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The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 25, 2025



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 126

JAISHTHA 11, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

ZILQAD 26, 1446 HJRI

16 PAGES: TK 15.00



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Advisory council calls for national unity to ensure fair election, stability

“However, if -- under the instigation of defeated forces or as part of a foreign conspiracy -- the performance of these responsibilities becomes impossible, the government will present all reasons to the public and then take the necessary steps with the people.”

ADVISORY COUNCIL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid simmering political tensions, the interim government has said it will not abandon its responsibilities and that Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus is not stepping down.

“We’re not going anywhere until our job is done,” said Wahiduddin Mahmud, planning adviser, following an unscheduled meeting of the advisers yesterday.

The announcement follows reports that Prof Yunus on Thursday expressed his desire to resign.

The two-hour meeting presided over by Prof Yunus focused on election, reforms, and trial -- the three core responsibilities of the

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An illegal fish market continues to operate on the banks of the Karnaphuli river in Chattogram, despite a High Court order on May 29 last year that authorised the removal of such structures to protect the river. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon at the mouth of the Chakta and Rajakhali canals.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

TALKS BETWEEN CA AND 3 PARTIES

BNP sticks to demand for polls by December

Says delay may open door to return of autocracy; Jamaat wants end to tensions; NCP for local polls first

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus last night, the BNP restated its demands that the next general election be held by December and the government immediately announce a roadmap to that end.

“If the election is delayed for any reason, we fear it will pave the way for the return of autocracy. The responsibility for this will fall on the current government,” BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said after the meeting.

The BNP also stuck to its demand for the resignation of two student representatives in the advisory council -- Asif Mahmud and Mahfuj Alam

- ⑤ BNP demands resignation of Mahfuj, Asif Mahmud, Khalilur
- ⑤ Jamaat says election should be held before or after next Ramadan
- ⑤ NCP wants all polls held during AL regime to be declared null and void
- ⑤ All parties reaffirmed support for Yunus: CA’s press secy

-- and the CA’s National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman.

After the BNP, the chief adviser sat with the Jamaat-e-Islami and National Citizen Party (NCP) separately at his official residence Jamuna.

The Jamaat demanded a timeline for the election, and another for reforms and trials of Awami League leaders for their alleged role in mass killings during the July uprising.

The party also said the election can be held before or after the next Ramadan.

The NCP demanded reconstitution of the Election Commission, local government polls before the parliamentary election, and

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UK freezes assets worth £90m of Salman’s son, nephew

TIB lauds move, urges other countries to follow suit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UK’s National Crime Agency (NCA) has frozen nearly £90 million worth of luxury London property owned by two individuals linked to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, according to the British daily The Guardian.

The move follows increasing pressure on UK authorities to assist Bangladesh in tracing assets allegedly tied to the ousted Awami League regime.

The NCA secured nine property freezing orders against Ahmed Shayan Fazlur Rahman and his cousin, Ahmed Shahryar Rahman, said The Guardian, citing official records.

The orders bar the duo from selling several high-value properties, including apartments in London’s exclusive Grosvenor Square.

The Rahmans were previously named in a Guardian investigation into UK assets owned by associates of Hasina.

The properties, held through offshore entities based in the British Virgin Islands, were seized by the NCA on May 8.



Hamid, in wheelchair, being taken to Gate-33 of the airport for boarding.

ZYMA ISLAM

Further details regarding the exit of former president Mohammed Abdul Hamid suggest he breezed through the airport before quietly departing for Thailand.

Security footage obtained and analysed by The Daily Star shows that Hamid’s car reached the barrier gate of the VIP terminal at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) at 12:46am on May 8.

The car was stopped by an operator of the airport’s Aviation Security Division, who, upon realising the identity of the passenger, returned to his station to contact his line manager.

While he was making the calls, two individuals appeared in the background -- one in a light pink shirt and the other in a blue shirt and grey blazer -- and beckoning the car inside.

Three minutes later, at 12:49am, the two men moved into the foreground.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

BB may issue redesigned bank notes before eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank is likely to issue Tk 20, Tk 50 and Tk 1,000 notes with a new design next week.

The new notes, which will not include any picture or headshot of any national leaders including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will be available from bank branches before Eid-ul-Azha.

The new bank notes will feature not only graffiti of the July movement but also images of mosques, temples, historical landmarks and nature.

The Daily Star learned from officials of the central bank that nine types of newly designed bank notes are currently being printed at the Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Limited, also known as the mint, in Gazipur.

However, the new Tk 20, Tk 50, and Tk 1,000 notes will be released into the market before Eid. The revamped Tk 500, Tk 200, Tk 100, Tk 10, Tk 5 and Tk 2 notes will be released after Eid.

About Tk 1,500 crore to Tk 2,000 crore worth of new bank notes are likely to be released into the market, said BB spokesman Arif Hussain Khan.

Not any direct picture or headshot but the very popular graffiti of Abu Sayed, Mir Mugdho, the well-known image showing



Organised by Jubo Dal, Svechchhasebok Dal and Chhatra Dal, the BNP’s youth rally was held at Bogra Central High School in Bogra town yesterday afternoon. Leaders and activists from 16 districts of Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions took part in the rally.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BNP

Nagar Bhaban still padlocked

Ishraque calls for resignation of ‘3 non-neutral advisers’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nagar Bhaban, the headquarters of Dhaka South City Corporation, was still under lock and key yesterday even though the supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain suspended their protests for the weekend.

City residents have not been getting any services at the Nagar Bhaban since Ishraque’s supporters, under the banner of Dhakabashi, started demonstrating on May 14 for immediate swearing in of him as mayor. Several employee unions have expressed support for the demonstrators.

The building also houses the Local Government Division office, closed since May 15, preventing Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain from attending work there.

Ishraque yesterday urged DSAC unions to ensure cleanliness in the city ahead of Eid as the failure to get services caused widespread frustration among residents.

Addressing the protesters over the



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Woman sues three over gang rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 35 year-old woman filed a case yesterday accusing three men of gang raping her in a forested area of Sreepur on May 20.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Mohammad Abdul Barik, officer-in-charge of Sreepur Police Station, said the incident took place around 11:30pm on May 20, when the woman was returning home from work.

The accused -- Alamin, 27, Shanto, 25, and Sumon, 26 -- have been on the run since the incident, said Inspector Nayan Kar, the investigating officer.

According to the victim's husband, the men blindfolded her, dragged her into a nearby forest, and raped her until 5:00am, before releasing her in the morning.

Police are trying to arrest the accused, OC Barik said, adding that the victim has been sent to hospital for medical tests.

Yunus to stay the course

FROM PAGE 1

interim government, said a statement.

"The future of the country depends on this task, and we must keep going despite the obstacles," Mahmud said.

The advisory council later issued a statement, calling for national unity to ensure a fair election and stability. The council also expressed concerns over attempts to hamper the functioning of the administration.

The statement said that "unreasonable demands, deliberately provocative and jurisdictionally overreaching statements, and disruptive programmes have been continuously obstructing normal functioning environment and creating confusion and suspicion among the public."

Despite these challenges, the government said, it would continue to carry out its duties, placing national interest above all else.

"However, if -- under the instigation of defeated forces or as part of a foreign conspiracy -- the performance of these responsibilities becomes impossible, the government will present all reasons to the public and then take the necessary steps with the people."

While briefing reporters after the unscheduled meeting of the advisory council, Mahmud said, "The chief



A child cries as Palestinians gather at a food distribution point in the Nuseirat camp for refugees in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. The United Nations chief Antonio Guterres said Palestinians are enduring "the cruellest phase" of the nearly two-year-long war in Gaza due to the Israeli blockade and bombardment.

PHOTO: AFP

Nagar Bhaban still padlocked

FROM PAGE 1

phone, which was put through a PA system, Ishraque expressed gratitude to his supporters and urged them to continue fulfilling responsibilities.

"We are giving the government one more day. In the meantime, everyone must carry out their duties. Eid-ul-Azha is approaching. After the Qurbani, it's our collective responsibility to keep the city clean and liveable. I hope government inaction doesn't lead to public suffering," he said.

In a Facebook post, Ishraque called for the immediate resignation of "three non-neutral and dangerous advisers".

They must either step down or give an undertaking that they would not take part in the next election.

Ishraque earlier said National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman, local government Adviser Asif Mahmud and Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam must resign.

Addressing the demonstrators in front of Nagar Bhaban, Dhakabshi Coordinator Moshirul Rahman said the government would face consequences if it delayed Ishraque's swearing in.

The High Court ruled last Thursday that there were "no further legal barriers" to Ishraque's swearing in. Following the ruling, his supporters temporarily suspended a road blockade in Kakrail, giving the authorities 48 hours to initiate the process.

However, the demonstrators reoccupied Nagar Bhaban early yesterday morning, locking all the entrances.

Only trucks carrying cleaning supplies for Eid preparations were allowed to enter the premises. A handful of officials handled operations from the emergency control room on the ground floor.

DSCC Public Relations Officer Rasel Rahman said, "Nagar Bhaban remains locked. Our regular administrative functions are at a standstill."

The disruption has taken a toll on citizens. Latiful Islam, a resident of Bakshibazar, went to Nagar Bhaban around noon to collect a his father's death certificate. "I came here three times in a week, but had to return empty-handed every time. One of my brothers came from abroad, and we were planning to settle property matters. Now everything is stalled," he said.

The story of Hamid's exit

FROM PAGE 1

The man in pink approached the car directly. The other in the blazer came from the side -- a white ID card hanging from his waist became visible.

Several aviation security personnel, speaking on condition of anonymity, claimed the two men were from a specialised intelligence agency. However, The Daily Star could not independently verify this, as their faces are not visible in the footage.

The gate operator promptly raised the barrier, allowing the car to proceed to the VIP terminal's drop-off/pick-up point.

A frail Hamid, using a cane, was transferred onto a wheelchair while his son Barrister Riad Ahmed followed behind with two small trolley suitcases. Hamid, wearing a lungi and sandals, entered the terminal at 12:51am.

On May 15, Riad wrote on Facebook that his father was too weak to stand for even two minutes or sit for more than two hours. "He has lost so much weight, he now weighs 54 kilograms and none of his pants fit him anymore, so he has to wear lungis," he posted.

Speaking to The Daily Star from Bangkok on May 21, Riad said, "The doctors detected cancer in his [Hamid's] right lung. There are a few more spots in other places. They extracted tissue from those places yesterday for a biopsy to test if they are cancerous. They did another test yesterday to judge whether or not he would be able to survive the stress of a surgery. He is not well. The weakness has intensified. The doctors will decide on Saturday [yesterday] if he will need chemotherapy or radiotherapy."

Once inside the terminal, Hamid was taken through the terminal-side scan and seated inside the VIP lounge as per protocol.

At 2:21am, after about an hour and a half, he was wheeled out past the police immigration desk towards Gate 33.

The Daily Star confirmed the gate number by speaking with Group Captain Muhammed Kamrul

Islam, the airport's immediate past executive director, who was present that night and left his post the following day.

There was, however, a procedural anomaly -- it is highly irregular for any passenger to proceed directly from the VIP lounge to Gate 33.

"Gate 33 is exclusively for secure airport personnel," said current HSIA executive director Group Captain S M Ragib Samad. "After exiting the VIP lounge, passengers go to the second floor where they undergo security checks."

This security check includes a comprehensive scan of the body and hand luggage -- a process standard at major airports globally before passengers enter duty-free and boarding zones. At HSIA, such checks occur immediately before boarding.

Senior airport officials, also speaking anonymously, said only the head of state and the sitting president are exempt from these checks.

After security clearance, passengers are usually directed either to a boarding bridge or taken by vehicle from a gate known as "Alpha" if the plane is parked remotely. Even Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus followed this process.

But both the CCTV footage and witness accounts confirm that Hamid was wheeled straight from the VIP lounge to Gate-33, skipping the mandatory security check.

The Thai Airways flight -- TG340 -- was parked away from the terminal. According to Riad, Hamid was transported in a car and lifted onto the plane along with his wheelchair.

INSIDE THE VIP LOUNGE

During his 90-minute stay in the lounge, Hamid's immigration was completed. A leaked and subsequently verified general diary (GD) entry reveals that upon his arrival, the terminal-in-charge informed the immigration police officer-in-charge.

The OC -- Additional Superintendent of Immigration Police Tahsina Arif -- then alerted two state intelligence agencies: an assistant director of the National

Security Intelligence (NSI) and a Grade-1 general staff officer of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), as recorded in the GD.

She also contacted the additional deputy inspector general and deputy inspector general of the immigration police.

Sources within the civilian intelligence agency confirmed that the NSI assistant director sought clearance through his chain of command.

Following these developments, Tahsina Arif has been removed from her post. Another officer withdrawn is Mohammad Hasan Chowdhury, superintendent of Kishoreganj police.

Notably, former president Hamid was named in a murder case filed in Kishoreganj relating to the July-August massacre.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Tahsina said she followed due procedure.

"I took clearance from both NSI and DGFI and I also checked the no-fly list. His name was not there. I informed my superiors and was told to let him pass through. I physically came down to the immigration desk to make sure that we get all the necessary permissions."

Security footage confirms her presence at the immigration counter with her sub-inspectors as Hamid was wheeled away.

Contacted for comments, SP Chowdhury declined but requested prayers from well-wishers for his return to service.

The investigation officer of the case, Assistant Sub-Inspector Azharul Islam, and Assistant Trainee Sub-Inspector of the Special Branch of police Md Solaiman were also suspended.

An investigation committee was formed on May 11, 2025, to look into the circumstances surrounding Hamid's exit. The committee is headed by Education Adviser Prof CR Arbar and includes Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan and Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain. The report is expected next week.

US strike on Yemen kills al-Qaeda members

APP, Dubai

Five Al-Qaeda members have been killed in a strike blamed on the United States in southern Yemen, two Yemeni security sources told AFP yesterday.

"Residents of the area informed us of the US strike... five Al Qaeda members were eliminated," said a security source in Abyan province, which borders the seat of Yemen's internationally-recognised government in Aden.

"The US strike on Friday evening north of Khabar Al Maraqsha killed five," said a second source, referring to a mountainous area known to be used by Al-Qaeda.

The second security source added that, though the names of those killed in the strike were not known, it was believed one of Al-Qaeda's local leaders was among the dead.

Washington once regarded the group, known as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), as the militant network's most dangerous branch.

Born in 2009 from the merger of Al-Qaeda's Yemeni and Saudi factions, AQAP grew and developed in the chaos of Yemen's war, which since 2015 has pitted the Iran-backed Houthi rebels against a Saudi-led coalition backing the government.

Earlier this month, the United States agreed a ceasefire with the Houthi, who have controlled large swathes of Yemen for more than a decade, ending weeks of intense American strikes on rebel-held areas of the country.

UN fears 427 Rohingya perished at sea on May 9-10

FROM PAGE 12

Nearly 1 out of 5 people attempting perilous sea movements in this region have been reported as dead or missing so far in 2025, making the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal waters amongst the deadliest in the world.

"The dire humanitarian situation, exacerbated by funding cuts, is having a devastating impact on the lives of Rohingya, with more and more resorting to dangerous journeys to seek safety, protection and a dignified life for themselves and their families," said HAI Kyung Jun, director of UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

With the annual monsoon season having already arrived in the region, bringing strong winds, rainfall and rough seas, these boats were travelling at a particularly dangerous time, reflecting the desperation of those making such journeys, UNHCR said.

UNHCR called on authorities

in the region to take urgent action to prevent future tragedies, saying that saving lives and rescuing those in distress at sea is a humanitarian imperative and a longstanding duty under international maritime law.

UNHCR also called on the international community to stand in solidarity with the countries in the region that have been hosting Rohingya refugees.

Until the situation in Myanmar's Rakhine state is peaceful and conducive to safe and voluntary return, the international community must continue to support efforts to provide life-saving assistance to Rohingya refugees.

UNHCR requires \$383.1 million in 2025 to stabilise the lives of refugees and their host communities across Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and those displaced inside Myanmar.

So far, only 30 percent of this amount has been received.

UK freezes assets worth £90m of Salman's son, nephew

FROM PAGE 1

Islands, Isle of Man and Jersey, were purchased for sums ranging between £1.2 million and £35.5 million, reports the British daily, citing Companies House records.

The two are the son and nephew of Salman F Rahman, Hasina's adviser for private industry and investment in the former regime.

He was arrested while reportedly trying to flee Bangladesh after the mass uprising that led to the regime's downfall last year. Salman is currently facing corruption and murder charges.

A joint investigation by The Guardian and Transparency International last year found that Hasina's allies owned UK properties worth £400 million.

One of the frozen assets includes a property in Gresham Gardens, where Sheikh Rehana, Hasina's sister and the mother of former UK City minister Tulip Siddiq, has reportedly lived, according to the Financial Times.

Tulip Siddiq, who stepped down as minister amid the controversy, is now the subject of an arrest warrant issued by the interim government. She has denied any wrongdoing.

TIB LAUDS, URGES

OTHERS TO FOLLOW

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has welcomed the property freezing orders, terming it a "hopeful first step" in the global fight against money laundering.

"This should not be viewed as an isolated incident; rather, the frozen property is merely the tip of the iceberg," said Dr Iftekharuzzaman, TIB's executive director of TIB, in a statement issued yesterday.

"Many more individuals, blessed by the fallen authoritarian regime, have laundered massive amounts of wealth. Similar actions must be taken against each of them," he said.

TIB expressed hope that this action would set a precedent for stronger mutual legal assistance between Bangladesh and the destination countries of siphoned wealth, enabling swifter investigations and the eventual recovery of laundered assets.

Calling for coordinated global action, TIB urged other countries like the US, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and the UAE, to follow the UK's example.

TIB pressed both foreign governments and the Bangladesh government to take proactive steps through mutual legal assistance, expert collaboration, and other international mechanisms to identify, seize, and repatriate illegally acquired wealth.

"The return of stolen assets can only be expedited through legal cooperation and political will," Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, adding that the recovery of these assets is vital not only for economic justice but also for accountability and the rule of law.

TIB urged the Bangladesh government to actively engage with international partners, utilise existing legal tools, and hold launderers accountable to prevent further capital flight and ensure transparency in financial governance.

BB may issue redesigned bank notes before eid

FROM PAGE 1

a body hanging from a rickshaw, and the emotional image of a body being thrown from a police van are likely to be featured on the new bank notes, Khan said.

The Sixty Dome Mosque, Ahsan Manzil, the Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sundarbans and deer are also likely to be featured on the new bank notes.

Officials at the mint said it takes around one to one and a half years

to print newly designed bank notes.

The decision to redesign the bank notes was taken in December last year. Following that decision, the printing of the new notes began this month.

The BB on March 10 asked banks to halt the exchange of new bank notes featuring the image of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

No decision has yet been made regarding bank notes featuring Mujib's image.

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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্মী' পুরালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

Lack of reform priorities led to political chaos

Speakers urge govt to put more focus on labour, agriculture and health sectors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has failed to set their reform priorities, which led to chaos among the political parties and damaged the national consensus, speakers told an event yesterday.

They said if the government were to prioritise reducing discrimination in the labour, agriculture and health sectors, they would be able to connect all the political groups in the process.

Labour sector is one of the most discriminatory sectors in the country where the government has opportunities to reduce discrimination and give labourers a better work environment, they added.

The remarks came at a special lecture on the recommendations made by the Labour Reform Commission, titled

"Discriminatory Society: Debate and Ways", at Dhaka University yesterday.

The speaker of the lecture, Taslima Akhter, also one of the members of the Labour Reform Commission, said around 85 percent of the country's total 8 crore labourers are still out of any legal framework.

"Household workers, agricultural labourers, and those involved in fisheries are still not acknowledged in the labour laws in the country. Their acknowledgement should be the first priority, and then there should be some activities gradually to ensure their wages, working hours and their rights to be involved in organisations," she said.

Mentioning that many government institutions for SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A boy stands on the rail line, mere seconds after a train just passed, while two school-going children jump up and hop over a fence. All of these dangerous activities could lead to an accident at any time. The photo was taken from the Sayedabad area of the capital yesterday.

Star wins 2nd place at INMA Media Awards



STAR REPORT

The Daily Star has clinched second place in the "Best Commerce Product or Service" category at the 88th INMA Global Media Awards 2025, a global stage that celebrates the most innovative initiatives in the news media industry.

The award was secured for introducing Keeron, The Daily Star's standalone EdTech business vertical, which has redefined how legacy media can diversify into high-impact digital ventures.

This marks a historic milestone, with The Daily Star being one of just three entries shortlisted from Bangladesh, joining a global lineup of finalists from Africa, Asia/Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America, and South Asia – including industry giants such as The New York Times (US), News Corp Australia, and Financial Times (UK).

Launched in September 2023, Keeron was recognised for its transformative impact on professional upskilling of youth – having registered 60,000+ learners and 25,000+ paid

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Lightning alerts 20-30 minutes in advance

Govt planning new early warning system to reduce fatalities

HELEMUL ALAM

After failing to implement earlier projects such as planting palm trees and installing lightning arresters in high-risk areas, the interim government is now planning to introduce an early warning system to reduce lightning-related casualties.

Razwanur Rahman, director general of the Department of Disaster Management, said the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) is developing a system that will issue warnings 20 to 30 minutes before lightning strikes in specific areas.

"With early warnings, residents can take precautionary steps to protect themselves," he said. "We are trying to disseminate this information via mobile operators to areas at risk of lightning strikes. We also plan to open a WhatsApp group to quickly communicate alerts to local officials like DCs and UNOs."

Rahman said the initiative is a joint effort between the Department of Disaster Management and the BMD.

According to data from the Department of Disaster Management, 2,328 people were killed by lightning strikes between 2010 and 2020, with the highest annual death toll – 359 – in 2018.

Meanwhile, Save the Society and

Thunderstorm Awareness Forum (SSTAF) reported that 1,536 people have died in the last six years since 2019. Of these, 265 died in 2019, 230 in 2020, 305 in 2021, 277 in 2022, 245 in 2023 and 214 in 2024.

AT A GLANCE

- Warnings to be issued 20–30 minutes before lightning strikes
- Alerts to be sent via mobile operators using SMS, voice messages
- Warnings will be area-specific, focusing on high-risk zones like haor regions
- WhatsApp groups to inform local officials (DCs, UNOs) quickly
- Data from radars in Dhaka and Rangpur to be used to detect strikes
- Training events planned to teach people how to respond to alerts

Rashim Mollah, secretary of SSTAF, said 75 people were killed in lightning strikes between January and April this year, including 18 on April 28 alone.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, president of SSTAF, identified 10 high-risk areas – Sunamganj, Habiganj, Kishoreganj,

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Making army controversial will threaten sovereignty

Says Jamaat ameer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman said yesterday that embroiling the army in controversy would put the country's sovereignty at grave risk, adding that the Bangladesh Army has made dignified contributions to the country.

He made these remarks while addressing the central Majlis-e-Shura meeting of Jamaat-e-Islami at Al-Falah auditorium in the capital's Moghbazar.

"We don't want to see acts or steps that may drag our

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Declare roadmaps for trials, reforms and polls: NCP

Claims advisers Mahfuj, Asif have no links to party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party yesterday demanded the announcement of simultaneous roadmaps for July mass killing trials, political reforms, and the election to restore the people and political parties' trust in the government.

"Just holding an election is not the only responsibility of the interim government. Justice for the July-August massacre and fundamental reforms must be undertaken before any polls are conducted," NCP Convener Nahid Islam said at a press briefing at the party's office in the capital's Bangla Motor.

"A clear roadmap for justice, reforms, and polls is essential. That way, the uncertainties and confusions in the minds of the people and political parties will go away."

"We urge Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus to remain in charge and move towards discussions with all political parties to resolve problems," he added.

Nahid also called on the public and political parties to act responsibly and settle outstanding issues through talks, in the interest of national security and a democratic future.

About the NCP's demand for a July Charter, Nahid said, "Time is passing by, and the deadline for the Proclamation is approaching. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure its announcement within the stipulated time."

Nahid also said, "There is no connection between the NCP and the two student advisers. We

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



These battery-run rickshaws illegally traverse the Buddhijibi Bridge, putting other vehicles and passersby at risk. Despite several warnings, these vehicles continue to use the bridge. The photo was taken in the Boshra area of the capital recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CID freezes 35 bank accounts linked to Munni Saha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has frozen 35 bank accounts linked to journalist Munni Saha, her husband Kabir Hossain, and several individuals and entities affiliated with them.

The accounts currently hold a total balance of Tk 18.16 crore, according to a press release issued yesterday, signed by Jashim Uddin Khan, special superintendent (media) of the CID.

According to the CID's Financial Crime Unit, the accounts were frozen as part of a money laundering investigation initiated under the Money Laundering Prevention Rules, 2019.

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2 SIs stabbed during anti-narcotics drive
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two policemen were stabbed allegedly by drug dealers during an anti-narcotics drive in the capital's Sayedabad rail line area on Friday night.

Faisal Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Wari Police Station, said a police team from the station conducted the drive around 9:45pm and detained one person.

He said as the team was escorting the detainee away, a group of suspected drug dealers attempted to snatch him and attacked the police, he said.

Kawsar Ahmed, 32, and Moniruzzaman, 30, were admitted to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital.

Police detained three people in this connection.



Just one hour of rainfall left this area in Rajshahi city waterlogged, with water entering alleys and residential buildings. Locals alleged that poor drainage system was the major cause for constant waterlogging woes. The photo was taken from Baharampur area yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

TENDER NOTICE

Procurement of new Core Banking Solution (CBS) for The Premier Bank PLC.

The Premier Bank PLC. is inviting tenders from the reputed CBS vendors for the above-mentioned job. Individual Request for Proposal (RFP) with detailed specifications terms & conditions of the job will be available at the office of the undersigned on payment of **BDT. 5,000/- (Five Thousand Only) (non-refundable)** in **Pay Order** with a request in company's letter head pad from **10.00 AM to 5.00 PM of May 25, 2025 to June 25, 2025**. The deadline of participation of tender process is not later than **4.00 PM on June 25, 2025**.

Bank reserves the right not to purchase the item (s) from the bidders and to accept or reject any or all the tender (s) without assigning any reason. Bank also reserves the right to negotiate with all the participating vendors regarding price warranty and specification of the item (s).

for more details: <https://premierbankltd.com/pbl/procurement/>
The Premier Bank PLC.

Head Office, Iqbal Centre, 42 Kamal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka-1213
Phone: +880-2-222274844-48, Fax: +880-2-222274849, 222274808
Email: info@premierbankltd.com

Premier Bank 
service first

The Premier Bank PLC.

premierbankltd.com  ThePremierBankPLC

Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution PLC
105, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwanbazar, Dhaka.

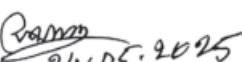
Tender Corrigendum Notice

This is to notify all concerns that "AMS (Annual Maintenance Service) of TGTPLC's Web Based Integrated System hosted in BCC cloud" Tender have published.

Corrigendum Details

SI	Field Name	Old Date & Time	New Date & Time
1	Tender last selling date and time	25/05/25 3:30PM	28/05/25 3:30PM
2	Tender Closing date and time	26/05/25 12:00AM	29/05/25 12:00AM
3	Tender opening date and time	26/05/25 2:00PM	29/05/25 2:00PM

Other corrigenda have incorporated in the Tender Document associated with this Corrigendum Notice and these corrigenda will be considered as the part of Tender Documents.


(Md. Kamal Hossain)
Deputy General Manager (IT Infrastructure)
TGTPLC

GD-1265

EAST WEST UNIVERSITY
Progoti Foundation for Education and Development
Permanent Sanad Holder

INVITATION OF TENDER

Tender is invited from the bona fide/intending suppliers/firms for the following items:

1. Procurement of 16 sets Computer with Monitor for Multimedia classrooms of AB # 3 and Dr. S. R. Lasker Library of East West University
2. Procurement of 84 sets Computer with Monitor and 02 Multimedia Projector set up with Multimedia Projector Screen for three new labs of the Department of CSE
3. Renovation work at 04 (four) ICS Labs of East West University
4. Procurement of 01 (one) set High-Performance Bioinformatics Computer with Monitor for the Department of GEB
5. Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of wall mounted split inverter type Air Conditioner (various capacities) for the Academic Building-2 (AB-2) of East West University
6. Procurement of 16 different types of printer cartridges for the period from July to December 2025 (06 months)

It is to be mentioned that the University will remain closed from 04 June to 14 June 2025 due to Eid-Ul-Adha vacation.

The schedule of the above-mentioned tender items with terms and conditions can be obtained from the Finance & Accounts Department (1st floor) of the University until **24.06.2025** during office hours (until 03:00 p.m.) on working days. The schedule of item no #1, 2 & 6 will also be available in the e-tendering process (<http://etender.ewubd.edu>). The price of the tender schedule (non-refundable) is Tk.500/- (Taka Five Hundred) only.

The interested bidders are requested to submit the tender by **25.06.2025 within 02:00 P.M.** through hard copy or e-tender process (as mentioned in the tender schedule). The tender (hard copy) must be dropped in the tender box kept at the 2nd floor of the office of the Treasurer (Room No-316) of the University. The tender(s) submitted within the deadline will be opened on the same day (25.06.2025) at **02:30 P.M.** in the Conference Room (4th floor) of East West University in the presence of the representatives of the bidders.

The bidders must mention the "name of the item" at the top of envelope. Otherwise, the bid document will be treated as cancelled.

East West University authority reserves the right to accept any tender in full or part of it or reject all tenders without mentioning any reason thereof.

Chief of HR & Logistics

4

Woman dies after bike hits divider
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A woman died after a motorcycle hit a road divider on the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway in Munshiganj's Sreenagar upazila yesterday.

The accident took place in the Hasara area, said Dewan Azad Hossain, station officer at the Sreenagar Fire Service.

The victim, Sakila Akter, who was riding pillion, suffered critical injuries in the crash, while her husband, Shakib Gazi, the rider, was also injured.

A fire service team rescued the couple and took them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared Sakila dead, the official added.

GRAFT ALLEGATIONS
Travel ban on Asif Mahmud's former APS Moazzem

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued a travel ban on Md Moazzem Hossain, former assistant private secretary (APS) to LGRD and Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain over corruption allegations.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order following an application from Anti-Corruption Commission Assistant Director Minu Akter Sumi.

According to the application, Moazzem allegedly amassed a large sum of money through extortion, tender manipulation, and irregularities in procurement and transfer related activities.

"The ACC official came to know from a credible source that Moazzem was attempting to flee the country. If he flees, inquiry into the allegations brought against him might be hampered. So, an order is needed to prevent him from doing so," said the ACC in her application.

The court also directed the ACC to take steps to block Moazzem's national identity card and to send copies of the order to the Special Branch of police in Dhaka's Malibagh and EC Secretariat, Agargaon, for the next course of action.

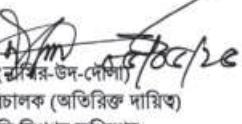


গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কৃষি বিপণন অধিদপ্তর
রঞ্জন উন্নয়ন শাখা
খামারবাড়ি, ঢাকা-১২১৫।
www.dam.gov.bd

তারিখ: ২৯-০৪-২০২৫

**কৃষি বিপণন অধিদপ্তরের আওতায় কৃষিপণ্য রঞ্জনির
লাইসেন্স গ্রহণ সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

এতদ্বারা কৃষিপণ্য রঞ্জনির সাথে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, কৃষি বিপণন আইন ২০১৮ এর
৭ (১) নং ধারামতে "কৃষিপণ্য ও কৃষি উপকরণের রঞ্জনিকারক, অমনিনিকারক, ডিলার, সিলার, সরবরাহকারী,
প্রক্রিয়াজাতকারী এবং প্রক্রিয়াক চাষ ব্যবস্থার সহিত সম্পৃক্ষ ব্যক্তিকে কার্য পরিচালনার জন্য লাইসেন্স প্রাপ্তি করিতে
হইবে"। ব্যক্তি আইন প্রতিগ্রান্তে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে কৃষি বিপণন বিধিমালা ২০২১ এর আওতাকে কৃষি বিপণন
অধিদপ্তর এর আওতাধীন জেলা বা উপজেলা কার্যালয় হতে লাইসেন্স গ্রহণ ও তথ্যাদি সংশ্রেণ জন্য অনুরোধ করা
যাচ্ছে।


Md. Niam Uddin Bepari (প্রতিবাদ প্রাপ্তি)
কৃষি বিপণন অধিদপ্তর।

GD-1257

Eastern Bank PLC.

HEAD OFFICE, 100 GULSHAN AVENUE, DHAKA-1212

TENDER NOTICE

Eastern Bank PLC. (EBL) invites sealed bids from bona fide/eligible competent bidders for the following:

Lot-1: Audit Management System

Lot-2: Automatic Voltage Regulator (AVR)

Interested bidders are requested to collect the RFP document electronically by sending an email from their official email address to bidit@ebl-bd.com mentioning the name of the company and the authorized contact person, mailing address, telephone & mobile phone numbers on or before **Wednesday, 4 June 2025**.

Queries are to be mailed by **Sunday, 22 June 2025**.

Bids should be prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the RFP document and submitted as per the process described in the RFP document bearing official authorized personnel's seal & signature in two separate sealed envelopes clearly marking 'Technical Offer' (hardcopy and softcopy both) and 'Financial Offer' (hardcopy only) on the envelopes.

Bids should be dropped in the ICT Tender Box, addressing to The President, Purchase Committee, Head Office, Eastern Bank PLC., 100 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212 (Basement-1, ICT Tender Box) on or before **Thursday, 10 July 2025**.

খুলনা উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ

খুলনা।

www.kda.gov.bd

তারিখ: ২৪/০৫/২০২৫

আটুটোসের্চিং পক্ষত্বে জনবল সরবরাহের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা আটুটোসের্চিং পক্ষত্বে সেবা সরবরাহকারী টিকাদার/প্রতিষ্ঠানের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ২০২৪-
২০২৫ অর্থবছরে খুলনা উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষের আওতায় সম্পূর্ণ অধ্যায়ী ভিত্তিতে আটুটোসের্চিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবা প্রাপ্ত
নীতিমালা, ২০২৫ অনুযায়ী ক্যাটাগরি-৪ এর ০৩ (তিনি) টি সেবা এবং ক্যাটাগরি-৫ এর ০১ (নয়) টি সেবা ক্রয়ের লক্ষ্যে
পার্সিলিক প্রক্রিয়ামেট আইন, ২০০৬ এবং পার্সিলিক প্রক্রিয়ামেট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ মোতাবেক সেবা সরবরাহকারী
প্রক্রত যোগায়ত সম্পর্ক বাংলাদেশী টিকাদার/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। দরপত্র সিডিল
বিজ্ঞয়ের সময়সীমা ২৫/০৫/২০২৫ টার্মি। হতে ১৫/০৬/২০২৫ টার্মি। পর্যবেক্ষণ (অফিস চলাকালীন)। দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ
তারিখ ১৫/০৬/২০২৫ টার্মি। (দন্তপূর ২,০০ ঘটিক পর্যবেক্ষণ)।

উল্লেখ্য, বিস্তারিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি অত্য কর্তৃপক্ষের ওয়েবসাইট (www.kda.gov.bd) এবং নোটিশ বোর্ডে প্রদর্শিত
রয়েছে। অধিকন্তু অফিস চলাকালীন অত্য কর্তৃপক্ষের প্রশাসন ও সাধারণ শাখা হতেও এতদস্মক্ত যাবতীয় তথ্যাদি
জানা যাবে।


উপসচিব
খুলনা উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ
খুলনা।
ফোন: ০২৪৭-৭২২৩০২৫

NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 823 OF 2025
IN THE MATTER OF
Nasir Uddin Ahmed, Director, Meghna Life Insurance PLC.
—VERSUS—
RJSC and another
—Respondents.

Please take notice that an application under Section 81(2) read with Sections 35(3) and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 and Rules 8 & 263 of the Companies Rule, 2009 for condonation of delay in holding Annual General Meetings (AGMs) of respondent No.2 Company has been filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon hearing his Lordship Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel was pleased to admit the application on 21.05.2025. Any person interested in the matter may appear before the Hon'ble Court on the date of hearing either personally or through duly appointed Advocate. (Moloy Kumar Roy) Advocate
Supreme Court of Bangladesh (High Court & Appellate Division)
M. Roy & Associates, Suite# 13E, Tropicana Tower (13th Floor) 45,
Topkhana Road, Dhaka-1000, Mobile No. 01791404011.</p

Syria hails US lifting of Assad-era sanctions

AFP, Damascus

Syria yesterday hailed the Trump administration's lifting of US sanctions, as Washington looks to open a new chapter in its relations with Damascus.

US President Donald Trump surprised many with his announcement of the new policy on a Gulf tour earlier this month, during which he shook hands with Syria's jihadist-turned-interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa.

Trump said he wanted to give the war-torn country's new rulers "a chance at greatness" after their overthrow of longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December.

"The Syrian Arab Republic welcomes the decision from the American government to lift the sanctions imposed on Syria and its people for long years," a foreign ministry statement said.

It described the move as "a positive step in the right direction to reduce humanitarian and economic struggles in the country".

US sanctions were first imposed on Syria in 1979 under the rule of Bashar al-Assad's father Hafez. They were sharply expanded after the bloody repression of anti-government protests in 2011, which triggered the country's civil war.

Washington imposed sweeping sanctions on financial transactions with Syria and made clear it would use sanctions to punish anyone involved in reconstruction as long as Assad remained in power.

Since Assad's ouster, the new administration has been looking to build relations with the West and roll back sanctions, but some governments had expressed reluctance, pointing to the Islamist past of leading figures.

Sharaa himself was once considered a "terrorist" by Washington, with a \$10 million bounty on his head.

On Friday, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said his country was "implementing authorisations to encourage new investment into Syria".

The sanctions relief extends to Syria's new government with conditions that the country not provide safe haven for terrorist organisations and ensure security for religious and ethnic minorities, the US Treasury Department said.

Concurrently, the US State Department issued a 180-day waiver for the Caesar Act to make sure sanctions do not obstruct foreign investment into Syria.

The 2020 legislation severely sanctioned any entity or company cooperating with the ousted government.



People stands with a woman outside her home, which was hit by a flood, in Glenthorne, Australia, yesterday. Tens of thousands of Australians remained isolated and thousands were without power yesterday, authorities said as conditions in New South Wales eased after days of heavy rain that caused widespread flooding.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russia strikes Kyiv with drones, missiles

Hundreds more POWs exchanged in second day of prisoners' swap

AFP, Kyiv

A massive Russian drone and missile attack on Kyiv yesterday wounded at least 15 people, even as Russia and Ukraine continued the biggest prisoner swap since the start of Moscow's invasion.

Ukraine's air force said Russia



launched 14 ballistic missiles and 250 attack drones overnight, adding that it downed six missiles and 245 drones.

Kyiv was "the main target of the enemy attack", the air force said in a statement.

"With each such attack, the world becomes more certain that the cause of prolonging the war lies in Moscow," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on X.

"Only additional sanctions targeting key sectors of the Russian economy will force Moscow to cease fire," he said.

Kyiv city officials reported fires and fallen debris in several parts of the Ukrainian capital, after AFP journalists heard explosions overnight.

Officials said 15 people were injured in Kyiv itself and five civilians were killed by Russian strikes in the Kharkiv and Donetsk regions.

before the second stage on Saturday. Russia's defence ministry said each side exchanged 307 prisoners of war yesterday via Belarus, a Kremlin ally.

It said the Russian POWs would receive psychological and medical help in Belarus before travelling on to Russia.

Both sides received 390 people in the first stage on Friday and are expected to exchange 1,000 each in total.

"We expect the exchange to continue tomorrow," Zelensky said.

Russia has signalled it will send Ukraine its terms for a peace settlement after the swap, which is set to continue over the weekend -- without saying what those terms would be.

The two enemies have held regular prisoner swaps since Russia launched its 2022 offensive -- but none have been on this scale.

Indian troops shoot dead Pakistani man

AFP, Ahmedabad

Indian border troops shot dead a Pakistani man who they said had crossed the international frontier and did not stop when challenged, the force said yesterday.

The shooting comes two weeks after arch-rivals India and Pakistan agreed a ceasefire after a four-day conflict, which killed 70 people.

India's Border Security Force (BSF) said its troops Friday evening had spotted "one suspicious person advancing towards the border fence", which lies beyond the international frontier in Gujarat state's Banaskantha district.

"They challenged the intruder, but he continued to advance, prompting them to open fire", the BSF said in a statement. "The intruder was neutralised on the spot".

He doubled down later in the day,

Trump fires new 50% tariff threat at EU

Targets smartphones

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump rekindled his trade war with the European Union on Friday by threatening 50 percent tariffs, as Brussels reacted with a call for "respect."

Trump also unleashed a broadside against smartphone makers including US tech giant Apple, threatening them with new duties of 25 percent if they do not move production to the United States.

Stock markets fell as the Republican's comments fueled fears of global economic disruption, after a relative lull in recent days after Trump reached deals with China and Britain.

Trump first raised the issue of EU tariffs in an early morning post on his Truth Social network.

"Our discussions with them are going nowhere!" Trump said. "Therefore, I am recommending a straight 50 percent Tariff on the European Union, starting on June 1, 2025."

He doubled down later in the day,



telling reporters in the Oval Office that there was nothing the 28-nation bloc could do to change his mind.

"I'm not looking for a deal. I mean, we've set the deal. It's at 50 percent," Trump said. "They haven't treated our country properly. They banded together to take advantage of us."

Billionaire property tycoon Trump, 78, also denied that his tariffs would hurt American businesses.

"They're not hurting, they're helping," he said.

Trump's new tariffs would, if imposed, dramatically raise Washington's current baseline levy of 10 percent, and fuel simmering tensions between the world's biggest economy

and its largest trading bloc.

The EU's trade chief said the bloc would work for a trade deal with Washington based on "respect" not "threats."

"The EU's fully engaged, committed to securing a deal that works for both," trade commissioner Maros Sefcovic posted on X, after a previously planned call with US Trade Representative Jamie Grier and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Stationery Office
 Department of Printing & Publications
 Ministry of Public Administration
 Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh
www.bso.dpp.gov.bd

e-GP Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of

Sl. No.	Goods Description, Invitation Reference No. and Date	Tender/ Proposal Package No.	Tender/ Proposal ID No.	Scheduled Tender/ Proposal publication date and time	Tender/ Proposal document last selling/ downloading date and time	Tender/ Proposal closing & opening date & time
01	White Printing Paper (Domestic), Size: 50.80 cm x 76.20 cm (20"x30"), GSM: 65-70 (As per schedule & guide sample). Invitation Reference No. 05.85.0000.009.04.077.25/98 Date: 24.05.2025	BSO-63/24-25	1117763	25.05.2025 at 11:00	22.06.2025 at 11:00	22.06.2025 at 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 (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fee for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any e-GP registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


 Brenjon Chambong
 Deputy Director
 Bangladesh Stationery Office
 Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208
 Phone: 02-226603937
 E-mail: dd.bso@dpp.gov.bd

ADMISSION OPEN (Summer-2025)

28th Batch

BICM
 Endeavour Education Excellence

Post-Graduate Diploma in Capital Market (PGDCM)

PGDCM will help attaining specialization in Securities Market that is rare in Business Schools

2 Semester

8 Courses

24 Credits

Application admission deadline

22 June 2025

Classes start

29 June 2025

the PGDCM program provides a unique exposure to capital market practices, investment decision making tools and techniques, and capital market regulations

classes will be held online in the evening from 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM, Sunday - Wednesday; only final examinations will be held in-person at BICM campus

PGDCM is highly regarded in the industry and recommended by the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission for employment and career progression in capital market related jobs/organizations

Admission support

01572-112496 ☎

08-000-999-999 ☎

For details and online application

www.bicm.ac.bd/pgd

Total program fee: Tk.33,000/-

Application fee: Tk.500/- (non-refundable)

Bangladesh Institute of Capital Market

34, Topkhana Road, Dhaka - 1000 (Gr. - 3rd, and 8th-9th Floor)
www.bicm.ac.bd | www.bicm.gov.bd | facebook.com/bicm.ac.bd | LinkedIn.com/school/bicm

Make social safety net fit for purpose

Planned redesign must result in more impactful interventions

After years of criticism and chronic inefficiencies, the authorities finally seem poised to restructure the social safety net system in the FY2025-26 budget expected to be unveiled in early June, as per a report by this daily. We welcome this shift, as it shows some intent to address long-standing concerns about the system's inflated numbers, overlapping schemes, and misdirected allocations. But good intentions alone are not enough. The redesign must result in a more targeted and impactful intervention that genuinely supports the poor.

According to finance ministry officials, the number of schemes under the social safety net will be trimmed from 140 to fewer than 100, while 38 programmes will be grouped as "pro poor" targeting the most vulnerable. The total allocation is expected to be Tk 95,908 crore—up from Tk 90,468 crore in the current budget—covering an additional 10 lakh beneficiaries. Small increases in monthly allowances are also expected across key cash assistance programmes like allowances for old age, the widow, deserted and destitute women, the physically challenged, mother and child benefits, etc. While these increases seem modest at the individual level, the real challenge lies in ensuring proper selection and enforcement so that any assistance reaches the most deserved beneficiaries.

For too long, our social safety net system has been weighed down by misclassification, corruption, and inefficiency. As we highlighted on various occasions in the past, especially during the tenure of the ousted Awami League government, the inclusion of retirement benefits and interest payments on savings certificates in the social safety budget inflated its total allocation, creating a misleading picture of state commitments to the poor. These expenditures accounted for 30 percent of the total allocation for FY2023-24, as per an assessment by CPD last year. The think tank also assessed that the share of "compatible" programmes under the social safety net bracket declined from 62.2 percent in FY2009-10 to 29.2 percent in FY2023-24. The planned restructuring, therefore, must reverse this state of affairs.

Merely shaving off irrelevant schemes is not enough. What we need is a fundamental restructuring of how these programmes are designed and implemented. Beneficiary selection must be transparent, data-driven, and insulated from political interference. Leaks must be plugged through digitisation and stronger oversight. And above all, allocations must be large enough to actually support families and individuals facing economic hardship. With the FY2026 budget around the corner, the government has an opportunity to make the system fit for purpose as a support structure for the vulnerable segments, with the goal of making them eventually self-reliant. Only then can the safety net serve its purpose of poverty alleviation. To that end, we urge the government to consult experts and build on previous research, including the findings of its own taskforce submitted in January, before finalising reform decisions.

Declare dengue a 'reportable' disease

Urgent measures needed to prevent a deadly outbreak

It is deeply concerning that despite warnings from public health experts, entomologists, and the media, the government's dengue control measures remain largely insufficient. Reports indicate that dengue cases have been rising rapidly with the early start of rains this year. As of the morning of May 23, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) reported a total of 3,767 dengue cases, with 23 deaths. While there were 701 cases in April, the first 23 days of May saw 1,195 infections, indicating a troubling upward trend. Yet, the government's response has been noticeably inadequate. Without urgent action, this year's outbreak could surpass the severity of last year's, which saw 101,214 cases and 575 deaths.

Earlier this month, entomologists warned of a sharp rise in the Breteau Index (BI)—a measure of Aedes mosquito density—across the country. Their research showed that in April, the BI exceeded 10, whereas last year's average remained below this level. They cautioned that if this trend continues, the BI could rise above 20 by June, posing a serious threat. Additionally, health experts have warned that if dengue serotypes such as DEN-1, 4, or even 3 become prevalent this year, the number of infections and severe cases could increase significantly. Therefore, the government must take this threat with the seriousness it deserves, and implement necessary preventive measures without delay.

A national control programme for dengue has become essential by now. The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives (LGRD) has a crucial role to play in this regard. It must issue immediate directives to curb the spread of Aedes mosquitoes, prioritising breeding source management and larvae control. City corporations and municipalities must also establish year-round plans to maintain cleanliness and conduct regular fogging operations to prevent mosquito breeding. Proper waste management must be prioritised as well. Since early detection of Aedes hotspots is essential for dengue control, swift action must follow every rainfall to eliminate breeding sites and larvae. It is the responsibility of both state departments and residents to ensure that there is no stagnant water in containers, construction sites, or other potential breeding grounds.

Experts have also stressed the need to declare dengue a "reportable" disease, which would facilitate proper data collection from hospitals and diagnostic centres and also enable more effective surveillance and response. Equally important, hospitals must be properly equipped to provide adequate treatment for dengue patients, especially those living outside Dhaka. Only through coordinated efforts and prompt action can we hope to prevent another deadly outbreak.

EDITORIAL

Will the budget offer a path out of the debt spiral?



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RASHED AL MAHMUD TITUMIR

Bangladesh's debt burden is inextricably linked to the nature of its political system. Over the decades, authoritarian and autocratic regimes have forced rapid increases in debt. During General Ershad's regime, between 1982 and 1990, foreign debt more than doubled. Under Sheikh Hasina's oligarchic rule, the debt surged by 322 percent, rising from \$23.5 billion in June 2009 to \$99 billion in June 2023. State patronage has been systematically weaponised to cling to power.

The interim government inherited an economy under strain—high inflation, a revenue administration rife with corruption, a sluggish budget, a liquidity crunch in the banking sector, and dwindling foreign exchange reserves.

With the 2025-26 budget approaching, three core questions emerge: how can the debt burden be alleviated? How might domestic resource mobilisation be strengthened? And how can financing be secured to address post-COVID poverty and income losses? This article examines the first.

Climbing towards a cliff

Over the past 15 years, Bangladesh's public debt has swollen by over Tk 1 trillion—i.e. Tk 100,000 crore annually. The debt-to-GDP ratio is forecast to be 41.41 percent at the end of the current fiscal year. The total public debt reached Tk 18.3 lakh crore by the end of the last fiscal year.

In the first 11 months of FY2024-25, the government borrowed Tk 1,08,371 crore from commercial banks—57 percent higher than the previous year. Debt to scheduled banks totalled Tk 4,85,000 crore as of May 12. Net borrowing from the central bank reached Tk 56,116 crore. Though still under international risk thresholds, the current debt poses serious vulnerabilities.

Mounting debt repayment

Debt servicing is escalating. In FY2024, foreign debt repayments rose by 26 percent to \$3.36 billion, with interest payments alone increasing by 44 percent. Over the past nine months, repayments climbed nearly 25 percent over the previous fiscal year. Debt repayment consumes more than half the national revenue budget.

The FY26 budget will reportedly allocate Tk 122,000 crore for interest payments alone—an increase of Tk 8,500 crore from last year. Interest on domestic debt will rise from Tk

93,000 crore to Tk 100,000 crore; on foreign debt, from Tk 20,500 crore to Tk 22,000 crore. This reflects not just rising debt but also higher interest rates and a depreciating taka. Without structural reform, the cost of debt will continue to crowd out development spending.

Contracting fiscal space

Fiscal space is shrinking. The Centre for Policy Dialogue had estimated that an improbable 55 percent



FILE ILLUSTRATION: STAR

revenue growth would be required in the last six months of FY2025 to hit the annual target, after recording just 4.4 percent growth in the first half. On the spending side, budget implementation is dismal. Only 41 percent of the Annual Development Programme was implemented in 10 months—a historic low in five years. Weak public financial management and a narrow tax base, riddled with evasion and corruption, continue to stymie progress.

Debt-financed patronage, not productive expansion

Much of the borrowing over the past decade was abused to consolidate power, not generate growth. Projects labelled as "development" were often vehicles for patronage, plagued by delays, inflated costs, and misaligned priorities. Many have yet to produce meaningful economic returns, compelling repayments from other

sources—or more debt. Private investment has remained stagnant for long. Export diversification is sluggish. Small and medium enterprises face persistent barriers.

There is little talk of industrial policy, competitiveness, or productivity—the very things needed to create jobs and transform the economy. The root of these challenges lies in deep institutional weakness. Without reform, the budget will continue to be a tool of regime maintenance, not development.

Escaping the trap of 'borrowing to repay debt'

The upcoming budget has the opportunity to present strategies to reduce the debt burden. A five-point strategic framework is offered here.

First, leveraging the interim government's rapport with the United Nations, a formal request could be

resilience, education infrastructure, and universal healthcare. This approach would create long-term goals of equitable and sustainable development while mitigating the anticipated decline in foreign aid in the post-LDC graduation era.

Third, expenditure prioritisation and the use of efficient strategy can be institutionalised through a comprehensive expenditure review framework, cost-benefit criteria for new projects, and performance-based budgeting. Fragmented and erroneous social safety nets must be consolidated under a unified authority to establish a universal, life-cycle-based social security system.

Fourth, a robust debt management strategy rooted in a Medium-Term Debt Management Framework (MTDF) can stabilise public debt through better liability management, reduced rollover risks, and lower borrowing costs.

Fifth, reducing dependence on short-term borrowing is essential to limit government liabilities. Excessive borrowing from commercial banks must be curtailed to prevent crowding out private credit.

The combination of revenue pressure, monetary policy tightening, and financial fragility poses significant risks to macroeconomic stability. Long-term stability demands coherent fiscal strategies, structural reforms, and institutional strengthening to advance inclusive, sustainable development.

The debt burden has not yet dangerously spiralled out of control. The IMF and World Bank support packages provide short-term liquidity. To address root causes, Bangladesh needs to move beyond conventional approaches and adopt creative solutions aligned with its political economy and development goals.

Wellbeing education is a must for Bangladesh

Masaki Watabe
is representative ad interim for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Bangladesh.

Dr Susan Vize
is representative for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Bangladesh.

MASAKI WATABE and SUSAN VIZE

No educator would deny the connection between adolescents' health and wellbeing and their academic success. In Bangladesh, schools are vital social institutions that safeguard girls and boys, providing a space for learning and opportunities for social transformation.

Yet today, Bangladesh is facing a crisis as millions of girls and boys are being denied the knowledge and life skills they need to make decisions about their bodies and futures. This is particularly serious for adolescent girls, as evidenced by the country's high rates of child marriage and teenage pregnancy—the highest in South Asia. The Violence Against Women Survey of 2024 reveals that 62 percent of married adolescent girls aged 15-19 experienced violence last year.

Dismantling the rigid gender norms and unequal power dynamics perpetuating this crisis requires urgent action, including a societal shift that prioritises adolescent girls' dignity, empowerment, and safety, as well as boys' mindsets and non-violent conflict resolution skills through transformative education.

To achieve this, curriculum reform is essential. Equipping young people with knowledge about health, consent, and bodily autonomy is vital for ensuring protection for over 30 million adolescents. It is critical for

breaking cycles of inequality and violence.

Last year, the 2012 curriculum was reinstated for the academic year 2025. As a result, the subject "Wellbeing" (*Shashthyo Surokhyo*) also got excluded from the curriculum, which is concerning. It creates a fragmented approach to life skills and wellbeing education. This move contradicts the country's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education (SDG 4), SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), and SDG 5 (gender equality), as well as the global Education 2030 agenda. Neither does it align with the spirit of the 2024 mass uprising inspired by the principles of human rights, non-discrimination, inclusion, and systemic change that underpin education, health, and other opportunities that promote gender equality.

Introduced in schools in 2023 under the National Curriculum Framework 2021, the "Wellbeing" subject was crucial for fostering the holistic development of students in grades 6 to 9. It provided essential support for their physical and mental health while addressing vital topics like adolescent development and violence prevention. Rather than being removed, it should have been expanded to include other grades and additional

competencies.

The almost universal recognition by UN member states of the critical importance of health and wellbeing education has been questioned in Bangladesh. Globally, the evidence is clear: prioritising life skills education results in lower violence rates and improved wellbeing. Integrating gender equality principles throughout the education system can effectively address early marriage and discriminatory practices, particularly against girls. In an era of misinformation and unequal access to education and opportunities, providing accurate, age and developmentally appropriate information through a system that reaches the majority of young people is key to a successful, violence-free, and educated nation. While every country must tailor education to its context, the universal principle remains the same: a quality education must equip children with the tools to protect their rights and thrive. Health and wellbeing education, integrated with life skills and grounded in gender equality, is fundamental for an equitable society.

While different nations have diverse approaches to educational transformation, universal values prioritise students, ensuring their fundamental rights are protected while addressing local issues through innovation. The current landscape in Bangladesh presents a crucial opportunity for stakeholders—including policymakers, curriculum experts, and educators—to commit to and integrate wellbeing and life skills education built on the principle of

gender equality. Health, wellbeing, and life skills education are not optional; they are fundamental. Empowering students with knowledge about their bodies, health, rights, and relationships enables them to challenge harmful gender norms and make informed choices about their relationships and life trajectories.

Bangladesh stands at a critical crossroads where strategic and evidence-based decisions regarding education can drive significant positive change. Therefore, drawing upon global best practices, UNFPA and UNESCO recommend establishing health and wellbeing as a distinct subject with specific teaching time allocated across all grade levels. This necessitates effective integration and implementation throughout all aspects of curriculum development, beginning with teacher training and extending to thorough assessment methods.

Amidst extensive discussions and debates about the future of Bangladesh and the proposed reform agenda, UNFPA and UNESCO urge all involved parties and stakeholders to prioritise adolescent girls and boys. They must ensure that these young people are not denied their fundamental rights to education and a life free from violence, stigma, discrimination, and inequality, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Integrating bodily autonomy, consent, mental resilience, and gender equality into the national curriculum is not merely a reform—it's a pathway to a thriving future for every child. The time for decisive action is now.

126TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM

The rebel poet who foretold planetary crisis



Priyam Paul
is a journalist and translator.

PRIYAM PAUL

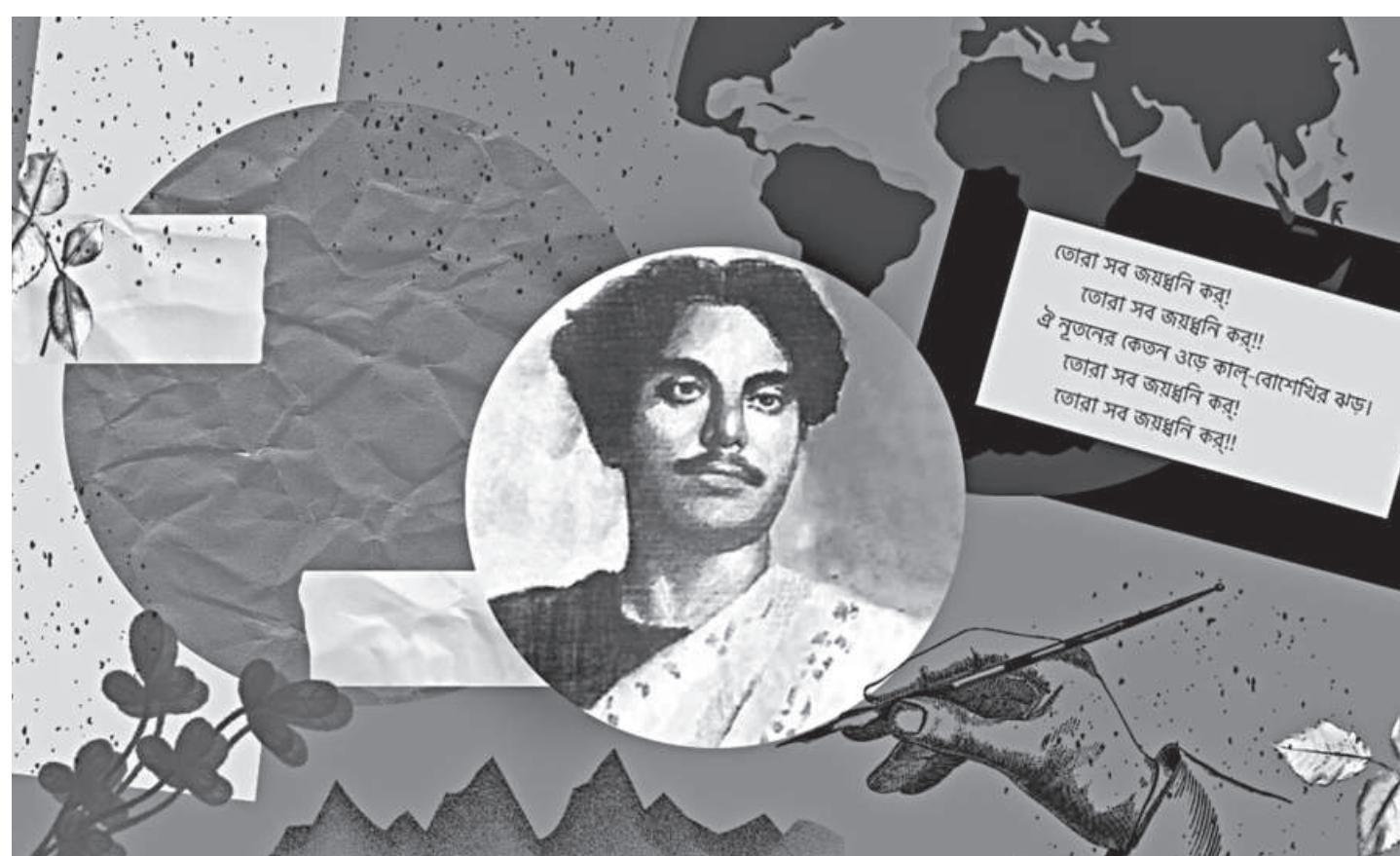
Born in 1899, national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, also known as the rebel poet, brought a bold new voice to Bangla literature and national life. His poetry fiercely challenged injustice and inspired youth towards positive change. Early in his career, Nazrul addressed themes of human-caused planetary crisis, making him a pioneer in environmental reflection in the Bangla language. As a visionary, he foresaw both life's vitality and the world's potential destruction.

After military service, Nazrul returned to Kolkata, writing poetry and stories, and joined a circle of progressive writers and activists. His friendship with Muzaffar Ahmad marked a key turning point in his life and work. They launched the evening daily *Nabajug* on July 12, 1920, with support from political leader AK Fazlul Huq, as a form of both resistance to colonial rule and political activism.

Nabajug was crucial to Nazrul's early career, providing him with a platform to write on politics and literature. Printed on a single sheet and sold for one paisa, it quickly gained a wide readership despite the founders' limited journalistic experience. Nazrul's talent for succinctly summarising complex news impressed his colleagues and contributed to the paper's success. It was in *Nabajug* that Nazrul published *Roz Kiyamat* (translated as *Doomsday* by Arka Dev), an article symbolising the planetary crisis.

What truly set *Nabajug* apart, however, were Nazrul's innovative headlines. Drawing from his deep familiarity with Bangla literary traditions, he infused his headlines with references from the poetry of Chandidas and Vidyapati, and even quoted Rabindranath Tagore. In one notable instance, he borrowed and modified two verses of a Tagore song to title a report on Faisal, the emperor of Iraq.

Beyond his reporting on Iraq, Nazrul and his associates developed a distinctly internationalist outlook. Their writings



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

reflected a deep interest in anti-colonial struggles worldwide and strong solidarity with the growing labour and communist movements.

In his article *Roz Kiyamat*, Nazrul cited several esteemed scientists who had claimed that the day of the Earth's destruction was not as far off as many had long supposed. Drawing from their findings, he noted that over the

past 50 years, the number of icebergs in the southern polar region had steadily increased. Captain Smithard of Edmonton was the first to discover a 580-foot high iceberg, followed by Captain Scott, who observed an ice shelf towering over 600 feet. He wrote that a sailor from Egeneta had seen a mountain-like iceberg over a thousand feet high—a sight that shocked the entire world. It was later confirmed that this ice mountain

was wise in his thinking. By translating the findings of Professor Louis and other renowned scientists for the Bangladeshi audience, he warned that the second great flood—or the great extinction—was imminent on Earth. While the entire planet might not be destroyed, it was beyond doubt that a significant part of it would be devastated.

In his article, he wrote of an immense expanse of sky-reaching ice shelves in the

Himalayas, destined to wash away everything in their path. One might think this came from a modern scientific or journalistic report, yet it was written in 1920 and published in the book *Jugabani* in 1922. The book was immediately banned.

He observed that humanity was increasingly dependent on coal mining and its widespread use for energy. "Do you know which era this coal dates back to?" he asked. "It comes from the carbonic acid-saturated ages, many hundreds of thousands of years ago, formed from the trees of that era. Even today, forest vegetation remains adept at absorbing carbonic acid. Yet every bit of coal, every matchstick burned, consumes the very oxygen essential to human survival." He cited a renowned English scientist who had recently warned that atmospheric oxygen was steadily decreasing, leading to pollution and a gradual return to the carbonic acid-filled conditions of prehistoric times.

Nazrul was acutely aware of the environmental hazards posed by coal. He warned that even if humanity stopped its reckless exploitation of this destructive fuel—noting that, even at the time he was writing, burning coal consumed over 1,600 million tons of oxygen annually—and turned to electricity as an alternative, new dangers would inevitably emerge. "Whichever path we choose, death awaits—crocodiles in the water, tigers on land!" he wrote, voicing his scepticism about electricity as a truly safer substitute. His words reflect a remarkably early awareness of the environmental trade-offs of industrial progress, articulated in the Bangla language over a century ago with striking foresight.

Globally, discussions of climate change began to surface in the 1960s, initially gaining traction in the Western world before spreading more broadly. In this context, Kazi Nazrul Islam stands out as a pioneer in alerting Bangladeshi readers to planetary crises long before the concept was widely recognised. Through his journalistic writings—often adopting a pessimistic tone that contrasts with his usual celebration of youth and life—Nazrul depicted the harsh realities of environmental degradation. Though writing nearly a century ago, his work captured the destructive nature of climate change, offering a prophetic glimpse into the global crisis that would unfold in the decades to come.

Research into nano-urea can transform our agricultural sector



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MD. WASIKUR RAHMAN

In 1913, the German scientist Fritz Haber successfully synthesised ammonia from atmospheric nitrogen—a breakthrough that laid the foundation for modern chemical fertilisers. Since then, scientists have continually developed new technologies to meet the growing food demands. The most recent and notable addition to this progress is nano-urea, hailed as a groundbreaking advancement in the agricultural sector.

Bangladesh, with its predominantly agrarian economy, relies heavily on fertilisers to meet food demands. To cope with the growing population, climate change, and environmental challenges, scientifically sound and sustainable technologies must be adopted in agriculture. Experts believe that the integration of nanotechnology in agriculture will play a transformative role in ensuring food security and promoting sustainable development.

Amidst global urea shortages, the demand for and necessity of nano-urea is immense. The Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) oversees several fertiliser plants, with a combined annual urea production capacity of approximately 2.3 million metric tonnes as of FY 2024-25. In the FY 2023-24, Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) produced about 527,271 metric tonnes of urea, necessitating the import of 1.66 million metric tonnes to meet the total demand. Despite efforts to boost domestic production, Bangladesh still relies heavily on imports. In this context, nano-urea offers a promising solution to tackle present and future

challenges in fertiliser supply and sustainability.

The use of fertilisers dates back to ancient times, with early civilisations like the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Romans applying natural substances to enrich soil. Scientific approaches emerged in the 18th century with crop rotation and gypsum use. In the 19th century, Justus von Liebig popularised the Law of the Minimum which states that a single and essential resource restricts plant growth even if other resources are abundant, while John Bennett Lawes founded first chemical fertiliser factory. The 20th century brought major advances, including the Haber-Bosch process in 1913, which enabled industrial-scale ammonia production and transformed global agronomy. This legacy of innovation continues today with the advent of nano-urea—a promising frontier in sustainable agriculture.

Currently, India is leading the production and marketing of nano-urea. Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) launched the world's first nano-urea in June 2021, marking a breakthrough in sustainable agriculture. IFFCO now has the capacity to produce approximately 200,000 bottles daily. By the end of 2024, the company aims to scale up annual production to three billion bottles, equivalent to 13.5 million tonnes of conventional urea. Nano-urea is already being exported to more than 25 countries, including the United States, Brazil, Mexico, Sri Lanka, and Kenya.

Bangladesh has also begun research on nano-urea as part of agricultural extension efforts. In a recent article, Dr Md Roushan Jamal highlighted the growing importance of nano-urea in the country. Although the use of nanotechnology for urea production is still in its early stages in Bangladesh, institutions like Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), and Gazipur Agricultural University (GAU) have initiated exploratory research in this field. Notably, Prof Dr Md Jabed Hossain Khan, a professor of the Department of Chemical

Engineering at Jashore University of Science and Technology (JUST), has made a significant breakthrough by successfully developing a locally produced nano-urea fertiliser. According to his findings, cultivating one bigha of land would require only Tk 230 worth of nano-urea—a stark contrast to the current cost of around Tk 4,200, suggesting a potential cost reduction of approximately 82 percent. However, extensive research

is still needed to fully understand the effects of nano-urea due to its unique composition and nanoscale properties.

From early dependence on organic fertilisers to the chemical revolution introduced by conventional urea, agriculture is now entering a new era with the advent of advanced nano-urea. To build a resilient agricultural future, Bangladesh must adopt a holistic strategy that promotes

research and development, enhances logistics and infrastructure, supports farmer training programmes, ensures the production of nano-urea that meets global standards, and encourages its field-level application. With these measures in place, Bangladesh holds the potential to build a green, sustainable, agriculture-based economy. And nano-urea could be a key driving force in realising that vision.

Tangail Pourashava Tangail

E-mail: tangailpourashava@yahoo.com

Dated: 24/05/2025

E-Tender Notice No. 05/2024-2025 (OTM)

Tangail Pourashava Infrastructure Improvement Project (TPIIP)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the below Schemes/packages:

Tender ID No.	Schemes/packages name	Tender document last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time
1104894	Package No: TPIIP/2023-24/BT-40, Development of Bus Terminal in Proposed Rabna Bypass area under Tangail Pourashava.	23-Jun-2025 17:00	24-Jun-2025 13:00
1113987	Package No: TPIIP/2024-25/OT-46, Part1: Renovation of DC Lake in Tangail District Head Quarter Installation of Street lights & Construction of Walkways. Part-2: Renovation of DC Lake in Tangail District Head Quarter Installation of Street lights & Construction of Walkways. Part-3: Renovation of DC Lake in Tangail District Head Quarter Installation of Street lights & Construction of Walkways.	23-Jun-2025 17:00	24-Jun-2025 13:00

These are 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 downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to mention above. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). If the tender submitted by the contractor is more than 10% above or more than 10% less than the official estimate, it will be treated as outright rejection.

24/05/25
Md. Shahjahan Ali

Executive Engineer
Tangail Pourashava, Tangail

Celebrating the Rebel Bard: A NATIONWIDE TRIBUTE TO KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM

Today marks the 126th birth anniversary of Kazi Nazrul Islam, the national poet of Bangladesh. A powerful force in Bengali literature and culture, Nazrul's fiery words, revolutionary spirit, and undying call for equality continue to resonate in the hearts of millions. In honour of his life and legacy, a vibrant array of nationwide events and television programmes has been organised, celebrating Nazrul's timeless contribution.



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy and local authorities, is hosting a three-day cultural event in Cumilla from May 25 to 27. This year's theme, *Chobbisher Gonobhyutthan: Kazi Nazrul Utterodhikar* (The People's Uprising of '24: Nazrul's Legacy), emphasises the poet's enduring impact on Bangladesh's spirit of resistance and cultural awakening.

The opening ceremony at the Cumilla District Shilpkala Academy will be graced by prominent personalities including Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, adviser to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and Md Mofidur Rahman, secretary to the Ministry. Special addresses will be delivered by Latiful Islam Shibli, executive director of the Kazi Nazrul Islam

Institute, and Khilkhil Kazi, chairperson of the Institute's Trustee Board.

The highlight of the event includes the presentation of the Nazrul Award for 2023 and 2024, honouring individuals who have significantly contributed to the promotion and preservation of Nazrul's work and philosophy.

The stage will come alive with powerful renditions of Nazrul Sangeet, dramatic recitations, and dance performances by renowned artists such as Ferdous Ara, Fatema Tuz Zohra, Shahinur Abedin, and Salauddin Ahmed, accompanied by the dynamic choreography of the Bangladesh Academy of Fine Arts and Shilpkala's own dance troupes.

Genesis Theatre will present the thought-provoking play *Damal Chele Nazrul* in Teota, Manikganj, the birthplace of Nazrul's wife, Promila Devi. This play portrays inspirational episodes from the poet's early

life and his struggle for justice.

Simultaneously, at the Bangla Academy, Genesis Theatre's children and youth troupe will stage the musical drama *Dekhbo Ebar Jagottake*. Created to bring Nazrul's messages of free thought and universal humanism to the next generation, the performance forms a key part of the daylong celebrations.

Additionally, *Damal Chele Nazrul* will be staged again on June 1 at the Nazrul Institute (Kobi Bhaban) in Dhaka.

A special musical programme titled *Thumrir Jalsa* was held yesterday at 6:30pm at the Chhayanaut Cultural Centre Auditorium, organised by the Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha.

Bangladesh Television (BTV) has curated an expansive day of special programming to honour Nazrul's legacy: 9am – *Duronto*



A panel delving into Nazrul's life, ideology, and enduring relevance. At 8:50pm – *Ganer Mala*: A star-studded musical showcase hosted by Ferdous Ara, featuring Fatema Tuz Zohra, Yakub Ali Khan, Salauddin Ahmed, Yasmin Mushtari, and others. At 10:00pm – *Sabyasachi Nazrul*: A rich multimedia performance hosted by Priyanka Gope, weaving together Nazrul's music, poetry, and dance.

Duronto TV joins the national celebration with two special presentations at 9:30am *Unnata Mama Shir*: A dance programme choreographed by Amit Chowdhury, performed by Sadhona's dancers, including Rudmila Priyonti Chowdhury, Arisha Chowdhury, Noholi Islam Riya, Labannya Das Gupta, and others. This performance unites the themes of rebellion, love, and equality, drawing from Nazrul's iconic



PHOTOS: COURTESY

Nazrul: A children's special featuring young performers from the Shishu Academy with songs, dances, poetry, and a play titled *Kanamuchi*. At 4:05pm – Documentary: A visual exploration of places associated with Nazrul's life and legacy. 5:00pm onwards – Music and Dance Special: A performance session inspired by Nazrul's poems and songs. At 6:00pm – Discussion Segment: works such as *Bidrohi*, *Nari*, *Mora Jhongar Moto Uddam*, and *Runjhun Rumjhun*. At 11:00am and 7:30pm – *Golper Jhuri*: A television play based on Nazrul's short stories *Shikari* and *Planchet*, directed by Nahid Ahmed Pial. The cast includes talented child actors Apurba, Jahan, Ratul, Protusha, and senior performers Shahiduzzaman Selim and Rahmat Ali.



Anwarul Haque, Shabnam Mushtari honoured with Nazrul Award

Researcher Anwarul Haque and Nazrul Sangeet artiste Shabnam Mushtari are set to receive the Bangla Academy's Nazrul Award today in recognition of their contributions to the legacy of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

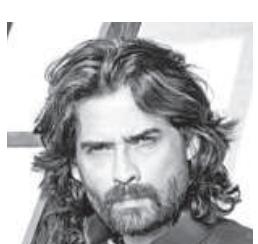
The awards will be presented at the Nazrul Jayanti celebration at the Bangla Academy premises and include a crest, an uttorio, and a cash prize of Tk 1 lakh each.

Professor Haque, a retired academic from Cumilla Victoria Government College, has authored several works on Nazrul's life and literary contributions.

Shabnam Mushtari, who began performing in the 1960s, gained prominence through her albums and television performances. She hails from a literary family, with her parents and siblings also active in the cultural sphere.

Actor Mukul Dev no more

Indian actor Mukul Dev, known for his performances across South Indian cinema, and television, passed away on Friday night, aged 54.



Rahul Dev, Mukul's oldest brother, shared the news on social media yesterday, writing, "Our brother Mukul Dev passed away peacefully in New Delhi last night. He is survived by his daughter Sia Dev. Missed by siblings Rashmi Kaushal, Rahul Dev, and nephew Sidhant Dev."

The cause of his demise remains undisclosed.

Mukul Dev stepped into the spotlight in 1996 with his TV debut in *Mumkin* and his film debut in *Dastak*.

Known for his roles in *Yamla Pagla Deewana*, *Son of Sardaar*, and *Jai Ho*, among others in recent years, he brought charisma to a wide range of characters.

MERIL PROTHOM-ALO AWARDS 2024

Biggest winners in the marquee event



Best Actress (web series): Zinnat Ara (Simpaat) **Limited-length Fiction:** **Best Director:** Jahid Preetom (Buk Pocket-er Golpo) **Best Screenplay:** Subrata Sanjib (Rod Brishtir Golpo) **Best Actress:** Tasnia Farin (Poroshpor) **Best Actor:** Khairul Basar (Rod Brishtir Golpo) **Best Feature Film:** Priyo Maloti **Best Director (Feature Film):** Shangkha Dasgupta (Priyo Maloti) **Best Actress (Feature Film):** Mehazabien Chowdhury (Priyo Maloti) **Best Actor (Feature Film):** Mamnun Hasan Emon (Maya)

A special honour was bestowed upon Shakib Khan in recognition of his outstanding contributions in the past 25 years to the film industry.

Popular Choice Awards: **Best Debut:** Farrukh Ahmed Rehan (Jugol) **Best Singer (Female):** Dilshad Nahar Kona (Dushti Kokil, Toofan) **Best Singer (Male):** Pritom Hasan (Laage Ura Dhura, Toofan) **Best Actress (Drama):** Tanjim Saiyara Totini (Love Sab) **Best Actor (Drama):** Tawsif Mahbub (Love Sab) **Best Actress (Film):** Mehazabien Chowdhury (Priyo Maloti) **Best Actor (Film):** Shakib Khan (Toofan)

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

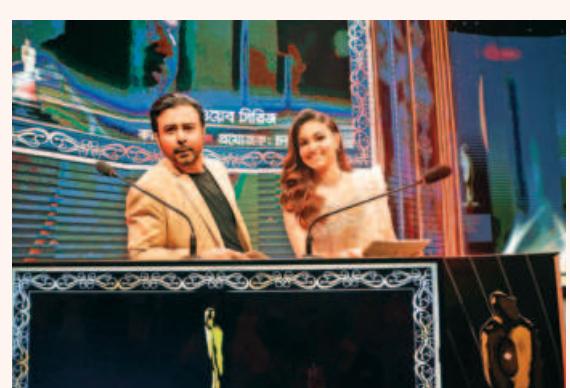
Rife with glamour and applause, the 26th Meril Prothom Alo Awards were held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Agargaon. Celebrating the year's finest in film, television, and OTT, the event brought together a dazzling array of stars and honoured the artistic achievements that aided in defining the spirit of Bangladeshi culture this past year.

Afran Nisho and Tasnia Farin made their debut as hosts for the event, and they helmed the ceremony with charm and poise.

A highlight of the night was the Lifetime Achievement Award presented to veteran actor Abul Hayat. A moving documentary paid tribute to his decades-spanning career. Actress Dilara Zaman presented the award, while Anjan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Toiletries Ltd, honoured him with an embroidered shawl. In a heartfelt moment, Hayat dedicated the award to his wife, Shirin Hayat, and expressed gratitude to his family and colleagues, underscoring the collective nature of his success.

Here is the full list of the awards:

Critics' Choice Awards: **Best Web Series:** Rongila Kitab **Best Screenwriter:** Salzar Rahman (Kalpurush) **Best Director (web series):** Nuhash Humayun (Dui Shaw) **Best Actor (web series):** Mosharraf Karim (Aduhnik Bangla Hotel)



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF PROTHOM ALO

The 2025 Cannes Film Festival concluded yesterday, with Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi's *It Was Just an Accident* and Ukrainian director Sergei Loznitsa's *Two Prosecutors* emerging as frontrunners for the coveted Palme d'Or top prize.

French actor Juliette Binoche and her jury will select the winner from 22 entries.

Acclaimed contenders also include *Young Mothers* by

Belgium's Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, German generational tale *Sound of Falling*, and Brazil's *The Secret Agent*, among others.

Politics loomed large this year: over 900 film professionals signed a letter condemning the Gaza conflict, with signatories including Binoche, Ralph Fiennes, and Julian Assange.

Assange's biopic *The Six Billion Dollar Man* won a special jury prize, while *The Mysterious Gaze*

of the Flamingo by Chilean Diego Cespedes claimed Un Certain Regard's top honour.

Other winners included Hafsia Herzi's *The Last One* (the festival's Queer Palm Award) and Thai film *Useful Ghost* (Critics' Week section).

On a lighter note, a sheepdog from the Icelandic drama *The Love That Remains*, by Hlynur Pálmarson, won the Palm Dog prize.



21 more pushed

FROM PAGE 12
pushed back through the same border and later handed over to their relatives after police confirmed their identities.

According to BGB Headquarters, a total of 528 people have so far been pushed into Bangladesh since May 7. Of them, 450 were detained by the BGB and 78 by the Bangladesh Coast Guard.

Meanwhile, in Kurigram, 22 Bangladeshi nationals, including women and children, who were detained by India's Border Security Force (BSF) for staying there illegally, were formally handed over to BGB at Balatari border early yesterday.

The handover followed a flag meeting between the two border forces at 1:30am near pillar 932 along the Balatari border in Phulbari upazila.

The Indian side was led by Assistant Commandant SHL Simti of the BSF Battalion-3, while Major Hasnain, second-in-command of the BGB Battalion 15 in Lalmonirhat, represented Bangladesh.

Following verification of their identities, the 24 detainees — comprising eight men, eight women, and eight children — were officially repatriated and later handed over to their families through local representatives.

Naek Subedar Saidur Rahman said

the BSF had initially gathered a group of people at the Karola camp, as they had been working in India without legal permits.

Upon hearing the information, Lt Col Mehedi Imam, commander of the Lalmonirhat BGB battalion, issued a strong message to the BSF, saying that no one would be allowed to enter Bangladesh without proper verification of citizenship.

In response, the BSF submitted a list of 24 individuals believed to be Bangladeshi nationals. After their identities were confirmed, a flag meeting was arranged, and the group was accepted and subsequently reunited with their families.

Shahidul Islam, brother of one of the returnees, said, "My brother went to Delhi in search of work 20 years ago. On his way back, he was detained by the BSF. We are grateful to the BGB for their efforts in bringing him and three of his family members back."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Major Hasnain of the BGB 15 Battalion said, "The repatriation was carried out through proper procedures and in cooperation with local authorities."

[Our correspondents from Sylhet and Lalmonirhat contributed to the report.]

Israeli strikes kill 15 more in Gaza

FROM PAGE 12
United Nations chief Antonio Guterres said on Friday that Palestinians were enduring "the cruellest phase" of the war in Gaza, where a lengthy Israeli blockade has led to widespread shortages of food and medicine.

Limited aid deliveries to the Gaza Strip restarted on Monday for the first time since March 2, amid mounting condemnation of the Israeli blockade.

The World Food Programme said 15 of its trucks were looted late Thursday night, calling on Israel "to get far greater volumes of food assistance into Gaza faster".

"Hunger, desperation, and anxiety over whether more food aid is coming, is contributing to rising insecurity," it said.

The Gaza City municipality, meanwhile, warned yesterday of "a potential large-scale water crisis" due to a lack of supplies needed for urgent repairs.

It said damage from the war had "affected the majority of Gaza's water infrastructure, leaving large portions of the population vulnerable to severe water shortages".

Affairs Directorate — similar to the Department of Women's Affairs — to coordinate inter-ministerial protection efforts.

They also urged a range of reforms, including taking steps to break families' silence regarding cases of abuse, strictly enforcing child protection laws, introducing school-based safety training, improving mental health and rehabilitation services, and ensuring stronger police accountability.

Further recommendations included community engagement involving parents, teachers and local leaders; strengthened victim support including legal aid and witness protection; and operational child help desks in all police stations.

To improve emergency response, they proposed streamlining national helplines — 109, 1098, and the police headquarters hotlines — to reduce confusion and ensure regular, transparent reporting on complaints and follow-up actions.

Nazrul's 126th birth anniv today

FROM PAGE 12
"On the occasion of the 126th birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, I pay my deepest respects to his memory," Prof Yunus said, as reported by BSS.

Kazi Nazrul Islam is a shining star of Bangla literature," he added, saying that the poet was born when the subcontinent was still bound by the chains of subjugation.

The poet's rebellious nature roared against injustice. He wanted to break the chains of the tyrant with his sharp pen, said Prof Yunus.

Recalling the poet's imprisonment for sedition during British rule, the chief adviser said Nazrul chose poetry as the language of protest, which earned him the title of the rebel poet, reports BSS.

In January this year, the interim

government officially declared Nazrul the national poet through a gazette notification.

The central theme of Nazrul's work was the triumph of humanity and a powerful protest against oppression, communal hatred, and inequality, Prof Yunus said.

"His creations gave people courage in every movement, from the anti-British struggle to the Liberation War," he said, adding that Nazrul stood against religious bigotry and championed gender equality.

Prof Yunus expressed hope that the poet's life and ideals would continue to guide the people in building a non-communal and just society. He also wished success for all commemorative events across the country.

Born in 1899 in Churulia, West Bengal, Nazrul later joined the British Indian Army and went on to become a journalist, composer, and filmmaker. His newspaper Dhumketu was banned by the British, and he was jailed for his poem Anandamoyer Agomony.

UNB reports that the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, along with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and local administrations, will host a three-day celebration in Cumilla starting May 25. The inaugural event will include the Nazrul Award 2023 and 2024, with Cultural Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki as the chief guest.

The national poet Nazrul passed away on August 29, 1976, and was laid to rest next to Dhaka University's central mosque, as per his wishes.

management.

The ministry also proposed installing 6,793 lightning arresters and constructing 3,398 lightning shelters in 15 high-risk districts. However, Razwanur Rahman said the project lacked sustainability and failed to secure approval.

Dr Shameem said installing thousands of arresters and shelters is economically unfeasible. "It's doable at individual homes but not at scale. It's too costly," he said.

Regarding palm trees, he said, "They take time to grow, and many landowners refuse to allow them. Planting them along roadsides is risky, as the area within four metres of a lightning-struck tree remains dangerous."

The DG of the Department of Disaster Management said they are still negotiating with mobile operators and cannot comment on costs at this stage.

They will select the most vulnerable areas for the lightning warning system, he added.

He said haor areas are especially vulnerable because tall trees, which can act as natural lightning conductors, do not grow well in waterlogged conditions, leaving field workers exposed during dry seasons.

Lightning was declared a natural disaster in Bangladesh in 2016. Since then, authorities have attempted various strategies to reduce associated risks. In 2017, the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) initiated a plan to plant 3.8 million palm trees across rural areas, as these trees can serve as natural lightning arresters.

However, due to poor maintenance, the project was scrapped in 2022 by the former state minister for disaster

management.

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Star wins 2nd place at INMA Media Awards

FROM PAGE 3
users with industry-aligned courses achieving 85 percent learner satisfaction.

The judges at the award ceremony praised The Daily Star's bold move into the EdTech space through a purpose-driven and scalable vertical. They highlighted Keeron's affordability, media-to-EdTech innovation model, and career-centric learning pathways as best-in-class.

The award was received by Md Tajdin Hassan, chief business officer of The Daily Star and chief operating officer of Keeron, alongside Mizanur

Rahman, chief financial officer of The Daily Star, on stage at the World Congress of News Media in New York at the Edison Ballroom this Thursday (EDT).

The 2025 INMA Global Media Awards received 839 entries from 286 news media brands across 49 countries, showcasing the industry's most groundbreaking initiatives. From this highly competitive pool, only 199 finalists were shortlisted, representing the best of global media innovation across 20 award categories in two distinct segments — national/international and regional.

Today, INMA recognised 60 winners, awarding first, second, and third place in each category, with select exceptions where judges exercised discretion.

Themes at the forefront this year included AI in newsrooms, public good campaigns, truth telling, youth engagement, and audience-first product strategies.

In the "Best Commerce Product or Service" category, other finalists alongside The Daily Star included media houses from Germany (Funke Digital), Switzerland (Ringier), Kenya (Legit), and Norway (Verdens Gang).

BNP sticks to demand for polls by December

FROM PAGE 1

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres said on Friday that Palestinians were enduring "the cruellest phase" of the war in Gaza, where a lengthy Israeli blockade has led to widespread shortages of food and medicine.

It also demanded that all national and local elections held during Sheikh Hasina's regime be declared "invalid".

The talks came two days after Yunus vented his frustrations over some recent developments and expressed desire to step down.

He had talked about how ongoing protests were continuing to hinder the government's core tasks — pushing reforms, ensuring justice for the July killings, and preparing for a free and fair election.

After the meetings last night, CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said all three major political parties voiced their confidence in the leadership of Yunus and support for a free, fair, and peaceful election under his administration.

He said the chief adviser reaffirmed his commitment to holding the election between December and June. "He is a man of his word. What he says, he does," Shafiqul said at a press conference in front of Jamuna.

Reaffirming their support for the chief adviser at the meetings, the BNP said it never sought his resignation, while the NCP urged Yunus to remain in office until he honours the commitment he made in the wake of the July uprising.

Mosharrif, who led the BNP delegation, said, "The BNP has never demanded the resignation of the chief adviser; rather, from the very first day, it has been fully cooperating with this government."

He said the topics of reform, justice, and election came up, and the BNP leaders said these three were not interrelated.

Reform is an ongoing process and will continue, he said, adding, "We expect this government to propose reforms based on consensus among all parties, and that process will remain active. If the people entrust us with power in the future, we will make efforts to continue implementing those reforms."

He said leaders and activists of the BNP were affected the most — personally, politically, and family-wise — during the Awami League rule.

"That is why the BNP demands justice the most. If the trial process remains incomplete, the BNP, if in power, will complete it through independent judicial process," he said.

The agitation that emerged in society regarding this issue, along with blockades for different demands, seems to have subsided for now. However, we seek a permanent resolution."

Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman

said if reforms are completed, the

election can be held by mid-February.

If the reforms take some more time,

the election can be held after Eid-ul-Fitr.

"If the election lingers, it will be

difficult to make it a free and fair one," he said.

The Jamaat chief said if all come

forward and provide meaningful

support to the reform process, then,

a meaningful election can be ensured

through effective reforms.

"The act of besieging the Election

Commission to press for local

government elections appears to

be intentional and mysterious," it said about the NCP's recent

demonstrations.

Press Secretary Shafiqul said both

Jamaat and NCP supported the

timeframe that the election will be

held between December and June.

But the two parties expressed

concern about the current electoral

environment, saying they do not

believe a level playing field exists

under the present structure.

The press secretary said the

Consensus Commission is expected

to conclude its work by mid-July,

and a "July Charter" will be adopted

afterwards.

"Work is underway to finalise the

document," said Shafiqul.

The chief adviser also confirmed

that the trial of the July killings will

begin later this month.

If the ongoing political crisis

would be resolved, the press secretary

said, "I'm not sure what crisis you are

referring to. What I can say is that

today's meetings were held in a very

cordial atmosphere."

Yunus is likely to hold a joint

meeting with more than 10 political

parties today.

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Yunus is likely to hold a joint

Magnesium deficiency and depression: what you should know

Magnesium is a vital nutrient that supports muscle and nerve function, regulates blood sugar and pressure, and aids in making protein, bone, and DNA. Yet, it is believed that nearly half of Americans may be deficient. This deficiency is increasingly linked to mental health issues, including depression and anxiety.

Magnesium supports mood by boosting calming brain chemicals and reducing stress hormones. It influences serotonin and glutamate levels, both essential for emotional balance. Chronic stress, poor diet, and depleted soil nutrients all contribute to low magnesium levels, creating a cycle where stress depletes magnesium, leading to more stress and mood issues.

Unfortunately, standard blood tests may not accurately detect magnesium deficiency, as most of the mineral is stored in bones and organs, not blood.

One form often recommended for mood support is magnesium glycinate, known for better absorption and fewer digestive side effects. While the general supplement limit is 350 mg daily, individuals with depression may benefit from slightly higher doses under medical supervision. Splitting the dose throughout the day and taking some at night may improve absorption and sleep.

Magnesium from food is a safe and effective option. Sources include leafy greens, nuts, seeds, whole grains, beans, dark chocolate, and dairy. Getting magnesium through food helps avoid side effects like low blood pressure or digestive upset.

Magnesium can be used alongside antidepressants, often enhancing their effectiveness. However, always consult a healthcare provider before starting supplements, especially if you have kidney or heart conditions or take other medications.



IN MY ARMS, YOU THRIVE: saving newborn lives through KMC

DR ABDULLAHEL AMAAN &
DR KHAINOOR ZAHAN

Globally, 2.3 million children died in the first 28 days of life in 2022. There are approximately 6,500 newborn deaths every day, amounting to 47% of all child deaths under the age of 5 years.

The world has made substantial progress in child survival since 1990. Globally, the number of neonatal deaths declined from 5.0 million in 1990 to 2.3 million in 2022. Yet in 2022, nearly half (47%) of all deaths in children under 5 years of age occurred in the newborn period. Most neonatal deaths (75%) occur during the first week of life. The leading causes of death include premature birth, birth complications (birth asphyxia/trauma), neonatal infections and congenital anomalies. In Bangladesh the neonatal mortality rate was 20 deaths per 1,000 live births (BDHS 2022).

Newborns, especially premature ones, are prone to developing hypothermia (low body temperature) from their deficient thermal insulation, as they have limited subcutaneous fat and sometimes a sudden exposure to the changes in the temperature in their surrounding environment.

Hypothermia is a major contributing factor to newborn illness, subsequent hospitalisation and even death. Hypothermia in newborns can have multi-organ involvements, such as heart-lung dysfunction, weakness, poor feeding, metabolic derangements resulting in low blood sugar levels, and life-threatening metabolic events. Their risk of mortality is five times more than newborns with normal body temperatures. Thus, preventing hypothermia is an essential part of newborn care.

To prevent such catastrophic hypothermia events, the World



Health Organisation (WHO)

recommends ensuring immediate Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) for these newborns. Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) is a method of caring for low-birth-weight and preterm infants by providing continuous skin-to-skin contact (by mother or even another carer) and support for breastfeeding. Infants receiving kangaroo mother care were found to show 40% less mortality than those who received conventional care in an incubator in hospitals.

The early KMC technique was first presented by Dr Rey and Dr Martinez in 1983 in Bogotá, Colombia, where it was developed as an alternative to inadequate and insufficient incubator care for premature newborns. Decades of research and development have documented that KMC lowers infant mortality and the risk of hypothermia and hospital-acquired infection, increases weight gain of infants, increases rates of breastfeeding, protects neuromotor and brain development of infants, and improves mother-

infant bonding. Today, the WHO recommends Kangaroo mother care (KMC) for preterm or low-birth-weight infants should be started as soon as possible after birth.

To raise awareness and promote the practice of KMC, International Kangaroo Care Awareness Day is being observed globally on 15th May annually since 2011. The theme of this day in this year is "In My Arms, You Thrive". It ensures our commitment to protecting and nurturing every newborn through the power of our touch. It highlights the profound impact of KMC in promoting healing, stability, and lifelong well-being while honouring the clinicians, families, and communities that make it possible.

The writers are the assistant professors of Neonatology at the Institute of Child & Mother Health (ICMH), Matuail, Dhaka and public health specialist respectively. Email: abdullahelamaan@gmail.com, khainoorzahan@gmail.com

The heart-friendly oils: what experts want you to use now

RAISA MEHZABEEN &
BOISHAKHI DEY

In a time when cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of death worldwide, health professionals and organisations are urging the public to make smarter dietary choices—especially when it comes to fat consumption. The American Heart Association (AHA) has reiterated the importance of replacing saturated and trans fats with healthier alternatives, particularly plant-based oils rich in unsaturated fats.

Backed by growing scientific evidence, a new focus is being placed on oils that not only enhance flavour but also offer potent cardiovascular benefits. Below are the top 10 heart-healthy oils endorsed by health experts and supported by the AHA:

1. Olive oil: Often referred to as the healthiest oil, extra virgin olive oil is abundant in monounsaturated fats and antioxidants. Research shows that it helps reduce LDL (bad cholesterol) and maintain HDL (good cholesterol), significantly lowering the risk of heart disease. The

AHA includes olive oil in its list of heart-healthy dietary fats, particularly due to its anti-inflammatory effects.

2. Avocado oil: Derived from the flesh of avocados, this oil contains heart-friendly monounsaturated fats and potassium. Studies indicate it helps reduce blood pressure, supports artery health, and combats inflammation.

3. Canola oil: Commonly used for its neutral flavour and affordability, canola oil offers a good source of omega-3 fatty acids and has one of the lowest saturated fat contents among cooking oils. According to AHA guidelines, it is a smart choice for maintaining cholesterol balance and cardiovascular function.

4. Flaxseed oil: An excellent plant-based source of omega-3 (ALA), flaxseed oil supports vascular health and reduces inflammation. As it is heat-sensitive, it is best used in salad dressings or smoothies.



5. Walnut oil: This nutty oil is rich in polyunsaturated fats and alpha-linolenic acid. Evidence suggests that regular consumption improves endothelial function and lowers triglycerides, helping to prevent artery hardening.

6. Soybean oil: Widely used in commercial kitchens, soybean oil contains essential fatty acids and vitamin K. It is beneficial for cholesterol control and may help reduce the risk of coronary artery disease when used in moderation.

7. Sunflower oil: High in vitamin E and available in a high-oleic form, sunflower oil supports immune health and cardiovascular protection. The AHA advises choosing high-oleic versions, which are richer in heart-friendly monounsaturated fats.

8. Corn oil: Recognised by the AHA for its cholesterol-lowering potential,

corn oil contains phytosterols and polyunsaturated fats that help manage LDL levels and support arterial health.

9. Sesame oil: Used in various cuisines for its distinct flavour, sesame oil is loaded with lignans like sesamin and sesamol, which exhibit strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. It may also assist in lowering blood pressure.

10. Grapeseed oil: A byproduct of winemaking, grapeseed oil is rich in polyunsaturated fats and vitamin E. It supports healthy circulation and reduces the oxidation of LDL cholesterol—a major contributor to plaque formation.

Nutritionists emphasise that adopting heart-healthy oils in everyday cooking can lead to a meaningful reduction in heart disease risk. "Simple swaps—like using olive or canola oil instead of butter—can make a significant difference over time," says Dr Alice H. Lichtenstein, a member of the AHA's nutrition committee.

As the global burden of heart disease continues to climb, such dietary adjustments offer a practical and accessible path to prevention.

When a broken heart turns deadly: the hidden risk for men

"Broken heart syndrome", or takotsubo cardiomyopathy (TC), is a temporary heart condition triggered by extreme stress or emotions—like the loss of a loved one or a serious accident. While it mostly affects women (around 80% of cases), recent research shows men are more than twice as likely to die from it.

This condition causes part of the heart to weaken and change shape, making it harder to pump blood. Although it usually improves with time, it can lead to serious complications. Surprisingly, despite medical advances, survival rates have not improved over the past five years. Researchers are still unsure why men outcomes, but the findings highlight the need for more awareness and better treatment.

Tips to protect your heart from stress:

1. Manage stress early – Daily stress can build up over time. Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing, yoga, or meditation.
2. Stay socially connected – Talking to friends, family, or a support group can help ease emotional burdens.
3. Exercise regularly – Physical activity boosts mood and strengthens your heart.
4. Seek help after emotional trauma – If you have gone through something deeply upsetting, talk to a doctor or mental health professional.
5. Do not ignore symptoms – If you feel chest pain, shortness of breath, or dizziness—especially after stress—seek medical help right away.



Is routine cancer surveillance always helpful?

After completing cancer treatment, many patients undergo regular scans and blood tests to check for a return of the disease. This process, called surveillance, is commonly done every 6 months for up to 5 years. The idea is that catching cancer early, before symptoms appear, could lead to better treatment outcomes. However, research shows this may not always be true.

Studies, including randomised controlled trials, show that routine testing for cancer recurrence in people who feel fine does not reduce the risk of death. In fact, detecting cancer earlier does not always mean better survival—it can just appear that way because the disease is found sooner (a concept called lead-time bias).

Surveillance can also bring harm. Tests like CT scans and MRIs are expensive, can cause stress or anxiety (often called "scanxiety"), and sometimes lead to more procedures that may not help. False alarms or incidental findings can lead to unnecessary treatments or emotional distress. Plus, many patients may start treatment for a recurrence earlier than needed, affecting their quality of life.

Blood-based tests for detecting cancer DNA are also being promoted, but we still do not know if they actually help people live longer or better. Meanwhile, some cancers, like prostate or thyroid, already have very high long-term survival rates, and frequent testing may offer



little benefit.

Experts now say that less surveillance may be better—especially if the patient has no symptoms. What is truly important is more research and honest conversations between doctors and patients about the real risks and benefits.

SOURCE: THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE

Embedding wellness into youth education and lifestyle

STAR HEALTH DESK

In an era where academic pressure, digital distractions, and societal expectations weigh heavily on young minds, a panel of leading experts gathered at the Dhaka Flow Youth Wellness Festival to redefine youth development through a wellness-first approach. The session, themed "embedding wellness into youth education & lifestyle: physical, emotional & nutritional well-being", called for integrating wellness into every aspect of a young person's life—education, lifestyle, and even career preparation.

Mental health: starting early, thinking big – Ms Salma Ikram, Senior Psychologist at United Hospital, stressed that emotional challenges in youth often begin around age ten. "If we wait until university to address emotional well-being, we are already too late," she warned. She advocated for embedding mental health literacy into school curricula and training teachers to spot early signs of distress. "We need to normalise asking for help as a strength, not a weakness."

Nutrition: food as fuel for focus – Ms Chowdhury Tasneem Hasin, Chief Clinical Dietitian at United Hospital, highlighted the growing impact of diet culture and misinformation. She urged schools to adopt canteen policies, workshops, and student-led wellness clubs. "Food is self-care—it is not just calories, it is chemistry."

Wellness and employability – Fahmidur Rahman Oni, Co-founder and Principal of DMR Institute of Skill Development and Local President of JCI Dhaka United emphasised that physical and mental well-being are key to academic and professional success. "Wellness increases a student's ability to learn, collaborate, and persist through challenges."

Financial literacy: a wellness imperative – Lowell Campbell, financial expert highlighted financial stress as a hidden source of youth anxiety. "When youth understand budgeting and goal-setting, they gain control—boosting mental health."

Thyroid nodules treated without surgery or scars – just a needle

DR MD KAMRUL AZAD

A 46-year-old woman came to my chamber with muscle cramps, tingling in her hands, and a strange twisting of her fingers. She looked worried and said these symptoms started slowly but later affecting her daily life. On examination, I noticed a large scar on the front of her neck. When I asked, she told me that she had undergone total thyroid surgery two years ago to remove a nodule. Since then, her problems had only increased. She had to take calcium injections repeatedly and swallow 6 to 8 calcium tablets daily. Her voice had changed after surgery, and she now depended on a lifelong thyroid hormone pill to survive.

As I checked her further, simple tests showed signs of low calcium in her body. She was suffering from a condition called hypocalcemic tetany—caused when the small parathyroid glands are accidentally removed or damaged during thyroid surgery.

Sadly, I see many such patients who come with scars, weak voices, repeated hospital visits, and constant medication needs. Most of them went through surgery without knowing that there was another way—a better, safer option now available in Bangladesh.

That option is called radiofrequency ablation, or RFA. This is a modern, non-surgical treatment for thyroid nodules or tumours. Instead of cutting the neck and removing the thyroid, RFA uses heat energy through a thin needle to destroy only the part of the thyroid that has the problem. It is done under ultrasound guidance to ensure accuracy. The healthy part of the thyroid is left untouched, and the whole procedure takes just 30 to 40 minutes. Patients can go home the same day without needing admission, stitches, or general anaesthesia.

Unlike surgery, RFA does not leave a visible scar, and there is little to no pain. Most patients do not need lifelong thyroid hormone pills or calcium supplements after the procedure. Recovery is quick, and the cost is also lower than traditional surgery. Over time, the size of the thyroid nodule shrinks significantly—up to 93% in some cases. For those with hormone-producing nodules, hormone levels return to normal in over 80% of patients within months. This method is especially effective in Asian populations like ours.

The mentioned patient's story is not just her story—it is a reflection of many others who suffered after thyroid surgery simply because a safer, less painful method was not known or not available at the time. But now, with RFA available in Bangladesh, patients no longer need to live with scars, voice changes, or a lifetime of pills. This technology is time-demanding and necessary for our population, especially where thyroid problems are common. Early awareness and the right decision can save people from unnecessary suffering. Now is the time to embrace modern thyroid care.

The writer is the head of the Department of Endocrinology at the Sharikat Karmachari Hospital, Fulbaria, Dhaka.



What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV
PSL
Final
Quetta vs Lahore
Live from 8:30pm
STAR SPORTS
EPL

Southampton vs Arsenal
Nottingham vs Chelsea
Man United vs Villa
Liverpool vs Palace
Fulham vs Man

City
All matches live from 9:00pm
SONY SPORTS
FRENCH OPEN
First Round
Live from 3:00pm

TONMOY, JUI lead BKSP's dominance in pool

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP's Monir Khan Tonmoy and Jui Akter emerged as the best swimmers of the 37th National Age group Swimming and Diving Competition, which concluded at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur on Saturday.

Tonmoy, competing in the 18-20 age-group category, grabbed nine gold and

one bronze including a record he set in the 100m freestyle event on Friday. Jui, competing in the same age group category for girls, finished with five gold medals including two records, the last of which came on Saturday in 200m individual medley. Jui took 2:48min 0.1sec to set the record, shaving off 0.50 seconds from the previous record held by Any Akter of BKSP.

A total of six records -- four in swimming and two in diving -- were set over four days of the competition, which concluded with complete dominance of BKSP. The sports institute amassed 70 gold, 62 silver and 32 bronze medals. Kushtia's Shilaidaha Swimming Club finished distant second with six gold, five silver and eight bronze. Kushtia's Amla Swimming Club finished third with six

gold, two silver and four bronze.

Navy chief and Bangladesh Swimming Federation's president Admiral M Nazmul Hassan distributed prizes among the winners as the chief guest of the closing ceremony. There were monetary rewards of Tk 5,000 each for record setters, Tk 2,000 each for gold winners, Tk 1,000 each for silver winners and Tk 500 each for bronze winners.

New era dawns at Roland-Garros

The 2025 French Open begins May 25 at Roland-Garros, ushering in a new era following Rafael Nadal's retirement. A special ceremony will honor the 14-time champion Nadal on opening day. Defending champions Carlos Alcaraz and Iga Swiatek return under pressure, with top seeds Jannik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka leading the charge. Swiatek aims for a fourth straight title, while Sinner returns from a doping ban hungry for redemption. With star power and rising threats, Paris sets the stage for a captivating clay-court showdown.

Tournament Dates: May 25 – June 08
Defending Champions: Carlos Alcaraz (Men), Iga Swiatek (Women)
Top Seeds: Jannik Sinner (men's singles), Aryna Sabalenka (women's singles)
Djokovic eyes record 25th Grand Slam title
Notable Contenders (Men's Singles): Carlos Alcaraz, Jannik Sinner, Novak Djokovic, Alexander Zverev, Casper Ruud, Jack Draper and Lorenzo Musetti.
Notable Contenders (Women's Singles): Iga Swiatek, Aryna Sabalenka, Coco Gauff, Elena Rybakina, Ons Jabeur, Marketa Vondrousova.

Moya sees 'Big Three' legacy too high for Alcaraz, Sinner

AGENCIES

Carlos Moya, Rafael Nadal's former coach, believes Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner could form a strong rivalry in the coming years but doubts they can match the dominance of the 'Big Three'—Nadal, Roger Federer, and Novak Djokovic.

Speaking to AFP, Moya praised world number one Sinner, 23, and 22-year-old Alcaraz, who have already won seven Grand Slam titles combined. In contrast, the Big Three amassed 66 Slams between 2003 and 2023.

"To replicate what Rafa, Roger, and Novak did over 15-20 years is hard to imagine," said Moya.

a former world number one and 1998 French Open winner. "Injuries, family issues, mental health—so much can happen in five years."

Moya, who will attend Sunday's French Open tribute to 14-time champion Nadal, credited the Big Three's longevity to their rivalry. "They pushed each other to the limit. Without them, Rafa may have retired earlier with fewer Slams."

Reflecting on his own career, Moya admitted he never dreamt of such dominance. "My dream was to win a Slam and become number one—not to stay there for years. What these guys did is mentally unbelievable. People don't realize how tough that is."



Team manager Nafees Iqbal informed that the players will arrive in Pakistan in two separate groups with the second group scheduled to depart from UAE today.

He also informed Mustafizur Rahman, who played his final match for the Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League (IPL) yesterday, will join the team soon after ending his IPL stint.

The team will have training sessions on May 26 and 27 before the series opener on May 28. The remaining two matches are scheduled on May 30 and June 1.

Leg spinner Rishad Hossain and all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who are currently representing Lahore Qalandars in ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL), are expected to join their national teammates after today's PSL final.

India's 'Prince' ascends the throne

AGENCIES

At just 25, Shubman Gill has been handed the reins of Indian Test cricket, tasked with steering a new era following the retirements of legends Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

Once seen as Kohli's heir apparent after a composed Test debut in Melbourne in 2020, Gill now stands at the forefront of Indian cricket's future.

Gill's rise to the Test captaincy stems as much from his elegant strokeplay as from his calm, calculated leadership of Gujarat Titans in the IPL.

This week, his fluent 93 sealed a playoff spot for Gujarat, showcasing both form and fortitude. "When I'm batting, I want to think like a batsman, not a captain," said Gill, who has scored 636 runs this IPL season at an average of 57.81.

Dubbed "Prince" by pundits, Gill has brushed off the tag. Gujarat's assistant coach Parthiv Patel echoed that sentiment: "He doesn't talk much, but his words carry weight."



Gill was chosen over candidates like Jasprit Bumrah, Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul, and Shreyas Iyer to lead India in a tough five-Test series in England starting June 20. He follows in the footsteps of Kohli (40 wins from 68 Tests) and Rohit (24 from 24), both giants of Indian cricket.

Former captain Sunil Gavaskar has backed Gill's appointment, calling him "the most competitive" among India's young stars. "He's quick to react, very involved," Gavaskar noted.

With centuries across all formats and a gritty upbringing in Punjab under his father's mentorship, Gill's journey has been one of talent molded by relentless discipline.

Gill has played 32 Tests, scoring 1,893 runs at an average of 35.05, with five hundreds. But there are question marks over his overseas record — in 13 Tests abroad, his average drops to 29.50.

While his overseas record remains a concern, the future now rests on his young shoulders. The crown may be heavy, but Gill seems ready to wear it.

Smart moves, steady run seal Napoli title

AGENCIES

Napoli clinched their second Scudetto in three seasons on Friday, crowning a campaign defined by ruthless consistency, a manageable fixture list, and the timely stumbles of their title rivals.

A 2-0 victory over Cagliari in the final round ensured they stayed ahead of Inter Milan, sending the Campania region into rapturous celebration.

The numbers tell the story. With just 41 matches played, thanks to an early cup exit and no European distractions, Napoli enjoyed a significantly lighter load compared to Inter, who balanced a 58-game season while reaching the Champions League final.

It wasn't a dream start for Antonio Conte's men. A 3-0 defeat at Hellas Verona on the opening day threatened to derail their season early.

But swift action

in the transfer market proved pivotal. Within 24 hours, Conte secured Romelu Lukaku from Chelsea and Scott McTominay from Manchester United; a duo that would define the campaign.

Lukaku and McTominay combined for 26 league goals, injecting life into Napoli's title charge and evoking memories of the iconic Osimhen.

Kvaratskhelia pairing that led them to glory two years ago.

After Kvaratskhelia's January departure, McTominay emerged as a talisman, and the duo found the net in the final match, sealing the title in style and rewarding Conte's calculated gamble.

The title race had been a tense three-horse contest until March, with Atalanta challenging before fading. Juventus also faltered early under Thiago Motta, whose replacement Igor Tudor steadied the ship but couldn't close the gap.



'A' team lose four-day series to New Zealand

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh 'A' team suffered a 1-0 series defeat to New Zealand 'A' after the second unofficial Test of the two-match series ended in a draw at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Both teams agreed on a stalemate on the fourth day after the hosts reached 87-2 in their second innings with Zakir Hasan and Amite Hasan not out on 24 and 21 runs respectively. Earlier in the day, resuming on an overnight score of 277 for four, New Zealand 'A' finished on 379 all out in reply to Bangladesh 'A' team's first innings score of 357, securing a 22-run lead.

Although the hosts had the more experienced squad, it hardly reflected on the field during the series as the opposition looked better equipped to handle the ebbs and flows of the longer format.

"Cricket isn't played on pen and paper. I think experience and how you react on the field is important," skipper Nurul Hasan told reporters after the match.

The hosts had earlier lost the first match by 70 runs in Sylhet and Sohan claimed just one poor session cost them that game. "We played well in the ODI series. In Sylhet, we dominated in 8-9 out of the 12 sessions. We played badly in one session and that's why we lost the game. Otherwise, the result could have been different."

Abahani stay three clear of Kings

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite being held to a 1-1 draw by Rahmatganj MFS, Abahani remained three points clear of third-placed Bashundhara Kings in the Bangladesh Premier League as they, too, were held to a 1-1 draw by Fortis FC later in the day.

Playing at the Dhirendranath Dutta Stadium in Cumilla on Saturday, the six-time champions took the lead through Emeka Ogbugh in the 64th minute, but Rahmatganj, who moved to fifth spot with 27 points after this match, hit back 10 minutes later. It was the league's top-scorer Samuel Boateng, with his 16th goal of the campaign, who brought parity in the fixture.

The draw moved Abahani to 32 points from 17 fixtures, with only a round of matches remaining.

Five-time champions Kings had the opportunity to cut the gap with Abahani but they eventually could come out with only a draw as Fortis FC had the better chances at the Kings Arena. The draw took Kings to 29 points, three adrift of Abahani.

Following a goalless first half, substitute Mohammad Abdullah broke the deadlock in the 67th minute of the match, smashing a powerful volley after Pa Omar Babou's harmless free-kick blocked off the crossbar and then Tariq Kazi's attempted clearance ricocheted off Deciel Dos Santos and came behind the wall, where Abdullah was ready to pounce. It was the former Mohammedan forward's third goal in three meetings against Kings this season.

Another second-half substitute, Sheikh Morsalin, brought Kings back in the match in the 80th minute with a sliding effort past the Fortis FC goalkeeper after being threaded through by Sohel Rana.

Abdullah could not score from a goalmouth melee as Kings scrambled clear from in front of goal in the fourth minute of stoppage time before Babou's curling freekick came off the crossbar.

In the other match of the day, Bangladesh Police beat bottom-placed Chittagong Abahani 2-1.

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Nazrul's 126th birth anniv today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 126th birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam will be celebrated across the country today with solemn respect and renewed admiration for the poet whose fearless voice stood against injustice, exploitation, and communalism.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, in a message on the eve of the day, paid tribute to the poet's memory and prayed for the eternal peace of his soul.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



CURSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE ... A toddler looks at the water as it inches toward the eroding edge of a fragile shanty on a coastal islet flanked by the Sutarkhali and Shibsa rivers in Khulna's Dakop upazila. With rising seas and relentless tidal surges now part of daily life, the Sundarbans stand in silent witness across the water. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

UN fears 427 Rohingya perished at sea on May 9-10



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

An estimated 427 Rohingya may have perished in the sea in two boat tragedies off the coast of Myanmar on May 9 and 10, said UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

In a statement issued Friday, the UNHCR said details are still being confirmed, but reports suggest that some 514 Rohingya were travelling on two separate boats. The first boat carried 267 people. Of them, over half reportedly left from refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, while the remainder departed from Rakhine state in Myanmar.

"The boat sank on May 9, with only 66 survivors. The second boat carried 247 Rohingya -- also refugees from Cox's Bazar camps and those fleeing Rakhine state -- and capsized on May 10, with just 21 survivors," UNHCR said in the statement from Geneva.

The agency is working to verify details concerning the survivors. There are reports of a third boat, carrying some 188 Rohingya, which was intercepted leaving Myanmar on May 14.

"This would be the deadliest tragedy at sea involving Rohingya refugees attempting to find safety this year," it said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Israeli strikes kill 15 more in Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli strikes killed at least 15 people yesterday across the Palestinian territory, where Israel has ramped up its military offensive in recent days.

Civil defence agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP the dead included a couple who were killed with their two young children in a pre-dawn strike on a house in the Amal quarter of the southern city of Khan Yunis.

To the west of the city, at least five people were killed by a drone strike on a crowd of people that had gathered to wait for aid trucks, he said.

At Khan Yunis's Nasser Hospital, tearful mourners gathered around white shrouded bodies outside.

"Suddenly, a missile from an F-16 destroyed the entire house, and all of them were civilians -- my sister, her husband and their children," said Wissam Al-Madhoun.

"We found them lying in the street. What did this child do? (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu?"

The Israeli military said it was unable to comment on individual strikes without their "precise geographical coordinates".

In a statement, the military said that over the past day the air force had struck more than 100 targets across the territory, including members of "terrorist organisations in the Gaza Strip, military structures, underground routes and additional terrorist infrastructure".

Israel resumed operations in Gaza on March 18, ending a two-month ceasefire.

Gaza's health ministry said yesterday that at least 3,747 people had been killed in the territory since then, taking the war's overall toll to 53,901, mostly civilians.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



Dhaka South City Corporation has recently initiated the beautification of the Hanif Flyover in the city's Jatrabari. A worker is seen painting a flag on a pier yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

21 more pushed in through Sylhet border

In Kurigram, BSF formally hands over 22 to BGB

STAR REPORT

Twenty-one Bangladeshi citizens were detained by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) yesterday after they were pushed into Bangladesh from India through the Dona border in Sylhet's Kanaighat upazila.

The detainees include 12 men, four women, and five children, confirmed Lt Col Md Zubayer Anwar, commanding officer of BGB's Zakiganj Battalion (19 BGB).

"One of our patrol teams found them divided into two groups near the border at around 6:00am," he said.

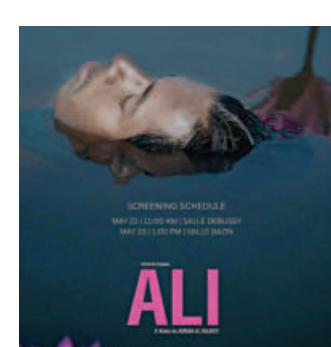
"During interrogation, the detainees informed us that they were staying in India illegally. Later, they were caught and pushed into Bangladesh," he added.

They are from Kurigram, Natore, and Rajshahi; after initial verification of their identities, they were handed over to the Kanaighat Police Station, the BGB official added.

Contacted, Kanaighat Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdul Awal said, "The detainees will be handed over to their relatives after figuring out their detailed identities and addresses."

Earlier on May 14, some 16 Bangladeshis were similarly

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Adnan's 'Ali' makes history at Cannes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a historic moment for Bangladeshi cinema, Adnan Al Rajeev's short film "Ali" has received a Special Mention at the highly esteemed 78th Cannes Film Festival yesterday.

The film, which was the first Bangladeshi entry to be officially selected for the Short Film competition, has now garnered further international recognition, marking a significant milestone for the nation's burgeoning film industry.

"Ali", directed by Adnan Al Rajeev and produced by Bangladesh's Tanveer Hossain SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Teen killed in gang feud, 4 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A 16-year-old boy was stabbed to death during a clash between two groups of youths on Thursday night in Narayanganj's Siddhiganj.

The deceased, Abdullah Khan Rayhan, used to work at an auto workshop with his father.

Rayhan was first taken to a hospital in Narayanganj and then to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

Police have arrested four people and are looking for other suspects, said Inspector Mizanur Rahman of Siddhiganj Police Station.

The arrestees are Muhammad Hridoy, 30, Al Amin, 20, and two 18-year-old boys, he added.

Rayhan's father Muhammad Shamim filed a murder case yesterday morning, accusing the arrestees, four others, and seven to eight unnamed individuals.



Rayhan