

SMART HOME APPLIANCES

Revolutionising Home Comfort

SEE PAGE J2



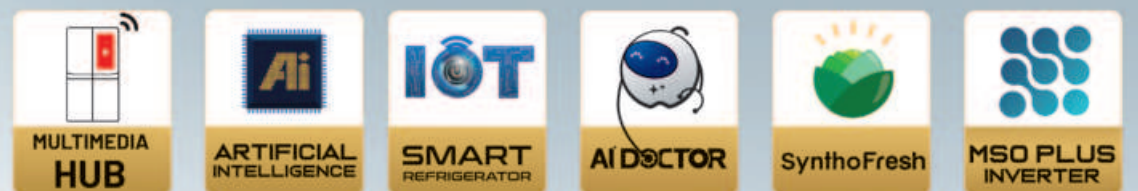
The Daily Star

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WALTON
Smart Fridge

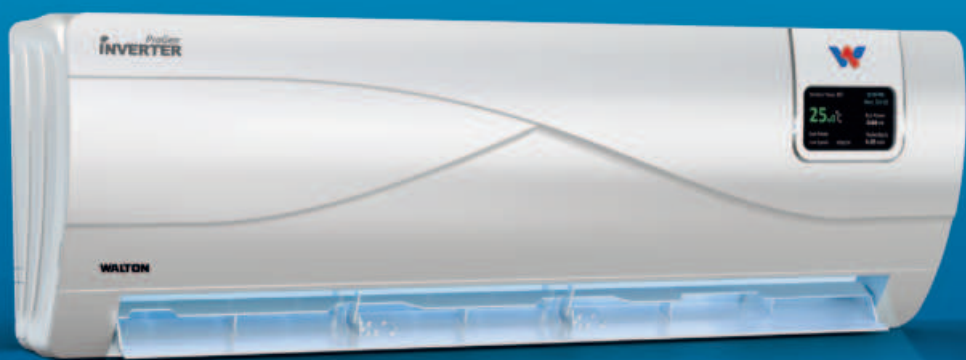
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Revolutionising Home Comfort

FROM PAGE J1

PRIYAM PAUL

Over the past decade, Bangladesh's electronics industry has witnessed remarkable growth. Products once viewed as luxuries are now seen as essentials, reflecting the country's transition from a low- to middle-income economy. As a result, the use of home appliances in everyday life is on the rise. In particular, the adoption of smart features is enhancing the functionality of these devices—making them more intuitive, user-friendly, and increasingly popular among consumers.

Smart home appliances are transforming everyday living by connecting traditional devices to advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT). From air conditioners and refrigerators to lighting and entertainment systems, these connected devices can be controlled remotely—often with just a tap on your smartphone.

Picture this: you're on your way home after a long day, and before you even step inside, your AC is cooling the room, the lights are on, and your favourite playlist is already playing. That's the promise of smart appliances—seamless comfort and control, anytime, anywhere. Unlike conventional electronics, which require manual operation, smart devices offer real-time responsiveness and remote functionality that redefine convenience.

Explaining the rationale behind smart home appliances, Tanvir Anjum, Business Coordinator to the Managing Director of Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC, says: "The world is moving forward, and we need to keep pace. Modern life is increasingly hectic, and to maintain our quality of life while meeting sustainability goals, we must adapt our lifestyles. Most people spend 7 to 8 hours at the office, and with traffic, the day often extends to 10 or 11 hours outside the home. In such a fast-paced routine, it's only natural to seek comfort—like coming

home to soothing music already playing, an air-conditioned room cooled in advance, or water at just the right temperature for a shower. To ensure this level of convenience and quality living, smart home appliances are no longer a luxury—they have become a necessity."

Salim Ullah Salim, Director of Marketing at Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd, shares: "These are all value-added services beyond the core functions of electronic devices, and the integration of artificial intelligence has introduced the latest advanced features."

According to industry insiders, the electronics market is broadly divided into two major segments: RAC (Refrigerators and Air Conditioners), which holds the largest share, and THC (Televisions and Home Appliances). The ongoing heatwave has driven a surge in demand for air conditioners, significantly boosting the overall market. In Bangladesh, nearly 70 percent of annual electronics sales occur around the two Eid festivals. Currently, local brands dominate the market, accounting for approximately 80 percent of total sales.

The smart home appliance segment within the broader electronics market is still a relatively new phenomenon in Bangladesh. With the market in its early stages, companies are actively introducing these products as part of their new business ventures.

So far, the market has been concentrated in urban areas—particularly Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet, especially in the super mega-city regions—and caters primarily to a niche group of customers. However, it holds strong prospects for growth in other areas, particularly among the large segment of remittance-receiving households across the country.

Electronics companies are increasingly equipping smart home appliances with modern features, cutting-edge technology, skilled manpower, high-quality raw materials, and continuous innovation to meet evolving customer needs.

"As a pioneer in smart home appliances

in Bangladesh, Walton entered the market with a clear vision and an aggressive product rollout strategy. At our most recent expo, we showcased our complete range of smart home appliances and received an excellent response—particularly for our smart-controlled air conditioners," says Tanvir Anjum.

"Walton introduced the first voice-controlled AC in Bangladesh, enabling customers to operate it using Bengali voice commands. We also offer ACs that can be managed through mobile phones. Our refrigerators feature smart technology that allows users to control temperature settings and locking systems remotely. Our televisions are equipped with cutting-edge features and support both Google TV and Android TV platforms. Beyond product innovation, we've launched several tools and initiatives to promote smart technology, raise awareness, and educate customers on how to use these products effectively."

"Jamuna has launched a new smart AC this year featuring 5D inverter technology, designed to significantly reduce electricity consumption while maintaining optimal temperature control with the support of artificial intelligence," notes Salim Ullah Salim. "Jamuna's smart refrigerators allow users to view the internal temperature on a display and operate on a robust 'Tough Scheme' operating system. They can be controlled via mobile apps and voice commands. If the fridge door is not properly closed, users receive a mobile notification. You can even adjust

the temperature remotely—from the road or your office. Additionally, the fridge's sound guard enables users to listen to YouTube," he adds.

With Eid approaching, companies are offering a variety of discounts, cashback offers, and coupons to make smart home appliance purchases more attractive and convenient, providing the best possible solutions for buyers.

"To make Eid even more joyful, Jamuna Electronics has launched the Double Khushi CP Offer (Season 3). Our customers have the opportunity to win Eid gifts and receive a cash discount when purchasing Jamuna Smart Home Appliances from our Jamuna Plaza or dealer

showrooms through registration during the Eid campaign. More than a couple of lucky winners each week will also get the opportunity to travel abroad through a lottery," says Monika Islam, Group Director, Jamuna Group.

S. M. Mahbulul Alam, Managing Director of Walton Hi-Tech Industries, adds: "Walton is currently running its 'Digital Campaign Season 22', offering customers a guaranteed cashback of up to one million taka on the purchase of Walton-brand refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, washing machines, or BLDC ceiling fans from any Walton Plaza or distributor outlet nationwide."



ELECTRONICS PRODUCT MARKET AT A GLANCE

Annual Market Growth
10%

CATEGORIES



RAC: Refrigerators and Air Conditioners



THC: Televisions and Small Home Appliances

ANNUAL SALES PATTERN (IN %)

Between two Eid festivals	70
Rest of the Year	30

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HOMEGROWN COMPANIES

lead in meeting rising demand

MONIKA ISLAM, Group Director, Jamuna Group

The Daily Star (TDS): Could you provide an overview of your company's current offerings and market position in the smart home appliances sector?

Monika Islam (MI): Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd., a sister concern of the country's leading business conglomerate Jamuna Group, began manufacturing smart electronic home appliances on a large scale in 2014. Modern equipment, cutting edge technology, skilled manpower, high quality raw materials, and continuous innovation have positioned Jamuna Electronics as the leading electronics brand in the country.

Our mass-produced home appliances include refrigerators, freezers, LED TVs, air conditioners, washing machines, microwave ovens, rice cookers, blenders, juicers, electric kettles, irons, gas stoves, induction cookers, infrared cookers, and various other small appliances.

The electronics market in Bangladesh typically sees a significant boost during Eid, with demand and sales rising sharply. Domestic companies are at the forefront of meeting this increased demand, and Jamuna Electronics plays a key role in this growth.

To make Eid even more joyful, Jamuna Electronics has launched the Double Khushi CP Offer (Season 3). Customers have the opportunity to win Eid gifts and receive cash discounts when purchasing Jamuna Smart Home Appliances from our Jamuna Plaza or authorised dealer showrooms by registering during the Eid campaign. Each week, multiple lucky winners will also have the chance to win international travel through a lottery draw.

TDS: How do you evaluate the current performance and competitiveness of local brands in this industry?

MI: The electronics industry in Bangladesh has made tremendous progress over the past decade. What was once a luxury has now become a necessity. As a result, the widespread use of home appliances is driving industry growth day by day. Electronics showrooms are now found everywhere—from rural villages to major cities and suburbs—playing a significant role in strengthening local manufacturers.

Over time, domestic brands like Jamuna have earned consumer trust and surpassed

many foreign competitors. The industry, once entirely reliant on imports, is now led by domestic companies. The market for refrigerators, TVs, air conditioners, and smart home appliances has expanded considerably. By reducing import dependence, we are ensuring that high quality products reach consumers at affordable prices. At the same time, rising purchasing power and improved electricity access in remote areas have further boosted demand for electronic goods. People's increasingly busy lifestyles have also contributed to this trend.

TDS: What are the key challenges hindering the industry's growth and wider adoption?

MI: In many parts of the world, geopolitical instability is threatening food and commodity security and pushing people into inflationary pressure. In Bangladesh, the dollar crisis and rising import prices have contributed to a widening trade deficit. The depreciation of the taka against the dollar has made it increasingly difficult to import essential raw materials for production.

Additionally, rising utility costs—both globally and locally—have significantly

increased production expenses, including transportation, thereby compelling manufacturers to raise prices.

Despite these multifaceted challenges, Jamuna remains committed to serving the national interest. Even amid changing circumstances, we continue to offer the best products in the market at affordable prices.

TDS: Could you share insights into your company's ongoing initiatives and future plans in the smart home appliances sector?

MI: Innovation is critical for any technology-based product. We are continually working with the latest advancements to match market demand and consumer preferences. That's why our brand's payoff line is: 'Innovation for Smarter Life'.

Jamuna Smart Home Appliances has established a strong presence among consumers, outperforming both domestic and international brands. Among local companies, Jamuna Electronics holds the top position in the consumer electronics market.

We are constantly striving to address evolving customer needs and enhance

satisfaction. Taking into account different purchasing capacities, Jamuna home appliances are available in a wide range of designs, sizes, features, and price points. Today, Jamuna is a trusted name for millions, offering products suited to the lifestyle, climate, and needs of the people of Bangladesh.

TDS: What policy reforms or government support do you believe are essential for the industry's further development?

MI: The key barriers to industrial growth in Bangladesh include infrastructural limitations, a lack of strategic planning, and the need for more effective policy implementation. This sector, which was once heavily reliant on imports, now plays a major role in the economy thanks to the efforts of domestic entrepreneurs.

However, the current tax structure—particularly in terms of industrial taxes, VAT, and customs duties—has somewhat slowed down the industry's momentum. We hope that further policy support from the government will accelerate the growth and global competitiveness of this vital sector.

REWRITING THE FUTURE

Bangladeshi Innovation in Home Appliances

ZARIF FAIAZ

The domestic appliance sector in Bangladesh is no longer playing catch-up with global markets, in many cases, it is leading them. Over the past decade, local brands like Walton and Jamuna have redefined what consumers can expect from their refrigerators, air conditioners, and other essential household devices. Their innovations go far beyond simple energy efficiency or cosmetic upgrades. These brands are pioneering the integration of artificial intelligence, smart connectivity, and health-conscious design in ways that are uniquely attuned to local needs and global trends.

One of the forerunners is the homegrown brand Walton, a name that has positioned itself as a technological powerhouse through its Research and Innovation Centre. Among its standout developments is a smart washing machine, the ATH80W, equipped with built-in weather forecast technology, a Thermo Heater, and Thermo-

Fabric Care to adapt laundry cycles to both fabric types and external conditions. In the kitchen, Walton has expanded its offering with ceramic-coated cookware and a microwave oven that supports multi-function grill and convection cooking, enhancing both utility and user experience. These products complement Walton's broader portfolio of intelligent appliances, including refrigerators with the 'AI Doctor' system—an artificial intelligence feature that not only diagnoses technical issues but initiates automated self-repair protocols or alerts the service team if manual intervention is required. Other fridges include 8-in-1 convertible compartments and Android-powered displays that double as multimedia hubs, while the AIOT platform continues to evolve as a central node of user behaviour-based energy efficiency.

In air conditioning, Walton has again set new benchmarks. Its 6-star energy-rated AC is the most efficient of its kind in Bangladesh, utilising eco-friendly

refrigerants such as R-32 and R-290. Features such as IoT-enabled smartphone control, voice-guided offline functionality in both Bengali and English, and real-time energy monitoring via a 5-inch TFT display exemplify the brand's commitment to usability and sustainability. Innovations such as UV sterilisation, ionisers, and baby-friendly modes ensure both comfort and health are prioritised, even in extreme heat of up to 55°C.

Jamuna, another well-established Bangladeshi name, has taken a health-first approach to air conditioning. Its latest models are powered by 5D AI Inverter Technology, which ensures powerful yet efficient cooling. Jamuna's Smart Inverter ACs are designed not just to cool but to cleanse the air. Using PM 2.5 filters, Cold Plasma Technology, and a suite of antimicrobial components such as Vitamin C, Silver Ion and Degerming filters, these units remove airborne

pollutants, bacteria, and odours, delivering 99% purified air. Jamuna's units also include features like UVC Sterilisation, Hot & Cool dual modes, and hands-free voice control without the need for a remote or internet connection, reinforcing the brand's commitment to accessible smart living.

Singer Beko, operating in Bangladesh under Singer, has introduced a suite of innovations that marry global standards with local sensibilities. Its refrigerators feature HarvestFresh technology, which helps preserve Vitamin A and C content in fresh produce for longer periods. Complementing this are EverFresh and EverFresh+ systems that keep fruits and vegetables fresh for up to 30 days—well above typical shelf life. The AeroFlow cooling system ensures gentle air distribution to preserve colour and texture, while a dedicated Zero Degree Compartment offers instant freshness for items meant for quick cooking.

On the connectivity front, Singer

Beko's HomeWitz platform allows users to control smart appliances via mobile devices. Meanwhile, its air conditioners are fitted with HEPA filters that claim to eliminate 99.99% of germs, reinforcing the brand's focus on hygiene and user health. These features are reinforced by a network of experiential concept stores in Dhaka, designed to let consumers engage with the technology first-hand.

As Bangladeshi consumers demand more intelligent, efficient, and sustainable home solutions, local manufacturers are not just responding—they are anticipating. Walton, Jamuna and Singer Beko exemplify a shift in mindset: from producing for affordability alone, to innovating for a smarter, healthier future. With investments in AI, IoT, and wellness-oriented design, these companies are not merely catching up to global standards—they are helping to define them. In doing so, they are reshaping expectations of what a "Made in Bangladesh" product can deliver.





WALTON'S SMART Appliances Get Smarter with AI and IoT

S M MAHBUBUL ALAM, Managing Director, Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC.

The Daily Star (TDS): Could you provide an overview of your company's current offerings and market position in the smart home appliances sector?

S M Mahbul Alam (SMMA): Walton is currently running its 'Digital Campaign Season 22', offering customers guaranteed cashback of up to one million taka on the purchase of Walton-brand refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, washing machines, or BLDC ceiling fans from any Walton Plaza or authorised distributor outlet across the country. In addition, the ongoing 'AC Exchange Offer' enables customers nationwide to trade in their old air conditioners for brand-new, energy-efficient, and eco-friendly Walton ACs—now available at a 25 percent discount. Free installation is also provided with every Walton AC purchase.

Recognising the growing demand for smart home appliances in Bangladesh, Walton has strategically focused on producing a wide range of smart products—such as refrigerators, televisions, and air conditioners—integrated with globally advanced technologies like AI (Artificial Intelligence), IoT (Internet of Things), and its proprietary 'AI Doctor'.

TDS: How do you evaluate the current performance and competitiveness of local brands in this industry in Bangladesh?

SMMA: Local electronics brands in Bangladesh have made impressive strides in recent years. Their ability to deliver high-quality products with cutting-edge features at affordable prices has strongly resonated with consumers. Combined with responsive after-sales service and extensive nationwide distribution networks, this has allowed local brands to secure a dominant position in the market. Walton, as a pioneer in the sector, along with other local players, now commands around 90 percent of the domestic electronics market.

Walton was the first in Bangladesh to introduce the 8-in-1 convertible smart refrigerator and the 3-in-1 convertible smart air conditioner. It also manufactures South Asia's most energy-efficient residential air conditioners, rated 6-Star by BSTI, and is the world's first company to launch a voice-command AC.

Walton also introduced 'AI Doctor', an AI-based diagnostic feature in IoT-enabled fridges and ACs, developed by its in-house R&D team. This feature identifies technical

issues and alerts customer service—often before users detect a problem. The AIoT system further optimises performance by learning user behaviour and adjusting settings to ensure energy-efficient operation.

Additional innovations include washing machines with weather forecasting, thermo heaters, and fabric care features. Walton's leadership has been recognised with the 'Superbrand' title and consecutive 'Best Brand Awards', including 11 years of dominance in the refrigerator category.

TDS: What are the key challenges hindering the industry's growth and wider adoption?

SMMA: The home appliance market is expanding rapidly, especially in developing countries, driven by rising incomes, urbanisation, and technological innovations like AI and IoT. These advancements are increasing demand for smarter, energy-efficient products. However, global economic uncertainty and inflation have made consumers more cautious about large purchases, leading to greater price sensitivity. Brand loyalty is also under pressure as buyers rely more on online reviews and comparisons. Intense competition in the sector continues to squeeze margins. At Walton, we closely

monitor market trends, adapt our strategies accordingly, and are actively exploring export opportunities to support sustainable national economic growth.

TDS: Could you share insights into your company's ongoing initiatives and future plans in the smart home appliances sector?

SMMA: Walton upholds customer trust through high-quality products and prompt after-sales service. We invest in advanced technology, R&D, and innovation to deliver AI- and IoT-enabled smart appliances. Expanding further, we've launched a lithium-ion battery cell manufacturing project, with commercial production set to begin by mid-2026.

TDS: What policy reforms or government support do you believe are essential for the industry's further development?

SMMA: **Refining Existing Regulations** Instead of a complete overhaul, it's essential to identify and eliminate bottlenecks and redundancies within the current regulatory framework. Priorities should include digitalising procedures, enhancing coordination among government agencies,

and resolving ambiguities in existing rules. Any new regulations should align with the core principles of the current system.

Enhancing Trade Facilitation Existing trade policies should be improved to further simplify international trade, reduce tariffs on essential imports where feasible, and strengthen export competitiveness. Strategic use of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) should be explored to unlock new global markets in line with the country's overall trade strategy.

Strengthening Business Environment Initiatives

Evaluate current government programmes aimed at improving the business climate. Identify ways to enhance their scope, accessibility, and effectiveness across industries. Any new reforms should integrate seamlessly with existing institutions that support business facilitation.

In summary, the electronics and electrical industry in Bangladesh has flourished largely due to supportive policies. Continued policy backing is vital, particularly in ensuring a level playing field in public procurement for domestic manufacturers.

THE SMART SHOPPER'S CHECKLIST

AYMAN ANIKA

Buying smart home appliances nowadays can feel like stepping into a minefield of QR codes, blinking LEDs, and tech jargon. One moment, you're just looking for a fridge that texts you when it's low on eggs, and the next, you're stuck in a rabbit hole of compatibility charts and subscription-based features.

In a market flooded with gadgets labelled as "smart," how do you make sure you're not buying an overpriced, overhyped toaster that's obsolete in two years? Welcome to the smart shopper's checklist—a reality check for those navigating the future of home living without losing their money, mind, or WiFi connection. **Start with your lifestyle, not the latest features**

Every household is different, and that's where your journey should begin—not with a list of features, but with an honest look at how you live.

Tanvir Anjum, Business Coordinator to the Managing Director of Walton Hi-Tech Industries, describes it clearly, "Smart home appliances basically mean AI-incorporated or IoT-integrated devices. It's about connectivity—your phone being connected to your AC, your fridge, your alarm clock, even your door lock. You're five minutes from home, and you can turn on the AC, the lights, maybe even play your preferred music. That's what makes it smart."

The smartest appliance isn't the one with the most bells and whistles—it's the one that integrates effortlessly into your day-to-day

life. Don't be swayed by shiny packaging or futuristic demos. Begin by identifying your pain points and picking devices that address them directly.

Local conditions matter more than you think

Most global smart devices are built assuming stable infrastructure—steady electricity, clean water lines, good insulation, and flawless WiFi. These assumptions don't always hold true everywhere in Bangladesh, where voltage spikes can damage sensitive electronics, and internet dropouts are routine. In these conditions, how "smart" a device is depends on how well it adapts to your environment.

Before making a purchase, check if the appliance has built-in voltage protection or auto-resume features after power failures. A smart fridge that resets its settings after every outage can become a daily frustration. Similarly, an app-controlled geyser might look great until the WiFi fails and no one at home knows how to turn it on manually. Always think in terms of backup functionality, especially in a country where infrastructure can be unpredictable.

Don't pay for gimmicks

One of the biggest traps in smart appliance marketing is the emphasis on gimmicky features that look impressive but serve little real purpose. "AI wash," "smart diagnosis," and "energy-aware cycles" sound innovative, but are often marketing repackagings of basic functionalities. A feature is only "smart" if it adds measurable value to your routine.

When evaluating features, ask yourself if you'll still use it six months down the line. If not, it's probably not worth paying for. That's why homegrown innovation also matters. Walton, for instance, has been focusing on

Choose brands that think long-term

Software support is an often-overlooked issue in the smart appliance world. Many devices depend on periodic software updates to remain functional, secure, and compatible with newer

technicians trained to work with smart systems. Global giants like Samsung, LG, and Whirlpool typically have stronger after-sales support networks in Bangladesh. But local manufacturers are not far behind—on the contrary, they are actively innovating and making their presence felt across all segments.

Monika Islam, Group Director of Jamuna Group, underscores this shift: "Domestic brands like Jamuna have built a strong position among consumers, leaving behind foreign brands. The electronics industry, which was once completely dependent on imports, is now dominated by domestic companies."

The rise of locally manufactured smart appliances is not just a sign of self-sufficiency—it's also a way for buyers to access innovation that's tailored for the Bangladeshi lifestyle and climate.

Local support should be part of your decision

Many Bangladeshi buyers overlook one crucial element: what happens if the product breaks? Imported gadgets may come with great features, but limited or no local servicing. That smart oven from an online store might seem like a steal—until something goes wrong and there's no technician qualified to fix it.

Always ask where the service centre is located. Is there support in your city? How long do repairs typically take? Are there spare parts available locally? It's also smart to photograph and digitally store your warranty papers—service providers in Bangladesh often "misplace" hard copies.

QUICK TIPS FOR SMART APPLIANCE SHOPPERS



Always ask: "Will I use this feature six months from now?"



Check for built-in voltage protection—it's not optional.



Look for auto-resume features after power cuts.



Opt for Bangla voice compatibility if available—it's practical.



Avoid brands without local servicing or app updates.



Store warranty and service info digitally.

function-driven products.

As Anjum notes, "We launched the first voice-controlled AC in Bangladesh, and it even works in Bangla. You can turn it on from outside the home. Our smart fridges let you manage temperature and even lock the device remotely. Our TVs are Google TV and Android TV. We are integrating IoT across our entire product line."

tech. Unfortunately, some lesser-known or imported brands disappear from the market in a year or two, leaving their customers stuck with expensive hardware that no longer syncs with anything.

If you're buying a high-investment smart product, make sure the brand has a local footprint—authorised service centres, responsive customer support, and

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BCB off-guard with Fizz's IPL call-up
P11

JnU protesters to press on with Kakrail sit-in

50 hurt as police beat up students, teachers; Adviser Mahfuj says govt open to talks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath University students last night declared they would not leave the streets until their three-point demand is met, after police action and Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam's attempt to move them through talks failed.

Several hundred students and some teachers, including the vice-chancellor and pro-vice chancellor, continued their sit-in in Dhaka's Kakrail intersection near Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' official residence Jamuna till the filing of this report at 1:00am.

The protesters said they would not withdraw their demonstration without getting assurances from Prof Yunus, who returned home around 8:00pm after his visit to Chattogram.

The students' demands include increased budget allocation for the university, introduction of a housing allowance, and improvement of academic facilities.

JnU Chhatra Dal's Member Secretary Shamsul Arefin, at a media briefing on behalf of the protesters around 12:00am, said, "After discussion with the students, we have decided that we will not leave this place under any circumstances."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Police beat up a Jagannath University student protester near Kakrail mosque during the students' march to Jamuna, the chief adviser's residence, yesterday for housing allowance, increased budget allocation and improved academic facilities. Police baton-charged and fired tear gas shells at the protesters to disperse them.

'Let's create the world we envision'

Yunus tells graduates at 5th CU convocation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged everyone not to accept norms, but to work to create the kind of world they envision.



"I hope we all will try to shape the future of the world with our own hands, creating it as we envision," Yunus said in his speech at the 5th convocation ceremony of Chittagong University.

The CU authorities conferred an honorary Doctor of Literature degree on Yunus for his outstanding contributions to poverty alleviation through microcredit and establishing peace across the globe.

"Everyone should have a dream, imagining what kind of world, what kind

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5
MORE STORIES ON PAGE 3

SHAMMO MURDER Protests rage at DU

JCD demands resignation of VC; DU forms probe body; 3 suspects held

DU CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested three suspects over the murder of Dhaka University JCD leader Shahriar Alam Shammo at Suhrawardy Udyan, as his killing sparked outrage across the DU campus.

The arrestees are Tamim Hawlader, 30, Samrat Mallik, 28, and Palash Sarder, 30, said Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of Ramna Division Police.

They have no ties with the DU, he added. The arrests came after the killing, which took place on Tuesday night, drew strong reactions from various sections at DU, with different student bodies demanding exemplary punishment for the killers.

A platform named Students Against Terrorism has called a full-day strike at DU today, rejecting the administration's half-day mourning over the death of Shammo.

Earlier, in the evening, activists of JCD, Biplobi Chhatra Moitree, Bangladesh Chhatra Federation, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Chhatra Front held a torch procession on the campus under the banner of Students Against Terrorism.

They also urged students to boycott all classes, exams, and administrative activities, calling the university's response "insensitive and inadequate."

They said the strike will conclude with a protest rally at 5:00pm at the Aparajeyo Bangla, demanding the resignation of the vice-chancellor and proctor for their failure to provide security for students.

According to Sub-Inspector Tawfique Hasan of Shahbagh Police Station, the three arrestees, along with others, had a scuffle with Shammo at the Suhrawardy Udyan and subsequently killed him.

He said the scuffle took place when a motorcycle of the accused collided with Shammo's bike.

The SI, however, did not say whether the man who stabbed Shammo was among the arrestees.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Agreement with IMF at last

Extra \$762m sought from IMF; \$3.3b expected from dev partners by June

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government has reached a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund for the fourth and fifth tranches of the \$4.7 billion loan programme, resolving months of uncertainty over their disbursement.

Besides, it has sought an additional \$762 million to navigate the "significant

revenue mobilisation and full implementation of exchange rate reforms, said Chris Papageorgiou, the IMF mission chief for Bangladesh, in the statement.

"The authorities reiterated their commitment to the objectives of the reform programme including fiscal reforms to address the emerging external financing gap, calibrating monetary policy to bring down inflation and fully

The authorities reiterated their commitment to the objectives of the reform programme including fiscal reforms to address the emerging external financing gap, calibrating monetary policy to bring down inflation and fully implementing exchange rate reforms to enhance flexibility.
— IMF

macroeconomic challenges", the IMF said in a statement yesterday.

The disbursement of the two tranches, amounting to about \$1.3 billion, and the request for a top-up of the loan amount are now awaiting approval by the IMF board.

The board approval is contingent on the completion of prior actions related to tax

implementing exchange rate reforms to enhance flexibility," the statement said.

Key priorities include streamlining tax exemptions, enhancing tax compliance and delineating tax policy from administration, the IMF said, adding that a comprehensive approach is required in parallel to rein in subsidy expenditures in the electricity sector.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BB eases currency controls in IMF reform push

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has moved to a more flexible, market-oriented exchange rate system, easing pressure on foreign exchange reserves and meeting a key condition tied to a \$4.7 billion loan programme with the International Monetary Fund.

The central bank yesterday lifted a Tk 1 spread between buying and selling rates of the dollar by repealing a January directive. At the same time, it reinstated an earlier circular issued in December 2024, allowing banks to "freely" negotiate the dollar rate for both interbank and customer transactions. That marks a formal return to a pricing framework driven by demand and supply.

While not a fully floating regime, the move grants banks wider autonomy in setting rates and reflects a shift toward managed flexibility.

Bangladesh Bank is now expected to step back from daily intervention but will retain the option to stabilise the market when necessary. To that end, it has set aside a \$500 million fund to support the foreign exchange market.

"We believe the exchange rate will remain broadly where it is now, around its current level," Governor Ahsan H Mansur told reporters at a virtual briefing from Dubai yesterday.

"We don't anticipate any need for intervention going forward. This does not mean the dollar can be sold at any price. We will be able to keep the market-based system operational."

Mansur also warned that the central bank would take firm action against rogue traders seeking to manipulate the market.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

BSF pushes back 60 more Bangladeshis Says BGB

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

India's Border Security Force (BSF) pushed back at least 60 Bangladeshis through borders in Sylhet and Moulvibazar yesterday.

In Sylhet, BSF members pushed back 16 Bangladeshis through the Atgram border in Kanaighat upazila in the morning.

The group includes eight men, six women, and two children.

A BGB patrol team (Zakiganj Battalion) detained them soon after they entered Bangladesh, said Lieutenant Colonel Md Zubayer Anwar, commanding officer of the 19 BGB Battalion.

Lt Col Zubayer said their identities have been confirmed after questioning. They are Bangladeshis, and BSF pushed them back following illegal entry into India.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5



Teachers and students of Dhaka University demonstrate near the vice-chancellor's residence yesterday, demanding justice for Shahriar Alam Shammo, a Chhatra Dal activist who was murdered near Suhrawardy Udyan on Tuesday night.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

DEATH OF MIGRANTS IN KSA HRW calls for investigation, compensation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Human Rights Watch investigation found that migrant workers from Bangladesh, India and Nepal have died in gruesome yet avoidable workplace-related accidents in Saudi Arabia.

Many migrant deaths in the Gulf country are erroneously classified as "natural" and are neither investigated nor compensated, said the report.

It found that employers violated or sought to evade their obligation under Saudi law that requires employers to bear the costs of repatriation of the remains.

HRW found that the "No Objection Certificate" given to a Bangladeshi worker who died of "electrocution" marked the possibility of compensation as "no", with the cause of death as "not available".

The son of the Bangladeshi man who died of electric shock told HRW that his father's employer said that they will receive compensation if they agree on a burial in Saudi soil.

"The family rejected this and had to pay more than Tk 5 lakh to repatriate the body, which they financed through loans. The family received Tk 3.35 lakh in compensation from the Bangladeshi government," the report said.

The family is now in debt, it said. The family members of nine deceased Bangladeshi workers told HRW that the employers offered lump sum payments or coverage of monthly expenses provided that the dead are buried in Saudi Arabia.

"Despite their dire economic conditions, eight families said they had refused these offers while six paid the repatriation costs themselves," said the report.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

WHO reduces management team after US funding cuts

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization chief told staff yesterday the UN agency was reducing its management team after US funding cuts forced it to shrink its budget dramatically.

In a short email to WHO staff, seen by AFP, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced the new "composition of the executive management team" at the agency's Geneva headquarters, with six members – down from 11.

The new team takes over from June 16, he said.

Two big figures from WHO's work leading the global battle against Covid-19 will be leaving: emergencies director Mike Ryan of Ireland and Canadian Bruce Aylward, who heads work towards universal health coverage.

Five existing members will remain, including Jeremy Farrar, a British medical researcher and former head of London-based health charity The Wellcome Trust.



PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus delivers his speech at the 5th convocation ceremony of Chittagong University yesterday.

US aware of ban on AL activities

Says principal deputy spokesperson, pledges support for democratic process

UNB, Dhaka

The US has said it supports a free and democratic process as well as fair and transparent legal processes for all individuals, noting that it is aware of the ban imposed by the interim government on the activities of Bangladesh Awami League.

"We are aware that the interim government has banned the Awami League from all political activities until a special tribunal for the party and its leaders concludes," said Thomas Pigott, principal deputy spokesperson at the US Department of State.

He made the remarks when a journalist sought US' views on banning activities of the AL during a regular briefing in Washington DC on May 13.

Pigott said they do not support any one political party in Bangladesh over another.

He said they urge all countries, including Bangladesh, to respect the freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association for all.

Responding to a separate question, the Principal Deputy Spokesperson at the US Department of State said they value their "partnership with the people of Bangladesh" spanning more than 50 years.

He said they remain committed to deepening their partnership by working with the interim government.

Agreement with IMF at last

FROM PAGE 1

Steadfast implementation of the flexible new exchange rate regime will remain critical, the IMF added.

In the interest of maintaining Bangladesh's macroeconomic stability, both parties carefully reviewed all matters and reached an agreement on reforms related to revenue management, exchange rate policy and other structural areas, the finance ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The development is expected to unlock further foreign funding, with the government expecting to receive a total of \$3.3 billion from various bilateral and multilateral lenders by June.

Other than \$1.3 billion from the IMF, Bangladesh is expecting to receive another \$2 billion in budget support from various development partners including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and OPEC Fund for International Development, according to the ministry statement.

The funds will further strengthen the country's foreign exchange reserves, which will help maintain stability in the exchange rate.

As of May 7, foreign currency reserves stood at \$20.29 billion, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

"It is important to note that the reform programmes undertaken to receive budget support from development partners are entirely planned at the discretion of the government and are adopted in the national interest," the finance ministry said.

Under the new tax plan, the government has agreed to collect an additional Tk 30,000 crore in revenue in the next fiscal year under a new tax measure endorsed by the IMF.

They will raise the value-added tax on several products to the standard rate of 15 percent, cut back on tax holidays and withdraw various exemptions.

Initially, the IMF had recommended raising additional taxes equivalent to 0.9 percent of the national GDP.

But following a series of meetings, both sides settled on a lower target of 0.7 percent – an estimated Tk 40,000 crore in additional taxes – of which Tk 10,000 crore is expected to be collected through administrative measures.

Bangladesh is expected to receive \$500 million in budget support from the WB among the \$2 billion thanks to the government's move to dissolve the National Board of Revenue on the IMF's prescription.

Through an ordinance earlier this week, the interim government dissolved the NBR and replaced it with two distinct entities under the finance ministry: the revenue policy division and the revenue management division.

"It was not only the condition of the IMF, it was a condition of the World Bank too," said one of the finance ministry officials on the condition of anonymity as he is not authorised to speak with the media.

The ADB is set to provide \$900 million: \$500 million for implementing banking sector reforms and \$400 million for mitigating the impacts of climate change, they said.

In addition, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank would provide \$400 million and AFD \$100 million in co-financing initiatives with the ADB.

Besides, the OPEC Fund for International Development would provide a \$100 million loan for strengthening economic management and governance.

JnU protesters to press on with Kakrail sit-in

FROM PAGE 1

"If any untoward incident occurs, the advisers and the government must take full responsibility."

He condemned the police action against the protesters earlier in the afternoon, warning of tougher protests.

Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam arrived at the protest site around 10:10pm.

Referring to police action to disperse the protesters earlier in the day, Mahfuj said the government instructed the law enforcement agencies to first attempt to talk to protesters instead of using force with teachers and students demonstrate.

"The government is willing to listen to any movement, to sit down, and to talk. Dr Muhammad Yunus is aware of the crisis at Jagannath University," he added.

As he was speaking, the atmosphere turned hostile with a section of students chanting "Bhua, Bhua" (fake, fake). Amid the commotion, a water bottle hurled from the left side of the crowd struck the adviser in the head. Following the incident, Mahfuj left the scene without making any further comment.

JnU Chhatra Dal's Arefin regretted the "unexpected" incident, but added, "Had our demands been met, we wouldn't have come here, and this incident wouldn't have taken place."

Mahfuj, in a Facebook post around 12:30am, said the JnU protesters' demands were submitted to the government and the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner was asked not to attack them or take any forceful measure to disperse them.

The JnU authorities, in a late-night notice, postponed all examinations that were scheduled to be held today.

Earlier in the afternoon, police baton-charged and fired tear gas shells at JnU students when the protesters under the banner "JnU Oikya" tried to break police barricades during their "Long March to Jamuna" from the university's Shaheed Minar.

Protests rage at DU

FROM PAGE 1

The arrestees have been sent to jail after they were produced before a court, the SI, also the investigation officer of the case, said.

Police will seek remand today, he added.

Shammo, 25, was the literature and publication secretary of the JCD's Sir AF Rahman Hall unit and a student of the 2018-19 session at the Institute of Education and Research. He lived in Room 222 of the hall.

He hailed from Ullapara in Sirajganj. On Tuesday night, Shammo was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with stab injuries, where doctors declared him dead.

As the news of Shammo's murder spread, agitated students barricaded the residence of the VC in the early hours of yesterday, resulting in a brief altercation between the VC, Dr Niaz Ahmed Khan, and the students.

Yesterday, Shammo's father Fakhrul Alam broke down in tears after seeing his son's body at the hospital.

"My son was a gentle boy. Why would outsiders kill him? I demand the highest punishment for his killers," he said.

After the first namaz e janaza at the Central Mosque of Dhaka University, Shammo's body was taken to Ullapara. He will be laid to rest at his family's graveyard after a second janaza there, said sources close to his family.

Yesterday, JCD brought out

at least 50 people were injured as police intercepted the procession near Kakrail intersection and dispersed the protesters around 12:30pm.

At least 38 protesters were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with injuries or after falling ill from tear gas inhalation, according to hospital sources.

Those injured include Prof Dr Md Rois Uddin, general secretary of Jagannath University Teachers' Association, and Nasir Uddin Ahmed, an English department teacher.

After the police assault, the protesters staged a sit-in in front of the Kakrail mosque, blocking the adjacent intersection. Vice-Chancellor Prof Rezaul Karim and other teachers joined the protest around 3:00pm.

Speaking to journalists, Prof Rois Uddin said, "We will stay here until there is justice for the police attack on students and our demands are fulfilled."

JnU Proctor Prof Dr Tajammul Haque said, "The authorities responded inhumanely to a legitimate student movement."

The students have been protesting for several days for the introduction housing allowance for 70 percent of students from the 2025-26 fiscal year until proper residential facilities are ensured. They also want approval of JnU's proposed budget for FY26 without cuts. Their third demand is that a second campus be constructed after approval in the next ECNEC meeting on a priority basis.

Contacted, citing a recent notice, Ramna Zone Deputy Police Commissioner Masud Alam said they could not allow the procession towards the CA's residence.

On May 10, Dhaka Metropolitan Police imposed bans on public gatherings near the Secretariat, Jamuna, and surrounding areas to maintain public order and ensure the safety of the chief adviser. However, the ban on protest excluded Shahbagh.

Previously, on March 13 this year, and

on August 25 and 29 last year, similar restrictions were imposed around the Secretariat and the chief adviser's residence.

Despite these bans, multiple gatherings have taken place in these areas, including the recent protests for a ban on the Awami League.

Many took to social media yesterday to decry what they called a "double standard" by authorities.

National Citizen Party leaders Hasnat Abdullah, Sarjis Alam and many others came here "just days ago and were welcomed with food and water," said a JnU protester.

"But we came with legitimate demands and were met with batons, tear gas, and sound grenades – even our teachers were not spared," the protester added.

NURSING STUDENTS BLOCK ROAD Meanwhile, hundreds of nursing students blocked the Shahbagh intersection to press their demand that all levels of the diplomas in nursing and midwifery courses be recognised as equivalent to a bachelor's degree.

The nursing students' protests, coupled with the JnU students' demonstration, caused severe traffic congestion.

Witnesses said the nursing students had initially gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar, giving the government a one-hour ultimatum. As no assurance was given within that time, they occupied the intersection around 1:30pm, blocking traffic.

Around 8:00pm, law enforcers removed the nursing students from the Shahbagh intersection, allowing vehicular movement to resume after six hours.

The protesters later gathered in front of the National Museum.

Around 8:45pm, law enforcers dispersed them again and forced them to march towards the Shaheed Minar area.

In a statement, it urged the authorities to take visible measures to enhance campus safety and demanded that the government assume responsibility for Shammo's family.

The killing of a university student on the DU campus may be part of a larger conspiracy to destabilise the university and the country, especially at a time when citizens nationwide are calling for a national election, the statement said.

Meanwhile, the DU authorities, after a meeting with law enforcers and other stakeholders, decided to permanently close the Suhrawardy Udyan's gate near the Raju Sculpture, evict nearby vendors, and begin regular anti-crime and anti-narcotics raids to curb rising violence and drug abuse.

"Seventy percent of crime activities linked to Dhaka University occur in Suhrawardy Udyan, as seen in the 'Proloy Gang' issue and many others," said Asif Mahmud, adviser to the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, who took part in the meeting.

"We discussed transitioning Suhrawardy Udyan into a regulated public space like Ramna Park," the adviser added.

Suhrawardy Udyan will remain shut after 8:00pm, he said.

After the meeting, the VC said efforts to control external traffic around the campus had to be scaled back as concerns were raised over personal freedom.

FROM PAGE 1

of society, what kind of family, and what kind of education system we truly desire," said Yunus, also a former CU teacher.

Everyone must find a way to implement these visions, he said, adding, "If we simply accept things as they are and conform to existing norms, then nothing will change, nothing will transform."

Yunus said he was delighted to be at CU after a long time, and recalled his days as a teacher after joining the economics department in 1972.

He recalled the 1974 famine and how he, along with others, and students worked for introduction of high-yielding paddy varieties during the winter (Boro) season near CU campus, using deep tube-wells and water collected from a fountain.

The chief adviser also narrated the story when he introduced microcredit to the women at Jobra village, near the CU.

"Today, I'm saying this because I came here as a teacher. But as time passed, I realised that I had become a student. I was no longer in the role of a teacher: I was learning, constantly learning."

He added that he learned a lot from the women of Jobra village.

"I started learning about a new economy from the women of Jobra. In that sense, Jobra became my new university. Everything I have done so far is the outcome of what I learnt from Jobra," he said.

The chief adviser said during that time, he wrote and made remarks asserting that credit is a human right. At that moment, everyone laughed. "You talk about loans, and you talk

BB eases currency controls

FROM PAGE 1

Now, Bangladesh Bank will publish a daily reference benchmark exchange rate, a weighted average of actual market quotes submitted by banks. This is meant to guide the market without enforcing a fixed rate.

To support this benchmark system, banks will now be required to report all foreign exchange transactions equal to or above \$100,000 twice daily: once by 11:30am for trades executed before 11:00am, and again by 5:30pm for trades completed between 11:00am and 5:00pm. The central bank will provide a standard template for reporting.

The central bank described the changes as part of a broader move toward "wider flexibility in exchange rate management," a stance that aligns with IMF recommendations.

Analysts said the goal is to gradually replace administrative controls with a transparent, market-responsive pricing framework, while retaining regulatory oversight.

Mansur said the decision was made as Bangladesh reached a full staff-level agreement with the IMF over the release of \$1.3 billion in the next two tranches of the loan programme.

"We believe the time is right to introduce a market-based exchange rate as the current account deficit is manageable, and our reserves have risen without external support," Mansur said.

Analysts say the effectiveness of the new framework will depend on how strictly the central bank maintains its commitment to flexibility and how quickly interbank liquidity improves.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, welcomed the central bank's "bold" step, which he said signals confidence in the ability of the market.

If the BB maintains its commitment to a flexible rate, the taka can adjust dynamically in response to external shocks, including volatile global commodity prices, economic downturns among major trading partners, and natural disasters, according to him.

A flexible exchange rate lets businesses and investors trade based on real market conditions, improving pricing and boosting economic agility,

about rights – what kind of statement is this?

"Exactly, economics has no place for rights. And yet, here I am talking about human rights."

Yunus said when he talked about sending poverty to the museum, many argued that it was the government's job.

He replied, "I will continue doing my work. If the government tries to stop me, I will deal with it then."

The chief adviser said the economics being taught at universities is business-oriented, not human-centered. "We have built a business-centric civilization: one that revolves around commerce. But this civilization is self-destructive; it will not survive."

"This led me to think on a larger scale. I declared that we must build a new civilization – one where the foundation of economics is people, where its basis is future planning and forward-thinking ideas."

Yunus at the convocation said that CU can be proud with two Nobel winners, one is he and another is Grameen Bank, as the birth of the bank took place at the university's economics department.

Yunus and Grameen Bank jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

The convocation was celebrated in a festive atmosphere. The entire campus was beautifully decorated for the occasion. After a long time, former students reunited on campus, sharing joyful moments together. Many brought along their parents and children to cherish and share this proud moment of their lives.

Around 23,000 graduates took part at the event.

he said.

"BB should intervene only when necessary, such as during periods of natural disasters or large unanticipated financial shocks."

NECESSITY OF IMF FUNDS Mansur dismissed concerns about the necessity of IMF loans, saying the funding was less about short-term liquidity and more about signalling.

"I previously said we don't necessarily need the IMF fund urgently for our balance of payments. But if we can add a little more, what's the harm? If reserves become \$28 billion or \$30 billion, what's the issue? There is no major fundamental shift."

"The more important reason is signalling," Mansur added. "We are sending a message – both to domestic and international investors, to market participants, to bankers that reforms are underway and will continue," he said.

Deputy Governor Habibur Rahman said the IMF also shifted its position during negotiations.

"Earlier, we were not agreeing – now we are. But it's not that only the Bangladesh authorities moved forward. The IMF also compromised on some of its positions. Both sides had to yield something," he said.

Governor Mansur explained the central bank's stance on remittance syndicates and offshore aggregators.

"What aggregators do or don't do doesn't require us to react immediately," Mansur said. "If there's a large trade, banks can approach us. We'll assist. Or they can buy from another bank. The aim is to develop the interbank market."

He said speculative pressure had already diminished: "Over the past seven to eight months, we've seen the market can remain stable. When speculators tried eight months ago, they couldn't succeed. They still won't be able to."

Addressing concerns about the banking sector, Mansur said the central bank's top priority was to strengthen governance. "I firmly believe the core problem lies in weak management and board structures, compounded by the government's earlier reluctance to enforce proper oversight," he said. "That inertia is now being addressed."

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KALURGHAT BRIDGE

A step closer to reality

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

After decades of anticipation, hope has finally arrived for thousands of commuters in Chattogram, as the foundation stone for the long-awaited Kalurghat Bridge was formally laid yesterday.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus unveiled the foundation stone plaque at an event at the Chattogram Circuit House in the morning.

The new bridge, to be constructed over the Karnaphuli, will replace the existing century-old steel truss bridge, originally built in 1930.

Speaking at the event, Yunus expressed optimism that the bridge's completion would finally bring an end to the prolonged transportation hardships faced by the people of Chattogram.

"I have many memories associated with the Kalurghat



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus unveils the foundation stone plaque of the long-awaited Kalurghat Bridge at an event at the Chattogram Circuit House yesterday. PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

Bridge. It holds great historical significance. Residents of Boalkhali are also present here today -- this bridge has long been their cherished dream. Once completed, it will alleviate many of the hardships faced by the people of Chattogram," he said.

The existing Kalurghat

Bridge, an ageing steel structure, currently allows only light vehicles and limited rail traffic. Over the years, it has become a source of frustration for commuters and traders due to frequent disruptions and safety concerns.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Reform laws for women's equal inheritance rights: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday emphasised the need for urgent legal reforms to guarantee equal inheritance rights for women.

They highlighted the entrenched inequality in Bangladesh's inheritance laws, which are still governed by the outdated 1961 family law, and stressed that gender sensitivity and legal equality are essential to building a just and inclusive society.

The speakers criticised the outdated legal framework for discrimination against women across religious communities and called for a uniform, secular family code that guarantees equal property rights for all, regardless of gender.

The seminar, titled "Gender Sensitivity and Legal Equality are Necessary to Build a Non-Discriminatory and Humane Society", was organised by Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) at the Women's Voluntary Association in Dhanmondi.

BNPS coordinator Nasreen Begum, in her keynote presentation, stressed the need to secure women's rights to

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



COURT CORNER

Zubaida gets HC bail in 2007 graft case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail to Zubaida Rahman, wife of BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, in a corruption case in which she was sentenced to three years' imprisonment by a lower court in 2023.

The HC bench of Justice Md Khasruzzaman passed the order after accepting an appeal filed by Zubaida challenging the trial court verdict.

The bail of Zubaida, who returned to Bangladesh on May 6 after 17 years from London, will continue until disposal of the appeal, the court said.

The HC stayed the realisation of the fine imposed by the lower court on Zubaida in this case and called for its record from the lower court, Zubaida's lawyer Maksud Ullah said.



EC REGISTRATION

Verdict on Jamaat's appeal June 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has scheduled June 1 for delivering its verdict on Jamaat-e-Islami's appeal against a High Court verdict that cancelled the party's registration with the Election Commission.

A four-member bench led by Chief Justice Syed Rezaul Haque fixed the date yesterday after concluding the hearing of the appeal.

The HC on August 1, 2013, scrapped Jamaat's registration with the EC following a writ petition filed by Syed Rezaul Haque Chandpuri, secretary general of the Bangladesh Tariqat Federation, along with 24 others, on January 25, 2009.

The EC scrapped Jamaat's registration in October 2018, ahead of the 11th national polls.

Court issues travel ban on Nanak, family

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued a travel ban on former lawmaker from Dhaka-13 constituency Jahangir Kabir Nanak, his wife Syeda Arjuman Banu and their daughter S Amreen Rakhi in connection with corruption allegations against them.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court in Dhaka passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Md Moniruzzaman, who is leading the inquiry team, submitted an application.

ACC Prosecutor Asaduzzaman Rana moved the application on behalf of the anti-graft body.

In the application, the ACC official said Nanak, also former textiles and jute minister, and his family amassed a huge amount of money through illegal means and corruption.

'Plans on to turn Ctg port into a world-class hub'

Chief adviser says top global firms to be brought in to manage it



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus visits the Chattogram Port as part of his daylong trip to the port city yesterday. PHOTO: PTD

STAR REPORT

The interim government has taken initiatives to turn Chattogram Port into a "world-class" facility by involving top global port management companies, said Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

He made the remarks while speaking at the Chattogram Port during his day-long tour of

the port city -- his first visit since assuming office, reports BSS.

"It will be a big opportunity for us," he said, adding that materialising the plans would boost the national economy and create thousands of jobs.

"To transform Bangladesh's economy, Chattogram Port is our hope. Without it, there's no alternative," the chief adviser said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Cut waterlogging in Ctg by half

Yunus directs authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has directed the authorities concerned to reduce waterlogging in Chattogram city by half compared to the previous rainy season, intending to gradually eliminate the entire issue.

He gave this directive while speaking as the chief guest at a views exchange meeting on waterlogging held at the Chattogram Circuit House conference room yesterday.

Prof Yunus arrived in Chattogram yesterday morning for a day-long visit -- his first visit to the city since assuming office as chief adviser.

During the meeting, he listened to updates and experiences shared by representatives of the Chattogram City Corporation, Chattogram District Administration, and other local service organisations and civil society groups.

"We have had many theoretical discussions. We don't want those anymore. We want to permanently solve the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Excess salt intake linked to surge in NCDs: experts

- Limit daily salt intake to 5g as per WHO guidelines
- Implement national salt reduction strategy
- Mandate clear front-of-pack nutrition labelling
- Raise public awareness about hidden salt in processed foods
- Monitor, regulate salt content in packaged, restaurant foods

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Excessive daily salt intake is significantly increasing in the country, raising the risk of hypertension, heart disease, stroke, and kidney problems, said public health experts yesterday.

Citing a 2018 survey, they said Bangladeshi adults consume an average of 9 grammes of salt per day -- almost double the World Health Organization's recommended limit of 5 grammes.

They also noted that around 25,000 people die each year from salt-related health complications.

They made the remarks at a discussion marking World Salt Awareness Week 2025, held at the Jatiya Press Club and organised by the National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh, according to a press release.

In his keynote speech, Ahmad Khairul Abrar, coordinator of the foundation's salt reduction

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Passenger traffic nears twice its capacity at HSIA

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, the country's main aviation hub, is currently handling nearly twice its intended passenger capacity, leaving airport authorities struggling to maintain expected service standards.

Originally designed to accommodate 8 million passengers annually, the airport handled nearly 12.5 million passengers, both domestic and international, in 2024, compared to 11.7 million in 2023, according to the outgoing executive director of HSIA, Group Captain Kamrul Islam.

He was speaking at an event organised by the Aviation and Tourism Journalists' Forum of Bangladesh at the Civil Aviation Authority headquarters in the capital.

The incoming Executive Director of HSIA, Group Captain SM Ragib Samad, was also present at the event.

Despite political volatility last year, passenger traffic through HSIA rose by around 8 percent, primarily driven by the continued outbound flow of migrant workers.

Authorities expect the situation to improve once the much-anticipated third terminal becomes operational by the end of this year.

With the terminal, the airport will be able to handle more than 20 million passengers annually, leading to smoother operations and improved services. The added capacity will also allow more airlines to operate flights from Dhaka.

Kamrul also highlighted that introducing

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Several hundred nursing students blocked the Shahbagh intersection in Dhaka yesterday afternoon to press home their demand for upgrading the nursing diploma to Bachelor's degree. The blockade triggered a severe traffic congestion in the nearby areas and caused immense sufferings to commuters.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Dhaka vows 15% female deployment in UN police units

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has pledged several specialised military and police units to further strengthen the uniformed capabilities of UN peacekeeping operations.

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain announced these new pledges while delivering the country statement at the concluding day of UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin yesterday, according to a statement of the Bangladesh Permanent Mission in New York.

Bangladesh's pledges also included deployment of 15% female peacekeepers in police units and implementation of an AI Integrated Camp Surveillance and Response System and installation of 1.8 MW solar panels in existing missions.

Touhid is leading the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

NAGAD ADMINISTRATOR BB moves to vacate SC stay on appointment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank has filed a petition with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court recently for vacating its order that stayed a High Court verdict which upheld the central bank's decision to appoint an administrator for the mobile financial service provider Nagad Ltd.

Chamber judge Justice Md Rezaul Haque yesterday sent the petition to its full bench for hearing on May 19.

Earlier on May 7, the SC chamber judge stayed for eight weeks the HC verdict that on February 16 this year upheld the Bangladesh Bank's decision to appoint an administrator for Nagad Ltd and also rejected a petition filed by Nagad's Director Md Shafayat Alam challenging legality of the central bank's decision.

The apex court chamber judge also asked the writ petitioner to move a leave to appeal petition before this court challenging the HC judgement by this eight weeks' period.

On August 21 last year, the central bank appointed its Director Muhammad Badiuzzaman Dider as the administrator at Nagad for one year. In addition, six other central bank officials were sent to Nagad to assist the administrator.

Two children found dead in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Savar

Police recovered the bodies of two children from a pond in Ashulia yesterday morning, around 16 hours after they went missing.

The bodies were found around 9:00am in Ashulia's Baipail.

The deceased are Limon Hossain, 11, son of Ratan Mia from Aminpur upazila in Pabna, and Manik Hossain, 9, son of Ziaul Hossain from Madarganj upazila in Jamalpur.

Both children lived with their families in a rented house in Baipail.

Md Shahinur Kabir, additional superintendent of police for Savar circle, said the boys were last seen playing in a nearby field around 5:30pm yesterday. When they did not return home, their families began searching for them.

Locals spotted the bodies floating in a pond and informed police.



Most roads in Tangail town dilapidated

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Most roads in Tangail town have long remained in a sorry state, causing untold suffering for commuters.

Locals said their repeated demands for repair and renovation of the roads have so far fallen on deaf ears of the authorities concerned.

Some roads are so worn out that they are no longer fit for vehicular movement. Yet, town dwellers are being compelled to use them for their daily commute amid the risk of accidents.

During a recent visit to different areas of Tangail town, this correspondent found major thoroughfares, including Club Road, Battala-Baby Stand Road, Park Market Road, Court Road and several other connecting roads, in a severe state of disrepair.

"Numerous potholes are scattered almost along the entire

stretch of Battala-Baby Stand Road, while the bitumen surface has worn out completely. Some potholes are so large that heavy vehicles often get stuck in them, while small vehicles ply amid the rising risk of getting overturned, often leading to accidents," said Mainul Islam of Muslimpara area.

Liton Saha, a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver, said, "Transporting passengers using such broken roads has become increasingly difficult and risky."

Mosharaf Hossain, a lawyer of Tangail court, said the condition of Court Road is so bad that accidents, including vehicles getting overturned, have now become regular.

Shahin Chowdhury, a resident of Ward 1, echoed him.

Several traders said they have been facing hassle transporting their goods using Park Market Road, one of the most important in

the town, due to its shabby state.

"Rickshaw-van pullers often don't want to come to Park Market Road due to its bad condition. Even if they do, they charge a high fare," said Sattar Mia, a vegetable trader at the market.

Delwar Hossain, traffic inspector (administration) in Tangail, said while Battala-Baby Stand Road is already in a sorry state, there is huge pressure of vehicles through it, including goods-laden heavier ones.

The condition of many other roads in the town is also poor, as they have not been repaired for years, causing regular traffic congestion across the area, he added.

Contacted, Shihab Raihan, administrator of Tangail municipality, said they were aware of the situation.

"The damaged roads will be repaired on a priority basis after getting necessary allocation," he added.

Govt to form 'social force' to curb violence against women

Says Sharmeen
Murshid

BSS, Dhaka

Women and Children Affairs and Social Welfare



Adviser Sharmeen S Murshid yesterday said the government will form a dedicated "social force" to combat violence and threats against women.

"The force will actively reach out to victims, listen to their concerns, and take concrete steps towards resolving their problems," she said.

The adviser shared the information while addressing an award distribution ceremony organised by the Bangladesh Scouts Girl-in-Scouting Division at the National Headquarters of Bangladesh Scouts as the chief guest.

"The initiative to form a social force aims to offer direct support to women who have suffered from abuse and violence, ensuring that help is available at their doorsteps," she said.

In addition, a specialised unit will be established to tackle the growing issue of cyberbullying, she added.

She said hundreds of girls, including members of the Bangladesh Scouts, will be part of the effort.

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Registrar General, Birth and Death Registration
Local Government Division
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives
Transport pool Building (8th Floor), Secretariat Link Road, Dhaka-1000.
Memo No. 46.04.0000.000.101.36.001.17.770 Date: 14/05/2025

Re-Tender (1072594) Notice
Re-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the following package:

Tender ID No.	Reference No.	Description	Tender Publication Date and Time	Tender/Propos at Closing and Opening Date and Time
1112159	Re-Ten.46.04.0000.000.102.07.0001.25.8	Procurement of Server (Hardware)	15 May 2025 2:00 PM	29 May 2025 3:30 PM

These are online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for last selling/downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to date & time.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

Md. Akhtar Jamil
Assistant Registrar General
(Administration & Finance)
Birth and Death Registration
Telephone: 02-41032263
Email: arg.admin@orgbdr.gov.bd

GD-1168

THE SECURITY PRINTING CORPORATION (BANGLADESH) LTD.
GAZIPUR-1703.

Local e-Tenders
Local e-Tenders are invited in The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd. (SPCBL)'s e-Tender site (<https://spcbldtender.bb.org.bd>) for procurement of the following items for SPCBL, as per e-Tender schedule. Necessary information is given below:

Sl. No.	e-Tender Nos.	Name of Items	Date of Publish	Last Date & time for submission of e-Tender	Date & time for Opening of e-tender
01.	25/2024-2025	366 Reams White Offset Paper & 555 Reams White Offset Paper	15/05/2025	16/06/2025 upto 11.00 AM	16/06/2025 at 11.15 AM
02.	26/2024-2025	11,040 kgs. Isopropyl Alcohol.	15/05/2025	18/06/2025 upto 11.00 AM	18/06/2025 at 11.15 AM
03.	27/2024-2025	1,000 reams of Green Proof Sheet.	15/05/2025	19/06/2025 upto 11.00 AM	19/06/2025 at 11.15 AM

For more details, Please visit/Contact the followings:
Website : www.spcbl.org.bd
Cell : 88-01952-665970
Telephone : 02-23375556-67(Ext: 168)
Email : info@spcbldtender.bb.org.bd
e-Tender site : <https://spcbldtender.bb.org.bd>

(Nahid Rahnem) General Manager (Local Purchase & Sales)
Phone: 02-223375556

GD-1165

Dhaka vows

FROM PAGE 3
Bangladesh delegation to the ministerial for May 13-14.

At a panel discussion, Touhid called for enhanced action on ensuring the protection of civilians and safety and security of the peacekeepers to prepare for the challenges of future peacekeeping.

He stressed on partnerships among all stakeholders, including the host government, troops and police contributing countries, peacekeepers, and UN Secretariat at the time of bringing any change in the requirements of existing mandates. He also expressed concern at the resource constraints and called for urgent international attention to address the funding gap.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Rapid Action Battalion Forces Headquarters
Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229
www.rab.gov.bd

Invitation For e-Tender

For financial year 2024-2025, e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of:

SL	Tender ID No & Reference No	Description of goods	Last selling Date & Time	Closing/ Opening Date & Time
1.	1112024, RABHQ/CPS/2024-2025/3258105/280 Date:23-02-2025	Repairing and Maintenance of Equipment	25-May-2025 10:00	25-May-2025 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

Tender having clarity requirements are requested to contact at 01777-720118 (Senior Assistant Director, Central Procurement Section).

KAMRUL HASSAN
Commander BN
Director (Admin & Finance)
RAB Forces Headquarters, Dhaka.

GD-1161

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
আবহাওয়া ও ভূ-প্রাকৃতিক কেন্দ্র
সরকারী কার্যভবন-১, আশ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম-৪১০০
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উপপরিচালক (দায়িত্বরত), আবহাওয়া ও ভূ-প্রাকৃতিক কেন্দ্র, আশ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম কর্তৃক আসবাবপত্র ও আনুষঙ্গিক এবং রাসায়নিক প্রবাহ ক্রয়/সজ্জা করার জন্য প্রকৃত প্রস্তুতকারী/ সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

০১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
০২	অধিদপ্তরের নাম	বাংলাদেশ আবহাওয়া অধিদপ্তর
০৩	বাধ্যকারী/অফিস	আবহাওয়া ও ভূ-প্রাকৃতিক কেন্দ্র, আশ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম।
০৪	অর্থায়নের উৎস	২০২৪-২৫ সালের রাজস্ব বাজেট
০৫	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির নম্বর ও তারিখ	২৩.০৪.১৫২৮.৫৫৪.৩৬.০০১.২৪.৭৩০ তারিখ ১৩/০৫/২০২৫
০৬	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির নাম/বর্ণনা	ক) Supply of Office Furniture & Others খ) Supply of Caustic Soda & Ferrosilicon
০৭	ক্রয় প্রক্রিয়া	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (পিপিএ-২০০৬ এবং পিপিআর ২০০৮ মোতাবেক)
০৮	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেখথযোগ্য)	টাকা ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) মাত্র।
১০	আর্নেস্ট মানি/ টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি (ফেরথযোগ্য)	টাকা ২৮,০০০/- (আটশ হাজার) মাত্র। উপপরিচালক, আবহাওয়া ও ভূ-প্রাকৃতিক কেন্দ্র, আশ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম এর অনুকূলে যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত পে-অর্ডার/ ব্যাংক ড্রাফট আকারে দরপ্রস্তাবের সাথে রাখা করতে হবে।
১১	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	আবহাওয়া ও ভূ-প্রাকৃতিক কেন্দ্র, সরকারী কার্যভবন-১, আশ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম।
১২	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয় আরম্ভের তারিখ	১৪/০৫/২০২৫ হতে প্রত্যেক কার্য দিবসে অফিস সময়কালীন সময়ে।
১৩	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	২৫/০৫/২০২৫ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৪	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৬/০৫/২০২৫ তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৫	দরপ্রস্তাব গ্রহণের স্থান	আবহাওয়া ও ভূ-প্রাকৃতিক কেন্দ্র, সরকারী কার্যভবন-১, আশ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম।
১৬	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	ক) ২৬/০৫/২০২৫ তারিখ বেলা ০২.৩০ ঘটিকা খ) ২৭/০৫/২০২৫ তারিখ সকাল ১১.০০ ঘটিকা আবহাওয়া ও ভূ-প্রাকৃতিক কেন্দ্র, সরকারী কার্যভবন-১, আশ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম।
১৭	দরপত্রের তথ্য/ শর্তাবলী	দরপত্র সিডিউলে বিস্তারিত বর্ণিত রয়েছে।
১৮	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র আংশিক কিংবা সম্পূর্ণ গ্রহণ কিংবা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

আমহী দরদাতাগণ উপপরিচালক (দায়িত্বরত), আবহাওয়া ও ভূ-প্রাকৃতিক কেন্দ্র, আশ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম এর বরাবর আবেদনকরতঃ প্রতিটি দরপত্র সিডিউল নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারী অফিস হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে উল্লেখিত মূল্যে ক্রয়/সজ্জা করতে পারবেন।

মোহাম্মদ আবদুর রহমান খান
উপপরিচালক (চলতি দায়িত্ব)
ফোনঃ ০২৩৩৩৩২১৫২ (অফিস)
E-mail: ctgbmd@gmail.com

জিডি-১১৬৭

North-West Power Generation Company Limited
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
Office of the Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-3)
NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj-6700.
Ref: 27.28.8878.000.301.07.0001.20.028
Date: 14/05/2025

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1	1071404	Procurement of Hydraulic System Instruments	14/05/2025 01:00 PM	04/06/2025 09:00 AM	04/06/2025 10:45 AM
2	1105133	Procurement of different pumps, spares and consumables	14/05/2025 01:00 PM	04/06/2025 09:00 AM	04/06/2025 11:45 AM
3	1105134	Procurement of spare parts for cooling tower gear box.	14/05/2025 01:00 PM	04/06/2025 09:00 AM	04/06/2025 10:45 AM
4	1110466	Procurement of spare cards for excitation system for STG.	14/05/2025 01:00 PM	04/06/2025 09:00 AM	04/06/2025 11:00 AM
5	1112022	Procurement of Spares for GCB and 230 kV Switchgear	14/05/2025 5:30 PM	04/06/2025 09:00 AM	04/06/2025 11:00 AM
6	1112023	Procurement of Air conditioners and other accessories	14/05/2025 5:30 PM	04/06/2025 09:00 AM	04/06/2025 11:30 AM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Shyamal
14.05.2025
(Shyamal Kumar Das)
Plant Manager (S.E.)
Sirajganj 225 MW CCPP (Unit-3)
NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj-6700.
Contact No.: + 8801777736401

GD-1166

Trump meets Syrian president

Urges him to establish ties with Israel after lifting sanctions

REUTERS, Riyadh

US President Donald Trump met with Syria's president in Saudi Arabia yesterday and urged him to normalise ties with longtime foe Israel, after a surprise US announcement that it would lift all sanctions on the Islamist-led government.



Trump met Syria's Ahmed al-Sharaa before a summit between the United States and Gulf Arab countries. Photos posted on Saudi state television showed them shaking hands in the presence of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also known as MbS.



Palestinians gather during a march to commemorate Nakba Day, the "catastrophe" of their mass dispossession in the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, in Ramallah in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday.

Israeli military intercepts missile fired by Houthis

Warns Yemenis to avoid ports, signalling retaliation

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's army yesterday urged Yemenis to stay away from Houthi-held ports, in a likely warning of retaliation after it intercepted a missile fired by the Iran-backed rebels.

The Houthis, who control large swathes of the Arabian Peninsula country, claimed responsibility for launching the missile in what they said was their third attack on Israel in less than 24 hours.

Trump offers to go to Ukraine talks if Putin does

AFP, Doha

US President Donald Trump yesterday offered to head to Turkey for talks on ending Ukraine war if his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin also showed up.

China, Colombia sign Belt and Road co-op pact

REUTERS, Beijing

China and Colombia have signed a joint cooperation plan on the Belt and Road Initiative, state media said yesterday after their leaders met in Beijing.

US admin cuts more Harvard funding

AFP, Washington

The US government on Tuesday announced fresh funding cuts to Harvard, a day after the elite school's president said it shared "common ground" with the Trump administration on many issues.



Firefighters search the area where a Japan Air Self-Defense Force training plane T-4 crashed, at Lake Iruka in Inuyama City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan yesterday.

LONDON HOUSE Ousted Myanmar envoy charged with trespass

AFP, London

Myanmar's ex-ambassador to London's Myanmar has been charged with trespass for refusing to leave his ambassadorial residence, police said yesterday, after he was stripped of his post by the military junta following a 2021 coup.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh University Grants Commission of Bangladesh UGC Bhaban, Plot # E-18/A, Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 www.ugc.gov.bd UGC-McGill PhD Scholarship Program

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয় সিলেট রেলওয়ে জেলা ব্রক-জি, রোড-৩, বাড়ি-৬৮, শাহজালাল উপশহর, সিলেট। উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Splitting the NBR is a timely step

Govt must straighten out the kinks to ensure smooth transition

On Monday, the government introduced a significant reform measure: dissolving the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to replace it with two new agencies. The goal is to separate the tax policymaking and implementation processes, in line with a key conditionality of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the \$4.7 billion loan deal. We agree with experts that this is a "bold" and "timely" move that can help modernise our tax system.

By dissolving the NBR along with the Internal Resources Division (IRD) through an ordinance, the government is paving the way for the Revenue Policy Division and Revenue Management Division. The first will be tasked with designing our tax policy framework, formulating tax laws, determining various rates, and overseeing the coordination of international tax treaties and trade-related tariffs. The second, on the other hand, will be responsible for tax administration, compliance, audit, and enforcement of income tax, VAT, customs, and other taxes and duties. The separation of duties is meant to make the tax system more efficient and boost overall revenue earnings. Until now, the NBR has been in charge of all these tasks—both policymaking and policy enforcement—something that has been criticised for creating an overlap of functions leading to poor performance and coordination.

Given that Bangladesh has one of the lowest tax-GDP ratios in Asia (around 7.4 percent), restructuring the country's tax authority has been long overdue. The NBR has consistently failed to ensure effective resource mobilisation, increase revenue generation through direct taxes, and plug loopholes to prevent tax evasion, among other things. Moreover, in its mission to meet revenue collection targets, it has often ended up enforcing policies that created unjust pressure on taxpayers and businesses. Under the new system, we expect to see a shift away from this state of affairs.

Merely overhauling the structure, however, will not bear the desired results if the underlying problems are not addressed. As experts have said time and again, the government should reduce its overreliance on indirect taxes and expand the tax base to improve our tax-GDP ratio. Tax exemptions must also be reconsidered and allowed more conservatively, and corrupt practices in tax collection must be stopped. The entire system must be designed in a way that eligible taxpayers feel encouraged and are able to pay taxes without hassle.

Of course, the latest decision is not without contention. NBR officers and staff members have been protesting against the move, arguing that the new ordinance sidelines experienced tax professionals. We believe this can be sorted out through dialogue and necessary readjustments. But the ongoing overhaul must be followed through, because it is in line with international best practices and, if done right, will improve tax governance and transparency.

Don't let cartels exploit migrants again

Malaysia talks must prioritise workers' interests

We are concerned by the news that a syndicate of recruitment agencies that once exploited Bangladeshi workers migrating to Malaysia—before its labour market was closed to them in May 2024—is allegedly becoming active again. This comes as Bangladesh is about to engage in a series of talks with Malaysia as the latter prepares to begin fresh recruitments. If the syndicate is allowed to form and take control of recruitment again when the market is reopened, it may leave workers exposed to the same cycle of exploitation and suffering they endured before. Prior to the 2024 market closure, there were frequent reports of irregularities, including exorbitant migration fees, with each worker having to pay as much as Tk 5.5 lakh even though the government-mandated ceiling was just Tk 78,990.

At the heart of the crisis is our long-standing failure to ensure transparency and accountability in the recruitment process. Previously, syndicates, enabled by political influence and administrative complicity, often monopolised access to the Malaysian labour market, sidelining more capable and ethical recruiting agencies. Over the years, many workers have fallen prey to such syndicates from both countries as well as exploitative employers that profited at their expense. There have been many cases of workers being defrauded, left jobless, unpaid or underpaid, and burdened with debt. According to official data, 898,970 Bangladeshis are currently working in Malaysia. There is no record of the undocumented workers, however, with one migrant rights activist estimating that around one or two lakh Bangladeshi workers remained jobless in Malaysia last year.

Therefore, besides ensuring that no cartel is formed to exploit aspiring workers and monopolise the migration process again, a key priority for the government should be to get the Malaysian authorities to consider our undocumented workers in their recruitment plans. We must remember that these people often become undocumented through no fault of their own. Often, it is because their employers fail to renew their visas, or they cannot get their passports renewed on time. And then there are the fraudulent companies enticing them with the promise of jobs. Reportedly, Bangladesh is prioritising the recruitment of the nearly 18,000 who were scheduled to fly to Malaysia by May 2024 but failed either due to ticket shortages or because their employers were blacklisted. This issue must be addressed. Equally importantly, it is vital that both governments act decisively to prevent all irregularities in labour migration before fresh hires are started.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan



On this day in 1988, Soviet troops began their withdrawal from Afghanistan since their invasion in 1979. The event marked the beginning of the end to a long, bloody, and fruitless Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

India, Myanmar, and the weight of regional instability on Bangladesh



Altaf Parvez is a researcher and writer.

ALTAFF PARVEZ

Before their latest fighting, India and Pakistan fought three wars, and those experiences suggest that conflicts between these two countries rarely remain confined within their borders. Bangladesh inevitably feels the ripple effects. Much like during the India-Pakistan cricket matches, Bangladesh finds it difficult to remain emotionally neutral or indifferent to their armed confrontations.

This is not solely due to their geographical proximity. Their shared religious and sociocultural heritages also formed a connection over the centuries. These inseparable connections are why it often feels like Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India are members of a vibrant, albeit feuding joint family. The "past" may have politically divided these societies, but their separate "presents" have not emotionally detached them from one another. On the first day of the latest conflict, a friend working at a leading national daily informed me that their viewership had tripled. It's not just curiosity—it's a reflection of collective anxiety, nostalgia, and unresolved identity questions that still echo from the subcontinent's traumatic history of Partition and its aftermath.

However, besides shelling Pakistan, India has also initiated a massive push-in operation along its borders with Bangladesh, further complicating regional dynamics. So far, according to the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Indian forces have pushed around 300 individuals into Bangladesh, including Rohingya, through remote border areas in Sakhira, Khagrachhari, Moulvibazar, and Kurigram. Some of these people are reportedly Bangla speakers and have come from Gujarat. If some among them were really illegal Bangladeshi migrants residing in India, that issue could have been addressed through formal channels. Instead, India has simultaneously launched push-in operations at multiple border points, which is clearly unjust and contrary to diplomatic norms.

Those already pushed into Bangladesh have claimed that various Indian agencies on the other side of the border are gathering more Bangla-speaking individuals. Many Rohingya who migrated to India from Arakan are also reportedly being assembled. These developments are deeply concerning. It is hard to believe that Indian policymakers do not understand how

such actions would upset and anger the Bangladeshi government and people.

To respond to the push-in, Bangladesh may inevitably be compelled to initiate a pushback programme. While that may appear inhumane, the government has no real alternative. The border situation is bound to get heated up due to such back and forth.

This development is especially significant in light of the relentless propaganda war Bangladesh has faced from some segments of Indian media since the ouster of the Awami League

is the visible decline in international financial assistance. The question is, why has there been a renewed influx of Rohingya from Arakan? The new wave of refugees claim that they are facing security threats from the Arakan Army.

The Arakan Army has already taken control of approximately 80 percent of the Rakhine state. At the same time, the Myanmar military, the Tatmadaw, continues bombing various parts of the region. This ongoing conflict has created a severe humanitarian and security crisis. In response, the United Nations has recently requested Bangladesh to open a channel towards Arakan to facilitate the delivery of international humanitarian aid.

Now, there are precedents for such channels or corridors being established by third countries in conflict or war-ravaged zones. The UN initiated similar efforts in Gaza and Ukraine in recent years, but the outcomes were far from satisfactory. Those experiences failed to achieve

highly sensitive issue. If there were a functioning parliament in the country, elected representatives would undoubtedly have deliberated on these matters. However, it appears that the interim government is yet to consult political leaders on this sensitive topic.

Senior officials of the government have issued contradictory statements regarding the channel. Initially, one adviser claimed that the government had agreed in principle to the proposal, subject to certain conditions. Another official stated that there had been no discussion on the matter. Later, it was said from the government's side that it was not considering a "corridor," rather a "channel." These disjointed and conflicting remarks have sparked public concern regarding the southern border.

Bangladesh's top priority regarding Myanmar and Arakan must be the repatriation of Rohingya and the prevention of further entries. Given the current situation in Arakan, any repatriation will require the consent and cooperation of the Arakan Army. At the same time, Myanmar remains a sovereign state with a functioning government in Naypyidaw, meaning their consent will also be needed for establishing a channel in Arakan. Only with the agreement of all parties can any humanitarian aid initiative be considered. And in that case, the primary condition must be the refugees' return. However, it remains unclear whether this crucial issue has been included in the current initiative. Without sufficient dialogue with political stakeholders on such a nationally critical and militarily sensitive matter, the country risks future controversies and divisions. Joining a military-style international initiative without a broad national consensus undoubtedly entails significant risk. The question, then, arises: does the current government have the authority to make such high-stake decisions unilaterally?

Though this government, formed through a mass uprising, has popular support, it remains unelected. The country is witnessing significant political tensions and uncertainty about when the next election will be held. In such a context, the prospect of establishing a humanitarian channel towards Arakan has added a new dimension to that. Moreover, some fear that a channel at the border could trigger military consequences. Considering the overall situation across our borders and the societal reverberations of the India-Pakistan war, there are reasons for concern. Are the people of Bangladesh being unwillingly dragged into the psychological and strategic orbit of a multi-front conflict, or have they already been entangled in one?



The illegal entry of Rohingya refugees from Arakan has surged in recent months.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

from power in August last year. The nature of Bangladesh government should be a matter solely for the people of Bangladesh to decide. India may understandably be uncomfortable with the political changes here, but engaging in widespread misinformation campaigns targeting an entire country and its people is downright antagonistic.

Additionally, amid such hostile propaganda and aggressive push-in efforts, Bangladesh is also facing a tense situation along its southern border.

During the tenure of the interim government, the illegal entry of Rohingya refugees from Arakan has surged. The population in the refugee camps is now close to 13 lakh. A major concern for Bangladesh regarding these new and old refugees

their objectives. Understandably, the Arakan-bound channel proposal has triggered intense reactions in Bangladesh from the outset. Many questions have arisen: who will manage this channel—Bangladesh or the UN? What kind of supplies will be transported through it, and will the Rohingya refugees be involved in their distribution? Most importantly, who will ensure the channel's security? If Myanmar's armed forces object to the channel, or if China or India raise objections, who will be responsible for its protection? Will this require the creation of a "no-fly zone" or a similar security arrangement?

Matters related to the channel's security and management—including the possibility of a no-fly zone—are inevitably tied to military considerations, making this a

No more silence, speak up, act for all women and girls

Gitanjali Singh is representative of UN Women in Bangladesh.

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GITANJALI SINGH and MASAKI WATABE

In 1995, as many as 189 governments, including Bangladesh, unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as a groundbreaking and far-reaching framework for the achievement of gender equality and the realisation of the human rights of women and girls as an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. This year marks a pivotal milestone in the pursuit of gender equality and the rights and empowerment of ALL women and girls: 30 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 25 years of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and the five-year countdown to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) deadline.

In March this year, member states including Bangladesh adopted a political declaration by consensus to respect, protect, and champion the rights, equality, and empowerment of women and girls. The political declaration reaffirms the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and

Platform for Action, originally adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, stressing the need to uphold all human rights and fundamental freedoms for every woman and girl, without exception. The declaration expresses concern that progress has been slow and uneven, and therefore recommends accelerating implementation across all 12 areas of concern. It underscores the importance of eradicating poverty in all its forms, including through ensuring women's and girls' right to education, particularly in STEM fields, and by increasing public investments in care systems. Recognising the vast potential of technology, it highlights the necessity of closing the gender digital divide and calls for renewed investment in gender statistics and data to drive informed policymaking.

The declaration recommit member states to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, including emerging forms such as digital violence, online harassment, and cyberbullying. Further, it acknowledges that achieving progress in these areas requires substantial resources and financing. It calls for strengthened national systems, women's machineries, and international mechanisms, including a revitalised Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), to accelerate gender equality efforts globally. It reinforces commitments to women, peace, and security, emphasising the need to integrate women's voices and

leadership into all stages of conflict prevention, peace-building, and conflict resolution.

Globally as well as in Bangladesh, we have seen change happen: stronger national normative frameworks; more girls in schools; reduction in maternal mortality; increasing number of women in the labour market; more women breaking the glass ceiling across sectors; and dynamic and vibrant women's movements. While there has been significant progress, we are also witnessing calculated pushbacks. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres noted in his 2025 International Women's Day 2025 message, "Centuries of discrimination are being exacerbated by new threats. Digital tools, while brimming with promise, are also often silencing women's voices, amplifying bias, and fuelling harassment. Women's bodies have become political battlegrounds. And online violence is escalating into real-life violence. Instead of mainstreaming equal rights, we are witnessing the mainstreaming of chauvinism and misogyny. We cannot stand by as progress is reversed."

In Bangladesh, too, we see this trend. On the one hand, we saw women and girls at the frontlines of the anti-discrimination movement—visible, vocal, bold, and leading from the front. On the other hand, we are seeing a regressive trend towards controlling women's voice, choice, and agency: online harassment and incessant trolling to curb freedom of expression

of women and girls; use of derogatory language and hate speech targeting women's rights advocates; policing of women's behaviour and attire in public spaces; restrictions on women's and girls' mobility; and disruption of girls' football matches and public rallies targeting women using appalling and abusive language. The one constant has been violence and harassment. Women and girls have endured it before, during and after the anti-discrimination movement. What is disturbing is how violence against women and girls continues to be normalised, including on social media, and at times venerated.

The vision of a new Bangladesh must be steadfast in its commitment to equality, non-discrimination and freedom from violence and abuse. When women and girls are heard and not silenced; when they are seen and not invisibilised; when they have equal rights, leadership opportunities and a seat at the decision-making table—everyone prospers.

Women's rights are human rights. We stand firm in our commitment to gender equality, women's rights, and empowerment for all women and girls and will continue to work closely with the government and civil society partners. Investing in women and girls is always the right thing and smart thing to do.

No more bystanders. No more silence. The time to speak up and push forward to accelerate the rights of women and girls is now.

Banks should open their doors to the urban poor



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MD MAIN UDDIN

“Financial inclusion” has been a buzzword in Bangladesh for many years. As most people in the country, primarily the poor, do not have bank accounts, this term has been used to justify the increase in the number of financial institutions here, especially banks. Some shrewd oligarchs became successful in getting a licence to open banks by persuading the authorities that financial inclusion is necessary for attaining rapid economic growth. It was argued that a large number of banks would increase formal finance and lessen the impact of exploitative informal credit markets, which are non-institutional and unregulated ways of extending credit mainly by various income groups including moneylenders.

Informal credit markets prevail in an economy because banks cannot reach all potential customers, especially the poor, mainly due to a mismatch between demand for and supply of financial services. In Bangladesh, the rural poor have easy access to microfinance institutions, which mostly work in rural areas. However, the urban poor have less access to finance since the number of microfinance institutions in urban areas is very low. Surprisingly, banks cannot serve the urban poor either. Consequently, many urban poor depend on informal finance to reduce their liquidity constraint.

There are a number of practical reasons why people access informal credit markets. These markets grant loans without any physical collateral. A borrower does not need to make any periodical savings; rules and regulations are not rigid; there is flexibility in loan size

and instalment repayment; and at times, the borrower does not even need to mention the purpose of a loan. Moreover, informal loans are sometimes a matter of verbal agreement without a formal contract; borrowers do not need to produce paper documents and fill out an application form, and loan disbursement is done very quickly. All these factors make informal credits easy for the poor.

The advantage of informal finance is strongly supported by an empirical research that I conducted in 2023 on 400 poor people in Dhaka city to explore their financial behaviour. In the research, 24 percent of the respondents took loans from moneylenders, 13 percent from local income groups, five percent from goldsmiths, and seven percent from *dadon* loan suppliers, which is a loan in cash for crop production or product manufacturing, to be repaid in the form of produce with its price predetermined

Our banks are also less eager to provide financial services to the poor. When a bank perceives that potential customers are not good suppliers of deposits, it discourages them from opening accounts. The overall environment of a bank branch is uncomfortable for the poor as well.

generally at a lower rate than the normal market price. Other poor respondents borrowed from their relatives (20 percent), neighbours and friends (28 percent).

It was also found that nearly 70 percent of the loans were granted without collateral. In these credit markets, collateral is required when a loan size is large, the borrower is perceived to be risky and has no third-party guarantee. The research notably identified

generous friends at minimum interest rates. It was identified that informal loans were taken for both productive (income-generating) and unproductive (consumption) purposes. Nearly 56 percent of the loans were taken for consumption, which is quite normal because formal credit markets do not extend loans for such purpose.

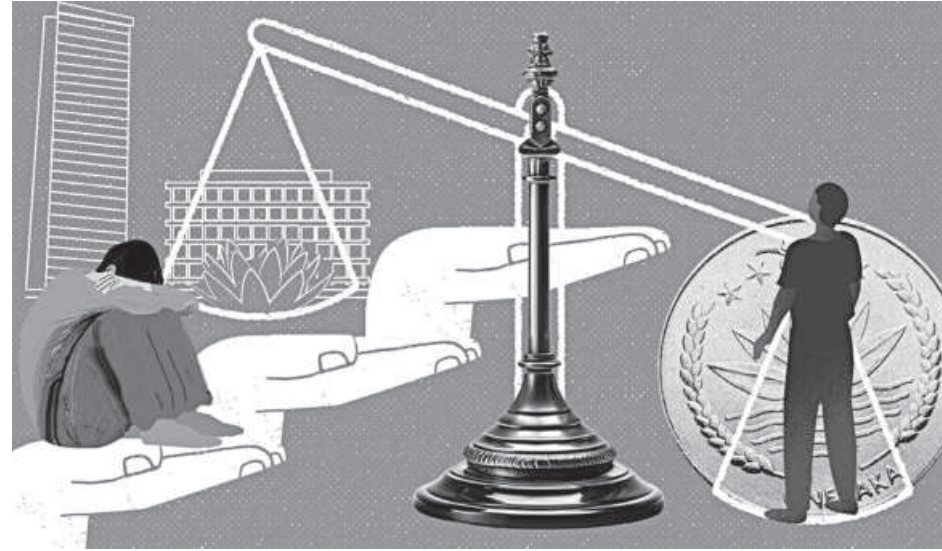
About 30 percent of the borrowers were found to have defaulted on loans. The main

Borrowers frequently default and lose their valuable collateral, which aggravates their poverty. There are also other humiliating consequences of loan default. Hence, it is necessary to take these people out of informal credit markets.

However, our formal financial institutions, principally banks, largely fail to reach the poor. Banks tend to produce large loans that the poor hardly need. Their loans require collateral that the poor generally lack. In banks, a person has to fill out a long account opening form; their loan application form is even longer; they need many other documents too. A borrower has to visit a bank several times for a loan. To the poor, every visit has a high opportunity cost—the cost of not being able to work during the visit, for example. All these factors make the lending process complex for them, and banks fail to meet the urban poor’s financial needs.

Our banks are also less eager to provide financial services to the poor. When a bank perceives that potential customers are not good suppliers of deposits, it discourages them from opening accounts. The overall environment of a bank branch is uncomfortable for the poor as well. Many of our so-called smart bankers are also less interested in conversing with poor customers. They deal with poor customers only when they are bound to do so by the Bangladesh Bank. For instance, private banks are less involved in granting agriculture loans. They fill the quota of this loan because it is a requirement set by the central bank.

The number of banks in Bangladesh stands at 62 now. But 53 percent of the population, mainly the poor, do not have bank accounts. It is impossible to attain real development while keeping this large number of people outside the banking network. These unbanked people must be integrated into the formal financial channels. Banks must be proactive and help reduce the prevalence of informal credit because the sizeable presence of informal finance indicates a big failure of formal finance.



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

that about 51 percent of respondents borrowed from informal credit markets because they found it easy. While quick funding attracted 19 percent of borrowers, no collateral requirement drew in 14 percent of borrowers. Less paperwork and the unavailability of formal credit encouraged seven percent and six percent of borrowers, respectively.

The average size of the loan was Tk 25,580. The interest rate ranged between zero and 250 percent with the average of 24 percent. About 45 percent of borrowers took loans from their affluent relatives, well-off neighbours, and

reason for default was high household expense (38 percent), followed by loss in business (30 percent), accidental cost (29 percent), and lack of financial discipline (three percent). The most dominating consequence of loan default was harassment—verbal abuse, physical assault, threat in the public and others—by the lender (71 percent), followed by absconding (14 percent) of borrowers, and loss of collateral (11 percent).

Informal finance has been found to be exceedingly exploitative. It is almost impossible to use informal credit profitably at abnormally high interest rates.

How to use RTI when there are no information commissioners

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SHAMSUL BARI AND RUHI NAZ

The right to information (RTI) regime in Bangladesh lost momentum with the departure of all three commissioners of the Information Commission following the mass uprising in July-August 2024. However, determined citizens are trying to make do and refusing to give up. Conferring with RTI activists from around the country, we can discern how they are creatively making the most of the situation.

In Dinajpur sadar, an RTI applicant was outraged by the quality of public healthcare services at local facilities. Reports of inadequate medical supplies, cleanliness, and insufficient staff were widespread. The lack of transparency regarding healthcare budgets and service standards further exacerbated the community’s concerns. Responding to these challenges, she filed an RTI request with the relevant health authorities, seeking information about the allocated healthcare budgets, expenditures, and service standards for local healthcare facilities. To her utter delight, she and others soon noticed a conspicuous change in the quality of healthcare services in the concerned area. The authorities appeared to have immediately undertaken a review of their service standards. Medical supplies were replenished, cleanliness and hygiene were improved, and efforts were made to ensure staffing levels met the established standards.

The interim government should encourage all public officials to respond diligently to the citizens’ RTI requests by using these examples, pending the appointment of the information commissioners.

Adapting to the absence of information commissioners, it would be best to focus RTI interventions more on systemic change in governance, which serves public interest, rather than

on matters of individual interest. Records show that since the adoption of the RTI Act in 2009, citizens have largely used the law for personal reasons, such as accessing benefits under the government’s safety net programmes, obtaining various types of licences, and securing job promotions, among others. Gradually, we have moved on to addressing small-scale transparency issues of societal interest, such as reviewing contract documents for the construction or repair of local roads and ensuring transparency in the tender process.

The next level involves invoking the law in matters such as unfair and discriminatory practices, misuse or abuse of power, deprivation of

A close reading of the law makes it abundantly clear that its ultimate aim is to change how the country is governed. The idea is to banish the age-old practice of official secrecy and replace it with open governance where citizens can monitor the government’s work and hold public officials accountable for their negligence and/or misdeeds.

entitlements, corruption in public works, and the implementation of laws and administrative orders.

With increased experience, consideration was given to applying the law to address larger national issues. For example, there were thoughts about filing RTI requests to investigate the escalating costs of numerous megaprojects in the country, such as the Padma Bridge. However, fear of official retaliation prevailed. The July uprising spurred hope that the law could now be applied without fear or anxiety, but that hope remains unfulfilled just like the positions of the information commissioners.

Focusing on transparency and accountability issues of public interest that are aimed at systemic change aligns with the

fundamental objectives of the RTI Act. A close reading of the law makes it abundantly clear that its ultimate aim is to change how the country is governed. The idea is to banish the age-old practice of official secrecy and replace it with open governance where citizens can monitor the government’s work and hold public officials accountable for their negligence and/or misdeeds. This is best achieved when citizens utilise the law to serve as watchdogs over the work of government offices, monitoring how government policies are implemented and the obstacles they encounter along the way.

To advance this objective, the best approach would be to frame RTI requests in a manner that designated officials, charged with dealing with RTI requests, would not feel any personal unease about the request but would rather be inclined to respond positively as part of their national responsibility. Filing multiple applications on the same subject by many applicants may be the trick in this regard.

To what issues can this approach of broader societal benefit be applied? A recurring topic is the poor state of the public health sector, which affects ordinary people daily. The absence of doctors in public clinics or hospitals during duty hours, along with their general indifference towards patients, is legendary. Concerted efforts may help change the situation. The first task would be to identify the target clinic or hospital, request the names of doctors assigned to it, and ask for their attendance records. It will be difficult not to respond if there are many requests on the same subject. Success here may be multiplied by similar approaches at other places.

Another hot topic is the chronic teacher absenteeism and poor academic outcomes in public primary schools, particularly in rural areas. Citizens may request teacher attendance records, school inspection reports, and student performance data. An approach like this in Nilphamari resulted in disciplinary steps against absentee teachers.

A perennial problem for the marginalised population in the rural areas is that eligible children of these communities are often denied government scholarships/stipends.

RTI requests for a list of recipients from the school or education office, as well as information on the selection criteria and attendance records, should suffice. Such an approach helped uncover irregularities in some cases, and students got their entitled benefits.

Ordinary citizens often face delays, bribes or manipulation when attempting to register or transfer land. A strategy to address the situation would be to obtain information on the number of mutation applications received and

resolved over the past six months and inquire about the reasons behind pending cases. Additional requests for prescribed official processing times and staff duty rosters can also be helpful.

Allegations of nepotism or bribery in the recruitment of schoolteachers, health workers, and other professionals are also prevalent in many places. Information requests for the list of applicants, selection committee members, and final merit lists may be the trick to cracking the nut. Requesting interview scores and

appointment letters is also likely to be helpful.

There are numerous other similar issues for which the RTI request strategy may be effective. We hope that the citizens will continue to use the law despite the temporary setback they face due to the absence of information commissioners. Such broader use of the law will build on the gains made over the years by many dedicated RTI users. In the meantime, we urge the interim government to prioritise the appointment of new information commissioners.

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Tanim Noor's 'Utshob' unites 11 acclaimed actors for Eid release

Tanim Noor's upcoming Eid-ul-Azha film *Utshob* brings together 11 acclaimed actors including Zahid Hasan, Jaya Ahsan, Aupee Karim, Chanchal Chowdhury, Afsana Mimi, Tariq Anam Khan, Azad Abul Kalam, Intekhab Dinar, Sunerah Binte Kamal, Soumya Jyoti, and Sadia Ayman.

Officially announced on May 13 at Dhaka's Gulshan Shooting Club, the film is produced by Dope Productions and co-produced by Choraki and Laughing Elephant.

Director Tanim Noor shared, "I wanted to create something everyone could enjoy together during Eid." Afsana Mimi said, "The tagline, 'Do not watch without your family,' truly moved me." Aupee Karim added, "This generation hasn't seen us all together, so let *Utshob* be their first."

The event was also attended by Quazi Nawshaba, FS Nayeem, Syed Ahmed Shawki, Saleh Sobhan Aunem, and Oyshee, among others.

Mosharraf Karim's 'Mirza' to premiere on Bongo this month

Mosharraf Karim stars as an eccentric detective in *Mirza*, set to premiere on Bongo on May 23. Directed by Sumon Anwar, the web-film offers a fresh take on the detective genre, featuring a laid-back, older sleuth who relies on sharp intellect rather than action.



The film aims to establish a homegrown detective franchise, distinct from global icons like Sherlock Holmes or Feluda.

The cast also includes Parsa Evana, Arfan Mredha Shibli, Tamanna Haque Borna, Shoumi, and Dilruba Doyel. "Mosharraf Karim was brilliant in the role," said Anwar, adding that the team is excited to gauge audience reaction.

CANNES DAY 1 Robert De Niro receives honorary Palme d'Or



Leonardo DiCaprio presents Robert De Niro with the honorary Palme d'Or for Lifetime Achievement.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The opening ceremony of the 78th Cannes Film Festival was filled with surprises and unforgettable moments. One of the evening's highlights was Leonardo DiCaprio presenting the prestigious honorary Palme d'Or for Lifetime Achievement to legendary actor Robert De Niro.

After expressing his gratitude for the festival, De Niro quickly shifted his focus to address former President Trump, who recently proposed imposing a 100% tariff on foreign-made films.

De Niro—celebrated for his iconic roles in classics like *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*—used the platform to speak out against US President Donald Trump's tariffs on foreign-made films. His powerful words were met with a standing ovation from the audience and jury members, who paid tribute to his extraordinary contributions to global cinema.

"Art represents truth and celebrates diversity, which is exactly why it poses a threat to autocrats and fascists," De Niro said. "America's cultureless president has placed himself at the helm of one of the country's leading cultural institutions, slashed funding for the arts, humanities, and education, and now wants to tax international films. But the power of human connection through art is priceless—you can't put a tariff on that."

Apart from that major award, acclaimed filmmaker Quentin Tarantino unexpectedly appeared on stage to officially open the festival. As the guest of honour in this year's Cannes Classics section, which highlights restored and historic films, Tarantino also presented a tribute to the late American director George Sherman. True to his flamboyant style, he capped off his speech by dramatically tossing the microphone to the floor.

A historic moment came with the premiere of Amélie Bonnin's *Leave One Day (Partir un Jour)*, which became the first debut feature film ever to open the Cannes Film Festival. The romantic dramedy received an enthusiastic response, earning a standing ovation that lasted over five minutes. The film, based on Bonnin's César-winning 2023 short of the same name, follows aspiring chef Cécile (played by Juliette Armanet) as she pursues her dream of opening a gourmet restaurant in Paris.

The 2025 Cannes opening night was a star-studded spectacle, with Leonardo DiCaprio, Quentin Tarantino, honoree Robert De Niro, Laurent Lafitte, Mylène Farmer, and Jury President Juliette Binoche all sharing the stage.

Their powerful presence and camaraderie have already become one of the festival's most talked-about moments online.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Ekti Loukik Athoba Aloukik Steamer'

Dhaka Theatre's 49th production, *Ekti Loukik Athoba Aloukik Steamer*, written by Anon Zaman and directed by Shahiduzzaman Selim, explores a city gripped by a pandemic.

Set at a ferry terminal where a steamer never arrives, the play symbolically unveils fear, corruption, and social decay in a collapsing society.

Date: Saturday | May 17

Time: 7pm onwards

Venue: National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy



Jessica Jones to appear in 'Daredevil: Born Again' Season 2



Krysten Ritter's Jessica Jones will officially join the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) in Season 2 of *Daredevil: Born Again*, as confirmed by *Daredevil* actor Charlie Cox during a recent press conference.

Ritter, who previously portrayed the character in Netflix's *Jessica Jones* and *The Defenders*, appeared alongside Cox to announce her return.

Jessica Jones is a former superhero-turned-private investigator with super strength and limited flight. Her MCU entry raises hopes for future appearances by other Defenders, including Luke Cage and Iron Fist.

Cox teased a major arc for Jones, as *Daredevil's* team now faces Mayor Kingpin, who is targeting vigilantes under the law.

NEWS

Ministry, Cabinet Division

FROM PAGE 12

Seeking anonymity, one of the panel experts said, "This kind of change will surely drag the government into a major controversy. And it will be challenged in court."

Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council Act was enacted in 2002 and last amended in 2022. The amendment expanded the definition of freedom fighter to include both armed combatants and those who contributed politically, administratively, financially, or intellectually within or outside the country.

MINISTRY'S MOVE TO CHANGE LAW

At a meeting on March 23, the expert panel apprised the Liberation War affairs ministry of potential complications if the definition in the law is changed.

"In the draft ordinance, a separate definition of 'associates of the Liberation War' has been introduced. These individuals are currently recognised as 'Bir Muktiyoddha.' Redefining them simply as 'associates of the Liberation War' could lead to legal complications and discrepancies in status and privileges," the committee said in its observation.

Defending the move to change the definition, Faruk-E-Azam, adviser to the Liberation War affairs ministry, said, "Various organisations of freedom fighters have raised the demand, objecting to putting the battlefield veterans and others in the same category."

"I fought on battlefields... I believe their demand is justified," said Faruk, who was awarded the Bir Pratik title for his role in the Liberation War.

DEFINITION OF 'BIR MUKTIYODDHA'

According to the draft amendment, those civilians who actively took part in the war against the Pakistan occupation forces and their collaborators—Razakar, Al-Badr, Al-Shams, Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Nezam-e-Islam, and members of Peace Committees—between March 26 and December 16, 1971 will be recognised as "Bir Muktiyoddha." They must have met the minimum age requirement set by the government at that time.

The revised definition outlines three categories of civilians: individuals who crossed the border to India, got enlisted at training camps and actively participated in the war; "Biranganas" who were victims of atrocities by the Pakistani forces and their collaborators; and doctors, nurses, and their assistants who treated injured freedom fighters at field hospitals during the war.

Besides, members of the armed forces, Mukti Bahini, East Pakistan Regiment (EPR), police, Ansar, Bangladesh Liberation Forces (BLE) and other recognised forces, and naval commandos will be recognised as "Bir Muktiyoddha."

'ASSOCIATES OF LIBERATION WAR' The ministry proposed recognising those individuals as "associates of the Liberation War" who—both at home and abroad—inspired freedom fighters, played the role of organisers, helped accelerate war efforts, contributed to shaping global opinion or securing diplomatic support, and strengthened the resilience of Bangladeshis between

March 26 and December 16, 1971.

There are five categories of associates: the first category includes Bangladeshi professionals who made significant contributions to the Liberation War while staying abroad.

Individuals who served under Bangladesh's first government—officials, employees, envoys, doctors, nurses, and support staff appointed by the Mujibnagar government—fall under the second category.

The third category includes the members of the National Assembly and the Provincial Assembly, who were later incorporated into the Constituent Assembly.

All artistes and staff of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, and Bangladeshi journalists who worked at home and abroad in favour of the Liberation War are in the fourth category.

Members of Swadhin Bangla Football Team are in the fifth category.

WHAT EXPERTS SAY

Liberation War researcher Afsan Chowdhury described the ministry's move as "a reflection of narrow-minded thinking." "Categorisation of freedom fighters is problematic," he told The Daily Star.

"If only those who fired weapons are considered true freedom fighters, then what about those who inspired them, procured arms or raised funds? Would they be considered half-freedom fighters? This will only create confusion."

"The Liberation War was a people's war. People from every walk of life participated in it in various ways... Creation of such categories will dent the broader spirit of the war."

India, Pak expel diplomats

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from behind bars, has applauded the people and the armed forces for their response to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "cowardice," reports Dawn.

"By targeting innocent civilians such as children, women, the elderly, and civilian infrastructure in Pakistan, Modi displayed cowardice," Imran was quoted as saying on his X account, to which he does not have direct access.

India and Pakistan also exchanged

one prisoner each—both security personnel—at the Wagah-Attari border yesterday, in a fresh sign of detente after a ceasefire ended four days of conflict between the nuclear-armed rivals.

Muhammadullah of the Pakistan Rangers was handed over to Pakistani officials, the PTI news report quoted security sources as saying.

On the other hand, Constable Purnam Kumar Shaw, a member of the Indian Border Security Force (BSF), who was detained after

crossing the border in Kasur district in late April, was returned to Indian officials.

Shaw had been in the custody of Pakistan Rangers since April 23, according to a statement from the Indian army. Several media outlets also reported on the BSF man's return.

The Indian Express quoted the BSF as saying: "The handover was conducted peacefully and in accordance with established protocols."

'Contact me if you face any trouble'

FROM PAGE 12

"We want the amount in one instalment. We have been in debt for more than two years. Unless we are repaid the recruitment fees, we will be in trouble," the worker said, requesting anonymity.

Addressing the workers, Nazrul said he knew that the migrants were facing various problems, including delay in payments, while they were worried over a delay in work visa extension.

"Some of you also face trouble in getting work. Unfortunately, some die here, and it is difficult to send the body back home. You also remain in fear of raids," he said.

The adviser said he spoke to the employer, who was trying to resolve the problems and repay the recruitment fees.

"You have to do certain things. Always resolve problems through discussions. Don't do anything

harmful to you and the employer," he said.

Referring to the political changeover and the corruption during the Awami League regime, Nazrul said, "You know what happened in Bangladesh in the past. The situation was unimaginable. Expatriates' money was kept in thieves' bank."

"There were thieves in the ministry as well. We are trying to retrieve Tk 1,200 crore. From now on, no money of the expatriates will be kept in the private bank," he said, adding that the interim government is trying to improve the services for the migrants.

He recognised the contribution of the migrants, saying the remittance they send is of utmost importance for the economy of Bangladesh.

Md Sumon, a migrant working for Mediceram, in his speech described the troubles they faced over the last two years.

"Now, we are all united. Initially, we went to the high commission but got no response. Today, we are happy that you've pledged to be by our side. We have strong faith in you," he said.

There are some 9 lakh Bangladeshis working in the Southeast Asian country, according to the Malaysian authorities. Rights groups say a substantial number of migrants there are undocumented and are jobless, underpaid or unpaid.

The Malaysian labour market has remained closed for Bangladeshis since May 31 last year after serious allegations of irregularities relating to a syndicate of 101 recruiting agencies surfaced.

"We will try to have the labour market reopened and request the Malaysian authorities to regularise the undocumented migrants," said an official of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

BTRC asked to block AL websites

FROM PAGE 12

Commission of Bangladesh has suspended the Awami League's registration as a political party, the NCSA letter said.

Citing the Cyber Security Ordinance, 2025, the NCSA letter said that any digital or electronic content that may threaten national security, integrity, religious harmony, or public order can be ordered to be removed or blocked by law enforcement agencies.

ACC 'working'

FROM PAGE 12

herself by not showing up," said Momen. "Everyone is given a chance to respond under the rules. If someone fails to appear, we will proceed according to applicable international protocols."

He said, "If we cannot reach her through regular means, or if she is a foreign national or is found to be absconding, then she will be officially considered as such."

"In that case, a red notice will be issued through Interpol and the relevant government will be informed. We will then initiate formal procedures to bring her back," he added.

Earlier, the ACC filed a case against Tulip Siddiq over allegations of acquiring a plot in Purbachal and unlawfully occupying a flat in Gulshan.

In this context, the agency has compiled a list of URLs and social media links connected to the AL and its front organisations, which must be urgently removed or blocked.

The letter concludes by emphasising the need for swift implementation, by global social media companies, in compliance with existing Bangladeshi laws and recent government notifications.

A BTRC officials said the list of

URLs and social media links had already been sent to the global social media platforms on Tuesday night.

The Bangladesh government can only block websites. It cannot directly remove content or take action against pages or accounts on social media platforms like Facebook or YouTube. Like many other countries, Bangladesh regularly submits requests to tech giants Meta and Google.

BSF pushes back

FROM PAGE 1

Kanaighat Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdul Alam said the detainees hail from Bagerhat and Kurigram districts. They are currently in BGB custody and will be handed over to the police following formal procedure.

In Moulvibazar, a total of 44 people, including women and children, were pushed back into Bangladesh through the North Shahbazpur border area of the district's Barlekha upazila early yesterday.

Among the detainees, there are 13 men, 18 women and 13 children.

52-BGB Commander Lt Col Mehedi Hasan told The Daily Star that the BSF pushed back 44 Bangladeshis this morning. The identities of the detainees have been confirmed. They are Bangladeshis,

and will be handed over to the police station tonight.

The commanding officer also said the detainees told BGB that they went to India illegally for work. Police in India detained them recently and pushed them into Bangladesh at dawn today.

Speaking on May 12, Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui, director general of the BGB, said BSF has pushed in 280 individuals, including Rohingya people, between May 7 and May 9.

Of these 280 people, 80 were pushed in through various borders in Khagrachhari, 76 from Moulvibazar, and 46 from Kurigram, while 78 were left behind by BSF on Mandarbaria island in the western Sundarbans of Satkhira's Shyamnagar upazila.

Excess salt intake

FROM PAGE 3
programme, said processed foods are a major source of excess salt intake. He warned that even when these foods don't taste salty, they often contain high levels of salt.

This hidden salt intake is silently fuelling an epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), particularly heart disease, he said, stressing the need for a comprehensive national salt reduction strategy.

Prof Sohel Reza Choudhury, head of the Department of Epidemiology and Research at the foundation, said while salt enhances taste, excessive consumption becomes a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, and other NCDs.

Mustak Hasan Md Iftekar, founding chairman of the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority, highlighted the need for mandatory front-of-pack

labelling and accurate nutrition information on packaging, alongside regular oversight by relevant authorities.

Prof Syed Zakir Hossain, line director of the NCD Programme at the Directorate General of Health Services, said the NCD Control Programme has already begun working on a national salt reduction strategy.

Prof Mohammad Shoeb, a member of Bangladesh Food Safety Authority, noted that while current packaging laws require companies to disclose salt, sugar, and fat content, many either fail to comply or provide the information in unreadable formats.

To protect public health and improve awareness, he said the authority is revising labelling laws to introduce a user-friendly front-of-pack labelling system.

Cut waterlogging

FROM PAGE 3
waterlogging problem. While it won't happen all at once, we must work to gradually change the situation," said the chief adviser.

He acknowledged that since the rainy season has already begun this year, a complete solution is unlikely this time. However, he emphasised that if recent efforts by the Chattogram City Corporation and other local government bodies do not yield the expected results this year, those efforts will seem to have gone down the drain.

Highlighting Chattogram's heritage and historical achievements, Prof Yunus said the waterlogging issue is both symbolic and complex. He said solving this problem could set an example for other cities and districts.

Urging to address the issue regularly, he said, "Many other cities lack the capacity that Chattogram has. Therefore, all local organisations must remain active, and civil society must step up and demonstrate their capability."

The meeting was attended by Road Transport and Bridges Adviser Muhammad Fozul Kabir Khan, Education Adviser CR Abrar, Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhtar, Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum, Liberation War Affairs Adviser Faruk-e-Azam, Special Envoy to the Chief Adviser Lutfe Siddiqui, BIDA Chairman Chowdhury Ashiq Mahmud Bin Harun, and SDG Affairs Principal Coordinator Lamia Morshed, among others.

Reform laws

FROM PAGE 3
inheritance and property, and to foster a gender-sensitive environment that encourages women's involvement in all spheres of life.

Advocate Deepti Sikder, BNPS director of legal aid, called for abolishing the discriminatory 1961 family law and introduction of a unified family code to remove inequality in inheritance laws across all religious communities.

Afroza Soma, assistant professor of Media and Mass Communication at American International University - Bangladesh, raised concerns about entrenched societal perceptions of women.

Despite some progress, women are still treated as second-class citizens while facing widespread harassment and marginalisation, she said.

Soma urged a shift in focus from remedial support for victims to changing the behaviour and mindset of perpetrators.

Sultana Begum, president of Green Bangla Garments Workers Federation, pointed out the multiple challenges faced by women working in the garment industry or as domestic workers, including wage disparity, job insecurity, lack of social protection, and vulnerable conditions, and called for the effective enforcement of government policies and the ratification of ILO Conventions 189 and 190.

BNPS director Shahnaz Sumi said structural change is necessary to strengthen women's economic position, and property rights is key to their social and political empowerment.

Presiding over the event, Dr Makhduma Nargis Ratna, vice-president of BNPS, reminded that a key objective of Liberation War was to establish a secular and equitable society.

Passenger traffic

FROM PAGE 3
accountability-based operations significantly improved passenger services at the country's busiest airport.

"We focused on ensuring accountability during my tenure. As a result, over 85 percent of baggage is now delivered to passengers within the standard time, monitored through automated tracking systems," he said.

Kamrul projected that the aviation sector's contribution to Bangladesh's GDP could reach 5-6 percent within the

next five years, up from less than 1 percent at present.

Newly appointed Executive Director Group Captain Samad pledged to prioritise international-standard services for both passengers and cargo, with transparency and professionalism.

"An airport is the first impression of a country. It must reflect the highest standards," he said.

The programme was presided over by ATJFB President Tanzim Anwar, while General Secretary Baten Bibop moderated the event.

Plans on to turn Ctg

FROM PAGE 3
Describing the port as the "heart" of Bangladesh's economy, he added, "If the heart is weak, no physician can fix it. That's why we must make it world-class."

He noted that although top global port management firms were invited earlier, there had been no meaningful progress.

"This heart must be connected with our neighbours; that's why I mentioned Nepal and the seven sisters (the seven northeastern states of India). They will benefit if they are connected to it, and so will we. Those not connected will be the losers," he said.

Recalling his childhood memories with the port, Prof Yunus said, "Chattogram Port is not new to me. I've known it since childhood. Though it has changed over time, progress has been slow. Since I got a chance, from day one, I have looked for ways to improve it."

"The world has moved ahead, and we are far behind. No one seems to care. That's why I pushed for change," he added.

He called for handing over port operations to leading global firms, saying, "I hope

everyone will understand the reality of the situation." Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (ret) Shakhawat Hossain said the construction of several new terminals would reduce container congestion. "I hope you'll see the difference within six months," he added.

A step closer to reality

FROM PAGE 3
The new bridge is expected to contribute to the country's economic growth, especially with the upcoming opening of the Matarbari deep seaport in Cox's Bazar.

To support this, Bangladesh Railway has planned to build a 26-kilometre railway line from Chakaria to Matarbari.

Railway officials said once completed, containers from the Matarbari seaport can be sent directly by train to the Dhaka Inland Container Depot.

According to railway, the new Kalurghat Bridge will span 700 metres across the Karnaphuli. In addition to the main structure, the project includes 6.2 kilometres of viaducts on both ends, 4.54 kilometres of embankments, and 2.40 kilometres of road viaducts.

A total of 11.44 kilometres of new railway tracks will

also be constructed under the project.

The estimated cost of the bridge is Tk 11,560 crore, of which Tk 4,435 crore will come from government funds and Tk 7,125 crore will be financed through foreign loans - primarily from South Korea.

To finance the project, Bangladesh signed a loan agreement with South Korea on June 27, 2023.

Project Director Abdul Kalam Chowdhury told reporters that preliminary work is already underway. The feasibility study has been completed, and tenders have been invited for consultant recruitment.

Construction work is expected to become visible by December this year, marking the transition from planning to on-ground execution, he said.

If all progresses on schedule, the bridge is expected to be completed by December 2029 and opened for use in 2030,

according to project officials.

For residents of Boalkhali, Patiya, and nearby upazilas, the new bridge represents more than just convenience - it symbolises long-awaited relief and new beginnings.

"The Kalurghat Rail and Road Bridge no longer feels like a dream, it's becoming a reality," said Chowdhury Lokman, a resident of the upazila.

Abdul Hannan, a trader from the Ghumdandi area, said, "The new bridge will reduce transport costs and give us access to larger markets."

PRAYER TIMING
MAY 15

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
4:10	12:45	5:00	6:36	8:30
JAMAAT 4:45	1:15	5:15	6:40	8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
District Primary Education Office
Habiganj.
website: dpe.habiganj.gov.bd

Memo No. dpeco/hobi/gps/752 Date: 13/05/2025

e-Tender Notice No.2/2024-25

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works:

SL. NO.	Name of Scheme	Tender ID NO	Package No	Tender/Proposal Document Last selling/downloading Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing Date & Time	Remarks
1	Furniture Supply for 60 Nos. Class Room and 9 Nos. Teachers Room of Selected 14 Nos of Govt. Primary School at different location of Hobiganj District.	1107225	NBIDGPS-1/G1.0481	01-Jun-2025 17:00	02-Jun-2025 15:00	OTM

This is an online tender. Where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for Tender/Proposal document to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

(Md. Shah Alam)
District Primary Education Officer
Habiganj.
Phone : 02996605294
e-mail: dpecohobi@gmail.com

GD-1157

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
বাংলাদেশ মহাকাশ গবেষণা ও দূর অনুধাবন প্রতিষ্ঠান (স্পারসো)
আগারগাঁও, শের-ই-বাংলা নগর
ঢাকা-১২০৭
ওয়েবসাইট: www.sparrso.gov.bd
নম্বর: ২৩.০৪.০০০০.০০৮.০৩.০২২.১৬ তারিখ: ৩০ বৈশাখ ১৪৩২
২৩ মে ২০২৫

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের ১১ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৫ তারিখের ২৩.০০.০০০০.১৬০.১১.১৪৭.২২.৪৮ নং স্মারকের ছাড়পত্র মোতাবেক রাজস্ব খাতভুক্ত নিয়োগযোগ্য শূন্য পদের বিপরীতে জাতীয় বেতনস্কেল, ২০১৫-এর ৯ম গ্রেডভুক্ত নিম্নোক্ত স্থায়ী পদে সরাসরি জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে পদের বর্ণিত শর্তে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে কেবলমাত্র অনলাইনে (<https://sparrso.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে) আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রম	পদের নাম, গ্রেড ও বেতনস্কেল	পদ সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১	একাউন্টস অফিসার টাকা ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (গ্রেড-৯)	০১টি	কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে বাণিজ্য ১ম শ্রেণীর স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী অথবা ২য় শ্রেণীর সন্মানসহ ২য় শ্রেণীর স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী অথবা সমমানের ডিগ্রী এবং সরকারী, স্বায়তশাসিত বা অন্য কোন সংবিধিবদ্ধ সংস্থায় হিসাব রক্ষণ কাজে ৪ (চার) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
২	স্টোর এন্ড প্রকিউরমেন্ট অফিসার টাকা ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (গ্রেড-৯)	০১টি	কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে ১ম শ্রেণীর স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী অথবা ২য় শ্রেণীর সন্মানসহ ২য় শ্রেণীর স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী এবং সরকারী, স্বায়তশাসিত বা অন্য কোন সংবিধিবদ্ধ সংস্থায় ডাভার রক্ষণ কাজে ৪ (চার) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।

আবেদন ফরম পূরণ এবং পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলি অবশ্যই অনুসরণ করতে হবে:

- ১৮-০৫-২০২৫ খ্রি: তারিখে প্রার্থীর বয়স ১৮-৩২ বছরের মধ্যে হতে হবে। বাস প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে এফিডেভিট গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।
- নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত বিদ্যমান সরকারি যাবতীয় বিধি-বিধান/আদেশ/নিয়মাবলি এবং কোটার ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের সর্বশেষ সিদ্ধান্ত অনুসৃত হবে।
- সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীদের অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে। চাকুরিরত প্রার্থীদের সকল শর্ত পূরণ সাপেক্ষে আবেদন ফরম পূরণের সময় **Departmental Candidate** এর ঘরে টিক চিহ্ন দিতে হবে। অন্যদের ক্ষেত্রে এই শর্ত প্রযোজ্য নয়। তবে সকল চাকুরিরত প্রার্থীকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অনাপত্তি পত্রের মূল কপি দিতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে কোনো অগ্রিম কপি প্রদান করা হবে না।
- চাকুরির আবেদন ফরমে (Applicant's Copy) সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা উল্লেখ করতে হবে। অন্যান্য চাকুরির জন্য নির্বাচিত হলে চাকুরির আবেদন উল্লিখিত সনদ ব্যতীত চাকুরির আবেদনের পূর্বে অর্জিত অন্যান্য শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদপত্র অর্ন্তভুক্ত করার সুযোগ নেই।
- সকল পদের জন্য লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা, নাগরিকত্ব, চারিত্রিক ও সকল প্রকার প্রশিক্ষণের সনদ, পূরণকৃত Applicant's Copy, প্রবেশপত্রসহ সকল কাগজপত্রের ০১ (এক) সেট সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি এবং সদ্য তোলা ২ (দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রঙিন ছবি দাখিল করতে হবে। এছাড়া, ফুড নু-গোষ্ঠী, শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী ও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের কোটায় আবেদনকারীদের ক্ষেত্রে উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় উপস্থাপন করতে হবে।
- আবেদনকারী বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহিদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও বীরশ্রদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যা হলে প্রমাণক হিসেবে আবেদনকারীকে (সংশ্লিষ্ট বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও বীরশ্রদ্ধার গেজেট/ভারতীয় তালিকা/লাল মুক্তিবার্তা নম্বর/সামরিক সনদের নম্বর ও তারিখ/বাসুস সনদের নম্বর ও তারিখ উল্লেখপূর্বক) সংশ্লিষ্ট সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর/পৌরসভার মেয়র/ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত প্রমাণপত্র উপস্থাপন করতে হবে।
- প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা যাচাই: প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত কোনো তথ্য বা দাখিলকৃত কাগজপত্র জাল, মিথ্যা বা বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে যাচিত ন্যূনতম শর্তের সাথে পরনিপ/অসামঞ্জস্যতা পাওয়া গেলে/প্রমাণিত হলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসদুপায় অবলম্বন করলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং জীৱ বিবুদ্ধে যথাযথ আইনানুশ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। ভুল তথ্য/জাল কাগজপত্র প্রদর্শিত হলে পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ যে কোন প্রার্থীর পরীক্ষা চলাকালীন অথবা পরবর্তীতে যে কোনো সময়ে প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।
- যদি কোন প্রার্থী বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক না হন কিংবা বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক নন এমন কোন ব্যক্তিকে বিয়ে করেন বা করার জন্য প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ হন কিংবা কোন ফৌজদারি আদালত কর্তৃক নৈতিক স্বলনজনিত অভিযোগে দণ্ডিত হন তবে তিনি আবেদন করার জন্য অযোগ্য বিবেচিত হবেন।
- লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোনো প্রকার ভাতা প্রদান করা হবে না।
- কর্তৃপক্ষ পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি ও বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল কিংবা বিধি মোতাবেক নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত যে কোন পরিবর্তন/সংশোধন করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।
- লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়সূচী স্পারসোর ওয়েবসাইট -এ প্রকাশ করা হবে। মৌখিক পরীক্ষার জন্য আলাদাভাবে ডাকযোগে কোন সাক্ষাৎকারপত্র প্রেরণ করা হবে না।
- অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলি ও করণীয়:**
(ক) পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তি <https://sparrso.teletalk.com.bd> এই ওয়েবসাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করবেন। আবেদনের সময়সীমা নিম্নরূপ:
(i) Online-এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার কি জমাদান **শুধুর তারিখ ও সময় ১৮-০৫-২০২৫ খ্রি: ১০:০০ ঘটিকা।**
(ii) Online-এ আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় **১৫-০৬-২০২৫ খ্রি: ১০:০০ ঘটিকা।**
উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit-এর সময় থেকে পরবর্তী ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে SMS এ পরীক্ষার কি জমা দিতে পারবেন।
(খ) Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী তীর রঙিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০xপ্রস্থ ৩০০ pixel) ও স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০xপ্রস্থ ৮০ pixel) স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করবেন। ছবির সাইজ, সর্বোচ্চ 100 KB ও স্বাক্ষরের সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 60 KB হতে হবে।

(গ) Online আবেদনপত্রে পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যথেষ্ট পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে, সেহেতু Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit করার **পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন।**

(ঘ) প্রার্থী Online-এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি প্রিন্ট কপি পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন প্রয়োজনে সহায়ক হিসেবে সংরক্ষণ করবেন এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় এক কপি জমা দিবেন।

(ঙ) SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলি ও পরীক্ষার কি প্রমাণ: Online-এ আবেদনপত্র যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নির্দেশমতে ছবি ও স্বাক্ষর Upload করে আবেদন Submit করার পর কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। আবেদন Submit করা প্রার্থী একটি User ID, ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত একটি Applicant's Copy পাবেন। যদি Applicant's Copy তে কোন ভুল থাকে বা অস্পষ্ট ছবি (সম্পূর্ণ কালো/ সম্পূর্ণ সাদা/ যোলা) বা ছবি/ স্বাক্ষর সঠিক না থাকে তাহলে পুনরায় আবেদন করতে পারবেন। তবে, আবেদন কি জমাদানের পর আর কোন পরিবর্তন/পরিমার্জন/পরিবর্তন গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়। তাই, আবেদন কি জমাদানের পূর্বে অবশ্যই Applicant's Copy তে সম্পূর্ণ ত্রুটি রহিত ছবি, নির্ভুল তথ্য ও স্বাক্ষর নিশ্চিত হয়ে PDF Copy ডাউনলোডপূর্বক রঙিন প্রিন্ট সম্পন্ন করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন। Applicant's কপিতে একটি User ID নম্বর দেয়া থাকবে এবং User ID নম্বর ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিম্নোক্ত পদ্ধতিতে যে কোন Teletalk Pre-Paid Mobile নম্বরের মাধ্যমে ০২ (দুই) টি SMS করে পরীক্ষার কি বাবদ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বর্ণিত হুকে ১ ও ২ নং ক্রমিকের জন্য পরীক্ষার কি বাবদ ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা ও Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ ২৩/- (টাকা)সহ (অফেরতযোগ্য) মোট ২২৩/- (দুইশত তেইশ) টাকা, অনন্থিক ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। তবে, সকল গ্রেডের অনগ্রসর (ফুড নু-গোষ্ঠী, শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী ও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ) প্রার্থীগণ পরীক্ষার কি বাবদ ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকা ও Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ ৬/- (টাকা)সহ (অফেরতযোগ্য) মোট ৫৬/- (ছাষাশ) টাকা অনন্থিক ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। এখানে বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য, "Online-এ আবেদনপত্রের সকল অংশ পূরণ করে Submit করা হলেও পরীক্ষার কি জমা না দেয়া পর্যন্ত Online আবেদনপত্র কোন অবস্থাতেই গৃহীত হবে না।"

প্রথম SMS: SPARRSO<space>User ID লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: SPARRSO ABCDEF & send to 16222

Reply: Applicant's Name, TK-223 will be charged as application fee. Your PIN is 12345678. To pay fee Type SPARRSO <Space>YES<space>PIN and send to 16222.

দ্বিতীয় SMS: SPARRSO<space>YES<space> PIN লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: SPARRSO YES 12345678

Reply: Congratulations! Applicant's Name, Payment completed successfully for SPARRSO Application for (Post Name) User ID is (ABCDEF) and Password (xxxxxxxxx).

(চ) প্রবেশপত্র প্রাপ্তির বিষয়টি <https://sparrso.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল ফোনে SMS এর মাধ্যমে (শুধুমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) যথাসময়ে জানানো হবে। Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল ফোনে পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় যোগাযোগ সম্পন্ন করা হবে বিধায় উক্ত নম্বরটি সার্বক্ষণিক সচল রাখা, SMS পড়া এবং প্রাপ্ত নির্দেশনা তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে অনুসরণ করা বাঞ্ছনীয়।

(ছ) SMS এ প্রেরিত User ID এবং Password ব্যবহার করে পরবর্তীতে রোল নম্বর, পদের নাম, ছবি, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থানের/ক্ষেত্রের নাম ইত্যাদি তথ্য সঞ্চলিত প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রঙিন Print করে নিবেন। প্রার্থী এই প্রবেশপত্রটি লিখিত পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের সময় এবং উত্তীর্ণ হলে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করবেন।

(জ) শুধুমাত্র টেলিটক প্রি-পেইড মোবাইল ফোন থেকে প্রার্থীগণ নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করে নিজ নিজ User ID এবং Password পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।
(i) **User ID জানা থাকলে:**
SPARRSO<space>Help<space>User ID & Send to 16222.
Example : SPARRSO Help User ABCDEF & Send to 16222.
(ii) **PIN Number জানা থাকলে:**
SPARRSO<space>Help<space>PIN<space>PIN Number & Send to 16222.
Example : SPARRSO Help PIN 12345678 & Send to 16222.

(ক) বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রতিক্রিয়া ছাড়াও বাংলাদেশ মহাকাশ গবেষণা ও দূর অনুধাবন প্রতিষ্ঠান (স্পারসো) এর ওয়েবসাইটে www.sparrso.gov.bd অথবা QR Code স্ক্যান করে মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় মোবাইল অপারেটর টেলিটকের জব পোর্টাল <https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও বিজ্ঞপ্তি পাওয়া যাবে। নিয়োগ পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও অন্যান্য তথ্য <http://sparrso.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে হতে জানা যাবে।

(গ) অনলাইনে আবেদন করতে কোন সমস্যা হলে টেলিটক নম্বর থেকে ১২১ নম্বর অথবা alljobs.query@teletalk.com.bd বা admin@sparrso.gov.bd ই-মেইলে যোগাযোগ করা যাবে। (Mail এর subject-এ Organization Name: SPARRSO, Post Name: **, Applicant's User ID ও Contact Number অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে।)

(চ) ডিভার্সন: প্রার্থীকে অনলাইন আবেদনপত্রের ডিভার্সন অংশে এই মর্মে ঘোষণা দিতে হবে যে, প্রার্থী কর্তৃক আবেদনপত্রের প্রদত্ত সকল তথ্য সঠিক এবং সত্য। প্রদত্ত তথ্য অসত্য বা মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে অথবা কোন অযোগ্যতা ধরা পড়লে বা কোনো প্রভাবনা বা দুর্নীতির আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসদুপায় অবলম্বন করলে, পরীক্ষার পূর্বে বা পরে অথবা নিয়োগের পরে যে কোনো পর্যায়ে প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর বিবুদ্ধে আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা যাবে।

১৪) Online-এ আবেদন ও নিয়োগ পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
* শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে হতে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে Online এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও আবেদন কি জমাদান করতে পারশর্ত দেয়া যাবে।

স্পারসো, প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় এর ওয়েবসাইটে প্রবেশ এর QR Code

স্পারসো, প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় এর টেলিটক মোবাইল প্রবেশ এর QR Code

স্বাক্ষরকারী ইয়াসির আকৌল
পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব)
উপসচিব, স্পারসো
ফোন: ০২-৪১০২৪১৯০

GD-1164

ESSAY

Panic, puke and Palahniuk

A retrospective on Chuck Palahniuk's chaotic 2003 press tour re-examining the 'Guts' legend 20 years later



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

20 years later, *Haunted* as a book, is remembered less for its themes of fame, exploitation and the cult of suffering, and more for whatever panic and puke-induced entrails "Guts" left behind.

ARSHI IBSAN RADIFAH

October 30, 2003, Chuck Palahniuk sits across Conan O'Brien on his late-night talk-show to promote his new novel, *Diary* (Doubleday, 2003), but the conversation is steered to something else that happened earlier over the summer. Palahniuk, in his Armani water buffalo leather pants, leans forward, more than eager to elaborate, and starts recounting an event at Columbia University that took place during one of his readings: "... This man falls backwards, falls forwards, falls on the floor, vomits, starts to aspirate his vomit, starts to bark like a dog while he's passed out, at that point, the publishing people come to the foot of the stage and they say, 'uh—Chuck? Over here. Do not read another word of this story, go right to Q&A, you've done enough damage.'" The late-night crowd gasps predictably, and Conan wants to know what kind of stories is Palahniuk specifically reading that is causing this visceral reaction? And Palahniuk replies, "It's a funny story about three ways that masturbation can go wrong." The crowd keels with laughter this time. That is the story that started it all: "Guts". A short story included in his full-length 2005 novel, *Haunted* (Doubleday), which follows 17 aspiring

writers responding to an advertisement of a secluded three-month writers' retreat. But Palahniuk was already performing live readings of this specific story, two full years before the book would come out, as part of his press tour for his other novel, *Diary*. An unexpected wave of fainting spells, vomiting episodes followed. As audience members bolted for the exits, and Palahniuk proudly tallied up these numbers as though he were racking up horror movie kills—it all culminated into something that read like Reddit creepypasta long before that had become a thing. It was marketing gold, a pure moment of viral horror before "viral" had also become a thing.

Now, two decades later, the question lingers: Did "Guts" really cause waves of fainting spells, or did the legend grow legs of its own?

"Guts" was actually formulated after one of Palahniuk's sessions at a support group for sex-addicts. Funnily, he wasn't there to collect material for *Haunted*, but *Choke* instead, a 2001 novel about a man who fakes choking in restaurants and attends similar support groups. But it was at one of these meetings where some of the personal stories shared were so extreme and graphic that it inspired him to collect similar tales for what would end up becoming

this infamous short story.

It really makes sense that Palahniuk was the author who needed to have paramedics on call during his live readings.

"Guts" was one of the more gut-wrenching (pun fully intended) stories in *Haunted*, told in the deadpan confessional tone Palahniuk is famously known for. It is a twisted tale of self-pleasuring accidents gone grotesquely wrong—complete with pool drains, candle wax, and vegetables used in anatomically unapproved and deplorable ways. The book contained 23 short stories in total, all similarly grotesque in varying degrees, but few have reached infamy the same way "Guts" has, if at all. From crowded bookstores to crowded university auditoriums, Palahniuk watched as audience members dropped like flies. The count went from single to double digits, and ultimately reached legend status.

And as word got around, it didn't take long for the skeptics to chime in: How much of it was manufactured? Some eyewitnesses from those tours talk about it being purely circumstantial—one lightheaded individual who couldn't handle the heat and the crowd, it just happened to be a Chuck Palahniuk reading where they blacked

out. Some think it might have initially been one single person who didn't have the best reaction, and through word of mouth, in an age where the internet wasn't still as massively accessible, the whole ordeal must have turned into this horrible game of Chinese whisper, and as misinformation carried it must have turned into some kind of a group delusion.

Besides, no one has ever contested that Palahniuk is a master when it comes to inducing queasiness, and the human body is extremely suggestible, after all. Now add in the theatrics of live readings and getting to meet one of your favorite authors, plus the anxiety of audience expectation, and a strange, subconscious urge to perform while everyone around you is whispering about some online posts from a fan forum where people had been boasting about surviving the "Guts" reading—you have a recipe for disaster. Whether that was 67 people or just six of them, people did faint, and they did throw up. In fact, remember the interview excerpt from before? If you are interested in a visual account, there is evidence of that. A 2003 documentary titled *Postcards from the Future: The Chuck Palahniuk Documentary*, which includes footage of a young man at Columbia University falling forwards and then backwards

and then aspirating in his own vomit. And then there is the infamous *Pitt News* article by Jonathan Check, the University of Pittsburgh's daily student paper, where the author started his piece with the line: "They came, they heard, they threw up".

In subsequent years, with the consequent rise of forums like Reddit and Palahniuk's personal (currently defunct) fan site, *The Cult*, it started to take the form of a dare—could you stomach "Guts"? Readers had begun to challenge each other; wide-eyed hushes of previous body counts and a wave of shock that felt both like a personal high and a communal hug. The experience had become more about reacting to the reading and then sharing the reaction, in an age where book tours themselves have become less frequent.

In the end we are left with some uncomfortable questions: considering how this was, after all, a marketing ploy—is it not just a tiny bit sleazy that it was built on legitimate audience trauma that got turned into an exaggerated narrative that was purely curated for buzz and sales? Why would Palahniuk keep doing it, until 67 people fainted and got sick? Why did his publishers allow this? Sure, Chuck has never shied away from provocation but doesn't something about this still feel a little nasty? But then again, some would argue that the audience demanded it, people showed up in droves desperate to throw up at the Chuck Palahniuk "Guts" reading and he was just appeasing his fans. Wasn't he? He just exposed the lengths of sensationalism, an era of people desperate to push boundaries. Weren't these the same groups of people lurking behind Ogrish.com and LiveLeak URLs, after all?

I was too busy being three years old when the *Pitt News* article first came out. My acquaintance with "Guts" is fairly recent. I started the book in 2022, and it took me quite a while to get through all of it. That same year, "Guts" had a resurgence on BookTok and many videos of people "live-reacting" as they read the piece with flashy titles like: "This has to be the grossest book I've ever read".

20 years later, *Haunted* as a book, is remembered less for its themes of fame, exploitation and the cult of suffering, and more for whatever panic and puke-induced entrails "Guts" left behind. But considering the iconography of Chuck Palahniuk, especially in terms of provocation, somehow, the lasting legacy of "Guts" is rather fitting. 20 years later, the story of "Guts" seems to have carved out a peculiar niche in the pop-culture hall of fame for years to come.

Arshi Ibsan Radifah is a literature major who loves unreliable narrators and Wes Anderson movie sets. If she had it her way she would have liked to play bass for a girl band in the 90s, but for now she'll suffice by rewatching Empire Records.

THE SHELF

5 books my 5-year-old can't get enough of

SALWAH CHOWDHURY

In a world where smart TVs, touchscreen tablets, and mobiles are always within reach, I feel grateful that my daughter, who is almost five and a half, often brings me books and asks me to read them to her for a quick, fun storytime. Here, I have taken on the (almost impossible!) task of selecting her top five favourite titles—the ones she insists on listening to and watching again and again, while still learning to read and write her ABCs.

Children of Foreign Lands
Elizabeth F. McCrady

The Platt & Munk Co., Inc., 1936

This hardcover brings together an illustrated collection of stories of children from different parts of the world—Southeast Asia, Europe, and North and South America. This book is a foundational gateway to the wider world which encourages young minds to think beyond borders while embracing the universal joys of childhood. What struck me most was how many questions the book sparked in my five-year-old. She was



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

curious, puzzled, and at times even a little surprised. Why do they wear those clothes? What are they doing? These unfamiliar details opened up opportunities for rich conversations about culture, difference, and

acceptance.

Esho Rongdhonu Banai
Tariq Manzoor (writer) and Sarah Toufika (illustrator)
Sesame Workshop Bangladesh, 2019

Esho Rongdhonu Banai is not only a colourful book about rainbows, but also features favourite Sisimpur characters demonstrating a fun scientific experiment to help children understand how the spectrum of colours blooms in a rainbow.

One Last Try
Shamim Ahmed
Mayurpankhi, 2025

Inspired by Sri Lankan oral folk tales, Ahmed weaves a story about a hat seller and a troop of monkeys. The narrative strings together various elements into a unique interpretation, offering a fun, imaginative, and inspirational read.

Jack and the Beanstalk
Iona Treahy (writer) and Ruth Rivers (illustrator)
Ladybird, 1999

This classic retelling of *Jack and the Beanstalk* offers more than just adventure. While my five-year-old was enchanted by the towering beanstalk and the magical golden harp, she also had questions—about stealing, about giants, and about fairness.

These moments opened up conversations about right and wrong, bravery, and making choices.

Tumi Jodi Akashe Takao
Eylu Şeyrek Altass (writer), Abul Khair Mohammad Atiqur Rahman (translator), and Alexandra Fobia (illustrator)
Mayurpankhi 2024

Saving the best (and my favourite) for last, *Tumi Jodi Akashe Takao* takes young readers across a celestial canvas. Each page of this book is a visual feast, with soft hues and pencil strokes bringing the night sky to life in detail. Reading this book with my daughter evoked a sense of tranquillity within us both. Not only did I fall in love with the artwork, but I fell head over heels in love with the prose. Kudos to Turkish authors and their creative inspiration!

Salwah Chowdhury, a mother and a voracious reader, loves the rush of thinking, reading and writing. Follow her on Instagram @salwah_chowdhury and share your book recommendations and thoughts on the article.

BCB caught off-guard after Fizz's surprise IPL call-up

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian Premier League franchise Delhi Capitals have confirmed the signing of Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman on Wednesday for the remainder of the IPL season for INR 6 crore, but interestingly, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was not aware of the development.

The news surfaced at a time when the first contingent of the Bangladesh team had already departed for Dubai on Wednesday morning for a two-match T20I series against the UAE, and the second contingent of players, including Mustafizur and a few others, were on their way to the airport to catch the Dubai-bound flight. The 29-year-old eventually departed for UAE with the other players and officials later in the evening.

Earlier, the news of IPL signing caused confusion on Mustafizur's availability for the UAE series – slated to be played on May 17 and 19 – and the five-match T20I tour of Pakistan.

Mustafizur had a base price of INR 2 crore in the auction list for this year's IPL. It was learnt that Delhi Capitals were in competition to secure the Bangladesh pacer's services alongside another franchise as a number of foreign players, including ones from Australia, South Africa and England, were reluctant to return to the IPL

following the India-Pakistan conflict. Given the competition, things moved fast as Delhi secured the left-arm pacer for a six-crore-rupee signing fee.

But BCB had no inkling about the development. "Mustafizur is supposed to go with the team to UAE and that's what the schedules are at the moment. We have not received any communication from the IPL officials. I am not sure whether Mustafizur asked for any NOC," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

IPL franchises usually communicate to the board regarding availability of players. However, BCB's cricket operations department, too, did not know about the development.

"We, too, learnt from social media and journalists regarding Mustafizur's signing with Delhi Capitals. Since we did not receive any official request from the player or the BCCI, we can't make a comment on an official basis," a BCB official said.

Given the delicate nature of the security situation surrounding the upcoming Pakistan series, it remains to be seen what decision comes regarding the series, and in the event the series is played as scheduled, whether Mustafizur gets NOC from the BCB.



Bangladesh team's second contingent, including skipper Liton Das, Mustafizur Rahman, Soumya Sarkar, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, Shoriful Islam, and senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin, departed the country in the evening yesterday for the UAE, where the Tigers are scheduled to play a two-match T20I series, starting on May 17 in Sharjah. The first contingent left in the morning.

PHOTO: BCB

Extreme weather conditions see BCL deferred

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is likely to scrap its plan of holding this season's Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) from next month and defer it till next September, keeping in mind the extreme weather conditions.

The four-day league was expected to start from June 15 after it was deferred for one month from its original scheduled start in May due to a few series of Bangladesh 'A' team and the Emerging Team.

However, as there is a heat alert and also a high chance of rain and thunderstorms in the coming month, the BCB is now planning to organise BCL at the start of the next domestic calendar year in September.

"as there is a warning of a heat wave, we are now thinking of holding the league at the start of the new season," BCB's tournament committee chairman Akram Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Akram also added that the league would still be considered as a tournament of the ongoing 2024-25 season even if it is held next season.

Meanwhile, the BCB is facing difficulties in attracting sponsors for all four teams in the BCL, the country's only franchise-based four-day tournament.

In recent years, two of the teams – East Zone and Central Zone – were patronised by Islami Bank and Walton, while the other two teams were managed by the BCB.

Wasting a golden gen?

ANISUR RAHMAN

When Bangladesh clinched their second straight SAFF Women's Championship title in October 2024, it felt like a turning point – a sign the team were ready to move beyond South Asian dominance and step onto a larger Asian stage.

Seven months later, that hope is dimming fast, giving way to uncertainty and increasing skepticism.

Calls to raise the bar – to arrange matches against stronger second-tier Asian nations like Vietnam, Thailand, Iran, and the Philippines – were loud and clear after the SAFF success. Yet little action followed. Infrastructure remains stagnant. Facilities haven't improved.

And more worryingly, even the existing resources are being mishandled.

The root of the current crisis is a deepening rift between head coach Peter Butler and a group of senior players. That fallout, which began with a training boycott in January, continues to overshadow preparations for the upcoming fixtures in Myanmar, Bahrain and Turkmenistan in AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers in June and July.

Despite Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) efforts at crisis management, the cracks are widening. Butler – a former Premier League player with a respectable coaching record – is back at the helm with eight of the boycotting players reintegrated.

Ten others, however, including national stalwarts like Sabina Khatun, Maria Manda, Monica Chakma, are currently playing in Bhutan's Women's League – just when the national team needs unity the most.

Playing abroad offers valuable exposure, especially given the limited international opportunities at home. Still, it's hard to ignore the timing. Shouldn't preparing

for a crucial international campaign take precedence?

The episode exposes deeper problems. Bangladesh women's football now stands at a crossroads – between building on progress and watching it unravel. The decision to let core players drift away without resolving internal disputes signals a worrying lack of leadership and strategic thinking.

Coach Butler has described the current squad as the "future" of Bangladesh. And while the younger players do show promise,

federation's inaction has only deepened the divide.

Seven months into the tenure of the Tabith Awal led executive committee, women's football remains without a functioning domestic structure. Beyond short-term contracts for 54 players, there are no meaningful pathways, leaving the sport's foundation increasingly fragile.

Unless reconciliation happens – unless Butler and the BFF work to reintegrate the veterans and unify the squad – Bangladesh



Bangladesh stars Sabina Khatun, Monika Chakma, and Rituporna Chakma share a light moment during Paro FC Women's training session yesterday, as they gear up for their 2025 Bob Women's National League opener at 4pm today. PHOTO: PARO FC WOMEN

pushing aside seasoned internationals without a clear transition plan risks derailing the momentum built over the past decade.

Players like Maria, Monica, and Sabina have carried Bangladesh through its rise since 2014, facing elite youth sides from Japan, Korea, and Australia. Their experience is irreplaceable. Yet, instead of bridging the gap and restoring trust, the

could head into the Asian qualifiers fractured, underprepared, and at risk of squandering hard-won momentum.

This is not just about picking sides. It's about safeguarding potential, preserving continuity, and respecting the journey that brought the team to this point.

Without belief, trust, and structure, even the brightest promise can collapse under its own weight.

Miraz third Bangladeshi to win ICC Men's POTM

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz was named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for April 2025 on Wednesday.

Miraz became only the third men's cricketer from Bangladesh to win the men's monthly award and the first in over two years. Shakib Al Hasan was the last Bangladesh player to win the award, in March 2023, while Mushfiqur Rahim is the other one to have won it.

"It's an incredible honour to win the ICC Men's Player of the Month award. The ICC Awards are the ultimate recognition for any cricketer, and to receive this from a global vote means a lot to me," Miraz said.

Superb performances with both bat and ball in a two-Test home series against Zimbabwe helped him win the award, his purple patch also helping grab the number two spot among all-rounders in the ICC Men's Test Player Rankings for the first time in his career.

The 27-year-old was named Player of the Series after finishing with 15 wickets that comprised three five-wicket hauls and knocking up his second Test century (104) in the second match in Chattogram that Bangladesh won by an innings and 106 runs to draw the series 1-1.

"I am truly delighted. This award will be a big source of inspiration for me to keep giving my best and contributing to Bangladesh's success on the world stage. As cricketers, we dream of making an impact and bringing joy to our fans," Miraz added.



Jannik Sinner came through the first true test of his comeback from a doping ban with Tuesday's straight-sets win over Francisco Cerundolo which took the world number one into the Italian Open quarterfinals. Italian Sinner bested 17th seed Cerundolo 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 in a match which was delayed by a couple of hours due to a torrential downpour to set up a last-eight clash with Casper Ruud.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Barca get Lewy boost with LaLiga title in sight

REUTERS

Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski is set to return to action in Thursday's LaLiga clash at Espanyol, manager Hansi Flick said, as his side prepare to wrap up the title this week.

A victory in their city derby against Espanyol would clinch the championship for the Catalans. Barcelona, now seven points clear at the top with 82 points, could win the title as early as Wednesday if Real Madrid fail to win at Mallorca.

The Polish striker missed Barca's last three league games and was also absent from their 3-2 Copa del Rey final win over Real Madrid on April 27 due to a muscle injury.

The 36-year-old has scored 25 goals in 31 league games, two behind Kylian Mbappe in the LaLiga Golden Boot race, with both having played the same number of matches.

"Lewandowski is doing good and of course he is ready to play," Flick told reporters on Wednesday.

Lewandowski featured for only 30 minutes in their Champions League semi-final second leg defeat by Inter Milan last week and missed their 4-3 home win against Real Madrid on Sunday.

After their last Clasico win, Barcelona have defeated Real in all four encounters

this season across all competitions, and Flick hailed his team's performance as a source of immense pride.

"We played 24 minutes with no contact from Real in our half, so it has something to do with the pressing, it has something to do with the right structure we had," he said.

"How we started to press them when they had the ball was unbelievable. When I heard this stat I thought it's really great... we can be very proud of that. I'm happy for the fans, for the club, because I know that's very important for them."

Asked about Real manager Carlo Ancelotti joining the Brazil national team at the end of the season, Flick, who coached Germany from 2021 to 2023, said: "I think he (Ancelotti) did a fantastic job in Madrid. He's a gentleman and one of the best and most successful coaches in the world."

"I wish him all the best for his new job. I think he will find a great team there, and he can follow success there."



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BTRC asked to block AL websites and social handles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) has requested the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to immediately block or remove all websites linked to the Awami League, its associated, affiliated, and like-minded organisations.

The agency, in a letter, also requested the BTRC to ask platforms such as Meta (Facebook), X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and TikTok to block all social media handles linked to the political group.

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for telecom and ICT, confirmed the issuance of the letter.

The move comes after the government on May 12 banned all activities of the Awami League and its affiliated organisations, including in cyberspace, until the completion of ongoing trials of its members at the International Crimes Tribunal.

Additionally, the Election

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain demonstrating outside Dhaka South City Corporation headquarters yesterday afternoon, demanding that he be sworn in and given the responsibilities of the city mayor following a court order.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

REDEFINING FREEDOM FIGHTER Ministry, Cabinet Division at odds over the move

BAHARAM KHAN

The legal expert committee of the Cabinet Division has opposed the Liberation War affairs ministry's proposal to redefine the term "freedom fighter," saying legal and hierarchical complications may arise from it.

The ministry, on the other hand, seems to be firm on its stance as it recently resubmitted the proposal to the Cabinet Division without changing the segment that deals with the definition of freedom fighter. Now it's up to the Advisory Council to make the final call.

In its draft amendment to Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council Act, 2022, the ministry proposed separate definitions of "freedom fighter" and "associates of the Liberation War".

Upon reviewing the draft, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Legal Draft Review and Opinion" under the Cabinet Division said that such a change could lead to legal and hierarchical complications. It sent the draft back to the ministry in March for further review.

The ministry argues that the redefinition is justified as there will be no changes to the existing benefits enjoyed by freedom fighters.

"We hope the Advisory Council will resolve the issue. That is why we have resubmitted the draft to the Cabinet Division without any changes to the segment," a joint secretary at the ministry told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

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'Contact me if you face any trouble'

Asif Nazrul tells migrant workers in Malaysia

PORIMOL PALMA

Asif Nazrul, adviser for law and expatriates' welfare ministries, has given his contact information to some Bangladeshis working in Malaysia, urging them to contact him if they face any trouble.

He was talking to the migrants during a visit to Mediceram, a hand gloves company in the Malaysian state of Negeri Sembilan, yesterday.

He requested the Bangladeshi workers to resolve any problems through discussion instead of doing anything that could be harmful to them and the company.

"Please directly communicate with me," he told the migrants, asking them to collect his phone number and email ID from his Private Secretary Sarwoer Alam.

Nazrul is visiting Malaysia and is scheduled to hold meetings with Malaysian Human Resources Minister Steven Sim and Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail in Putrajaya today.

The Bangladeshis employed by Mediceram said nearly 200 of them were recruited in 2018 and 2023, but they were underpaid and their payments were irregular.

"This prompted us to hold demonstrations, and report to the labour department and even to our high commission, but nothing happened," a migrant told this correspondent from Malaysia yesterday.

Having spent Tk 4-5 lakh on recruitment, the migrants were indebted and frustrated. They then communicated with a migrants' rights group and demanded repayment of the recruitment fees.

At one point in time, Mediceram agreed to repay the recruitment fees, 22,500 Malaysian Ringgit (RM) each, since April in 12 instalments.



SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

ACC 'working' to bring back Hasina, Tulip

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission is "actively working" to bring back ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her niece, British lawmaker Tulip Siddiq, both accused in separate corruption cases.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, ACC Chairman Dr Mohammad Abdul Momen stated that the commission is actively working to ensure both individuals return to face legal proceedings.

Regarding Sheikh Hasina's repatriation, Momen noted, "A prisoner exchange agreement was signed with India during the Awami League government's tenure in 2011. Under that agreement, it is possible to bring her back. We will act in accordance with the court's directives."

Tulip Siddiq was summoned to appear before the ACC at 10:00am yesterday for questioning over allegations of abuse of power and receiving undue privileges. However, she failed to appear.

"She has lost the opportunity to defend

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

70 killed across Gaza as Israel intensifies strikes

Hamas military leader among dead; Trump envoys pushing for new hostage release deal

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli military strikes killed at least 70 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip yesterday, local health authorities said, in a significant escalation of the bombardment as US President Donald Trump continued his visit to the Middle East.

Medics said most of the dead, including women and children, resulted from a barrage of Israeli airstrikes that targeted several houses in the Jabalia area in northern Gaza.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment and said it was trying to verify the reports.

Israeli press reports yesterday cited security officials as saying they believed Hamas military leader Mohammad Sinwar and other senior officials had been killed in a strike on Tuesday on what the Israeli military described as a command and control bunker under the European Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis.

There was no confirmation either from the Israeli military or Hamas. Yesterday, witnesses and medics said an Israeli airstrike hit a bulldozer that approached the area of the strike at the European Hospital, wounding several people.

Late on Tuesday, Islamic Jihad, an Iranian-backed group in Gaza allied with Hamas, fired rockets towards Israel. Shortly before the Israeli strikes began in response, the military issued

evacuation orders to residents in the area of Jabalia and nearby Beit Lahiya.

The Israeli escalation came against Palestinian hopes that the Trump visit might provide pressure for a de-escalation of violence. Hamas on Monday released Edan Alexander, the last known living American hostage, ahead of Trump's trip.

Speaking in Riyadh on Tuesday, Trump said more hostages would follow Alexander and added that the people of Gaza deserved a better future.

Efforts to agree a ceasefire have faltered in recent weeks, with Hamas and Israel exchanging blame. Hamas talked to the United States and Egyptian and Qatari mediators to arrange the release of Alexander, and Israel has sent a team to Doha to begin a new round of talks.

On Tuesday, Trump's special envoys Steve Witkoff and Adam Boehler met hostage families in Tel Aviv and said they could now see a better chance of an agreement for their release following the deal over Alexander.

The US has also presented a plan to reopen humanitarian aid deliveries in Gaza using private contractors. Israel, which imposed a total blockade of supplies going into Gaza from March 2, has endorsed the plan. But it has been rejected by the United Nations and international aid agencies and key details, including funding and donors, remain unclear.

- Islamic Jihad fighters fire rockets towards Israel
- Israel issues evacuation orders to residents in Jabalia
- People of Gaza deserve a better future: Trump

Iran diplomacy will 'work out', hopes Trump

AFP, Doha

US President Donald Trump voiced hope on Wednesday that diplomatic efforts would succeed on Iran's nuclear programme, even as he vowed rigorous enforcement of sanctions.

Trump, on his first visit to the Middle East since returning to the White House, said he spoke about Iran with the leader of Qatar, which maintains relations with both longtime adversaries.

"It's been really an interesting situation. I have a feeling it's going to work out," Trump said of Iran after talks with the emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

The Trump administration has held four rounds of talks with Tehran, as the president seeks to avert a threatened Israeli military strike on the Iranian nuclear programme.

"I want to make a deal with Iran. I want to do something, if it's possible," Trump told a summit of Gulf Arab leaders in Riyadh earlier Wednesday.

"But for that to happen, it must stop sponsoring terror, halt its bloody proxy wars, and permanently and verifiably cease its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

"I'm strongly urging all nations to join us in fully and totally enforcing the sanctions" imposed on Iran by the United States, he said.

The Trump administration in recent weeks has imposed sanctions on a series of entities and individuals linked to Iran's oil industry and nuclear programme.

ESPIONAGE ROW India, Pak expel diplomats in tit-for-tat move

Swap prisoners

AGENCIES

India and Pakistan each announced on Tuesday evening the expulsion of one diplomat from the other country, with both sides accusing the respective officials of engaging in espionage activities.

Pakistan declared a staff member of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad as persona non grata. The official has been ordered to leave the country within 24 hours, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Indian Charge d'Affaires was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where a formal demarche was issued conveying the decision, the foreign office said, adding that it called on the Indian mission to ensure that its personnel refrain from actions inconsistent with their diplomatic responsibilities.

According to Indian media, the Indian government announced earlier it had expelled an official working at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi and asked him to leave the country within 24 hours.

The Pakistani diplomat, who was declared "persona non grata" by the Indian authorities, was "indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status in India", according to India's foreign ministry in a statement.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's PTI founder Imran Khan,

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Children swing from the mooring line of a ship on the Bhairab river in Khulna, seeking a bit of fun and relief from the scorching heat after school.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

EU demands accountability for Myanmar school strike

AFP, Brussels

The EU yesterday voiced shock at a deadly air strike on a school in central Myanmar, warning the "perpetrators must be held accountable for this atrocity".

A Myanmar junta air strike on Monday killed 20 students and two teachers in the village of Oe Htein Kwin in the country's Sagaing region, according to a school staff member, a local administrator, and other witnesses.

"We are horrified over reports of a massacre in a village school in Sagaing," EU foreign affairs spokeswoman, Anitta Hipper, said on X.

"Our deepest condolences to the families of the victims, most of them children."

The strike took place during a purported truce -- to ease aid after March's devastating magnitude-7.7 quake -- between the junta, which seized power in 2021, and guerrilla fighters.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since its military ousted a civilian government in 2021.