media over how an accused in a July uprising related case managed to leave.

Gono Odhikar Parishad and its youth wing, Jubo Odhikar Parishad, submitted a memorandum to the home ministry, demanding the resignation of adviser Jahangir and accusing him of facilitating Hamid's departure.

Meanwhile, the home adviser yesterday announced he would "leave [the position]" if he fails to take action against those who assisted the former president in leaving the country.

He made the remarks after being questioned by student activists of the July uprising while leaving the Dinajpur deputy commissioner's office, following a meeting with the district's law and order committee.

Jahangir said, "No one who aided former president Abdul Hamid in fleeing the country will be spared. Action will definitely be taken ... Under no circumstances will they be let off the hook. Those involved will be held accountable."

About Hamid being accused in a case, Akeruzzaman said, "The agency handling the case did not inform us. There was no prior alert regarding him in

## TIME 100 Health names

FROM PAGE 1

across TIME's social platforms.

His selection not only honours his own achievements, but also serves as an inspiration to young Bangladeshi scientists and researchers,

demonstrating that through hard work, passion, and unwavering dedication, they too can earn a place on the global stage, the press release added.

Dr Tahmeed said, "It is a profound honour to be included in TIME's 2025 Health100 list.

"This recognition is not mine alone -- it belongs to the brilliant scientists and staff of icddr,b, to our collaborators around the world, and to the communities we serve."

He added, "I am deeply grateful to TIME for this spotlight, which I hope will help bring greater urgency to the fight against malnutrition and the need to invest in science that improves lives -- not in war, conflict, or division, but in equity, health, and human dignity."

In 2021, Dr Tahmeed Ahmed became the first Bangladeshi in

history to be appointed executive director of icddr,b, a renowned international public health research organisation.

Tahmeed, who obtained his medical degree from Mymensingh Medical College, joined the organisation in 1985. Over the years, he has held various roles and was appointed senior director of the Nutrition and Clinical Services Division in December 2015.

A celebrated scientist with a distinguished career in public health nutrition, Tahmeed has earned global recognition for his research and vital contributions to preventing childhood malnutrition and simplifying its treatment.

He has received numerous awards from health organisations, including the Ambulatory Paediatric Association in the United States, the Commonwealth Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition, and the Indian Paediatric Association.

In 2018, he won the Islamic Development Bank's Transformers Roadshow award. The Gates

Foundation honoured Dr Tahmeed as one of its Goalkeepers Champions in 2024.

The 2025 TIME100 Health list also includes the Princess of Wales, Kate Middleton; US Olympic athlete Ilona Maher; former NBA player Dwyane Wade; CEO of Eli Lilly David Ricks; Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; CEO of GSK Emma Walmsley; philanthropist Melinda French Gates; World Health Organization director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus; actor and advocate Colin Farrell; US Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F Kennedy Jr; actors and Hilarity for Charity founders Seth Rogen and Lauren Miller Rogen; activist Rachel Sweet; science educator and television host Bill Nye; CEO of Novartis Vas Narasimhan; Apple's vice president of health Sumbul Desai; Global Health Council president Elisha Dunn-Georgiou; and US FDA commissioner Marty Makary, among others.

According to the law ministry gazette issued last night, the ICT-2 has been formed considering the increasing number of complaints and accused individuals and the need for quick disposal of cases.

Justice Nozrul retired from the High Court Division in December 2015 and began appearing in the Appellate Division to move cases as a lawyer in January 2016.

He represented Jamaat leader Mir Quasem Ali at the appeal hearing at the Supreme Court. Quasem was convicted of crimes against humanity and executed.

Justice Nozrul, however, stepped down from the defence team of Quasem, citing "a seriously adverse environment".

## Robert Prevost

FROM PAGE 1

Leo thanked Francis in his speech and repeated his predecessor's call for a Church that is engaged with the modern world and "is always looking for peace, charity and being close to people, especially those who are suffering".



Need strategic leadership to address nat'l challenges

Says army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday stressed the need for strategic, reform-oriented leadership to address complex national challenges and improve institutional effectiveness.

He made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest at the certificate distribution ceremony of the Capstone Course at the National Defence College (NDC).

Reflecting on past

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



A woman tries to step over the divider on a highway to get to the other side while her family members wait beside her. This dangerous act could lead to an accident at any moment. The photo was taken from the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Govt aims to open 3rd terminal by December

3 advisers visit Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three advisers yesterday visited the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka to witness the progress of the major infrastructure project.

Civil Aviation Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin, Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain, and Energy Adviser Muhammad Fauzul Kabir Khan inspected the newly built terminal and received a briefing on its development and operational readiness.

Once operational, the terminal is expected to significantly improve Bangladesh's aviation sector by increasing both passenger and cargo handling capacity.

In January, CAAB reaffirmed plans to inaugurate the terminal by the end of 2025.

However, CAAB Chairman Air Vice-Marshal Mohammad Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan told The Daily Star that they are now aiming to open it by December this year.

The project, launched on December 28, 2019, involves an investment of Tk 21,300 crore, with Tk 5,000 crore from the government and the rest financed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

TALKS WITH POLITICAL PARTIES  
Finalise plan for 2nd phase without delay

Yunus tells Consensus Commission



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has directed the National Consensus Commission (NCC) to finalise the action plan for the second phase of discussions with political parties without delay.

Yunus, who also chairs the NCC, praised the constructive and positive stance taken by political parties during the initial round of reform discussions.

He gave the directive while presiding over a meeting of the commission held at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday.

The second phase of dialogue with political parties is expected to begin on May 15.

The meeting reviewed the commission's overall progress, particularly the outcomes of the first phase of talks with political parties. The hour-and-a-half-long meeting was attended by the commission's Vice Chair Prof Ali Riaz and members Badiul Alam Majumdar, Iftekharuzzaman, Justice Emdadul Haque, Safar Raj Hossain, and Dr Mohammad

Ayub Miah.

Among others, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, Planning Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, Housing and Public Works Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Energy and Roads Adviser Muhammad Fauzul Kabir Khan, and Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam were present.

The NCC was formed to build national consensus on reform. It officially began its work on February 15.

Key recommendations from different reform commissions – such as the Constitution Reform Commission, Electoral System Reform Commission, etc. – were sent to 39 political parties, seeking specific feedback. So far, 35 parties have responded.

The commission began formal discussions on March 20 to finalise recommendations from the reform commissions. Initial discussions have already been completed with 27 political parties.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Without effective action, around 1.9 crore people in Bangladesh could be displaced by slow-onset climate disasters by 2050, said Professor Tasneem Siddiqui at a workshop yesterday.

The workshop, titled "Introduction and Stakeholder Consultation on the National Strategy on Internal Displacement due to Climate Change 2021", was organised by the Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit (RMMRU) at a hotel in the capital.

Prof Tasneem, executive director of RMMRU, said although many action plans and strategies are formulated, they often remain unimplemented due to budget constraints.

However, she noted that this particular national strategy on

climate-induced displacement is being implemented in different areas.

"We want the government to allocate resources to support this strategy," she said.

Participants also discussed a template that is currently being developed by Bangladesh to help Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) countries prepare their own national strategies for managing internal displacement.

Bangladesh presented its national strategy at the United Nations Climate Conference (COP26) in 2021, when the then CVF secretary general requested Bangladesh to develop a standardised template.

Nazrul Islam, secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, said, "We

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5



Reduce corporate tax to 10% for newspapers

Proposes NOAB president at meeting with info adviser



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government wants to see positive competition among newspapers, said Information and Broadcasting Adviser Mahfuj Alam yesterday.

"There are still some negative practices in the newspaper industry that must be stopped," he said during a discussion with the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) at the ministry's conference room.

On media reforms, the adviser said the government has already started working on implementing the recommendations of the Media Reform Commission.

He expressed hope for the cooperation of all stakeholders in this process.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

Press freedom should not depend on political will'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The media must first prove its integrity and public value before seeking recognition in the Constitution as the fourth estate, said Amar Desh Editor Mahmudur Rahman yesterday.

He made the remarks at a seminar titled "Media Reform: Problems and Solutions", jointly organised by Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) and the Journalist Community of Bangladesh at the DRU auditorium, marking World Press Freedom Day.

Mahmudur alleged that the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina systematically weakened public and private institutions over the past 15 years, with journalism, the judiciary, and the police being the most affected.

"Senior editors degraded journalism through flattery. When editors

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



Employees of The Daily Star donate blood at a programme marking World Thalassemia Day yesterday. The blood drive was organised by Bangladesh Thalassemia Foundation and was held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital. The event aimed to raise awareness about thalassemia and promote voluntary blood donation. Inset, Prof Syeda Masooma Rahman, vice-chairman of the foundation, was in attendance at the programme.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Snigdho resigns as CEO of July Foundation  
Says he needs to prioritise studies

DU CORRESPONDENT



Mir Mahbubur Rahman Snigdho yesterday stepped down from his role as the chief executive officer (CEO) of the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation saying he needs to prioritise his studies.

He made the announcement at a press conference in front of the state guest house Jamuna after a meeting. Snigdho said he will continue to serve as a member of the foundation's governing body.

Snigdho is the twin brother of July uprising martyr Mir Muddho.

Meanwhile, the board has appointed Lt Col (retd) Kamal Akbar as the new CEO of the foundation.

However, at the press briefing, Md Moniruddin, father of Shaikh Ashhabul Yamin, who was martyred during the July uprising, protested the appointment. He claimed the newly-appointed CEO does not belong to a martyr's family.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

PROTESTING 'CORRUPTION'  
56 SAD members step down from Kishoreganj unit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

A total of 56 leaders and activists of Students Against Discrimination (SAD) resigned from the Kishoreganj district committee yesterday, accusing its top leadership of corruption, irregularities, and autocratic practices.

At a press conference held in front of the Kishoreganj District Public Library, the resigning members demanded the dissolution of the current committee led by Convener Ikram Hossain and Member Secretary Faisal Prince.

Among those who stepped down are eight joint conveners and eight joint member secretaries.

Former joint convener Ali Rayan Johan and former organiser Sharmin Akhter Mitu were among those who addressed the press conference.

They said they resigned in protest of the recent expulsion of two members – Senior Joint Member Secretary Mamun Mia and Organiser Riyad Ahmed Ullas – on what they said were false grounds.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Confiscate Dubai flat of Benazir's daughter: court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the relevant authorities to confiscate a flat in Dubai owned by Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir, daughter of former IGP Benazir Ahmed, in a case filed over amassing illegal wealth in December last year.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain passed the order after investigation officer Muhammad Jayal Abedin, also an ACC deputy director, submitted an application in this regard, said Aktarul Islam, public relations officer of ACC.

The court also ordered the freezing of 144,497.82 AED (Arab Emirates Dirham) owned by Tahseen.

According to the ACC, the flat is located in Dubai Thunayah 3 Residential Area, and its market value is 40 lakh AED.



Employees of The Daily Star donate blood at a programme marking World Thalassemia Day yesterday. The blood drive was organised by Bangladesh Thalassemia Foundation and was held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital. The event aimed to raise awareness about thalassemia and promote voluntary blood donation. Inset, Prof Syeda Masooma Rahman, vice-chairman of the foundation, was in attendance at the programme.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Tangail embankment under threat

Locals blame unchecked soil lifting, heavy truck traffic

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

The Tangail town protection embankment is under threat due to indiscriminate soil lifting from the Poulee river, a branch of the Jamuna.

Influential traders, most of them locals, have been extracting soil with excavators at several points near the embankment and transporting it using hundreds of trucks, including ten-wheeled heavy dump trucks, along the town protection dam, alleged locals.

Locals said the practice only halts temporarily when the local administration launches mobile court drives against the



perpetrators, but resumes within a few days.

According to the Water Development Board (WDB), the Tangail Town Protection Embankment, also known as the Silimpur-Karata Embankment, was constructed under the Compartmentalisation Pilot Project at a cost of Tk 120 crore in 2000.

Villagers said the embankment, along with the riverside villages, is now facing a serious erosion threat as the earth traders continue using the structure as a road for transporting earth in large trucks.

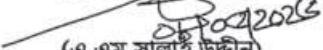
SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
মহাপরিচালকের কার্যালয়  
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে  
রেলওয়েবন, ঢাকা।

## বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ের "আমিন, ফিল্ড কানুনসূত্র ও সহকারী পোকোমোটিভ মাটার প্রেস-২" পদে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়সূচী প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। প্রকাশিত সময়সূচী বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে ও টেলিটক বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড এর ওয়েবসাইট ([www.railway.gov.bd](http://www.railway.gov.bd) ও [www.teletalk.com.bd](http://www.teletalk.com.bd)) থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

  
(এ এম মাশারুফ হোসেন)

মুখ্য-মহাপরিচালক (অপারেশন)

বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, রেলওয়েবন, ঢাকা।

ও

আম্বায়ক  
বিভাগীয় নির্বাচন কমিটি।

GD-1120



বাংলাদেশ কৃষি উন্নয়ন কর্পোরেশন

কুরিয়ে সমূহ

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (কুসুমসেচ) এর কার্যালয়

কিলোমিটার বিজিয়েল, কিলোমিটার।

e-mail : [xenkishore@yahoo.com](mailto:xenkishore@yahoo.com), টেলিফোন নং ০২৯৯৭৭-৬১৬২৫

Memo no. 12.06.4800.651.38.01.02.190

Date: 08/05/2025

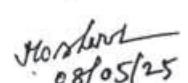
## e-Tender Notice

E-Tenders are invited in e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the Executive Engineer, BADC, Kishoreganj Region, Haibatnagar, Kishoreganj for the procurement of following works:

no.	Tender ID No.	Procurement Title	Procurement Method	Tender last Selling date & time	Tender Closing date & Time
1	2	3	4	5	6
01	1108060	Construction of internal road under Bhairab Fertilizer Campus	OTM, NCT	22-May-2025 11:00:00	22-May-2025 15:00:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>)

বিএন্টিসি = ৩১৮ (৮x৩)

  
08/05/25

(Md. Mosharof Hossain)

Executive Engineer (MI)

BADC, Kishoreganj Region, Kishoreganj

Phone: 029977-61655

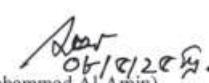
Email: [xenkishore@yahoo.com](mailto:xenkishore@yahoo.com)

GD-1118

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA)  
Power Division  
IEB Bhaban (9th-10th Floor), Ramna, Dhaka-1000  
[www.sreda.gov.bd](http://www.sreda.gov.bd)

## INVITATION FOR TENDER

01	Ministry/Division	Power Division Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources
02	Agency	Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA)
03	Procurement Entity Name	Director (Administration), SREDA
04	Invitation for	Procurement of Supply & Installation of VRF AC Parts & repair with Related Services & Maintenance.
05	Invitation Ref. No.	27.02.0000.013.07.088.25-236
06	Date	09 May, 2025
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>		
07	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (National)
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>		
08	Budget and Source of Funds	Revenue Budget, GoB
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>		
09	Tender Name	Procurement of Supply & Installation of VRF AC Parts & repair with Related Services & Maintenance.
	Date	Time
10	Tender Publication date	09 May, 2025
11	Tender Collection date	09 May, 2025
12	Tender Pre-Tender Meeting	14 May, 2025
13	Tender Last Selling Date	23 May, 2025
14	Tender closing Date & Time	24 May, 2025
15	Opening Date and Time	24 May, 2025
16	Name & Address of the office: Selling, Receiving & Opening Tender Document	Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA) IEB Bhaban (9th-10th Floor), Ramna, Dhaka-1000
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>		
17	Eligibility of Tenderer	i) The minimum of years of general experience of the Tenderer in the supply of Goods and related services as Supplier shall be 3 (Three) years. ii) The minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of similar Goods of at least 1 (one) contract(s) successfully completed within the last 5 (five) years, each with a value of at least Tk. 28 (Twenty Eight) lac. Bidder must have to submit a documentary proof of experience. iii) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk. 32 (Thirty Two) Lac.
18	Brief Description of Goods	As per schedule
19	Brief Description of Related Services	As per schedule
20	Price of Tender Document	Tk. 1000/-
21	Tender Security Amount	Tk. 85,000/-
22	Name	Mohammad Al-Amin
23	Designation	Director(Administration)
24	Address	IEB Bhaban (9th-10th Floor), Ramna, Dhaka-1000
25	Contact details	Tel: +8802-55110338; e-mail: <a href="mailto:dir.admin@sreda.gov.bd">dir.admin@sreda.gov.bd</a>
26	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.	

  
(Mohammad Al-Amin)  
Director (Administration)

Phone: +8802-55110338

e-mail: [dir.admin@sreda.gov.bd](mailto:dir.admin@sreda.gov.bd)



Fishermen in Sylhet repair their boats on the bank of a pond. With the arrival of the monsoon, these boats will become a key instrument in their fishing ventures. The photo was taken from the Baishtila area of Sadar upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Mohammed Irfan Syed passes away  
CITY DESK



Mohammed Irfan Syed (Poltu), son of former finance minister M Syeduzzaman, passed away from a heart attack on May 5. He was 60, said a press release.

He is survived by his son Ibraaz, daughter Ilhaam, parents Hafeza and M Syeduzzaman, and sister Tania.

Irfan obtained his MBA in the USA. He began his career with Banque Indosuez and later moved to Dhaka Bank and BCCI. Before leaving for the USA, he was briefly involved in the textiles sector. He also served as a director at Bank Asia and Delta-BRAC Housing. Irfan had a deep interest in art and was also a talented painter.

## Ex-AL supporters who opposed misrule can join BNP: Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday said those who were once involved with the Awami League but did not support or participate in its misrule, and had already distanced themselves from the party, are welcome to join BNP.

"Suppose someone hasn't been involved in politics for a long time. Or, there are those who, even during the Awami League's time, might have once been involved with the party but did not support its misrule, barbaric acts, looting, money laundering and were never part of such activities. Those who had already distanced themselves from the Awami League, they can join," he said.

He made the remarks during a press briefing held at BNP's central office in Nayapaltan.

"We want decent people from society -- retired government officials, teachers, bankers, NGO workers, farmers, and labourers -- to join," Rizvi said.

He highlighted the importance of carefully vetting new members.

"We must ensure that no collaborators, money launderers, criminals, or land grabbers are allowed into the party," he said.

Rizvi announced that BNP aims to recruit around one crore new primary members over a two-month period from May 15 to July 15 as part of its membership renewal and recruitment drive.

Rizvi said that during autocratic regimes, people were afraid to join the BNP.

Mentioning that the situation has now improved, Rizvi added, "The campaign will begin with launch events in divisional cities."

## Robotics, tech festival begins at Cuet



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cuet

The National Robotics and Technology Festival "MIE Robolution 1.0" has begun at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet), celebrating innovation and technology.

More than 700 students from over 41 universities and colleges across the country are participating in the three-day event started on Thursday morning.

The event is organised by the Department of Mechatronics and Industrial Engineering.

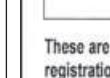
Cuet Vice Chancellor Prof Mahmud Abdul Matin Bhuiyan was present as the chief guest at the event presided over by MIE Department Head Prof Prosanjit Das.

## FLAT SALE AT UTTARA

Brand New Ready luxurious 4-Bedroom Flats for Sale in Sector-4, Uttara. Spacious units available: 3,250 & 3,795 sq. ft. with 02 Car Parks

Call: 01844 536 670

We are looking for a new building in Mohammadpur, Lalmoni and Dhamondi for rent.  
Please Contact: 01337259348, 01715046385



বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি.

BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.  
(A State Owned Commercial Bank)

Reference: 11.2/189/300

Date: 08-May-2025

Invitation Reference No.: BDBPLC/TOD/OTM/2025/02; Re-Tendered ID- 1060639

Re-Tender have been invited in the national e-GP Portal ([https://www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for procurement of the following Goods.

SL NO.	Tender/ Proposal ID	Description	Method of Procurement
--------	---------------------	-------------	-----------------------

## UKRAINE WAR

### Russia building new explosives facility

REUTERS, New York

Russia is undertaking a major factory expansion in remote Siberia to ramp up production of a powerful explosive used in artillery shells and other munitions in the war in Ukraine, a Reuters review of publicly available state documents has found.

Moscow's ability to muster more shells than Ukraine has played an important part in Russia's battlefield successes during the conflict.

The additional explosive anticipated from the project, which has not previously been reported, could help increase Moscow's firepower significantly at a time when Ukraine and its Western allies have been stepping up production of ordnance needed to thwart Russian advances, three defence analysts said.



A woman stands outside a house that was destroyed by Pakistani artillery shelling in the village of Salamabad, Uri, approximately 110 km from Srinagar, India, yesterday. Inset, residents living along the Line of Control (LoC) take shelter inside a degree college in Uri.

PHOTO: AFP

## INDIA-PAKISTAN CLASHES

# Why Trump isn't leading an effort to ease crisis

CNN ONLINE

The violent crisis between India and Pakistan is exactly the kind of international emergency that would once have prompted a full-on US diplomatic drive to cool tempers and head off a wider war.

But this latest fighting over and beyond Kashmir, the disputed Muslim-majority region, may become a test of the Trump administration's bandwidth and limited aspirations for global convening — and for the world without American leadership.

President Donald Trump on Tuesday offered a passive initial response to the fighting, set off by a terror attack on Indian tourists that New Delhi blames on Pakistan-backed militants. "It's a shame," Trump said. "I just hope it ends quickly." On Wednesday, he went a little further, offering his good offices without showing much enthusiasm for becoming involved. "I get along with both, I know both very well, and I want to see them work it out," Trump said.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has been in touch with top officials from India and Pakistan. But there's no indication so far of a broadening US effort to coordinate international mediation or crisis management.

While Trump has made peacemaking a cornerstone of his new term, his efforts in defusing global hotspots as wars rage in Ukraine and Gaza have shown little progress.



and military power to manipulate smaller nations to America's advantage and sees little difference between allies and adversaries in his narrow win-loss worldview. In any case, it would be rather incongruous to see a president who has expansionist designs on Greenland, Canada and Panama mediating one of the world's most nettlesome territorial disputes.

This may be partly because the time is not yet ripe for diplomacy, since everybody expects several steps up an escalatory ladder by both sides.

## Israel mounts heavy strikes in south Lebanon

REUTERS, Beirut

Israel launched dozens of airstrikes in south Lebanon yesterday, in one of its heaviest bombardments of the region since a ceasefire ended last year's war with the Iran-backed Hezbollah.

The Israeli military said it had hit a Hezbollah infrastructure site in the south. There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, which has previously said that it withdrew all its forces from the south in line with the US-brokered truce.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said at least one person was killed and another eight wounded in the strikes. Thick columns of smoke rose from the hilltops hit in the attacks in the Nabatieh region, some 12 km from the border.

Israel has been carrying out airstrikes in south Lebanon on a regular basis since the ceasefire.

জীবন ও স্বাস্থ্য সুরক্ষায় নিরাপদ খাদ্য  
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ  
বিএসএল অফিস কমপ্লেক্স, ভবন ২,  
১১৯ - কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম সড়ক, ঢাকা-১০০০  
[www.bfsa.gov.bd](http://www.bfsa.gov.bd)

### বেসরকারি টেলিভিশনে টিভিসি প্রচারের নিমিত্ত তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ

বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষের নিরাপদ খাদ্য বিষয়ক টিভিসি/ ক্রলবার্তা বেসরকারি টেলিভিশন চ্যানেলসমূহের মাধ্যমে প্রচারের লক্ষ্যে তালিকাভুক্ত হতে ইচ্ছুক চ্যানেলসমূহ থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রচারে আগ্রহী টেলিভিশন চ্যানেল/ কোম্পানির পক্ষ থেকে আগামী ২১ মে ২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্ন বর্ণিত তথ্যসহ চেয়ারম্যান, বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ বরাবর আবেদন প্রেরণ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

#### বর্ণিত ছবি

ক্রমিক নং	বিষয়ের বিবরণ	প্রচারের সময়	পরিমাপের একক	দর/মুদ্রিত (ভ্যাট/ট্যাক্সসহ)
০১	টিভিসি	পিক আওয়ার	মিনিট	
		অফ পিক আওয়ার	মিনিট	
০২	ক্রলবার্তা (শব্দ সংযোগসহ)	প্রতিদিন	বার	

আবেদনপত্রের সাথে বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, টিআইএন নম্বর ও ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন নম্বর, কোনো তফসিলি ব্যাংক থেকে আর্থিক স্বচ্ছতার সনদ এবং টিআরপি সম্পর্কিত ডকুমেন্ট (যদি থাকে) দাখিল করতে হবে।

শ্রাবণী রায়  
সচিব  
বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ  
[secretary@bfsa.gov.bd](mailto:secretary@bfsa.gov.bd)

GD-1113

## ISRAEL'S BLOCKADE

### First responders in Gaza run out of supplies

REUTERS, Gaza

Dozens of community kitchens in Gaza shut their doors yesterday due to a lack of supplies, closing off a lifeline used by hundreds of thousands of people in a further blow to efforts to combat growing hunger in the enclave.

The move followed hours after the US-based World Central Kitchen (WCK) charity announced that it had run out of the ingredients necessary to provide much-needed free meals and had been prevented by Israel from bringing in aid.

Amjad al-Shawa, director of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) in Gaza, told Reuters that most of the enclave's 170 community kitchens had shut down after running out of stock due to Israel's continued blockade on Gaza.

- Most of 170 community kitchens shut due to blockade
- Dozens of students arrested in pro-Gaza protest at Columbia University

Shawa said the decision by the WCK, announced late on Wednesday, and the closure of community kitchens yesterday would cause a drop of between 400,000 to 500,000 free meals per day for the 2.3 million population.

"Everyone in Gaza today is hungry. The world must act now to save the people here," said Shawa, speaking to Reuters by phone from Gaza.

"The remaining kitchens will be closing soon. The hunger catastrophe is beyond words. People are losing their lone source of food," Shawa added.

Those Gazans trying to cook independently meanwhile complain that flour still available on the market is contaminated.

"The flour is full of mites and sand ... We sieve it three, four times, instead of once, so we can bake it," said Mohammad Abu Ayesh, a displaced father of nine from northern Gaza.

"We don't want to eat from it, but we feed the children, for the children. You can't tolerate its smell, cattle and animals would not eat it, we are forced to eat it against our will, we are helpless," he told Reuters.

Meanwhile, the United States and Israel have discussed the possibility of Washington leading a temporary post-war administration of Gaza, according to five people familiar with the matter.

“Taiwan and Europe are jointly facing the threat of a new totalitarian group.”

Taiwan President LAI CHING-TE



## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Bangladesh Police  
Office of the Additional Inspector General  
CID, Malibagh, Dhaka  
[www.cid.gov.bd](http://www.cid.gov.bd)

### Invitation for Tender (National)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs
2	Agency	Bangladesh Police, CID, Dhaka
3	Procuring entity name	Additional Inspector General, Bangladesh Police, CID, Dhaka
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka
5	Invitation for	Supply of Computer Parts and Software Expansion/ Maintenance, Upgradation for CID, Bangladesh Police
6	Invitation Ref. No.	CID/Logistics/Procurement/43-2025/497 Date: 08/05/2025

#### KEY INFORMATION

7	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (Framework Contract)
---	--------------------	--

#### FUNDING INFORMATION

8	Budget & source of fund	Revenue Budget (GOB)
---	-------------------------	----------------------

#### PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9	Tender package name	Supply of Computer Parts and Software Expansion/Maintenance, Upgradation for CID, Bangladesh Police
---	---------------------	---

10	Tender publication date	Before 10.05.2025
----	-------------------------	-------------------

11	Tender last selling date	22.05.2025
----	--------------------------	------------

12	Tender submission date & time	25.05.2025 time 12.00 hrs
----	-------------------------------	---------------------------

13	Tender opening date & time	25.05.2025 time 12:30 hrs.
----	----------------------------	----------------------------

14	Name & address of the office	CID Headquarters, Malibagh, Dhaka.
----	------------------------------	------------------------------------

15	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting	Situation Center 10th Floor, CID, Dhaka / 18-05-2025 / At 11:30am
----	---------------------------------------	---

#### INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

16	Eligibility of tenderers	Up-to-date copies of valid trade license, bank solvency certificate, income tax certificate, VAT registration certificate, minimum 03 years' experience in similar nature of goods supply & other requirements described the tender document (PG-3A)
----	--------------------------	--

17	Brief description of goods	Mentioned in Tender document.
----	----------------------------	-------------------------------

18	Brief description of related services	As per tender document.
----	---------------------------------------	-------------------------

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF GOODS</h

## Unilateral push-ins a blow to strained ties

India should respect international norms in border conduct

We strongly protest India's action of pushing at least 123 individuals, including Rohingyas and Bangla-speaking people, into Bangladesh through the Kurigram and Khagrachhari border points. Reportedly, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) has detained these individuals and is currently verifying their identities, as they possess no IDs or passports. Furthermore, the BGB has issued a high alert along the border and lodged a strong protest note with India's Border Security Force (BSF), advising against such push-ins.

Flag meetings with the BSF have also been requested at various levels. Meanwhile, the Police Headquarters has alerted the superintendents of police in 31 bordering districts to ensure that our national security is not compromised amid the escalation of the India-Pakistan conflict. At a time when tensions between India and Pakistan have reached their highest point in years, it is shocking that India would choose this moment to push individuals into Bangladesh without consulting the Bangladeshi authorities.

Out of these individuals, 44, including 35 Rohingyas, were detained from the Roumari and Bhurungamari upazilas of Kurigram-30 in Roumari and 14 in Bhurungamari. Meanwhile, in Khagrachhari, at least 79 additional Bangla-speaking individuals were detained after being pushed in through three border points—27 at the Shantipur border in Matiranga upazila, 22 at the Taitong border in Dighinala upazila, and 30 at the Panchhara border in Panchhara upazila. According to a resident of Shantipur who had sheltered one of the individuals arriving from India, these people were flown from Gujarat to Agartala and then forcibly pushed across the border. They were also reportedly warned by BSF personnel never to return, or they would be shot.

We must say that there is no basis in international law for such unilateral "push ins." In fact, it is entirely contrary to accepted diplomatic norms. The question is, why did India not consult the Bangladeshi government before deciding to send these people? This is a question Bangladesh must raise. At the same time, our border security forces must remain on high alert. After all, we still do not know the identities of the individuals who have been pushed in. Moreover, it remains unclear whether India intends to carry out further push-ins—including of Rohingyas from Myanmar—into Bangladesh in the future.

In their interactions with Indian officials, Bangladeshi authorities must make it clear that any such action must involve consultation with the local authorities first. No unilateral decision that threatens our national security, sovereignty, or territorial integrity can be accepted.

## Support returnee female migrants

Their rights must be protected both at home and abroad

It is deeply troubling to learn about the persistent abuse and exploitation faced by our female migrant workers abroad, as well as the depression and social isolation they experience upon returning home. According to a BRAC report, more than 4.7 lakh Bangladeshi migrant workers have returned over the past six years after enduring various forms of mistreatment and hardship. Among them, 67,199 women suffered sexual and physical abuse. In 2020 alone, 49,924 women were sent back, primarily from Middle Eastern countries. Upon their return, many shared harrowing accounts of their experiences. While the authorities in Bangladesh have done little to protect their rights abroad, they have also failed to provide the support necessary for their reintegration at home.

A combination of factors including financial struggles, lack of education and skills, unemployment, social insecurity, and environmental hardships often compel women to seek employment abroad. However, their desperate attempts to find better economic opportunities often end in exploitation, as they fall victim to trafficking, forced labour, and gender-based violence. In many cases, their wages are withheld, and working conditions are harsh, but they can hardly seek help due to language barriers. Restrictions on movement and communication further deepen their plight.

And it does not end upon return either. Many come home with serious injuries, illnesses, and psychological trauma, yet receive no support at the airport or access to medical care. Mental health challenges such as trauma, depression, and social isolation make their lives even more difficult, while many are burdened with debt. According to a 2023 study by the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association, a staggering 37.3 percent of female migrants returned home empty-handed. Many also struggle to find work due to social stigma. Unless the government addresses these challenges, their dream for reintegration will remain out of reach.

We, therefore, urge the authorities to develop gender-responsive migration policies that protect the rights of female migrant workers and take meaningful action to improve their lives upon return. These vulnerable women need adequate medical care, psychological support, and financial assistance. The government must also ensure that the migration process is more sustainable. Instead of sending unskilled workers abroad, it should provide training to aspiring migrants, equipping them with the knowledge of their rights and responsibilities in destination countries. The structural vulnerabilities faced by Bangladeshi women throughout the migration journey must be effectively addressed to create a more secure system.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY



### Fourth and final voyage of Christopher Columbus launched

On this day in 1502, master navigator and admiral Christopher Columbus, long considered the "discoverer" of the New World, set sail from Cádiz, Spain, on his fourth and final voyage, hoping to find a passage to Asia.

# Bangladesh's export dilemma post-transshipment ban

**Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), talks with Naznin Tithi of The Daily Star about India's decision to revoke transshipment facility for Bangladesh and its implications.**

**How would you assess India's sudden decision to revoke the transshipment facility for Bangladesh?**

The formal explanation provided by the Indian side is that, since Bangladeshi exports are increasing through Indian ports, their own exports are facing additional time and cost burdens. Therefore, they decided not to continue with this arrangement. Before making this decision, India could have discussed with Bangladesh that they were facing congestion and could not handle the increasing cargo volume, or that they could only allow a relatively lower cargo capacity from Bangladesh. However, as far as we know, no such discussion took place between the two countries. Therefore, it seems the decision was made suddenly. However, there could be other underlying reasons.

It was stated from India's side that they needed to consider the kind of decisions being made in Bangladesh. This implies that some bilateral issues or decisions were involved, which, to some extent, were political. For example, even before the transshipment revocation decision was made, discussions were ongoing in Bangladesh regarding the impact of Indian yarn imports through land ports on the local textile industry. Indian yarn was allegedly being under-invoiced, and as a result, large quantities were entering with little or no duty, making it difficult for domestic textile owners to remain competitive in the market. Therefore, they requested the government to redirect yarn imports through seaports instead of land ports.

From India's perspective, it may seem that Bangladesh was trying to discourage imports. But from our perspective, importing by sea will increase costs, putting financial pressure on yarn users. The discussion was ongoing, but the decision was implemented after India announced the closure of transshipment. Another concern from the Indian side was whether there was any intention on our part to facilitate yarn imports from a third country. In fact, the announcement to use seaports for yarn imports was made at a time when representatives from other countries were visiting Bangladesh. Therefore, I believe both economic and political factors might be behind this decision.

**How will this decision affect our RMG sector, especially when Bangladeshi goods, including readymade garments, are currently facing higher tariffs in the US market?**

The transshipment facility allowed many of our goods, especially those requiring quick delivery to the market, to be exported through Indian ports. Dhaka airport's loading and handling capacity was becoming overburdened

compared to demand. The airport was not adequately equipped to manage the increasing load. Indian ports helped alleviate some of this pressure. Additionally, when Chattogram port became congested, Indian ports served as an alternative. Now that this option is no longer available, shipping these products will take more time, and air shipments will be further delayed. Another challenge is that air cargo planes face relatively high costs when landing in Dhaka to transport goods. The reason is that the volume of goods leaving Dhaka by air cargo is high, but the volume of goods arriving in Dhaka is relatively low. As a result, planes often arrive empty, which increases costs. In contrast, at Indian airports, there is demand for both incoming and outgoing cargo, making them comparatively cheaper for air carriers.

Now that shipments must go through Bangladesh, costs will also rise. So, our entrepreneurs will have to accept these increased costs and continue shipments. Until our internal capacity improves, they might also opt to send products by sea if feasible or reduce orders for those types of goods that require short delivery windows and yield high profit margins.

**How can we improve our internal capacity? Will the third terminal at HSLA, once operational, enhance our capacity to export goods directly to other countries?**

For building capacity, I think we need to focus on one specific airport. Although we have several international airports, I think we should plan facilities, especially for air cargo, at an airport where it would be cost-effective and profitable for both freight operators and exporters. If our air cargo carriers could bring in some goods, it would be

more economical for them. However, they will likely arrive almost empty and leave with full load. In that case, they will charge for both ways, which would be costly. So, considering all that and our current capacity, I think if we plan future expansion focusing on one port, it should be Shahjalal Airport.

Regarding the third terminal, if it is completed by the end of the year, its capacity must be evaluated. Besides, our current capacity should also be assessed to determine how much expansion is required. For cargo planes landing and handling, additional facilities might be needed. The sheds seem small, so loading, carrying, sorting, and dispatching facilities may require upgrades. To ensure all these improvements, the government will need investment. I think, if we can negotiate with foreign

products shipped by air are usually short-duration goods with slightly higher margins. Additionally, if for any reason shipments by sea are delayed, air cargo remains an alternative option.

Earlier, the government had taken an initiative to convert old passenger aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines into cargo planes. Possibly one aircraft was modified. However, since this plane was repurposed, it was not fully optimised for cargo. Moreover, strategically, using converted aircraft for cargo is not a good idea. But buying a new aircraft for Biman is also not advisable. Instead, if rental agreements can be made on a long term basis with neighbouring or regional countries, and feasibility studies indicate their interest in carrying cargo from Bangladesh, then that could be considered.

**India has been among the top trading partners of Bangladesh. How will this sudden policy change impact our bilateral relationship?** Recently, several issues have unfolded in a way that has created political tensions between the two countries, affecting both people-to-people relationships and government-to-government relations. Indian visa restrictions, for example, have contributed to this tension. Besides, many political and economic decisions have been made involving various countries, and India may have different perspectives on these decisions and find them concerning. Therefore, we need to consider whether we are adequately addressing these concerns while making such decisions. However, during the previous government's tenure, Bangladesh-India relations showed weakness in fairly considering the interests of both parties. We expect fair treatment from India.

Against the backdrop of Bangladesh's new political reality, a kind of distance is increasingly developing between Bangladesh and India. I think this will impact not only our economic or trade relations but also political ties and relations involving third countries like Nepal and Bhutan. Many of our engagements with India are no longer just about trade in goods. For instance, we are now importing electricity from Nepal through India. In the regional context, where interdependence is increasing, India remains an important partner. I think Bangladesh must take these dynamics into account while making future decisions so that people-to-people contacts, trade, investment, and social sector relations, such as education and healthcare, as well as all important bilateral or trilateral engagements are preserved and strengthened.

## The need for smart election observation



Jeffrey Noel Vanness is managing partner at Compasspoint Logistics. He has participated in election observation missions in various countries.

JEFFREY NOEL VANNESS

Bangladesh's next parliamentary elections promise to be the most consequential since voters went to the polls in December 2008 to restore democracy after a two-year-long state of emergency. By sponsoring smart, meaningful, and cost-effective international election observation this year, the international community can demonstrate that it takes these elections as seriously as Bangladeshis.

If the election process goes well, the return of multi-party democracy would be the first step necessary to reset Bangladesh's embittered political culture. But if either citizens or political actors doubt the integrity of the results, it risks dropping the country back into a pattern of political polarisation, corruption, and social instability.

In either scenario, smart international election observation gives the global community a powerful tool to help Bangladeshi head off post-election controversies. Objective, non-partisan international election observation helps keep disappointed political contestants at the table by assuring them that their legitimate grievances won't be ignored or

forgotten.

I saw these efforts up close in 2008 when diplomats combined international observer statements, public opinion surveys, and exit polling to help the BNP understand how and why they trailed the Awami League in that election. By confirming that the election was fundamentally sound, the international community helped all political parties focus on why citizens voted the way they did instead of speculating about ballot rigging.

But the value of international election observation is squandered if the global community views it as just a box checking exercise. Donors need to be clear and specific with observer missions at the inception phase about how they intend to use observation reports in their decision-making and engagements with Bangladeshi stakeholders before and after election day. In return, international observers owe donors smart and meaningful election observation plans fulfilling specific informational and analytical needs of their sponsors.

It is clear that this will be Bangladesh's next transitional election. However, questions remain

regarding how to enfranchise the millions of adult Bangladeshis living overseas, how to protect ethnic and religious minorities from intimidation and political violence, how to prevent active disinformation campaigns from manipulating voters' choices, and how new patterns of money in politics are taking shape. These issues deserve thorough investigation and analysis.

To justify this investment of increasingly scarce resources, donors require election observation designs that speak to the moment. If a donor cares about things like women's roles in society, corruption caused by money in politics, or protecting religious minorities, they should say so, because knowing this will help observers write much better, more relevant reports. The output should be a cost-effective way to produce an actionable roadmap leading to more fulfilling political participation and less political dysfunction after the election.

This doesn't mean donors can or should dictate a methodology to election observation missions or limit their independence to call it like they see it. We expect international observers to bring cutting edge methods for social media monitoring, tracing disinformation narratives on and off-line, conduct parallel campaign expenditure tracking, and use election forensics to spot statistical anomalies that may indicate manipulation of results after the votes are cast.

Importantly, Bangladesh needs international election observers sooner rather than later. Today, Bangladesh's diverse stakeholders

are rewriting the legal framework. They are also cautiously testing out a new political culture of collaboration before the election is declared.

And Bangladesh will need international election observers on the far side of the election as well to report on possible post-election violence, formal electoral dispute resolution, and public feelings about the credibility of the elections.

Unfortunately, international election observation doesn't come cheap. However, given the cost of political instability—not just to Bangladesh but to regional interests and the country's socio-economic development—the international community cannot afford not to observe these next elections at some level. Smart election observation can't be budget driven, but it can be highly cost-effective.

But the value of smartly designed international observation is irreplaceable for those who want to speak definitively about the quality of the elections in order to incentivise contending parties to cooperate in the post-election period.

This time, just like in 2008, credible elections are absolutely essential for Bangladesh to move forward democratically. This election will define the terms for political competition for years to come. We don't know how much time remains before the election, but the global community should assure Bangladesh's voters now that international election observers will be here to protect their votes.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY



### Fourth and final voyage of Christopher Columbus launched

On this day in 1502, master navigator and admiral Christopher Columbus, long considered the "discoverer" of the New World, set sail from Cádiz, Spain, on his fourth and final voyage, hoping to find a passage to Asia.

# Takeaways from Bangladesh's latest human development indicators



Selim Jahan  
is former director of the Human Development Report Office under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and lead author of the Human Development Report.

SELIM JAHAN

The 2025 Human Development Report titled "A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI" is out. In addition to its substantive content, the report has ranked 193 countries and territories in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI), using 2023 internationally comparable data. The HDI is a composite measure of life expectancy at birth, educational attainment comprising mean and expected years of schooling, and per capita income in purchasing power parity dollars. In this year's global HDI ranking, Iceland has replaced Switzerland as the top country in the HDI league. Meanwhile, Somalia has jumped above South Sudan, pushing the latter to the bottom of the league. In fact, in the HDI ranking, the top and bottom five countries have remained the same, even though they have interchanged places.

Three observations are pertinent to the report and the index. First, like any other concept and its relevant measure, the notion of human development is broader than the index, which does not capture the totality or richness of the concept of human development. Second, the HDI embraces some basic dimensions of human development—e.g. a long and healthy life, knowledge, and standard of living—but not broader aspects such as participation, human security, and environmental sustainability. Third, the journalistic obsession and political interest in the report lie in the ranking of countries. In the process, the richness of its content and policy options is often overlooked. In that context, it should be made clear that the preoccupation with the HDI ranking can lead to misleading conclusions. For example, the HDI ranking of a country may go down despite increases in its HDI value, either because another country's HDI value has



FILE VISUAL: STAR

increased more, or because more countries are included in the HDI league. Therefore, it should not lead to the conclusion that the country whose HDI ranking has gone down is doing badly in human development.

In Bangladesh too, the hype is all about our HDI ranking. Bangladesh's HDI value in this year's report is 0.685. It was 0.680 in last year's report. Over the past 35 years, the HDI value of Bangladesh has gone up by 72 percent. Yet, the HDI discussions in the country hover around whether Bangladesh's ranking has moved up or down and how

it compares to those of our neighbours. Similarly, the focus of the current discourse is that the HDI ranking of Bangladesh has dropped from 129 last year to 130 this year; in the regional context, the HDI rankings of Sri Lanka and the Maldives are well ahead of that of Bangladesh, etc.

In my view, the HDI discussion in Bangladesh should focus on some fundamental issues with policy implications.

Second, like the notion of a "middle-income trap," Bangladesh also seems to be stuck in a "medium human development trap" for more than a decade, even though its HDI value has improved. The question is: what is holding us back? When we look at the components, we find that there has been a gain of two years in life expectancy since 2021, the expected years of schooling have marginally improved, but there has been a decrease in mean years of schooling and not enough increase in per capita income. So, the policy priority to push Bangladesh into high human development should focus, among other things, on how average years of schooling can be improved and how economic growth can be accelerated. Let us also have a look at Sri Lanka. Because of its long-term human development achievements, Sri Lanka has been in the high human development category for quite some time. Although Sri Lanka experienced economic, political, and social turmoil in 2022, the country could steer through the challenges and impediments, increase its life expectancy by two years, maintain its per capita income, and contain the slide in its HDI value to only 0.006—from 0.782 in 2021 to 0.776 in 2023. As we move forward, what can we learn from Sri Lanka, given the socio-economic changes in Bangladesh over the past year?

Third, India has now caught up with the HDI value of Bangladesh. In 2021, the HDI value of Bangladesh was 0.641 and that of India was 0.633. Two years later, in 2023, both countries have achieved an HDI value of 0.685. As a result, the two countries' 2021 HDI ranking gap (Bangladesh 129 and India 132) has been closed, and both countries now share an HDI ranking of 130. India closed the HDI value gap with Bangladesh because of a gain of five years in life expectancy (from 67 years in 2021 to 72 years in 2023) and by increasing its expected years of schooling from 12 to 13 years. It would be worthwhile to assess how India has improved its human development outcomes.

Fourth, the data reported in the global Human Development Report are internationally comparable data that come from standardising national data—the mother of all global data. If national statistical authorities in different countries strengthen

their processes of reliable and robust data collection and make them available to respective UN agencies mandated to collect different types of human development data, the data reported in the global Human Development Report will be greatly improved. National policies should be geared to this effort.

Fifth, looking at the Gender Development Index (GDI), which is a ratio of female to male HDI, the disparities between female and male human development outcomes in Bangladesh are obvious. To start with, while the male HDI value is 0.708, the female HDI is 0.650. Because of a biological edge, female life expectancy at 76 years is higher than male life expectancy at 73 years. Other than that, women in Bangladesh are at a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis mean years of schooling and per capita income. The female mean years of schooling at 6.2 years is less than the 7.3 years for men. Women's per capita income is half that of men. Only in expected years of schooling are women, with 12.4 years, ahead of men at 11.9 years. All this begs the question: what policies need to be pursued to reduce gender disparities in human development outcomes?

As Bangladesh moves forward, there will be domestic and global economic challenges with implications for human development. On the domestic front, economic sluggishness, high inflation and unemployment, and volatilities in the banking and external sectors will pose challenges to human development. On the global front, the issue of Bangladesh's LDC graduation, the global tariff war, and conflicts in different parts of the world will affect the human development situation in Bangladesh.

Human resources are the greatest asset of Bangladesh. Therefore, the development of the country critically hinges on the human development of its people. It requires identification of the obstacles to human development, analysis of the challenges, and formulation of strategies to overcome them. We can try to fix the country's economic structure, work towards its macroeconomic stability, and undertake infrastructural development, but in the ultimate analysis, we have to prioritise human development in Bangladesh, as there is no other alternative.

## Why our industrial future depends on women

Rassiq Aziz Kabir and Mohammad Iftekharul Islam are policy analysts. They can be reached at rassiq.aziz@gmail.com and contact: iftekharul.islam@gmail.com, respectively.

**RASSIQ AZIZ KABIR and MOHAMMAD IFTEKHARUL ISLAM**

The July uprising of 2024 paved the way for reimagining Bangladesh's economic future. There is a powerful opportunity to reshape the country's industrial policy to make it more inclusive, strategic, and forward-looking and it means putting women, the half of the population, in front and centre. Despite achieving significant progress, Bangladesh still lacks policies that fully support women across diverse industries and promote their inclusion in the labour force.

Gender integration should no longer be treated as a social obligation, it must be seen as an economic strategy. Gendered industrial policy, particularly in the ready-made garments (RMG) sector, is not just desirable but essential for a just and sustainable economic transition post-July 2024.

Since the late 1980s, women have been integral to the industrial development of Bangladesh, especially in the export-orientated RMG sector. This feminisation of labour was not accidental; it was incentivised by both state policies and the global demand for cheap labour. Women were seen as "docile," willing to accept lower wages, and less likely to unionise. This strategy paid off in GDP terms: by 2022, the RMG sector alone accounted for over 80 percent of Bangladesh's export earnings, with women making up approximately 60 percent of its workforce (UNDP, 2023).

However, this economic success came with gendered costs. Despite their contribution, women workers were largely excluded from policy dialogues, workplace protections, and leadership roles within the industry. The very policies that enabled industrial growth often

treated women's labour as a means to an end, not as a subject of development.

Most current gender-related policies in Bangladesh are welfare orientated: they focus on microcredit schemes, skills development, or social safety nets. While these are important, they are not successful in integrating women into the core of economic planning. The concept of "gender mainstreaming" has often been reduced to tokenistic inclusivity, rather than a subject of development.

What is needed is a shift from welfare to strategy. A truly gendered industrial policy must ask how economic policies can work for women, not merely with them. This requires a rethinking of how incentives, trade policies, labour laws, and technological advancements impact female workers across sectors.

Feminist economists such as Gita Sen and Naila Kabeer have long emphasised that markets are not gender neutral, and overlooking this fact leads to flawed economic outcomes. Even 2024 reports by the IMF and World Bank support this statement, where they showed that closing gender gaps in the labour market could raise the GDP of Bangladesh by up to 40 percent. This makes gender equity not only a moral responsibility but also a macroeconomic opportunity.

The RMG sector is the clearest example of gendered exclusion in economic policy. Despite their majority in numbers, female workers have little control over their working conditions. Labour rights violations, wage theft, sexual harassment, and lack of maternity support continue to plague the industry.

Moreover, automation and shifting global trade patterns now threaten the jobs of thousands of female RMG workers. Without policy intervention, the transition to higher-value manufacturing will likely displace women first. In this context, gender-responsive industrial upgrading becomes essential. Policies should prioritise retraining female workers, subsidising their entry into new sectors like electronics or

agro-processing, and promoting female entrepreneurship through access to finance and market linkages. The World Bank adds that increasing female participation in manufacturing alone could boost the output of the sector by 21 percent. These figures show the strategic value of expanding women's roles as Bangladesh moves up the

small-scale renewable energy technologies, which include training programmes and support for income-generating activities to enhance women's economic empowerment.

The gender-inclusive policies of Seychelles aim to expand employment opportunities for women beyond traditional sectors. It emphasises capacity building to enable



Despite their majority in numbers, female RMG workers have little control over their working conditions.

FILE PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

industrial ladder. For example, the RMG Sustainability Council (RSC) can expand its mandate beyond compliance to include gender equity metrics. The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) can actively incentivise firms that adopt gender-inclusive workplace practices. While the 2022 Industrial Policy briefly mentions women's participation, future policies must firmly integrate gender targets into their core framework.

Several countries offer useful lessons. Tunisia has integrated gender goals into its industrial upgrading programmes, leading to a more balanced distribution of skilled jobs. The country is also promoting female entrepreneurship in rural areas through

women to take on more diverse roles in manufacturing and other industries. The government of Chile offers financial incentives such as bonuses on grants for female-led firms. Gender equality is integrated into industrial development through national strategic plans and training programmes of the Chilean economic development agency, CORFO. The industrial parks in Ethiopia include mandatory daycare centres and female-friendly infrastructure, improving female labour force retention. Vietnam's textile industry invests heavily in technical education for women, ensuring they are not left behind in the shift to automation.

Bangladesh can learn from these models by adapting them to local contexts without just being a mere copycat. When gender is

seen as a productivity issue rather than just a social one, policy innovation is bound to happen.

To move forward, Bangladesh must integrate gender at every level of industrial policy. The government can offer tax benefits or subsidies to firms that show evident progress in gender equity. This includes narrowing the gender wage gap, promoting women to leadership roles, and ensuring access to safe transport and child care. Technical training centres should prioritise women in emerging sectors like IT, electronics, green energy, and logistics by reserving seats and providing stipends. The recommendations by the IMF also align with them, which is to include women in climate-adaptive sectors and green industry, essential for sustainable growth.

Key ministries such as the Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Commerce, and Ministry of Labour and Employment need to establish gender audit systems. Authorities must also mandate female representation in industry associations. According to the World Bank, female labour participation has stagnated at 37 percent in recent years despite proven economic benefits. The IMF identifies unpaid care burdens and limited property rights as major obstacles to unlocking the full economic potential of the female workforce. So, the labour laws should be updated to improve maternity benefits, enforce anti-harassment measures, and guarantee equal pay for equal work. These are not radical demands, they are pragmatic steps toward building an inclusive economy.

The July uprising has opened a rare political window for structural reform. To achieve economic justice, policymakers must place gender justice at the heart of industrial strategy. A gendered industrial policy does not undermine efficiency or growth; it redefines them. As Bangladesh prepares for a new economic future, it must recognise that industrialisation without women is neither just nor sustainable.

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS**  
1 Light wind  
7 Flight part  
11 Crashed into  
12 Do a KP chore  
13 Apparel  
14 Gumbo veggie  
15 Taste bud locale  
17 Play parts  
20 Honshu port  
23 Meadow cry  
24 TV studio equipment  
26 Noah's boat  
27 In the style of  
28 Tick off  
29 Ticked off  
31 River stopper  
32 Throw with effort  
33 Sampras of tennis  
34 Phone photo  
35 Revenue  
43 Lends a hand  
44 Justice symbol  
45 Apple or pear  
46 Jug part  
47 DOWN  
48 DOWNTOWN  
49 DOWN  
50 DOWN  
51 DOWN  
52 DOWN  
53 DOWN  
54 DOWN  
55 DOWN  
56 DOWN  
57 DOWN  
58 DOWN  
59 DOWN  
60 DOWN  
61 DOWN  
62 DOWN  
63 DOWN  
64 DOWN  
65 DOWN  
66 DOWN  
67 DOWN  
68 DOWN  
69 DOWN  
70 DOWN  
71 DOWN  
72 DOWN  
73 DOWN  
74 DOWN  
75 DOWN  
76 DOWN  
77 DOWN  
78 DOWN  
79 DOWN  
80 DOWN  
81 DOWN  
82 DOWN  
83 DOWN  
84 DOWN  
85 DOWN  
86 DOWN  
87 DOWN  
88 DOWN  
89 DOWN  
90 DOWN  
91 DOWN  
92 DOWN  
93 DOWN  
94 DOWN  
95 DOWN  
96 DOWN  
97 DOWN  
98 DOWN  
99 DOWN  
100 DOWN  
101 DOWN  
102 DOWN  
103 DOWN  
104 DOWN  
105 DOWN  
106 DOWN  
107 DOWN  
108 DOWN  
109 DOWN  
110 DOWN  
111 DOWN  
112 DOWN  
113 DOWN  
114 DOWN  
115 DOWN  
116 DOWN  
117 DOWN  
118 DOWN  
119 DOWN  
120 DOWN  
121 DOWN  
122 DOWN  
123 DOWN  
124 DOWN  
125 DOWN  
126 DOWN  
127 DOWN  
128 DOWN  
129 DOWN  
130 DOWN  
131 DOWN  
132 DOWN  
133 DOWN  
134 DOWN  
135 DOWN  
136 DOWN  
137 DOWN  
138 DOWN  
139 DOWN  
140 DOWN  
141 DOWN  
142 DOWN  
143 DOWN  
144 DOWN  
145 DOWN  
146 DOWN  
147 DOWN  
148 DOWN  
149 DOWN  
150 DOWN  
151 DOWN  
152 DOWN  
153 DOWN  
154 DOWN  
155 DOWN  
156 DOWN  
157 DOWN  
158 DOWN  
159 DOWN  
160 DOWN  
161 DOWN  
162 DOWN  
163 DOWN  
164 DOWN  
165 DOWN  
166 DOWN  
167 DOWN  
168 DOWN  
169 DOWN  
170 DOWN  
171 DOWN  
172 DOWN  
173 DOWN  
174 DOWN  
175 DOWN  
176 DOWN  
177 DOWN  
178 DOWN  
179 DOWN  
180 DOWN  
181 DOWN  
182 DOWN  
183 DOWN  
184 DOWN  
185 DOWN  
186 DOWN  
187 DOWN  
188 DOWN  
189 DOWN  
190 DOWN  
191 DOWN  
192 DOWN  
193 DOWN  
194 DOWN  
195 DOWN  
196 DOWN  
197 DOWN  
198 DOWN  
199 DOWN  
200 DOWN  
201 DOWN  
202 DOWN  
203 DOWN  
204 DOWN  
205 DOWN  
206 DOWN  
207 DOWN  
208 DOWN  
209 DOWN  
210 DOWN  
211 DOWN  
212 DOWN  
213 DOWN  
214 DOWN  
215 DOWN  
216 DOWN  
217 DOWN  
218 DOWN  
219 DOWN  
220 DOWN  
221 DOWN  
222 DOWN  
223 DOWN  
224 DOWN  
225 DOWN  
226 DOWN  
227 DOWN  
228 DOWN  
229 DOWN  
230 DOWN  
231 DOWN  
232 DOWN  
233 DOWN  
234 DOWN  
235 DOWN  
236 DOWN  
237 DOWN  
238 DOWN  
239 DOWN  
240 DOWN  
241 DOWN  
242 DOWN  
243 DOWN  
244 DOWN  
245 DOWN  
246 DOWN  
247 DOWN  
248 DOWN  
249 DOWN  
250 DOWN  
251 DOWN  
252 DOWN  
253 DOWN  
254 DOWN  
255 DOWN  
256 DOWN  
257 DOWN  
258 DOWN  
259 DOWN  
260 DOWN  
261 DOWN  
262 DOWN  
263 DOWN  
264 DOWN  
265 DOWN  
266 DOWN  
267 DOWN  
268 DOWN  
269 DOWN  
270 DOWN  
271 DOWN  
272 DOWN  
273 DOWN  
274 DOWN  
275 DOWN  
276 DOWN  
277 DOWN  
278 DOWN  
279 DOWN  
280 DOWN  
281 DOWN  
282 DOWN  
283 DOWN  
284 DOWN  
285 DOWN  
286 DOWN  
287 DOWN  
288 DOWN  
289 DOWN  
290 DOWN  
291 DOWN  
292 DOWN  
293 DOWN  
294 DOWN  
295 DOWN  
296 DOWN  
297 DOWN  
298 DOWN  
299 DOWN  
300 DOWN  
301 DOWN  
302 DOWN  
303 DOWN  
304 DOWN  
305 DOWN  
306 DOWN  
307 DOWN  
308 DOWN  
309 DOWN  
310 DOWN  
311 DOWN  
312 DOWN  
313 DOWN  
314 DOWN  
315 DOWN  
316 DOWN  
317 DOWN  
318 DOWN  
319 DOWN  
320 DOWN  
321 DOWN  
322 DOWN  
323 DOWN  
324 DOWN  
325 DOWN  
326 DOWN  
327 DOWN  
328 DOWN  
329 DOWN  
330 DOWN  
331 DOWN  
332 DOWN  
333 DOWN  
334 DOWN  
335 DOWN  
336 DOWN  
337 DOWN  
338 DOWN  
339 DOWN  
340 DOWN  
341 DOWN  
342 DOWN  
343 DOWN  
344 DOWN  
345 DOWN  
346 DOWN  
347 DOWN  
348 DOWN  
349 DOWN  
350 DOWN  
351 DOWN  
352 DOWN  
353 DOWN  
354 DOWN  
355 DOWN  
356 DOWN  
357 DOWN  
358 DOWN  
359 DOWN  
360 DOWN  
361 DOWN  
362 DOWN  
363 DOWN  
364 DOWN  
365 DOWN  
366 DOWN  
367 DOWN  
368 DOWN  
369 DOWN  
370 DOWN  
371 DOWN  
372 DOWN  
373 DOWN  
374 DOWN  
375 DOWN  
376 DOWN  
377 DOWN  
378 DOWN  
379 DOWN  
380 DOWN  
381 DOWN  
382 DOWN  
383 DOWN  
384 DOWN  
385 DOWN  
386 DOWN  
387 DOWN  
388 DOWN  
389 DOWN  
390 DOWN  
391 DOWN  
392 DOWN  
393 DOWN  
394 DOWN  
395 DOWN  
396 DOWN  
397 DOWN  
398 DOWN  
399 DOWN  
400 DOWN  
401 DOWN  
402 DOWN  
403 DOWN  
404 DOWN  
405 DOWN  
406 DOWN  
407 DOWN  
408 DOWN  
409 DOWN  
410 DOWN  
411 DOWN  
412 DOWN  
413 DOWN  
414 DOWN  
415 DOWN  
416 DOWN  
417 DOWN  
418 DOWN  
419 DOWN  
420 DOWN  
421 DOWN  
422 DOWN  
423 DOWN  
424 DOWN  
425 DOWN  
426 DOWN  
427 DOWN  
428 DOWN  
429 DOWN  
430 DOWN  
431 DOWN  
432 DOWN  
433 DOWN  
434 DOWN  
435 DOWN  
436 DOWN  
437 DOWN  
438 DOWN  
439 DOWN  
440 DOWN  
441 DOWN  
442 DOWN  
443 DOWN  
444 DOWN  
445 DOWN  
446 DOWN  
447 DOWN  
448 DOWN  
449 DOWN  
450 DOWN  
451 DOWN  
452 DOWN  
453 DOWN  
454 DOWN  
455 DOWN  
456 DOWN  
457 DOWN  
458 DOWN  
459 DOWN  
460 DOWN  
461 DOWN  
462 DOWN  
463 DOWN  
464 DOWN  
465 DOWN  
466 DOWN  
467 DOWN  
468 DOWN  
469 DOWN  
470 DOWN  
471 DOWN  
472 DOWN  
473 DOWN  
474 DOWN  
475 DOWN  
476 DOWN  
477 DOWN  
478 DOWN  
479 DOWN  
480 DOWN  
481 DOWN  
482 DOWN  
483 DOWN  
484 DOWN  
485 DOWN  
486 DOWN  
487 DOWN  
488 DOWN  
489 DOWN  
490 DOWN  
491 DOWN  
492 DOWN  
493 DOWN  
494 DOWN  
495 DOWN  
496 DOWN  
497 DOWN  
498 DOWN  
499 DOWN  
500 DOWN  
501 DOWN  
502 DOWN  
503 DOWN  
504 DOWN  
505 DOWN  
506 DOWN  
50

Cannes to screen  
Satyajit Ray's  
'Aranyer Din Ratri'

A restored 4K version of Oscar-winning filmmaker Satyajit Ray's 1970 classic *Aranyer Din Ratri* will be screened at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival.

The film, featuring Soumitra Chatterjee, Sharmila Tagore, and Rabi Ghosh, was restored by The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project in collaboration with Film Heritage Foundation, Janus Films, and The Criterion Collection.

Based on Sunil Gangopadhyay's novel, the film follows the story of four Calcutta men on a forest retreat.

Notably, Sharmila Tagore, Wes Anderson, and producer Purnima Dutta will attend the Cannes screening.

The original film, which earned a nomination at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1970, was followed by its sequel *Abar Aranye*, released in 2003.

The Cannes Film Festival is scheduled to run from May 13 to 24.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

**Acclaimed actor  
Faizlur Rahim  
Babu, a six-time  
National Film Award  
winner, is set to  
bring the inspiring  
life of Polan Sarkar  
to the silver screen  
in the upcoming  
government-grant  
film 'Solte', directed  
by Zahir Raihan.**

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Known for his dedication to delivering powerful performances across theatre, television, film, and OTT platforms, Babu said this new role deeply moved him.

"Polan Sarkar's philosophy attracted me," said the actor in an interview with The Daily Star. "Despite limited formal education, he became a guiding light for others by distributing books door to door. His commitment to enlightening people through literature is rare and immensely admirable."

The film *Solte* draws inspiration from the life of Polan Sarkar, a widely cherished community figure and social worker who became a household name by voluntarily distributing books to thousands across rural Bangladesh.

"He found joy in reading and spread that joy to others," Babu added. "That's what books do — they bring knowledge and happiness. Polan Sarkar made that

joy accessible."

The actor praised director Zahir Raihan's dedication to the project. "He really immersed himself in Polan Sarkar's life story before writing the script," said Babu.

Parts of the film have already been shot in Kakonkhali, Rajshahi, a location selected for its visual resemblance to the Barind region where Sarkar lived. Additional filming also took place in Dhaka and Bandarban.

Speaking about his broader professional journey, Babu remarked, "I've always looked for characters that are different. That's why I've shaped my journey as an actor."

He is currently in talks for several new films and continues working in television dramas, but emphasised that completing *Solte* is his current focus.

*Solte* aims to honour the legacy of Polan Sarkar, a man whose love for books became a beacon of light for rural communities across Bangladesh. "I believe this role will resonate deeply with the audience," Babu concluded.

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## 'Agunjatra'

Prachyanat will stage *Agunjatra*, an adaptation of Mahesh Dattani's *Seven Steps Around the Fire*, translated by Shahidul Mamun and directed by Azad Abdul Kalam. The play will explore discrimination against transgender people, following Uma Rao's investigation into the death of Kamala, a transgender woman, revealing deep-seated societal injustices.

DATE: SUNDAY | MAY 11, 2025

TIME: 7PM ONWARDS

VENUE: NATIONAL THEATRE HALL,  
BANGLADESH SHILPAKALA ACADEMYRobert De Niro, Jenna  
Ortega cast in David O  
Russell's 'Shutout'

Hollywood stars Robert De Niro and Jenna Ortega are teaming up for a new film titled *Shutout*. According to Variety, it will be directed by David O Russell, known for *Silver Linings Playbook* and *American Hustle*. The film is scripted by Alejandro Adams.

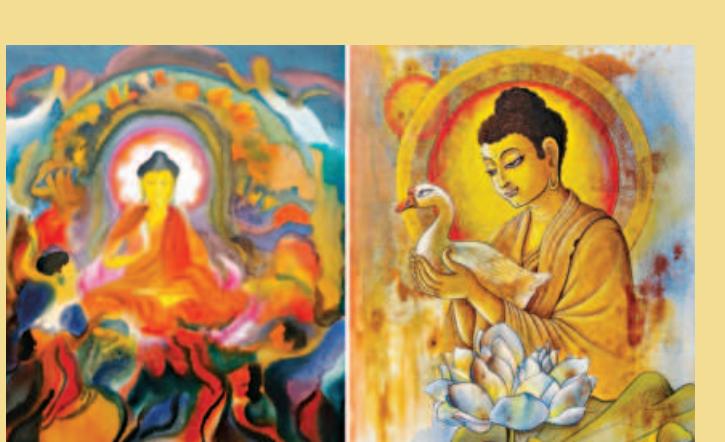
The story follows Jake Kejeune (played by De Niro), a veteran pool hustler holding on to a fading art. After a lifetime of wins and losses in shadowy billiard rooms, Jake crosses paths with Mia (Ortega), a gifted newcomer whose intense, untamed skill reignites a passion in him he believed was long gone. De Niro's recent role was in *The Alto Knights*, while Ortega starred in *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* (2024), reuniting with Tim Burton after *Wednesday*.

'Buddha  
of Bengal'  
exhibition  
opens at  
AFD

Alliance Française de Dhaka is celebrating Buddha Purnima with the exhibition *Awakening of Sacred Peace: The Buddha of Bengal*, opening today at La Galerie.

Organised by the Oriental Art Practice Association and Learning Design Studio, and curated by Mikhail Idris, the exhibition features over 100 artworks by 73 Bangladeshi artists.

The pieces, created using mediums such as oil, watercolour, ink, and ashes from the fire-ravaged Bangabazar, interpret Buddhist philosophy through Oriental art traditions. The programme, running from May 9 to 16, includes seminars, recitations, musical performances, and a cultural evening. Highlights include discussions led by Dr Saymon Zakaria and Professor Dr Rashid Amin.



## NEWS

## China not involved in 'aid corridor'

FROM PAGE 12  
between the Arakan Army and the  
Myanmar junta since late 2023.

For that to happen, Bangladesh has put forward some conditions that include a ceasefire in Rakhine, representation of the Rohingya in the Rakhine leadership and creating conditions in the state for the eventual repatriation of the Rohingya.

"China does not interfere in any internal affairs of any country," he said at the event organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies at its auditorium.

He went on to express hope that Bangladesh and Myanmar can properly solve the Rohingya issue through peaceful dialogue and promote the process of repatriation.

There are some 1.4 million Rohingya sheltered in Bangladesh, with more fleeing every day.

China had mediated between Bangladesh and Myanmar for the Rohingya return, but that stopped in late 2023 because of the conflicts in Rakhine State, which still continue, Yao said.

However, China will facilitate

dialogue between the two countries. "We will never give up," he said at the event titled 'Five Decades of Bangladesh-China Relations: Towards a New Height'.

Addressing the discussion, Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director for the Centre for Alternatives Executive, proposed a Marshall Plan for Rakhine State, which can facilitate Rohingya repatriation.

Regional countries like China, Japan and India should come forward with "out of the box ideas", he said.

Bangladesh approached China for the Teesta river management project as India had not signed the water sharing treaty, while Bangladesh has been suffering from a lack of irrigation water in the north, said Ahmed, also a former professor of international relations at the University of Dhaka.

"This is an economic project — not a security one," he said, adding that China can alone support this project, or India and China can jointly do it.

There can even be a consortium for the project.

"We are willing to offer our help.

Now it is up to Bangladesh to decide whether it wants to move forward," Yao said in response.

On the India-Pakistan conflict, he said both neighbours should refrain from further escalation.

"China opposes any form of terrorism and wants a neutral investigation into the attack into the terrorist attack in Indian-administered Kashmir. We urge both sides to act in the interest of peace and stability, stay calm, exercise restraint and refrain from taking actions that may further complicate the situation."

The world today is full of turmoil, instability and uncertainty.

"No matter how the international landscape may evolve, China will stand firm on the right side of history and the side of human progress, serving as the most stable, certain and peaceful force in the world."

Yao said China stands ready to work with Bangladesh and all parties to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, jointly resist unilateral protectionism and hegemonic bullying practices, in order to uphold free trade and multilateralism.

"This is a general terms document" which will set out agreements but also lay out a framework where further discussions are needed.

"The realisation of women's human rights and their social respect are not one and the same. To ensure women's rights, we must eliminate discriminations embedded in existing laws, social structures, and customs."

"Religion is sacred and should remain a personal practice. Using it as a political tool is entirely unacceptable."

She called for unity in advancing the women's rights movement, stating that it is a collective responsibility to ensure just and equal status for both women and men, in Bangladesh and across the world.

"There will be further negotiations to come," the source added.

The deal was focused on specific sectors rather than being a fully fledged free trade agreement sought by the UK following its 2020 departure from the European Union, the official said on condition of anonymity.

As well as dealing with steel and car tariffs, it would lay out positions for discussions over possible future tariffs in the key pharmaceuticals sector.

"There will be further negotiations to come," the source added.

## Four of family die

FROM PAGE 12  
charge of DMCH police outpost.

Billal's expecting wife Rozina Begum, 30; their younger daughter Marium Akhter, 5; Billal's sister-in-law Sharmin Akhter, 24; and brother-in-law Iqtar Hossain, 20, suffered injuries. They were provided with primary treatment, said Mirza.

Later, Rozina was taken to a private hospital in Dhanmondi, where she delivered a baby boy at around 5:30pm.

"She has mentally collapsed. She cannot enjoy the moment," Mirza told The Daily Star.

Police seized the bus and the ambulance, Jilani, the OC of Hasara Highway Police Station.

The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

"The bus driver was also injured in the accident and was undergoing treatment at the DMCH. The bodies were kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy, Faruk said.

## Bill Gates accuses

FROM PAGE 12  
to give away almost his entire personal wealth in the next two decades and said the world's poorest would receive some \$200 billion via his foundation at a time when governments worldwide are slashing international aid, reports Reuters.

The 69-year-old billionaire Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist said he was speeding up plans to divest his fortune and close the Gates Foundation on December 31, 2024.

"People will say a lot of things about me when I die, but I am determined that 'he died rich' will not be one of them," Gates wrote.

"There are too many urgent problems to solve for me to hold onto resources that could be used to help people," he said.

Shrinking  
foreign aid

FROM PAGE 12  
energy, and agrotechnology," he said.

This includes forming public-private partnerships, exploring government-monitored zakat funds, enabling youth-led natural resource monitoring and reinforcing governance frameworks for evidence-based community engagement, he added.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, echoed the urgency for reform.

With LDC graduation, civil society organisations will face new challenges.

"To continue their work, we must explore South-South cooperation, implement a national CSR policy -- possibly under the finance ministry -- and introduce structural and digital reforms in both government and civil society organisations."

He also recommended ensuring democratic leadership transitions and advocating for a dedicated Tk 1,000 crore budget to support rights-based development in the face of shifting political priorities.

Sharmind Neelormi, a professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University, cautioned against weak implementation.

"Planning is not enough. We must scale up implementation efforts, improve monitoring of tax expenditure rebates and redirect untapped private sector tax benefits into seed funding for grassroots civil society organisations."

Local organisations also need to upskill in emerging technologies and their applications, she added.

Flights taking  
longer due

FROM PAGE 12  
A flight between Dhaka and London takes around 10 hours when the planes use Pakistan airspace, said a Biman captain.

"But now the flight takes 11 to 12 hours, the captain said, wishing anonymity.

"At the very beginning of the recent India-Pakistan tensions, the flight operation department carried out a thorough risk assessment and finalised the flight plan," a Biman official said.

The realisation of women's human rights and their social respect are not one and the same. To ensure women's rights, we must eliminate discriminations embedded in existing laws, social structures, and customs.

The deal was focused on specific sectors rather than being a fully fledged free trade agreement sought by the UK following its 2020 departure from the European Union, the official said on condition of anonymity.

As well as dealing with steel and car tariffs, it would lay out positions for discussions over possible future tariffs in the key pharmaceuticals sector.

"There will be further negotiations to come," the source added.

The deal was focused on specific sectors rather than being a fully fledged free trade agreement sought by the UK following its 2020 departure from the European Union, the official said on condition of anonymity.

As well as dealing with steel and car tariffs, it would lay out positions for discussions over possible future tariffs in the key pharmaceuticals sector.

"There will be further negotiations to come," the source added.

The deal was focused on specific sectors rather than being a fully fledged free trade agreement sought by the UK following its 2020 departure from the European Union, the official said on condition of anonymity.

"There will be further negotiations to come," the source added.

The deal was focused on specific sectors rather than being a fully fledged free trade agreement sought by the UK following its 2020 departure from the European Union, the official said on condition of anonymity.

"There will be further negotiations to come," the source added.

The deal was focused on specific sectors rather than being a fully fledged free trade agreement sought by the UK following its 2020 departure from the European Union, the official said on condition of anonymity.

"There will be further negotiations to come," the source added.



## BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

# The sacred architecture of story

Review of 'The Sufi Storyteller' (Neem Tree Press, 2025) by Faiqa Mansab

**Mansab's feminism here is not polemical. It is textured and spiritually aware. In Layla and Mira, she gives us women shaped by grief, marked by exile, both geographic and emotional and yet capable of immense compassion, complexity, and transformation. These are not heroines molded for clarity; they are rendered in chiaroscuro, in shadows and contradiction.**

## NAMRATA

Faiqa Mansab's second novel, *The Sufi Storyteller*, is a quiet triumph—both elegiac and urgent, intimate and expansive. It arrives as a natural evolution from her acclaimed debut, *This House of Clay and Water* (Penguin Random House India, 2017), and yet it stands apart, not merely in ambition but in execution. Where the former was steeped in the politics of desire and gender within Lahore's elite and unseen spaces, *The Sufi Storyteller* ventures across continents and metaphysical thresholds to bring forth something more elusive: the sacred, storied terrain of the inner world.

The novel traces the entwined journeys of Layla, a scholar of women's histories in a small American liberal arts college, and Mira, a Sufi storyteller bearing the weight of a terrible past. A woman's murder becomes the axis upon which the narrative turns but this is no ordinary mystery. The crime is a disturbance, a crack in the carefully composed surfaces of both women's lives, through which memory, story, and sorrow begin to leak and, eventually, flood.

At the heart of the novel is a profound meditation on the act of storytelling itself. Mira, whose voice carries the cadences of oral tradition, represents the instinctive, intuitive knowledge passed down through generations of women, mystics, and keepers of the unsaid. Layla, in contrast, approaches stories through the lens of research and archival authority. It is this tension between text and telling, history and memory, intellect, and emotion that Mansab renders with delicate nuance.

Her prose is lyrical, spacious, and deliberate. It evokes the tempo of Sufi narrative. There is repetition that deepens rather than dilutes, silences that echo, and imagery that unfolds like a dervish's dance: circular, layered, and revelatory. The "realm of story" that Layla and Mira enter is not merely symbolic; it is crafted with mythic resonance, a liminal space where past and present, dream and trauma, are interlaced like threads in a Sufi's robe.

In many ways, the novel resists Western narrative conventions. Its emotional crescendos do not coincide with plot twists; rather, they emerge from moments of recognition, from fragments of stories buried within stories. The murder mystery, though present, serves more as a structural whisper than a genre anchor. What unfolds instead is a deeply feminist excavation of the silences within women's



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

lives, the silences they inherit, absorb, and sometimes choose to carry.

Mansab's feminism here is not polemical. It is textured and spiritually aware. In Layla and Mira, she gives us women shaped by grief, marked by exile, both geographic and emotional and yet capable of immense compassion, complexity, and transformation. These are not heroines molded for clarity; they are rendered in chiaroscuro, in shadows and contradiction.

There is also something remarkably generous in the novel's embrace of Sufi thought, not merely as a backdrop but as an epistemology, a way of knowing and being. The Sufi thoughts that flow through the text serve as both metaphor and method. They are not neatly decipherable; rather, they are offerings.

This refusal to over-explain, to smooth the reader's path, is one of the book's greatest strengths. It invites surrender rather than control.

Compared to *This House of Clay and Water*, this novel is more ambitious in scope but also more refined in its craft. The voice is quieter, more assured. The characters are less constrained by place and more in dialogue with timeless questions of self, truth, and forgiveness. Yet the thematic threads remain: the body and its discontents, the power of voice, the haunting presence of the unsaid.

The world Mansab conjures is lush with metaphor, but it is also grounded in the visceral. A woman's death, a note from a killer, a journey into war-ravaged mountains, these are not

abstractions but anchors, gestures toward how violence inscribes itself upon language, memory, and gendered experience.

In *The Sufi Storyteller*, Faiqa Mansab offers a novel that is not only about story but made of story, its fragments, its echoes, its capacity to both wound and mend. It is a deeply literary work, one that asks for patience, reflection, and above all, listening. For in this world, it is not the loudest voice that reveals the truth, but the one that has endured the longest silence.

**Namrata** is a published author who enjoys writing stories and think-pieces on travel, relationships, and gender. She is a UEA alumnus and has studied travel writing at the University of Sydney.

## ESSAY

## Feluda, the idea of 'Bangali Bhadralok', and the gendered silence in detective fiction

## MAHMUDA EMDAD

There's a certain warmth and ache that comes with remembering how we first met the worlds of Feluda, Sherlock Holmes, or Harry Potter; stories that quietly slipped into our lives, often as prizes at school sports days or stumbled upon in the quiet corners of an elder sibling's shelf. Feluda came to us gently. Wrapped in brown paper, or worn from many reads—and once found, he stayed. In our own way, we all wanted to crack a code, spot a clue, chase the thrill of something larger than life. But as we grew older, the lens shifted. The nostalgia remained, but so did the questions. Slowly, quietly, we began to read the silences too—the gaps, the absences, the shadows.

Detective fiction, by its very nature, has always been a well-tailored, pipe-smoking boys' club. When the average reader imagines a sleuth, the mind's eye conjures up a man—sharp, cerebral, and sartorially sound—be it Sherlock Holmes, Byomkesh Bakshi, or Satyajit Ray's iconic Feluda. The genre's gendered legacy is hard to miss: Even as Agatha Christie's Miss Marple or Suchitra Bhattacharya's Mitin Mashi made their marks, they remained mostly outliers in a landscape dominated by men draped in trench coats and deductive prowess. The Bangla literary world, in particular, has long deserved its detective pedestal for the likes of Feluda, Kakababu, Kiriti Roy, or Byomkesh, while early female detectives like Krishna (penned by Prabhabati Devi Saraswati) never quite cracked the mainstream.

It is against this backdrop that the absence of women in Feluda's world becomes not just a narrative quirk but a telling reflection of the cultural and social codes of the Bangali bhadralok. Feluda-Pradosh C. Mitter arrived on the scene in 1965, and over the course of 35 published stories (with four unpublished), he became the very embodiment of the educated, urbane, morally upright Bangali gentleman. His world is scrupulously constructed: We know about his father, his uncles, and the paternal lineages of both Feluda and his cousin Topshe, the narrator. Yet, when it comes to the women in their lives, the silence is deafening. The only mention of Feluda's mother is a single line: He lost her at the age of nine. Topshe's mother, too, is a ghostly absence—no emotional shading, no narrative presence, not even a passing comment.

This is not a matter of oversight. As Ray's



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

aunt, the celebrated author Leela Majumdar, wryly noted in her essay, "Felu Chand" (*Sandesh*, 1995): "...There's something rather odd, you know, in Feluchand's stories and novels. Yes, why is it that we never see any family members or relatives of the detective and his assistant? Even the homes of the villains seem to have no one except servants?" The critique is as sharp as it is accurate. For a series that revels in the minutiae of Bangali life, the absence of mothers, aunts, and sisters is not just noticeable—it's apparent.

Of course, there are exceptions, but they are rare and fleeting. In "Gosainpur Sargaram" (*Sandesh Sharadiya* 1383) and "Jahangir Swarnamudra" (*Sandesh Sharadiya* 1819), elderly women briefly influence the plot. "Chhinnamastar Abhishek" (*Desh Sharadiya* 1385) introduces Neelima Devi, who aids Feluda's investigation, while in "Ambar Sen Antardhan Rahasya" (*Anandamela*, 1983), Mrs Sen and her daughter provide crucial clues. In "Shakuntalar Kanthahaar" and "D Munshir

Diary", female characters are central to the mystery's resolution—Mrs Munshi's actions, for instance, are pivotal to the case. But these appearances are rare and lack continuity.

These women—wives, daughters, or informants—may serve the story in isolated moments, but they are never part of the core world. They do not return, they are not remembered, and they are never central. What catches the reader's attention, over time, is not the total absence, but the absence of continuity. Yet, these women are supporting actors in a drama where the spotlight remains firmly on the male trio: Feluda, Topshe, and Lalmohan Ganguly (Jatayu). There is no recurring female character, no female foil or confidante. The adventures, camaraderie, and even the banter are resolutely male.

This narrative architecture is no accident. It is deeply tied to the ethos of the bhadralok, a term that has shaped the Bangali psyche for over two centuries. The bhadralok—literally "gentleman"—emerged in 19th century colonial

Bengal as a social class defined by education, English proficiency, and a genteel, "civilised" lifestyle. They were the torchbearers of the so-called Bangali Renaissance, the intermediaries of the empire, and the self-appointed custodians of culture and taste.

But this respectability came at a cost. The bhadralok project was built on a strict division between the public and private spheres—a division that mapped neatly onto gender. Men were the rational actors, the seekers of truth, the explorers of the world; women, by contrast, were relegated to the home, the keepers of tradition and spirituality. In Feluda's meticulously ordered universe, this separation is absolute. The detective's world is one of logic, mobility, and public engagement—spaces from which women are conspicuously, and perhaps intentionally, excluded.

Ray himself was acutely aware of this absence and addressed it directly. In a note for a *Feluda* collection that was published in 1988, he wrote, "To write a whodunit while keeping

in mind a young readership is not an easy task, because the stories have to be kept 'clean'. No illicit love, no crime of passion, and only a modicum of violence. I hope adult readers will bear this in mind when reading these stories." While Ray's candour is admirable, his rationale inadvertently exposes a deeper bhadralok anxiety: the notion that the mere presence of women threatens the narrative's "cleanliness" or innocence.

But as literary history has shown—through characters like Miss Marple or Mitin Mashi—female presence need not imply sexualisation or moral ambiguity. This unintentional suggestion, that female presence is somehow entangled with moral complexity, impurity, or adult content—speaks volumes about the norms of his time. Yet, this is precisely where Ray's brilliance could have defied convention. In a literary landscape where women were routinely sidelined in detective fiction, a writer as versatile and imaginative as Ray could have shaped a narrative that included strong, witty female characters without compromising the clarity or sophistication of his stories. Far from "unclean," such inclusion would have expanded the imaginative scope of his readers, especially young girls, and offered them a different kind of mirror. It would not only have reflected the intellect and agency of women but also widened the very idea of who belongs in a world of clues, codes, and conclusions.

This absence is not just a reflection of genre or audience. It is a window into the anxieties and aspirations of the bhadralok class—a class that defined itself by its intellectual and moral superiority, its disdain for the "chhotolok" (the uncultured masses), and its ability to keep the messy realities of sexuality and domesticity at bay. Feluda's all-male universe, devoid of domesticity or female influence, becomes a literary manifestation of this divide—a detective who solves mysteries not just for justice, but to uphold the bhadralok's self-image as the enlightened guardian of Bangali modernity.

**This is an abridged version of the original essay. Read the full article on *The Daily Star* and *Star Books and Literature's* websites.**

**Mahmuda Emdad** is a women and gender studies major with an endless interest in feminist writings, historical fiction, and pretty much everything else, all while questioning the world in the process. Reach her at [mahmudaemdad123@gmail.com](mailto:mahmudaemdad123@gmail.com).



## BCB seeks 'secure return' for Nahid, Rishad

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is working to bring home Nahid Rana and Rishad Hossain from the Pakistan Super League (PSL) "in a timely and secure manner" following rising tensions between India and Pakistan.

The escalation has not only cast doubt over Bangladesh's upcoming T20I series in Pakistan, but also raised immediate concerns for its players currently in Islamabad. Both Rishad, representing Lahore Qalandars, and Nahid, playing for Peshawar Zalmi, are awaiting safe passage home.

BCB sources confirmed that the players would be flown back as soon as Pakistani airspaces reopen. One source noted that if a window had emerged yesterday, the board was ready to act quickly to arrange their departure.

Amid the tense situation, Pakistan's Airport Authority announced the suspension of flights at Lahore, Sialkot and Karachi airports until noon yesterday, citing "regional tensions and operational considerations."

In a statement, BCB said it had been

in constant touch with both players and is working closely with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad.

"BCB is coordinating with the relevant authorities to ensure that all arrangements are in place to facilitate the eventual departure of the players from Pakistan in a timely and secure manner," stated the BCB press release.

The urgency heightened after a drone reportedly fell within the Rawalpindi Stadium complex, prompting the PCB to postpone and reschedule several PSL fixtures.

The PCB is reviewing the situation and will be rescheduling some of the PSL matches," the PCB said in a statement. "Further updates will be provided as matters are finalised," it added.

According to ESPNcricinfo, foreign players in the PSL are believed to be keen on the idea that the remainder of the PSL be moved to Dubai. Several foreign players reportedly sat with PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi after the drone incident at Rawalpindi Stadium.

Regarding the May-June's T20I series, PCB officials have told local media in

Bangladesh that they are hopeful of the series taking place. However, BCB is also placing the highest priority on players' security.

BCB director Akram Khan told The Daily Star, "The situation is something that's difficult right now, since if things turn bad, we need a decision from their end [Pakistan] while we are concerned about the players and that's our priority."

I think if a development comes, PCB and concerned authorities will let us know. There has been no discussion here regarding the series being postponed or anything."

Meanwhile, in India, Indian Premier League has also felt the impact. The match between Mumbai Indians and Punjab Kings, originally scheduled for Sunday in Dharamsala, has been shifted to Ahmedabad, Gujarat, after Dharamsala airport was closed due to rising security concerns.

With the cricketing world watching closely, both PCB and BCCI continue to navigate logistical challenges while keeping contingency plans in place should further relocations or adjustments become necessary.

### SHORT CORNER

#### Could Bangladesh still play in hockey's Asia Cup?

Bangladesh failed to qualify for the upcoming Asia Cup after finishing third in the AHF Cup, with only the top two teams, Oman and Chinese Taipei, earning spots. However, escalating India-Pakistan tensions may prevent Pakistan from participating in the India-hosted tournament. If Pakistan withdraw, a vacancy would open, and Bangladesh, as the next-best team, could be selected to maintain the tournament's structure. While no formal decisions have been made, hosting the tournament in India without Pakistan appears more likely, potentially allowing Bangladesh to enter the Asia Cup unexpectedly.

#### Shamit thanks Bangladesh fans

Canada-based Shamit Shome has thanked his fans for their support and gratitude to Bangladesh's football officials for expediting the process of his switch through a video message. The 27-year-old midfielder, in the video message shared by BFF, said: "Very excited to represent Bangladesh at the international level of football. A huge thanks to everybody for your support and a huge thanks to everybody who have sped up the process and made this possible."

#### Gill, Bumrah in race to succeed Rohit as India's Test captain

Top order batter Shubman Gill and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah are locked in a two-horse race to be India's next Test captain following Rohit Sharma's exit. Rohit, 38, was dropped from the fifth test in Sydney earlier this year after a prolonged run drought, and announced his retirement from Test cricket on Wednesday.

#### Rising star Rew called up to England squad for Zim Test

Somerset young gun James Rew was drafted into the England squad on Thursday for the upcoming one-off Test against Zimbabwe in Nottingham starting on May 22. The 21-year-old, one of the most promising batter in the English game, replaces Jordan Cox, who suffered an abdominal injury while scoring a century in Essex's County Championship defeat by Somerset on Sunday.

\*Read full stories on *The Daily Star's* website

## PSG cruise to final as Gunners misfire

AGENCIES

PSG made things happen when it mattered, and Arsenal could not -- this is what decided the Champions League semifinal tie that ended with the French champions claiming a 3-1 victory on aggregate.

Arsenal, who were trailing the game following a 1-0 defeat in the first leg at home last week, looked more threatening in the opening 25 minutes of the second leg against hosts PSG on Thursday night.

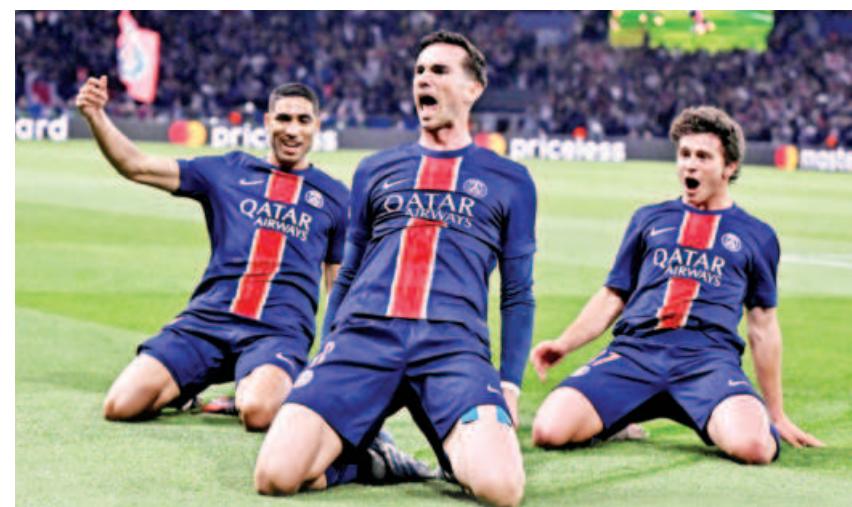
Yet, the night ended in PSG's favour, with Luis Enrique's side clinching a 2-1 victory to seal only their second berth in the Champions League final.

About a week ago, PSG were the ones who hounded the Gunners right after the whistle blew at the Emirates, and they found the net inside four minutes when Ousmane Dembele finished from outside the box. That lone goal eventually decided the first leg.

However, Arsenal did at the Parc des Princes what PSG did to them at Emirates, but failed in the most crucial aspect -- converting at least one of the flurry of chances they created at the very beginning.

Despite 19 attempts at goal, five of which were inside the first 25 minutes, Arsenal paid the price for failing to make those moments count as they were undermined by a lack of ruthlessness in front of goal as well as the brilliance of PSG's Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Arsenal caught PSG cold in the



- ➡ Arsenal produced an xG (Expected Goals) of 3.14 on Thursday night, the most by a team against PSG in a Champions League game this season. Their 19 shots were also their most in a knockout match since having 20 away at Barcelona in March 2016.
- ➡ Arsenal have now failed to progress from each of their last four major cup semifinals (2020-21 Europa League, 2021-22 League Cup, 2024-25 League Cup, 2024-25 Champions League).
- ➡ PSG have reached just their fourth major European final, also featuring in the 1996 and 1997 Cup Winners' Cup finals and the 2020 Champions League final.

opening 15 minutes with Declan Rice heading wide of an open goal and Donnarumma blocking a close-range effort by Gabriel Martinelli before making a stupendous low save to keep out Martin Odegaard's fizzing shot.

PSG rode their luck and then made Arsenal pay in ruthless fashion with sublime goals by Fabian Ruiz and

Achraf Hakimi putting the French champions in total command.

It still felt as though Arsenal were not out of the tie and when Bukayo Saka did finally beat Donnarumma in the 76th minute, there were jitters in the French ranks.

After outplaying Real Madrid at home and away in the quarterfinal,

If you score one of them chances, probably in the first 15 or 20 minutes, the game completely changes on its head.

Arsenal midfielder Declan Rice

rued the missed chances.

A win over all four Premier League teams [against Manchester City, Aston Villa, Liverpool, and Arsenal in this Champions League]? Well... farmers' league, you know? We are a farmers' league.

PSG coach Luis Enrique.

it was a tough way for Arsenal's run to end and it left Mikel Arteta again contemplating another trophy-less season, and critics sure to label his side the 'nearly men'.

PSG will now face Inter Milan in the final on May 31 in Munich, looking to win the trophy that has always eluded them.



Bangladesh under-19 football team players go through drills ahead of a training session at RG Stadium in Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh in India yesterday. Golam Rabban Choton's charges will start their SAFF U-19 Championship campaign today when they take on Maldives in the opening match of the six-team tournament at the Golden Jubilee Stadium in Yopia.

PHOTO: BFF

## After 9-year gap, swimming talent hunt begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

After a gap of around nine years, the Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) with the help of Bangladesh Navy is all set to hold a talent hunt programme titled "Bangladesh in search of best swimmers 2025", starting today in Dhaka.

The BSF had last conducted a talent hunt in 2016, from which it selected some 60 budding swimmers for a three-year-long training programme. Around half of those swimmers are still active and of them Samiul Islam Rafi and Kajal Mia have gone onto become country's leading swimmers, winning medals in national competitions and representing Bangladesh at the international level.

"Current swimmers like Rafi, Kajal, Omar [Ali], [Mohammad] Islam, Rabiu [Islam], Tofayel Ahmed, Mukti Khatun, Mukta Khatun, Anna [Akhter], Anny Khatun and Rupa Khatun are products of the 2016 talent hunt programme and most of them have represented Bangladesh at the international level," former



South Asian Games gold medalist swimmer Shahjahan Ali Rony said.

turn up in 15 different venues in the first phase which will run from May 10 to June 30.

Rony, also a swimming coach, said the lengthy gap between the talent hunts didn't allow Bangladesh to build a proper pipeline of swimmers, saying, "Truth be told, we don't have a proper pipeline of swimmers at the moment. The talent hunt programme will help build a strong pipeline in coming days."

The local game's governing body is expecting that some 12,000 budding swimmers will

After the initial phase, 600 swimmers will be selected, who would then undergo a two-week training programme in the second phase, at the end of which the number will be trimmed down to 100. After the third and final phase, 50 swimmers would get selected for a two-year training programme.

"It is an initiative to turn talented swimmers into national treasures. Bangladesh Navy chief and BSF president admiral M Nazmul Hassanwe wants to provide them long term training, accommodation and education during their training under foreign and local coaches," said Mahabubur, adding that they are all set to hunt for talent in all 64 districts and eight division with an 18-member coaching panel which will work in two groups.

Swimmers aged 9-11 will participate in 'A' group and swimmers aged 12-15 will participate in 'B' group. The estimated costs for the whole programme is Tk 6 crore. Prime Bank has come forward as one of sponsors with a contribution of Tk 50 lakh.



Iga Swiatek dismissed Elisabetta Coccia in just 52 minutes as she opened her account at the Italian Open on Thursday. World number two Swiatek came to Italy on the back of a demoralising straight-sets defeat to Coco Gauff in the semifinals of the Madrid Open. But the 23-year-old Pole dropped just a single game in winning 6-1, 6-0 against the Italian yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

**THE BEST QUALITY  
EVERY TIME GUARANTEED  
BSRM**

THE NATION'S  
LARGEST ROD  
MANUFACTURER

**BSRM**  
building a safer nation

**DHAKA METRO RAIL PROJECT**

Proud Construction Partner

**SHAH  
CEMENT**

## Govt must act now to curb anti-women vitriol Say 67 rights groups

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Samajik Protirodh Committee, a coalition of 67 women's rights, human rights, and development organisations, yesterday urged the government to take immediate and decisive action against the escalating tide of misogynistic speech and behaviour in public discourse and the media.

The committee made the call at a press conference titled "Protest Against Anti-Gender Equality and Demeaning Remarks and Behaviour Towards Women", at the Tofazzal Hossain Manik Miah Hall of the National Press Club in Dhaka.

At the event, speakers expressed deep concern over what they described as a growing and organised campaign to degrade women and reverse their progress.

The committee issued a set of demands, including the strict enforcement of laws against all forms of misogynistic propaganda, swift punishment for those involved in mob violence, and effective steps to prevent such incidents from recurring.

It also called for a ban on the use of religion in politics and the implementation of a science-based, secular, and gender-sensitive education policy grounded in human rights values.

Other key demands included ensuring speedy justice for violence against women, protecting press freedom, strengthening law enforcement for women's safety, and

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Four of family die as bus hits ambulance

Pregnant woman has a boy but loses husband, 3 in-laws

STAR REPORT

For long, Billal Fakir, 40, and his family wanted a fourth child. On the day their wish was to be granted, fate betrayed them.

Billal, who used to work as an Imam of a mosque in Madaripur Sadar upazila, was taking his wife to a private hospital in Dhaka for her delivery yesterday when the ambulance's tyre started leaking.

The driver parked the ambulance at one edge of the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway at Nimatola area of Munshiganj to fix the leak when a bus of Golden Line Paribahan hit the parked vehicle from the rear.

The accident claimed five lives and injured five others, said Billal's cousin Miraj Ahmed.

Billal's mother Saheda Begum, 57, died on the spot, and the rest were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for treatment, said Abdul Qader Jilani, the officer-in-charge of Munshiganj's Hasara Highway Police Station.

The ambulance driver Mahbub Sarder, 28; Billal; his father Abdus Samad Fakir, 60; and Billal's sister Afansa Akhter, 22, were brought dead to the hospital, said Md. Faruk, the in-

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## Shrinking foreign aid threatening development

Experts call for alternative funding



**“Women, children, and marginalised populations are disproportionately at risk. If left unaddressed, this could lead to widening inequality, increased poverty, and erosion of public trust in development efforts.”**

FARAH KABIR, country director of ActionAid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The declining flow of foreign aid to Bangladesh is threatening key development initiatives, particularly those supporting marginalised communities, said development experts yesterday.

In 2020, about \$1 billion was in foreign assistance, according to the NGO Affairs Bureau. That amount came down to \$655 million last year, down 11.6 percent year on year.

"The funding shortfall is already having real impacts," said Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, at a roundtable titled "Strengthening Community Support Amid Changing Funding Landscapes".

Essential services in primary healthcare and social protection are being disrupted, particularly in underserved urban and rural areas.

“Women, children, and marginalised populations are disproportionately at risk. If left unaddressed, this could lead to widening inequality, increased poverty, and erosion of public trust in development efforts,” she said at the roundtable organised by ActionAid Bangladesh at the BRAC Centre Inn in the capital's Mohakhali.

She called for “active and collaborative” action to ensure the long-term sustainability of community support programmes.

Civil society organisations must undergo strategic transformation to remain effective after graduation from the least developed country bracket, said M. Zakir Hossain Khan, chief executive of Change Initiative.

“We must adopt forward-looking strategies that focus on nature-based solutions, renewable

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Flights taking longer due to Indo-Pak tensions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman flights from Dhaka to London, Toronto, and Rome are currently taking one to two hours longer than usual because of rerouting amid the tensions between India and Pakistan, officials said.

Flights of Turkish Airlines and Jazeera Airways and several carriers that operate to and from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport are also being rerouted.

The disruptions are caused by airspace restrictions: Pakistan has closed its airspace to Indian aircraft, prompting reciprocal measures from India.

As a result, several international airlines have begun avoiding the region's airspace, leading to longer routes for flights between South Asia and destinations in Europe and North America.

Flights over India are operating normally, but the closure of Pakistani airspace is forcing planes to take detours, Biman officials said.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

## US, UK agree on trade deal 10% levy on British goods to stay

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump unveiled a “breakthrough” trade agreement with Britain yesterday, celebrating the first deal in a tariff war that has rattled the world.

Speaking by telephone from the Oval Office to British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Trump said the deal would be the first of many with other countries.

The deal will reduce tariffs on British cars and steel, but a 10 percent baseline levy on British goods will remain.

Britain will, in return, open up markets to US beef and farm products despite consumer concerns over their quality.

“I’m thrilled to announce that we have reached a breakthrough trade deal with the United Kingdom,” Trump said at the White House.

“The deal includes billions of dollars of increased market access for American exports, especially in agriculture.”

Starmer said it was a “really fantastic, historic day”, noting that it coincided with the 80th anniversary of “Victory Day” for allied forces – including Britain and the United States – over Nazi Germany in World War II.

The trade deal slashes export tariffs for British cars from 27.5 percent to 10 percent, Britain said.

“That is a huge and important reduction,” PM Starmer said during a visit to a Jaguar Land Rover factory in the central Midlands area of England.

Both sides said there would be further negotiations on a fuller deal, but Trump denied overselling the agreement.

“This is a maxed-out deal – not like you said it really incorrectly,” he added, answering a reporter’s question on whether he was overstating the breadth of the deal.

The deal follows a charm offensive by Starmer, who came to the White House in February armed with an invitation from King Charles III for a historic second state visit for Trump.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

## Bill Gates accuses Musk of ‘killing’ children with aid cuts

Pledges to give away his entire fortune

AGENCIES

US billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates intensified his ongoing dispute with Elon Musk, alleging that the Tesla and SpaceX CEO was harming the world's most vulnerable children by making what Gates described as ill-advised reductions to US development aid.

In an interview, Gates said that the Tesla chief had acted through ignorance.

In February, Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency in effect shut down the

US Agency for International Development, the main conduit for US aid, saying it was “time for it to die”.

The co-founder of Microsoft said the abruptness of the cuts had left life-saving food and medicines expiring in warehouses and could cause the resurgence of diseases such as measles, HIV and polio. “The picture of the world's richest man killing the world's poorest children is not a pretty one,” he told the Financial Times.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



Battery-run rickshaws stand parked under a makeshift shed on railway land in the capital's Tejkunipara, where exposed illegal electric lines are used for charging, posing grave safety risks.

## Israel closes UN schools in annexed east Jerusalem

AFP, Jerusalem

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees said yesterday that Israel closed three of its schools in annexed east Jerusalem, months after an Israeli ban on its activities took effect.

An AFP photographer at the scene reported that a closure notice in Hebrew was left at the entrance of at least one of the schools, and UNRWA said at least one of its staff members was detained.

“From May 8, 2025, it will be prohibited to operate educational institutions, or employ teachers, teaching staff or any other staff, and it will be forbidden to accommodate students or allow the entry of students into this institution,” the closure order read.

UNRWA's director in the West Bank, Roland Friedrich, told AFP that “heavily armed” forces surrounded three UNRWA schools in east Jerusalem's Shuafat camp at 9:00 am yesterday.

Friedrich added that 550 pupils aged six to 15 were present when the closure was enforced, calling the event “a traumatising experience for young children who are at immediate risk of losing their access to education.”