



## GDP growth lowest since pandemic

Bangladesh now a \$462b economy

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh's GDP grew by 3.97 percent this fiscal year, the slowest in 34 years excluding the pandemic, on the back of lower growth in the agriculture and service sectors.

When the global coronavirus pandemic hit in fiscal 2019-20, the GDP growth was 3.75 percent. Otherwise, this year's provisional estimates by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics suggest that the economy will expand at the slowest pace since fiscal 1990-91, when it stood at 3.24 percent.

This fiscal year, the agricultural sector grew by 1.79 percent, down from 3.30 percent in fiscal 2023-24.

Service sector growth dropped 58 basis points to 4.51 percent, while the industrial sector growth jumped 83 basis points to 4.34 percent.

"This is a realistic assessment -- the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank projected similar growth estimates," said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling.

### GDP GROWTH

	FY24	FY25*
Agriculture	3.3	1.79
Industry	3.51	4.34
Service	5.09	4.51
GDP Size	\$450b	\$462b
GDP per capita	\$2,625	\$2,671
GNI per capita	\$2,738	\$2,820

\*PROVISIONAL

When the ousted Awami League government prepared the budget for this fiscal year, the GDP growth projection was set at 6.75 percent. It was later revised down to 5 percent by the interim government.

However, the WB estimated the growth at 3.3 percent for the current fiscal year while the ADB estimated at 3.9 percent.

There was political instability and factory closures, while the law-and-order situation was dicey, said Raihan, also a professor of economics at the University of Dhaka.

"It's a kind of reflection of reality," he said, adding that the garment sector performed well, dragging up the overall industrial growth.

If the economic activities stagnate, the service sector growth is bound to be lower, he added.

In its Bangladesh Development Update released in April, the WB said the overall deceleration of economic activities in the first three quarters of fiscal 2024-25 was driven by a slump in both private and public investment.

Subdued private investment has been associated with declining private sector credit growth, which grew at 7.3 percent year-on-year in December 2024 -- the slowest pace of growth in 30 years, the report said.

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A Palestinian woman carries a girl wounded in an Israeli strike in the Saftawi neighbourhood, west of Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip, yesterday. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: AFP

## Top criminals Subrata Bain, Molla Masud held

It forces also arrest their 2 cohorts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Subrata Bain and Molla Masud, two of the country's most-wanted criminals, along with two of their close associates, were arrested yesterday in separate drives jointly conducted by the Bangladesh Army and intelligence agencies.

Subrata Bain, alias Fateh Ali, 60, and Abu Rassel Masud, alias Molla Masud, 54, were arrested in Kushtia. Based on information provided by them, their associates Arafat, alias shooter Arafat, and Sharif were arrested in Hatirjheel.

"These individuals were involved in killings, extortion, and sabotage across the country. The operation was the result of prolonged surveillance and was executed with precision without any casualties or confrontation," said Lt Col Sami Ud Dowla Chowdhury, director of the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).



Subrata Bain



Molla Masud

Both Subrata and Masud are named on the list of the country's top 23 most-wanted criminals and are believed to be masterminds of the infamous "Seven Star" gang, said the ISPR director in a press briefing at the Mess Alpha of Dhaka Cantonment.

During the raid, five foreign pistols, 10 magazines, 53 rounds of ammunition, and a satellite phone were seized from the suspects, he added.

The operation was coordinated with support from the Military Operations Directorate at the Army Headquarters, 55 Infantry Division, 14 Independent Engineer Brigade, 71 Mechanised Brigade, and the National Security Intelligence (NSI).

In a separate raid in the capital's Mohammadpur, the army also arrested notorious criminal Farid Ahmed Babu, alias Excel Babu, along with three others from the Buriganga Filling Station area yesterday.

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## Leftist orgs condemn Azharul's acquittal

2 hurt in RU clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Left-leaning political parties and student organisations yesterday condemned the acquittal of Jamaat-e-Islami leader ATM Azharul Islam in a crimes against humanity case.

They also held protest marches in Dhaka University and Rajshahi University.

At least two leftist students were injured in a clash between "Anti-Shahbagh Union" -- comprising mostly Islami Chhatra Shibir members -- and left-leaning organisations at Rajshahi University, protesting the verdict.

At DU, a march began around 5:00pm from Madhur Canteen and paraded through the campus, concluding at the base of the Raju Memorial Sculpture.

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## Unveil roadmap or it'll be hard to cooperate

BNP tells govt about polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday expressed disappointment over the absence of a clear roadmap for the upcoming national election, despite the demand for one made during its recent meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

Excuses are being made to delay the elections. One excuse is that the trial [of AL] must be completed before the elections.

Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, BNP Standing Committee member

"We demand the immediate announcement of a roadmap for the formation of parliament by December. Otherwise, it will become difficult for the BNP to continue its cooperation with the government," said Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, a member of the BNP Standing Committee.

Reading out a statement at a press conference at the

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## Jamaat's Azharul cleared of crimes against humanity

SC orders his immediate release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday acquitted death row convict Jamaat-e-Islami leader ATM Azharul Islam of the charges of crimes against humanity during the Liberation War, clearing the way for him to walk out of jail.

The Appellate Division of the SC scrapped its earlier judgement that upheld the conviction and death sentence given by the International Crimes Tribunal in 2014.

The apex court also directed the jail authorities to release Azharul immediately unless he is arrested in another case.

A seven-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed delivered the verdict following an appeal filed by Azharul challenging the conviction and death penalty handed down by the International Crimes Tribunal.

Azharul's lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir said his client, who has been in jail since August 8, 2012, may get released today.

"Azharul is currently treated at the prison cell of Bangladesh Medical University (BMU), formerly Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University," he told

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Employees of various ministries and divisions demonstrate on the Secretariat premises for the fourth consecutive day yesterday against some provisions of the Public Service (amendment) Ordinance, 2025.

### NEW PUBLIC SERVICE ORDINANCE

## Govt mulls softening strict provisions

Say high-level meeting sources; Secretariat employees suspend protests for today

BAHARAM KHAN

The government is considering changes to the newly issued "Public Service (Amendment) Ordinance-2025" so that it can soften harsh provisions and incorporate clauses to ensure workplace safety for female employees.

This development comes amid protests by government employees demanding the cancellation of the ordinance.

At least two top officials said the decision to amend was made in a meeting held at the office of Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the railways ministry, on Monday afternoon, just a day after

the ordinance was issued.

The meeting was also attended by Adilur Rahman Khan, adviser to the housing and public works ministry; Khuda Baksh Chowdhury, special assistant to the chief adviser assigned to the home ministry; Sheikh Abdur Rashid, cabinet secretary; and Mokhles Ur Rahman,

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## 'Please forgive us if we caused you any hurt'

Says Jamaat chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat chief Shafiqur Rahman yesterday apologised to anyone who might be hurt by the party at any time.

"If you have been hurt by any of our behaviour or performance -- whenever, however -- please forgive us," he told a press conference, following the acquittal of Jamaat leader ATM Azharul Islam, who was accused of committing war crimes in 1971.

"We are humans after all, to err is human. As a party, we do not claim to be above mistakes. If any party activist, party worker or the party itself has caused harm or hurt anyone, anywhere, we unconditionally apologise. Please forgive us," the Jamaat ameer said.

There was a time when that party was in great danger, but "we tried to stand by the people" who were in need.

After the fall of the fascist regime, he said, his party tried to be beside the families of martyrs and the wounded. "But we believe that we could not fully discharge our duties due to many limitations."

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জাতীয় পুষ্টি সপ্তাহ ২০২৫

২৮ মে - ০৩ জুন

শিশু থেকে প্রবীণ পুষ্টির খাবার সর্বজনীন

- ১। পুষ্টিমানে সমৃদ্ধ খাবার গ্রহণ করুন
- ২। খাদ্য উৎপাদন, পরিবহন, সংরক্ষণ ও রান্নায় পুষ্টিমান এবং নিরাপদতা বজায় রাখতে সচেতন থাকুন
- ৩। খাবারে চিনি ও লবণের মাত্রা সীমিত রাখুন
- ৪। অতিরিক্ত ভাজা, তৈলাক্ত খাবার ও ফাস্টফুড বর্জন করুন
- ৫। শিশুদেরকে অতি প্রক্রিয়াজাত পানীয় ও খাবার গ্রহণ থেকে বিরত রাখুন
- ৬। শিশুর বুদ্ধির বিকাশ এবং শারীরিক গঠনের জন্য প্রতিদিন ১টি করে ডিম এবং নির্দিষ্ট পরিমাণ আমিষ জাতীয় খাবার দিন
- ৭। পরিবারের গ্রবীণ সদস্যদের পুষ্টির খাবার নিশ্চিত করুন
- ৮। প্রতিদিন অন্তত একবেলা ডিম, দুধ বা আমিষ জাতীয় খাবার খান - শক্তি, সামর্থ্য ও রোগ প্রতিরোধ ক্ষমতা বাড়া

জনস্বাস্থ্য পুষ্টি প্রতিষ্ঠান

মহাশালা, ঢাকা

MAX, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, gain, Save the Children, The Project, HELEN KELLER INTL