



DHAKA TUESDAY JULY 8, 2025

Dhaka gets some relief in US trade tariff

Expects 20% or less as new rates to take effect on Aug 1

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The Trump administration has extended its tariff deadline to August 1 from July 9, opening a critical three-week window for Bangladesh to finalise a trade agreement while it expects a rate of 20 percent or less.

Dhaka has argued it deserves better terms than the 20 percent rate Washington recently fixed for Vietnam, a close competitor in the global garment trade, officials familiar with the negotiations said. A Bangladeshi delegation is in Washington, DC, for a critical phase of talks with the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

The negotiations are part of a broader overhaul of US trade policy by President Donald Trump, who was expected to notify 14 countries of new tariff rates yesterday.

For Bangladesh, failure to reach an agreement would mean a proposed 37 percent reciprocal tariff would replace a temporary 10 percent baseline rate. This would

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We are expecting a better deal as we are engaged with the USTR full-time for the tariff negotiation and we will continue the negotiation.
MAHBUBUR RAHMAN, commerce secretary

be levied on top of the country's existing average tariff of about 16 percent, pushing the total rate to a punitive 53 percent.

"We are expecting a better deal as we are engaged with the USTR full-time," Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman told the Financial Times. "We will continue the negotiation."

The talks are complex. The US is pushing for a bilateral agreement, a departure from the World Trade Organisation's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) system that Bangladesh has traditionally followed. According to one official, Washington also wants the deal to compel Dhaka to mirror any US trade restrictions, such as an embargo on China.

To narrow a trade gap heavily in its favour, Bangladesh has offered zero-duty access for many US products and

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Homes in Sattar Madbar Majhirghat of Shariatpur's Zajira upazila were destroyed by sudden erosion yesterday, putting the Padma Bridge's main protection embankment at risk. Locals said around 200 metres of land were swallowed by the Padma, while the authorities concerned have remained indifferent to the recurring erosion.

PHOTO: JAHID HASSAN

BUSINESS

Inflation drops to 3-yr low

Consumer prices dropped to a three-year low in June, while the economy posted its fastest growth in nearly two years in the January-March quarter.

Economists say the twin improvements point to early signs of economic stabilisation following a prolonged period of strain.

STORIES ON B1

SANEM SURVEY 83pc youth show no interest in politics

Of 2,000 respondents, 81pc hopeful of a free, fair election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A striking 82.7 percent of the youth population, especially first-time voters, said they were not interested in joining politics or participating in political activities.

Most of them cited fear of political violence or backlash (58.7 percent) as the main reason, along with concerns about graft and a lack of ethics in politics (56.4 percent).

Only 1.6 percent of the youth population is currently involved in some form of political activities, revealed a nationwide survey conducted by the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM) in collaboration with ActionAid Bangladesh.

The survey report, based on 2,000 respondents aged between 15 and 35, representing a significant portion of first-time voters, was released at a programme at the Brac Centre Inn yesterday.

The finding comes in the wake of a youth-led uprising that toppled an autocratic regime just last year.

However, 76.78 percent of the youth expressed a desire to vote in the upcoming election, while around 80.73 percent were optimistic that this time it would be free and fair.

The 2014, 2018, and 2024 national elections were marred by controversy, including opposition boycotts, allegations of

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JULY 8, 2024

Blockade intensifies as students form committee

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

For the second consecutive day, the Bangla Blockade grips the capital, with thousands of students and jobseekers bringing traffic to a standstill at key intersections across Dhaka. Defying police obstruction, protesters block major city roads, rail lines, and highways as their call for the reinstatement of the 2018 circular abolishing the quota system grows louder.

In Dhaka alone, blockades unfold at 11 key points, including Shahbagh, Science Lab, Nilkhel, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Technical, Zero Point, Chankharpul, Banglamotor, Sonargaon, and Paltan. Hundreds of students from Dhaka University, Jagannath University, Dhaka College, Eden College, and Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University gather in processions, blocking intersections for hours. Students also block the Karwan Bazar rail crossing for nearly an hour.

"We have no choice but to take to the streets. We will not back down until our demands are met," says Rashed Al Hasan, a student of Dhaka College, echoing the sentiment of protesters who have

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Players and coaching staff of Bangladesh women's football team pose for a group photograph during a reception at the Hatirjheel Amphitheatre in the early hours of Monday. The team went to the reception venue straight from the airport following arrival from Myanmar, where they sealed a historic Women's Asian Cup berth with three wins out of three in Group C.

PHOTO: STAR

Rights situation 'disappointing' Says HRSS in its half yearly report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming the country's human rights situation in the first half of 2025 "disappointing", rights group Human Rights Support Society said the interim government has largely failed to meet the public's hopes for "genuine freedom" following last year's uprising.

HRSS's half yearly rights review, released yesterday, reveals a disturbing trend in violence and rape against women, child abuse, political killings, mob lynchings, attacks on journalists, deaths in jail and custody, and attacks on minorities and shrines.

During this period, various crimes such as extortion, theft, snatching, robbery, and murder have also occurred, creating widespread fear and anxiety

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Life expectancy better here than global average

Finds UNFPA report on world population

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The average life expectancy of both men and women in Bangladesh is now higher than the global average, according to a report of the UNFPA.

While the global average life expectancy for men is 71 years, in Bangladesh it is 74 years. For women, the global average is 76 years whereas in Bangladesh it is 77 years.

Bangladesh's population is estimated at 175.7 million of which half are women, two thirds (115 million) in the working-age group (aged 15-64), which presents a window of opportunity to harness the demographic dividend, said the State of World Population (SWOP) 2025, of the United Nations Population Fund.

UNFPA Representative in Bangladesh Catherine Breen Kamkong officially launched the annual report at a press event held at the UN Building in the city's Gulshan yesterday.

She said 7 percent (12 million) of the population is aged 65 and above, signalling the onset of population ageing.

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political parties agreed to have lower courts at the upazila level and changes to conditions for declaring a state of emergency.

They, however, were divided over the duration of an emergency and whether the fundamental rights during emergencies will remain suspended.

The issues were discussed on the 10th day of the second round of talks with the National Consensus Commission at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

After the talks, the commission's Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz said parties supported decentralising the judiciary by gradually expanding courts.

They also agreed to amend article 141 of the constitution to prevent misuse of emergency powers

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ICT CASE
Hasina's counsel
seeks discharge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state-appointed defence counsel for ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday pleaded to the International Crimes Tribunal-1 to discharge his clients, saying that they are innocent and the charges brought against them are politically motivated.

While placing arguments on discharge petitions in the case filed over crimes against humanity during the July uprising against Hasina and her two top aides, he also said the charges brought against his clients were "false, fabricated and baseless".

"So, I want discharge of my clients from the liability of the case," Amir Hossain told the three-member tribunal.

This was opposed by Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam, who termed it a flat denial.

Following arguments from both sides, the tribunal fixed July 10 for passing its order on whether to frame charges or discharge Hasina and Kamal.

The defence counsel for the other accused, former Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, neither filed any discharge petition for his client nor made any argument.

Hasina and her two top aides were charged with five counts of crimes against humanity on June 1, including murder, attempted murder, torture and use of lethal weapons, among others.

About the allegations about Hasina calling for the elimination of 'the descendants of Razakars', Hossain argued that she was in power for many years and if she had really intended to do so, she would have done it earlier.

"Since she never did that, why would she now order the killing of young boys?"

When pointed towards a phone conversation with Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, the former mayor of Dhaka South, in which Hasina instructed the students' killing, he argued that such a claim by the prosecution is not valid as they have no documentary evidence to support it.

Blockade intensifies

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been demonstrating since July 1.

Protests flare outside Dhaka as well, with students from Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Mymensingh Agricultural University, Cumilla University, and others enforcing blockades and staging sit-ins. In some places, like Rajshahi, students block railway lines for nearly five hours.

In response to the growing scale of the movement, student organisers form a 65 member coordination committee to strengthen communications and planning across campuses nationwide. "From now on, we will coordinate our movement through this committee," says Nahid Islam, a student of Dhaka University and one of the lead organisers. "We will work together to build a larger blockade on July 10."

Meanwhile, at the Awami League's Dharmundi political office, three ministers and two state ministers, including Obaidul Quader, Anisul Huq, and Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury, hold a closed door meeting to discuss the crisis. They call for restraint, urging the students to avoid actions that cause



Students block Dhaka's Shahbagh intersection on July 8 as part of the "Bangla Blockade," demanding the abolition of the quota system in government jobs.

public suffering while the case remains pending before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Law Minister Anisul Huq reiterates that since the matter is under judicial consideration, protesters should present their arguments through legal channels rather than on the streets.

But on the ground, anger and determination run deep. The students

see the courts as too slow and the government as indifferent. For them, the blockade is not just about a circular, it is about fairness and the right to a future free from discrimination.

As the sun sets on July 8, 2024, the blockade holds firm, setting the stage for what organisers promise will be even larger showdows in the coming days.

Life expectancy better here than global average

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Adolescents make up 19 percent of Bangladesh's population, approximately 33 million, while the broader youth cohort aged 10-24 accounts for 28 percent, nearing 50 million, Catherine added.

This year's theme of the publication is "The Real Fertility Crisis - The Pursuit of Reproductive Agency in a Changing World."

The real crisis is not about numbers; it is a crisis of reproductive agency.

"Around the world, and here in Bangladesh, people especially women and young people are unable to realise their reproductive intentions due to systemic, economic and social barriers," said the UNFPA representative.

Catherine noted that while fertility rates have dropped to 0.8 children per

woman in countries like South Korea and remain high in nations such as Niger at 5.8, Bangladesh, with a Total Fertility Rate of 2.1, continues to face systemic barriers preventing people from having the number of children they desire.

She urged the government to increase health spending from 0.7 percent to 5 percent of GDP and 15 percent of the national budget to improve maternal care, ensure contraceptive availability, and retain skilled health workers.

Economic instability, high healthcare costs, and unaffordable childcare are forcing many families to delay or forgo parenthood, she said.

Social and gender norms continue to pressure girls into early marriage and motherhood while burdening women with unpaid care work, while

high rates of gender-based violence, as shown in a recent UNFPA-supported survey, further undermine women's ability to make informed reproductive decisions, while climate change and frequent disasters are leaving young people uncertain about parenthood, she pointed out.

"These factors result in people being forced into parenthood or excluded from it—not by choice, but by constraint. What they need is empowerment and enabling conditions, not judgement," she said.

The report advocates for comprehensive sexuality education, affordable housing, paid parental leave, and the recognition of women's unpaid caregiving work—a step Bangladesh has begun by pledging to include unpaid work in GDP calculations.

83pc youth show no interest in politics

FROM PAGE 1

vote rigging, and low voter turnout.

The survey further showed that 38.76 percent of the respondents felt the BNP would poll the highest votes in the upcoming election, followed by 21.45 percent for Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, 15.84 percent for the National Citizen Party (NCP), and 15.02 percent for the Awami League if it is allowed to contest.

Of the respondents, women felt more strongly than both the NCP (17.47 percent) and the AL (15.61 percent) would get more votes.

In rural areas, especially Mymensingh, more people felt the AL would fare well in the polls, while those in urban areas, including Dhaka and Chattogram, felt the same about the BNP and NCP. Meanwhile, the sentiment was evenly split when it came to Jamaat, though its support was poorest in Dhaka.

Opinions were almost evenly divided on whether religion-based politics is conducive to Bangladesh's development. While 51.77 percent replied in the affirmative, 48.23 percent disagreed.

Among Muslim respondents, 58.14 percent supported religion-based

politics, in stark contrast to 87.77 percent of non-Muslims who opposed it.

Gender-wise, men were more prone to support religion-based politics.

Around 77.2 percent of those who opposed religion-based politics said they had varying levels of anxiety about the growing presence of religion-based parties.

Asked whether religious minority groups are safer in the current scenario, 78.83 percent of respondents said yes, while 21.17 percent disagreed.

Among Muslim respondents, 84 percent believed minorities are safe, while 46.76 percent of non-Muslims felt the same.

However, nearly half of non-Muslim respondents said people are not currently free or safe to practise their religion without fear.

The survey covered all eight divisions of Bangladesh. Two districts were selected from each to ensure geographic and demographic representation.

These included Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Netrokona, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Chattogram, Cumilla, Barishal, Jhalakathi, Khulna, Satkhira, Dhaka, and Munshiganj.

A near-equal distribution across rural and urban areas, and between

38.76 percent of the respondents felt that the BNP would poll the highest votes in the upcoming election, 21.45 percent felt the same for Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, 15.84 percent for the NCP, and 15.02 percent for AL (if allowed to run).

men and women, was maintained while conducting the survey.

A significant majority of the youth said current social and political issues are increasingly disrupting daily life.

The most cited concern was the rise in arson, robbery, and theft, mentioned by 80.2 percent of the respondents; mob violence was identified by 71.5 percent, while 56.2 percent pointed to politically biased arrests and legal proceedings.

Over half of the respondents were alarmed by gender-based violence,

while 44.2 percent expressed concern over social backlash against feminist or liberal views. Another 61.2 percent were worried about unsafe public spaces, especially for women.

The study also highlighted the youth population's disengagement with ongoing reform processes.

Of the respondents, 43.5 percent said they were unaware of the reform initiatives underway.

Asked to rank priority areas for immediate reforms, an overwhelming 94 percent identified education system reforms as "very urgent", followed by health sector reforms at 92 percent, and labour market reforms at 90 percent.

They also called for political party reforms. Asked what kind of changes they expect in this regard, 60 percent called for an end to patronage, nepotism, and political violence.

Another 52.7 percent wanted a shift toward policy-based politics rather than personality or legacy-driven leadership, and 47.5 percent emphasised the need for greater transparency in party funding and internal democracy. Meanwhile, 43.6 percent of the respondents called for greater inclusion of youth and women in leadership roles.

No arrest, no case after Jubo Dal leader murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday said they were trying to identify and arrest the killers of a local Jubo Dal leader who was shot dead in broad daylight a day earlier in Kadapur Union of Chattogram's Raozan upazila.

As of yesterday evening, no case had been filed in connection with the killing of Muhammad Selim, 40, a former member secretary of the union unit of Jubo Dal.

Officer-in-Charge Md Manirul Islam of Raozan Police Station said they were examining available CCTV footage to identify the attackers.

He said police had learned that notorious criminal Raihan led the killing mission and that law enforcers were working to determine his whereabouts.

Operations to arrest the suspected killers are ongoing, he added.

On Sunday afternoon, Selim—who was involved in sand trading and poultry farming—was shot dead by a group of armed assailants in the Ishan Bhatta Bazar area while returning home after attending a relative's janaza.

Selim was the father of two daughters—one a fifth grader and the other just 18 months old.

Meanwhile, a video went viral on social media showing Selim's alleged killers fleeing the scene in a CNG-run auto rickshaw.

Multiple CCTV clips of the incident showed seven to eight masked assailants, some wearing burlaps, getting out of an auto rickshaw with firearms at the gate of Hazrat Ashraf Mazar in Bherempara. They were later seen switching to another auto-rickshaw and fleeing towards the hilly areas via Hazrat Ashraf Shah Mazar Road.

Police are yet to confirm the motive behind the murder.

Locals said Selim, who had multiple cases filed against him, might have been killed over a power struggle, as both the victim and the suspected assailants were involved in the sand and soil trade.

Kaladan project to be operational by 2027: India

It'll benefit neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh, says Indian minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

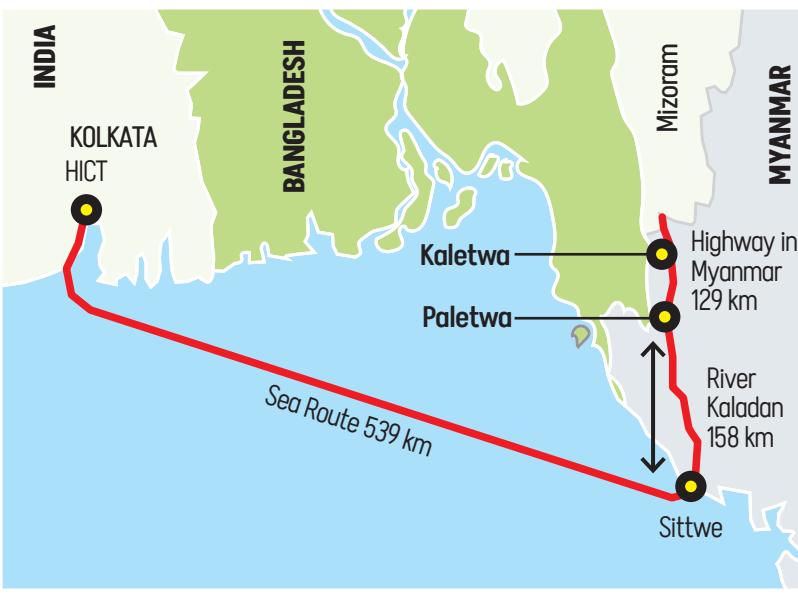
The Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project, a joint initiative between India and Myanmar, which will be fully operational by 2027, may open up new trade opportunities for neighbouring countries, said India's Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal.

"It [the project] is a strategic initiative to enhance connectivity between India's northeast and Myanmar. It is set to be fully operational by 2027... Once fully operational, the region will unlock new trade opportunities not just for northeast India, but also for Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Myanmar by connecting them with Southeast Asia," he said while announcing multiple initiatives to boost the waterways sector in northeast with an investment of Rs 5,000 crores (\$582.5 million).

KMTT aims to connect Kolkata with Mizoram in India's northeast, via Sittwe port in Myanmar, using a combination of sea, river, and land routes. This project is a key component of India's "Act East Policy" and seeks to enhance connectivity and trade with Southeast Asia, while also providing an alternative route for goods to reach the northeast, bypassing the congested Siliguri Corridor.

Goods from Kolkata can be transported to Sittwe and then can be shipped to Bangladesh's Teknaf port, which is just 60 nautical miles from Sittwe, Sonowal said.

He also said that goods can be transported by road to the border



town of Sabroom in Tripura from Teknaf. Sabroom has an integrated customs border between Bangladesh and Tripura.

The project will significantly

reduce transportation time and

logistics costs, according to Sonowal.

Additionally, the Indo-Bangladesh

Protocol Route (IBPR), which is in

place, provides new trade routes that

bypass the Siliguri Corridor, thereby

strengthening regional connectivity,

he added.

Dhaka gets some relief in US trade tariff

FROM PAGE 1

has committed to increasing imports of American goods, including LNG, cotton, aircraft and agricultural products. Total goods trade between the nations was \$10.6 billion in 2024, according to USTR data, with the US trade deficit with Bangladesh widening by 2 percent to \$6.2 billion last year.

JAPAN, S KOREA FACE 25% TARIFFS

The countries that received new rates yesterday were Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Laos and Myanmar.

Japan and Malaysia face a 25 percent tariff rate, up from 24 percent.

Korea's was unchanged at 25 percent. Kazakhstan also received a 25 percent rate, down from 27 percent. South Africa received 30 percent, unchanged from April 2. Laos received a 40 percent rate, down from 48 percent and Myanmar received a 40 percent rate, down from 44 percent.

In letters to Japan and South Korea posted on his Truth Social platform, Trump issued a direct warning against retaliation. "If for any reason you decide to raise your Tariffs, then, whatever

the number you choose to raise them by will be added onto the 25% that we charge," he wrote.

He did, however, offer a path to negotiation, adding: "If you wish to eliminate your Tariff, and Non Tariff, Policies and Trade Barriers, we will, perhaps, consider an adjustment."

The policy also stipulates that goods transshipped through a third country to evade the new duties will be subject to the higher tariff.

THREAT TO BRICS

Trump said the US will impose an additional 10 percent tariff on any country aligning itself with the "anti-American policies" of the BRICS group of developing nations, whose leaders kicked off a summit in Brazil on Sunday, according to a Reuters report.

With forums such as the G7 and G20 groups of major economies hamstrung by divisions and the disruptive "America First" approach of the US president, the BRICS is presenting itself as a haven for multilateral diplomacy amid violent conflicts and trade wars.

In a joint statement from the opening of the BRICS summit in Rio de Janeiro

released on Sunday afternoon, the group warned of the rise in tariffs threatened global trade, continuing its veiled criticism of Trump's tariff policies.

Hours later, Trump warned he would punish countries seeking to join with the grouping.

"Any Country aligning themselves with the Anti-American policies of BRICS, will be charged an ADDITIONAL 10% Tariff. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Trump did not clarify or expand on the "Anti-American policies" reference in his post.

The original BRICS group gathered leaders from Brazil, Russia, India and China at its first summit in 2009. The bloc later added South Africa and last year included Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates as members. Saudi Arabia has held off formally joining, according to sources, while another 30 nations have expressed interest in participating in the BRICS, either as full members or partners.

Rights situation 'disappointing'

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Cops foil ex-BDR members' march
Use water cannons, sound grenades to disperse them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday used water cannons and fired sound grenades to disperse dismissed members of Bangladesh Rifles, now Border Guard Bangladesh, and their family members after they blocked the road in front of Kakrail Mosque.

The protesters were marching towards the chief adviser's residence, Jamuna, pressing a three-point demand that includes reinstatement of their jobs and renaming the force back to BDR.

Traffic movement in the area came to a halt due to the blockade.

Witnesses said the dismissed BDR personnel and their families have been demonstrating in front of the National Museum in Shahbagh for over two weeks. Several hundred more joined the protest yesterday morning.

Around 11:15am, the protesters began marching towards Jamuna via Matsya Bhaban. Police initially attempted to intercept them near Shahbagh, but they continued moving forward, according to witnesses.

A police team led by Deputy Commissioner of Ramna Division Masud Alam set up a barricade near Matsya Bhaban.

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Dismissed BDR personnel stand their ground as police use water cannons to disperse them during a demonstration near Kakrail Mosque yesterday. The dismissed members and their families have been protesting for over two weeks, demanding the reinstatement of their jobs and for BGB to be renamed back to BDR.

PHOTO: STAR

DENGUE OUTBREAK
16 to 30 age group most vulnerable

HELEMUL ALAM



People aged between 16 and 30, compared to other age groups, are proving to be the most vulnerable to dengue infection this year.

Experts attribute this trend to the fact that individuals in this age range tend to spend a significant portion of their day outside the home, increasing their exposure to Aedes mosquitoes, the virus carriers.

According to data from the DGHS, the highest number of dengue patients -- 1,519 -- are aged between 15 and 20. This is closely followed by 1,517 patients aged 21 to 25 and 1,483 patients aged 26 to 30.

In terms of fatalities, the highest number of deaths -- nine -- is in the 36-40 age group, followed by six in the 46-50 age group, and five in the 21-25 age group.

Meanwhile, three more dengue patients died, and 492 others were hospitalized in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, a single day record for the year.

These bring the total figure of dengue-related deaths to 48 and the total number of reported cases to 12,763 this year, according to the DGHS.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar

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Tk 2 for a day's work

Prisons chief pushes to raise pay for inmate labour

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Prisoners in Bangladesh legally earn only Tk 2 per day for their labour, a figure so low that it demoralises inmates and undermines their rehabilitation efforts through meaningful work.

The outdated wage provision, part of the existing jail code, is now at the centre of growing calls for reform in the country's prison employment system.

Brig Gen Syed Muhammad Motahar Hussain, inspector general of prisons, yesterday raised the issue at a seminar titled "Right to Employment in Prison: Employment as a Basic Human Need", organised by De-Cage Initiatives at the Professor Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium, Faculty of Social Sciences Building of Dhaka University.

He said the jail code permits paying inmates just Tk 2 per day, regardless of their work -- be it furniture making, tailoring, or garment production.

"You can imagine how frustrating it is for someone who works eight hours a day and receives

such a negligible amount," he said. He explained that prison-made products are sold at lower prices not because of production efficiency, but due to the outdated wage structure.

"If a wardrobe costs Tk 15,000 in the market, we might sell it for Tk 7,000 or less, simply because

- ⌚ Inmates work 8 hours a day and earn Tk 2
- ⌚ Authorities plan to set up industrial zones inside prisons
- ⌚ Aims to engage 10,000 inmates in first phase
- ⌚ A draft Correction Services Act-2025 is in final stage to replace existing jail code

workers get token pay," he said. "It's not sustainable, and the inmates lose motivation."

According to prison data, over 70,000 inmates are currently held in jails across the country. Around five percent are elderly, while 65,000 inmates are aged between 18 and 50.

Among them, 15,000 are between 18 and 21, 20,000 between 22 and 30, and another 18,000 between 31 and 40 years.

Officials believe this demographic represents a largely untapped workforce.

"Most of our inmates are young and able. Many were factory workers, mechanics, electricians, or tailors before incarceration," said the IG prisons.

"We also have educated professionals -- engineers and even doctors. They can contribute if given a chance."

However, only a small portion of inmates participate in productive work, largely due to the lack of incentive, he said.

"Why would someone work for Tk 2 a day when they know their effort hardly makes a difference? Many simply choose not to work," he said.

To address this, the Department of Prisons has proposed establishing open industrial zones within prisons, where private companies can set up manufacturing units. Talks are ongoing with BEZA and other stakeholders.

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Political stability, democracy key to nat'l security
Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National security is not solely about military capability; it is closely linked to political stability, democratic development, and economic prosperity, said speakers at an event on Sunday.

They said the country must move forward through a democratic process based on national unity to ensure national security.

The event, titled "National unity is imperative for the interest of national security", was organised by the Foundation for Strategic and Development Studies at a hotel in the capital.

Leaders from various political parties, civil society organisations, former military officials, university teachers, journalists, and other professionals attended the programme.

Speakers said national unity could serve as the strongest security shield for Bangladesh, which is currently facing critical challenges, including border instability with India and Myanmar, the Rohingya crisis, and incidents in the CHT.

They recommended enhancing military capabilities, offering short-term military training for youth, forming a national security council involving all stakeholders, and strengthening democratic institutions.

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Veteran journo
Shamim
Ahmad
passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Shamim Ahmad, former chief of correspondents of UNB, passed away at a hospital in the capital yesterday morning.

He was 68. On Sunday, he was admitted to a private hospital as his health condition deteriorated, said his brother and journalist Rashed Ahmed Mitul.

Shamim is survived by his mother, four brothers, three sisters and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

Mitul said he was buried at Mirpur Intellectuals Graveyard.

In 2015, Shamim was

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Threats, cases undermine July spirit

Say Press Club leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday said incidents of threats to the media and the trend of filing cases against media workers on charges of attempted murder go against the spirit of the July uprising.

In a statement, its President Hasan Hafiz and General Secretary Ayub Bhuiyan expressed concern over a "threat to the media by a July movement leader".

They said one of the reasons behind the student-led uprising was to ensure freedom of expression and the press.

"Threatening the media is an obstacle and interference in achieving that goal."

They also said if anyone is aggrieved by the role of the media, the Bangladesh Press Council is there to provide redress.

One can also go to court

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Release the detained journalists

Demand 51 journos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty-one journalists across the country yesterday demanded the release of detained journalists and condemned harassment.

In a joint statement, the signatories, including current and former leaders of various journalist associations, expressed deep concern over the "alarming political instability", saying it has "given rise to violent crackdowns and coordinated intimidation campaigns".

"These developments have placed press freedom and journalist safety under threat," the statement read.

The media has, in effect, been taken hostage by a systematic policy of repression involving ongoing violence and orchestrated mob attacks, it added.

Over the past 11 months, a disturbing pattern of events

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Father held for 'killing son' in Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Sunday night arrested a man in Gazipur's Konabari flyover area for allegedly killing his son in Dhaka's Hazaribagh on June 14.

The arrestee is Mustafizur Rahman Jewel, 44.

Rab-10 Assistant Director (Media) ASP Shamim Hasan Sardar said Mustafizur allegedly hacked his son Rahabul Islam Russell with a sharp weapon over a family dispute.

Following the murder, Russell was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

His brother Rabiul Islam Rabbi filed a case with Hazaribagh Police Station.

Tipped off, a team of Rab-10 arrested Mustafizur and handed him over to the police station, he added.



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Eight killed in road crashes across 5 districts

STAR ONLINE REPORT

At least eight people were killed and several others injured in road accidents in Tangail, Panchagarh, Mymensingh, Chattogram, and Munshiganj yesterday.

In Tangail, three people, including a woman and her son, were killed when a passenger bus collided head-on with a CNG-run auto rickshaw in Dhanbari upazila.

The victims are Kajol Rekha, 45, and Shrabon, 16.

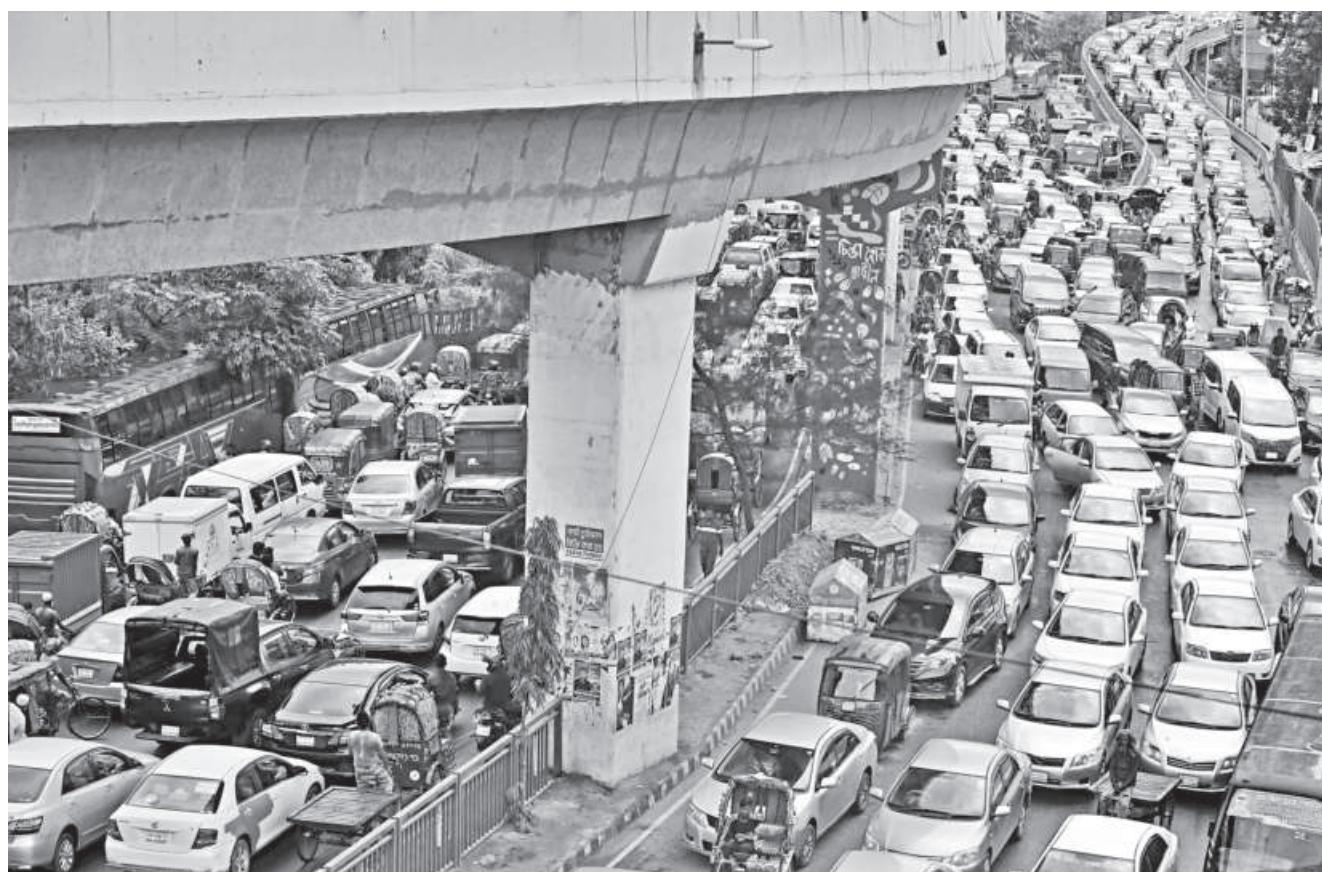
The injured, Basonti Begum, 60, was admitted to a hospital.

The accident occurred around 1:15pm in Baghil area on the Tangail-Jamalpur regional highway, said Dhanbari Police Station OC SM Shahidullah.

"We seized both the vehicles but their drivers managed to flee," the OC said.

In Panchagarh, a man was killed and two people were injured as a motorbike hit a cycle on the Panchagarh-Banglabandha highway in Boyalmari village.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



A long tailback forms on both sides of the road near Bangladesh Film Development Corporation in the capital yesterday, as officegoers return after a three-day weekend for Ashura, causing heavy traffic across Dhaka.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Bar AL leaders from contesting national polls

NDM urges EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Democratic Movement (NDM) Chairman Bobby Hajaj yesterday urged the Election Commission to prevent senior leaders of the Awami League from contesting the upcoming national election as independents or under the banner of other parties.

He made the demand while speaking to reporters following a meeting with the chief election commissioner at the EC headquarters in the capital.

A five-member NDM delegation met with the CEC and placed four major proposals: redrawing parliamentary constituencies, amending the electoral code of conduct, outlining the grounds for candidate disqualification, and ensuring a conducive electoral environment.

The party also proposed increasing the ceiling on election expenditure from Tk 25 lakh to Tk 40 lakh.

When asked about the potential influence of black money on electoral spending, the NDM chairman said, "When the current ceiling was set, inflation and purchasing power were different. The present context is entirely different."

Veteran journo

FROM PAGE 3
appointed press minister at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, DC. His appointment was extended by two years in 2017.

Shamim led Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) and Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) as president. He also served as the city editor (diplomatic and political affairs) at the New Age.

The UNB management and colleagues expressed profound shock at his death.

Present true history of the Liberation

FROM PAGE 3

Meanwhile, Jatiya Press Club, DRU, DCAB and Overseas Correspondents Association Bangladesh (OCAB) also expressed condolences at his demise.

Threats, cases

FROM PAGE 3

according to the existing rules of law, they added.

"But, we believe, such threat is an obstacle to the establishment, practice, and development of democratic culture in the country," the statement said.

The chief adviser ordered the immediate appointment of a consultant and the formation of a committee to determine how to properly utilise the trust's properties and strengthen its capacity.

He said effective steps

must be taken regarding the trust's work, including the establishment of enterprises using its assets. "This trust must be revived," he said.

Yunus urged all concerned to ensure that future ministry projects reflect the real history of the Liberation War.

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D-49

উত্তরা ব্যাংক পিএলসি

পারচেজ এন্ড এক্সিউটিভেন্ট পিপার্টেমেন্ট, ধৰন কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্যাংকের বাসিসরিক স্টেশনারী সমূহ চাহিদা মোতাবেক ২০২৫-২০২৬ সময়কালে সরবরাহ করার জন্য পূর্ব অভিন্নতা সম্পন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। বিস্তারিত জানতে ভিত্তি করুন www.uttarabank-bd.com/home/tender/2025

মহাব্যবস্থাপন পারচেজ এন্ড এক্সিউটিভেন্ট পিপার্টেমেন্ট

Shaheed Monsur Ali Medical College

26 & 26a, Road No-10/B, Sector-11, Uttara, Dhaka-1230

Recruitment Notice (Revised)

The following positions have been added to the earlier recruitment circular (Ref: SMAMC/07/2025/532) dated on 06/07/2025.

Designation	Department	No.	Criteria
Professor		01	
Associate Professor	Biochemistry	02	Remain unchanged
Assist. Professor		02	
Lecturer		06	

Principal (Acting)
Shaheed Monsur Ali Medical College
Uttara, Dhaka.

গবাদিদ্বারাগির নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি

- প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম : এডহক মিলিটারি ফার্ম সিলেট।
- নিলামের বিবরণ : কিছু সংখ্যাগত গবাদিদ্বারাগি বিজ্ঞপ্তি।
- গবাদিদ্বারাগি বিজ্ঞপ্তের : ১৩ জুলাই ২০২৫ (১০০০ ঘটিকা)।

তারিখ ও সময় : ১৩ জুলাই ২০২৫ (১০০০ ঘটিকা)।

৪ ঘটিকা মাত্র হওয়া পর্যন্ত।

লেন তারিখ : এডহক মিলিটারি ফার্ম সিলেট।

আইএসপিআর/সেনা/৪৫২

অধিনায়ক

এডহক মিলিটারি ফার্ম সিলেট

GD-1536

PABNA MENTAL HOSPITAL Patient admissions halted amid food supplier dispute



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Patient admissions at Pabna Mental Hospital have been suspended since last Thursday due to an impending food shortage.

Hospital authorities have completed the tendering process for food supply, but are yet to issue a work order, creating uncertainty over regular meals for patients.

According to hospital sources, the tender was floated on May 28, with eight bidders participating. Although the tender was opened on June 26, the final selection has not been made.

"We initially identified Anik Traders as one

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Expelled SAD leader held in assault case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

An expelled joint convener of the Students Against Discrimination (SAD) Habiganj unit was arrested on Sunday night in connection with a case filed over assaulting people involved in SAD.

Enamul Haque Shakib, the prime accused, was detained in Kibria Bridge area around 9:00pm, according to police sources.

OC AKM Shahabuddin Shaheen of Habiganj Sadar Police Station said Shakib was arrested by the army and handed over to police.

"He will be sent to jail following legal procedures," the OC said.

On May 9, four members of SAD, including the district unit's member secretary Ahmad Reza Hasan Mahdi, came under attack by a group of assailants while protesting for a ban on Awami League. Mahdi and three others suffered serious injuries in the attack.

Later, Mahdi filed a case with Habiganj Sadar Model Police Station on May 11, naming Shakib as the main accused. Shakib had been on the run since then.

Police earlier arrested Nur Alam Chowdhury and Rezaul Hasan Raju, also accused in the case and close associates of Shakib. Earlier, on May 6, Shakib was expelled from SAD on allegations of breaching organisational discipline, involvement in violence, and misuse of legal processes.

বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

নিম্নোক্ত প্রায়শিক বার্ষিক ব্যয়ের অধীন পানি উন্নয়ন বিভাগ-১
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তারিখঃ ০৩/০৭/২০২৫

স্মারক নং৪ বি-৬/৭

স্ম

INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA TUESDAY JULY 8, 2025

ASHAR 24, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

5

Myanmar clashes force thousands to flee to India

AFP, New Delhi

Heavy fighting in war-torn Myanmar has forced nearly 4,000 people to flee into India in the last four days, Indian officials in the northeastern state of Mizoram said yesterday.

The refugees, crossing thick forested routes to neighbouring India, ran from clashes between rival Chin armed groups, Mizoram state home secretary Vanlalmawia, who uses only one name, told AFP.

"Many of the people have relatives on the Indian side, so they are staying with them," he said. "Others are being housed in community halls."

The remote hill state is already hosting more than 30,000 refugees from Myanmar, where a deadly civil war has raged since the military seized power in 2021.

A senior state police officer said "approximately 4,000 people have come in the last four days", speaking on condition of anonymity.

Police said the fighting between the groups -- both of which oppose military rule -- continues for control of the region known as Chinland.

"The situation on the other side of the border remains tense, so we have not asked them to return," the police official said.

India, which has sought to deepen ties with Myanmar as a counterweight to China's growing influence, has shied away from explicitly condemning the military coup.

Mizoram's interior minister K Sapdanga confirmed the new arrivals, but put the number of refugees at 3,000.

"The fighting is beyond our control. People have come in and on humanitarian grounds, we have to provide drinking water, food and shelter," Sapdanga told Reuters.



Migrants speak with authorities at the port of Agia Galini, Greece, on Sunday, after the Greek Coast Guard rescued hundreds of people in separate incidents off the islands of Gavdos and Crete. Sea arrivals from northeastern Libya of migrants trying to cross to Europe have surged in recent months.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israel kills 12 more in Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli forces killed at least 12 people yesterday, including six in a clinic housing Palestinians displaced after 21 months of war.

Israel has recently expanded its military operations in the Gaza Strip, where the war has created dire humanitarian conditions for Gaza's population of more than two million.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that six people were killed and 15 injured in an Israeli air strike that hit the Al-Rimal clinic, "which houses hundreds of displaced people, in the Al-Rimal neighbourhood west of Gaza City."

In the south of the territory, Bassal said two people were killed and 20 others injured by Israeli forces' gunfire while waiting for aid near a distribution site run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) northwest of Rafah.



NEW UKRAINE REGION Russian forces claim first foothold

Transport minister fired by Putin reportedly shoots himself dead

AGENCIES

Russia said yesterday it captured its first village in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region after grinding towards the border for months, dealing a psychological blow for Kyiv as its worries mount.

Moscow launched a fresh large-scale drone and missile barrage before the announcement, including on Ukraine's army recruitment centres, as part of an escalating series of attacks that come as ceasefire talks led by the United States stall.

The Russian defence ministry said its forces captured the village of Dachne in the Dnipropetrovsk region, an important industrial mining territory that has also come under mounting Russian air attacks.

Russian strikes killed at least four people and wounded more than 30 others across Ukraine early yesterday, spurring evacuations from damaged housing blocks and sending civilians to bomb shelters, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, Russia's former transport minister Roman Starovoit shot himself dead in Odintsovo following his dismissal by President Vladimir Putin yesterday, the pro-government newspaper Izvestia reported, citing unnamed sources.

Starovoit's ouster came after nearly 500 flights were grounded at major Russian airports on July 5-6 due to security threats from Ukrainian drone attacks, reports The Kyiv Independent.

Israel bombs ports, power plant in Yemen

Houthis continue to fire missiles; Iran president says 'no problem' restarting nuke talks with US

AGENCIES

Israel struck Houthi targets at three Yemeni ports and a power plant, the military said early yesterday, in its first attack on Yemen in nearly a month.

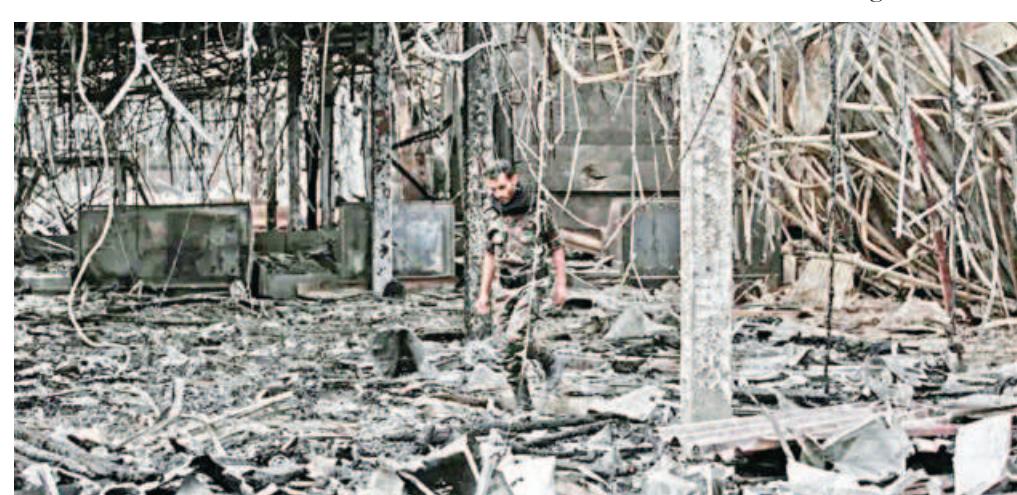
The strikes hit the ports of Hodeidah, Ras Isa and Salif, as well as the Ras Qantib power plant on the coast, in response to repeated Houthi attacks on Israel, the military said.

Hours later, Israel said two missiles were

a ship, the Galaxy Leader, which was seized by the Houthis in late 2023 and held in Ras Isa port.

The Houthi terrorist regime's forces installed a radar system on the ship, and are using it to track vessels in international maritime space in order to promote the Houthi terrorist regime's activities," the military said.

The Houthi military spokesperson said the group's air defences had responded to the Israeli attack with "a large number of



launched from Yemen. Attempts were made to intercept them, though the results were still under review. The Iran-aligned Houthi forces said they had fired missiles and drones at multiple targets in Israel in retaliation for the strikes on Yemen, reports Reuters.

The Israeli ambulance service said it had not received any calls regarding missile impacts or casualties following the launches from Yemen.

Since the start of the offensive in Gaza in October 2023, the Houthis have fired at Israel and at shipping in the Red Sea, disrupting global trade, in what the group says are acts of solidarity with the Palestinians.

Most of the dozens of missiles and drones fired toward Israel have been intercepted or fallen short. Israel has carried out a series of retaliatory strikes.

Israel said its attacks yesterday also targeted

domestically produced surface-to-air missiles". Israel's military told residents to evacuate the three ports before it launched its attacks.

Residents of Hodeidah told Reuters that the strikes on the power station had knocked out electricity. There was no immediate information on casualties.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said in an interview released yesterday that his country has "no problem" restarting nuclear talks with the United States, provided that trust can be reestablished between the two countries, reports AFP.

"We see no problem in re-entering the negotiations," Pezeshkian told US media figure Tucker Carlson. "There is a condition ... for restarting the talks. How are we going to trust the United States again?"

Polls delay will push

Reform blockers are to blame

FROM PAGE 12

order will deteriorate. That's why we need an elected government -- one that has the people behind it, one that has public support. No government can be stronger than a democratically elected one," he said.

Addressing party leaders and activists, Fakhrul said, "We must ensure that no one can speak ill of us. No one should be able to point fingers and say we are ... grabbing land, occupying roads, or extorting money. ... We must unite everyone."

He said the fascist regime of Sheikh Hasina did not fall in a day. Many had to make extreme sacrifices for the last 15 years before the fall of her government last year.

"Thousands of false cases have been filed against our people. Many of our leaders sitting here today were shackled and kept imprisoned for months right here in

FROM PAGE 12

[Sheikh] Hasina and her fascist regime, and evaluate those who are trying to get the position of Hasina's chair.

"We want to build a nation with the new spirit," the NCP said, demanding an impartial role of the police and administration after the fascist regime was

toppled.

"We have seen how the police and administration played a partisan role during the Awami League's tenure. After the removal of Hasina's fascist regime, we don't want a return to such party-loyal administration. We want the police and administration to play an

impartial role in building the nation."

Nahid said, "We want an inclusive country, which is why we need a new democratic constitution that upholds the spirit of the 1947 partition, the Language Movement, the Liberation War, and the mass uprisings."

FROM PAGE 12

to participate whenever the government announces the election. However, it also said that no election will be allowed to be held in a haphazard manner," he said.

"The ameer said that we want an election, but not in an atmosphere where the administration will be biased, it won't act neutrally, there'll be election engineering and grabbing of polling

stations," Parwar clarified. "People still have doubts about the government's role. That's why we're saying that the playing field is not level. That's why the ameer said we can't accept an election in this situation. There must be a level playing field," he said.

The Jamaat announced the Suhrawardy Udyan rally last month to press home the party's seven-point demand, including

trials for all mass killings, essential fundamental reforms, implementation of the July Charter and July Declaration, and rehabilitation of the families of those killed and injured in the July uprising.

The party also demanded that the next parliament be formed under a proportional representation (PR) system, with arrangements for expatriates to cast their votes.

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Bold banking reforms on the cards

Govt must get all stakeholders on board to ensure full implementation

We welcome the government's decision to undertake a sweeping overhaul of the country's financial sector, as outlined in its latest agreement with the IMF. This includes a detailed three-year roadmap aimed at undertaking comprehensive banking reforms. The plan, also supported by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, reportedly comprises a package of legislative, supervisory, and institutional changes designed to restore stability, recover bad loans, and shield taxpayers from future bank failures. Its objective is to establish a long overdue, government-wide strategy for a banking sector that has been devastated by corruption and a lack of regulatory enforcement over the years.

As of the end of March this year, bad loans in the banking sector soared to a record Tk 420,335 crore. Of this, Tk 300,028 crore was concentrated in just 10 banks, according to data from Bangladesh Bank. Some of these now-underperforming banks were once respected institutions, whose standards of governance deteriorated drastically under the Awami League regime, largely due to political interference. A few were even forcibly taken over, reportedly at gunpoint, by individuals favoured by the former government. Regulators became totally ineffective, often facilitating rule-breaking and corruption, which pushed the sector nearly to its breaking point.

In this context, the introduction of the reform plan—and particularly its substance—sends a positive signal. For instance, the series of laws the government has committed to enacting or amending by the first quarter of FY2026 address several of the sector's most pressing problems. These include a Bankruptcy Act, a Money Loan Court Act, a Distressed Asset Management Act, a Bank Resolution Ordinance, and a Deposit Protection Ordinance. To enhance transparency, the central bank has issued a new rule requiring banks to identify and report their true owners. Furthermore, by amending the Bank Company Act, the government aims to ensure that bank owners and board members are selected based on qualifications rather than political affiliations. For asset recovery, it has reconstituted a special task force, whose performance will be particularly important given the vast sums of money that have been looted from the country.

While such reforms are clearly necessary, it is their implementation that may prove to be more challenging, however. It remains to be seen how much the interim government will be able to achieve, given its limited tenure. The next elected government is expected to oversee the latter phases of the roadmap, so it is essential for the interim administration to bring political parties on board. Considering how such reform plans often fell by the wayside in the past, ensuring strict implementation is key—and that is where the government needs to most focus on.

Don't lower the bar for name-only parties

Many parties seeking registration fail to meet basic requirements

We're concerned about the ongoing trend of political parties mushrooming across the country, many of which appear to exist on paper only. While this is nothing new—with elections under the now-ousted Awami League regime similarly attracting many parties, some of which even secured registration for election—what we're seeing under the new dispensation only reinforces the need for proper verification by the Election Commission (EC). According to a report, some 147 parties applied to the EC for registration between March 10 and June 22. Our correspondents recently visited the addresses of 13 applicants in the Paltan area. Strikingly, nine were found to have no central offices or even signboards at those locations, while the remaining four were found huddled on the rooftop of a 15-storey building, sharing addresses in a dubious arrangement. What does this say about the motives of these organisations?

The Representation of the People Order, 1972 lays out clear criteria for registration: a functional central office and committee, offices in at least one-third of the districts or 100 upazilas, proof of at least 200 enrolled voters per office, etc. Although the Election Reform Commission formed after the 2024 uprising recommended relaxing some of the conditions, any changes have yet to be approved, meaning that the EC issued its call for applications based on the existing rules. However, these requirements, even in their current form, are not arbitrary—they are meant to ensure that political parties are rooted in the electorate and capable of sustained political activities. It is vital that the EC strictly enforces these rules before granting party registration and symbols.

In the past, we've seen how name-only parties with no real political base have disrupted electoral environments or become tools for ulterior motives. As experts have observed, many such parties do not even bother contesting elections seriously and seem to exist primarily for financial gains or political leverages. Some vanish after their launch, while others linger around waiting for opportunities. Worse still, too many parties today see politics as an electoral project only, reappearing briefly every five years with grand declarations. But politics is not just about elections. It's about consistent public engagement, ideology driven activism, and building institutions that outlast individual leaders.

That is why the RPO's provisions around inter-party democracy—elected committees, gender representation, and structural transparency—should be taken seriously. These and other requirements, if enforced properly, can help build a democratic culture in the country. A party that cannot uphold democracy within cannot be expected to champion it for others. Thanks to the sacrifices made during the July uprising, we now have a rare opportunity to reset how politics is practiced. Both established and newly emerging parties, therefore, must prove themselves worthy of the role they seek.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Vasco da Gama's first voyage to India

On this day in 1497, Vasco da Gama sailed from Lisbon with a fleet of four vessels, and ultimately opened a sea route from western Europe to Asia by way of the Cape of Good Hope, ushering in a new era in world history.

EDITORIAL

Who is sponsoring bribery?



Mamun Rashid,
an economic analyst, is chairman at Financial
Excellence Ltd and former managing partner of
PwC Bangladesh.

MAMUN RASHID

Not long ago, I heard a story about a friend who went to renew his passport. At the passport office, frustrated citizens stood under the sun, in a long queue, waiting for their turn. Yet, my friend, without hesitation, dialled a number. Within minutes, an officer waved him through a side door. No forms, no lines, just a quiet exchange and swift processing. This wasn't a one-off. In Bangladesh, such shortcuts have become normal. Whether it's renewing a passport, getting a driving license, or transferring a school posting, many use their networks (or money) to bypass the system meant to serve all equally.

This everyday reality is echoed in hard data. The latest survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) reveals a troubling truth: nearly one in three people reported paying bribes to access essential public services. With a sample of over 84,000 individuals from across the country, this is not a fringe issue but a national crisis. Among the most corrupt institutions, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) tops the list, with more than 63 percent of citizens reporting that they were forced to pay bribes. Close behind are law enforcement agencies, the Department of Immigration and Passports, and the Directorate of Registration. These are not just numbers; they reflect the experience of countless citizens trying to do the right thing but finding the system stacked against them.

The education sector is also deeply affected. Bribes for teacher transfers or school admissions are common, eroding faith in a system meant to uplift the next generation. According to a separate Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) assessment, during the last decade, citizens paid an estimated Tk 1.46 lakh crore in bribes for basic services. That's not just a statistic; it's money taken from families who often have little to spare.

It is easy to blame corrupt officials or inefficient institutions, but the roots go deeper. Why do people offer bribes in the first place? Because they believe it's the only way to get things done. We accept, and even expect, corruption.



VISUAL: SIFAT AFRINS SHAMS

It becomes a tool, not just for the powerful, but for ordinary people trying to survive a broken system. And this normalisation is perhaps the most dangerous part of all.

Other countries, despite challenges, offer lessons. Rwanda has made huge strides through digitalisation and strict enforcement. Estonia rebuilt itself after Soviet rule with a foundation in transparency and e-governance. Uruguay, surrounded by more corrupt neighbours, stands out for its institutional strength. Yet none of these countries shares Bangladesh's exact profile: our population, poverty levels, and political landscape are unique. Still, the direction is clear. For Bangladesh to move forward, we need deep institutional reform, starting with empowered, truly independent watchdog agencies. We need to

digitise services so that middlemen and gatekeepers can't extort money for what should be simple procedures. We must enforce the law equally, regardless of someone's rank or political affiliation.

of a corrupt official. It will come when we stop seeing bribery as a shortcut and start seeing it as a betrayal of our rights and responsibilities. It will come when citizens demand better and refuse to pay for what they are entitled to. So, who is sponsoring the corruption? It's you, me, and us, but that is also a source of power since it is in our hands. But what do we do with that power?

First, let's talk about technology. It's not a magic fix, but a serious enabler. Countries like India have reduced leakages in welfare and ration distribution simply by using biometric IDs and direct cash transfers. In Bangladesh, too, expanding digital platforms like "MyGov", mobile banking, and online service applications can cut out the need for personal contacts or unofficial payments. When you don't have to queue in front of an office or deal with an officer at all, the chances of bribery fall dramatically. Digital footprints also make it easier to track irregularities and hold people accountable.

stronger institutions respond to that pressure.

Third, we need leadership by example. When high-ranking officials or public figures are seen using influence or dodging accountability, it sends a loud message. But when the opposite happens, when someone faces consequences despite their connections, it begins to restore faith. That's not just good governance; that's nation-building.

At the end of the day, this isn't about blaming others. It's about looking in the mirror and asking: What am I doing to change the system? Am I standing in line like everyone else, or am I making a call to skip ahead? The system survives because we feed it. But the moment we stop feeding it, it starts to collapse.

We can be hopeful because real change will come not when we wait for someone else to fix things, but when we decide, as individuals and as a society, to stop sponsoring bribery and start demanding integrity. That is our responsibility. And our power.

Reversing the decline of Dhaka's canals



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ADIL MOHAMMED KHAN

Water is vital to any city's development, shaping its identity, culture, and future. Dhaka, once intricately linked by its canals, rivers, and wetlands, has lost the natural connection. Rapid and unplanned urban growth, illegal occupation, and neglect have led to the disappearance of many water bodies, making the city prone to flooding, waterlogging, and environmental issues.

The book, *Dhaka's Canals on Their Dying Breath*, by journalist Helemul Alam, is more than just a historical account; it's a passionate appeal for change. With a thorough investigation and a deep appreciation for nature, Alam uncovers the stories behind the disappearance of Dhaka's canals, highlighting the severe consequences of their loss.

His detailed reporting, combined with personal insights, offers a vivid portrayal of the past, present, and potential future of these water systems. The book emphasises the urgency of protecting and restoring canals through environmentally conscious urban planning, making it an essential read for planners, policymakers, environmentalists, and concerned citizens alike.

In his previous work, *Oasis Lost to Urban Sprawl* (2023), Alam explored the neglect of Dhaka's ponds. This latest book sheds light on what have led to the decay of the city's water infrastructure and the environmental challenges Dhaka now faces as a result. It outlines how the destruction of natural drainage has turned rain, once a blessing, into a cause of urban distress. Crucially, it looks ahead, proposing realistic and sustainable solutions. And offers strategies for restoring lost water channels, repairing drainage systems, and guiding urban development to be more in tune with nature. Drawing on case studies and expert opinions, the book provides actionable ideas for building a more resilient and sustainable Dhaka.

The author has realistically depicted Dhaka's waterlogging, its causes and consequences. According to him, "In Dhaka, rain brings chaos. Streets become submerged, water invades homes in low-lying areas, and life in the capital slows to a frustrating crawl." He argues that the reasons behind this mess are: canal encroachment, ignored and poor urban solutions. Therefore, once the lifeline of Dhaka, the city's canals are now mere

shadows of their former selves—clogged with pollution, suffocated by encroachment, and neglected due to flawed urban planning.

Alam also pointed out that the water retention ponds, originally designed to rescue Dhaka from floods, are now in need of rescue themselves. These basins, meant for stormwater management, are shrinking rapidly

Rapid and unplanned urban growth, illegal occupation, and neglect have led to the disappearance of many water bodies, making the city prone to flooding, waterlogging, and environmental issues.

due to encroachments, unplanned urbanisation, and government neglect.

The book reveals that the efforts of the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) to reinforce canals with concrete U-channels have made things worse. These structures have narrowed the canals, therefore reducing their capacity to carry water. Additionally, the original canal boundaries were not maintained, encouraging further encroachment. Additionally, the construction of embankments has cut natural connections between canals and rivers, including the Buriganga and Turag. This separation has disrupted the natural water flow and damaged the city's drainage system. The

author warns that without immediate and sustained intervention, the waterlogging crisis will worsen, as climate change means the city may experience unusually high rainfall at any time.

To reverse this crisis, any flood flow and sub-flood flow zones must be protected. Box culverts should be turned back into open canals where possible. And reviving Dhaka's canals will require restoring their connectivity with rivers, the book argues. Once linked to the Buriganga, Turag, Balu, and Shitalakshya rivers, the canals seamlessly transported excess water.

Protecting retention ponds, recovering canals, and maintaining drainage networks—both surface and stormwater—are crucial to reducing waterlogging. By and large, Alam urges us to take a holistic approach to recover our water channels and waterbodies.

As the city continues to grow, this book stands as both a warning and a guide. It calls on citizens, planners, and decision-makers to reconsider how waterbodies fit into urban life. By adopting greener strategies, Dhaka can reclaim its waterways and build a healthier future in harmony with nature. In a time when cities around the world are learning to live with water rather than fight it, Helemul Alam's work reminds us of what's possible. It encourages us to reflect on our relationship with water and inspires hope that, through collective will and smart planning, Dhaka can move toward a more water-sensitive future.

Remand redecorated: Same torture, new curtains?



MIND THE GAP

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NOSHIN NAWAL

So here we are, ladies and gentlemen, at the next episode of "Decorative Justice." After years of creative choreography between the state and your basic human rights, the government has finally decided to introduce a groundbreaking, revolutionary, earth-shattering change: you now have the right not to be tortured during arrest. Yes, the bar is that low, and yes, we are still applauding.

According to the law adviser himself, the interim government is preparing to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) 1898—you know, that charming Victorian relic that still decides whether a man gets bail or a beating. The goal? A "rights-based approach" during arrests and interrogations. Apparently, someone in the interim government opened the constitution, possibly even read it, and remembered that torture is bad. Bless them. But let us not be cynical—yet. Let's first admire the PR.

In a Commonwealth-themed youth workshop (because nothing screams "youth empowerment" like legal jargon), Law Adviser Asif

Nazrul proudly announced the proposed amendment. Arrests and interrogations will now come with "strict safeguarding measures." Presumably, this means you'll be beaten with consent, or at the very least, someone will read you your rights while they plug in the electric wires.

To understand the significance of this "reform," we must travel back to *BLAST v Bangladesh* (2003), where the High Court essentially stated, "please stop chaining people like medieval prisoners." Then to the 2016 *BLAST v Bangladesh* case—truly a sequel worth watching—where the HC gave the police a list of dos and don'ts for arresting people under Section 54 of the CrPC and sending them to remand under Section 167. These weren't revolutionary demands: just small things, like not torturing people for confessions, informing families when someone is picked up, and recording reasons for arrest. Basically, the legal version of "don't kidnap and slap people for fun."

But like every blockbuster HC judgment in Bangladesh, this one

too was screened only for a limited audience—the judiciary. The police, prosecution, and parliament never seemed to buy a ticket. For years, Section 54 remained the legal equivalent of "vibe check failed." You could be arrested for suspicion of intent to commit a crime, which is just fancy talk for "you looked too political."

window dressing?

Because let's be clear: no law in Bangladesh is safe from abuse when power is unaccountable. Our track record speaks for itself. You can criminalise torture under The Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013, but then you can just make sure no one ever gets convicted under it. You can sign international treaties

guidelines. It said: record the arrest, notify family, ensure medical exams before and after remand, and let the arrestee speak to a lawyer. These aren't utopian demands—they're literally constitutional rights under Articles 31, 32, and 35 of the Bangladesh Constitution and Articles 7 and 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

lucky if the police wear uniforms at all. Arresting officers often arrive like paranormal entities—no badge, no warrant, just vibes and violence.

And yet, this amendment could be historic. If—and this is the size of a Supreme Court courtroom—it is implemented. Because if it's just another box ticked for the Commonwealth Charter conference brochure, then let's be honest: it's not reform. It's interior design.

Reform means making Section 54 compliant with constitutional guarantees. Reform means making confessions in remand inadmissible in court. Reform means prosecutors who prosecute independently, not prosecute on WhatsApp instructions from party offices. Reform means retraining the police in a rights-based investigation, not teaching them how to hit without leaving a mark.

Reform also means justice for past violations. If you don't address the countless custodial deaths and the disappeared who never returned, then your amendment is nothing but a band aid on a bullet wound. A glossy promise wrapped around a very bloody history.

So yes, dear citizens, soon you may be arrested in a slightly more polite manner. Perhaps someone will offer you water after your third slap. Maybe your mother will get a phone call before your mugshot ends up in the paper. We've entered the era of deluxe detention—same trauma, better packaging.

As for the rest of us, let's continue dreaming. Not just of better arrests, but of a country where your rights aren't subject to seasonal reforms and donor optics. Where justice isn't decorative. Where dignity is the default.

Until then, remember to carry a lawyer's number, a power bank, and a healthy distrust of "reform announcements." You never know when Section 54 might take a personal interest in you.



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BILOB CHAKROBORTY

And now, amid a post-uprising transitional government that is balancing on a tightrope, this amendment is being dangled before us like a golden carrot. But here's the thing—after decades of being fed with sticks, we're suspicious of carrots. And when a reform is announced by a government that is struggling to keep it all together, one must ask: is this actual reform or just reputational

like UNCAT, promising not to torture anyone, and then just do it anyway. After all, as we learned during the last regime, treaties are like wedding vows—they sound good under fairy lights but mean very little when the lights go off.

What we need, and have always needed, is not more laws but more enforcement. The Supreme Court in 2016 gave us gold standard

So why are we treating them like radical Gen Z demands from TikTok?

Even India—where the police are no strangers to baton choreography—had their moment of reckoning in *DK Basu v State of West Bengal* (1997). The Indian Supreme Court issued a checklist of rights during arrest, one of which was that the police must wear visible name tags. Here in Bangladesh, half the time, you're

Bangladesh's growth depends on women's economic empowerment



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NAWSHEH AHMED

There are three major aspects of women's empowerment—social, political and economic—and all three are equally important. It is widely recognised that economically empowering women can help achieve developmental goals such as economic growth, increased productivity and the reduction of household poverty. To achieve economic empowerment, women must be given decision-making power and control over financial resources in the form of loans and grants, as well as other factors of production such as land, training, technological support, employment opportunities and market access.

It has been widely demonstrated that women's economic empowerment contributes to GDP growth and a more equitable society. Women's contributions to family income benefit children's health and education, thereby helping to build human capital and facilitate movement out of poverty.

in the same age group. A significant wage gap also exists between male and female workers.

According to World Bank data, about 21 percent of Bangladeshi women are engaged in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), compared to 43 percent in India, 41 percent in Sri Lanka, and 37 percent in Indonesia. As per the Global System for Mobile Communications Consumer Survey 2023, a gender gap of 20 percent exists in mobile ownership and a 40 percent gap in mobile internet adoption in Bangladesh—higher than

education and introduce various incentives to encourage women's participation in productive sectors. Although a similar trend is observed in Bangladesh, the pace of economic empowerment remains slower than expected due to the factors explained below.

The Bangladesh government allocates a substantial amount of resources for women in the annual budget. According to the Gender Budget Report 2024-2025, the government allocated Tk 271,818 crore—representing 34.11 percent of the total budget and 4.86 percent of GDP—towards women's empowerment and development, including social safety net programmes. However, many economists argue that the gender budget is not properly monitored, making it difficult to assess the impact of these expenditures on women each year. Particularly concerning is that the overall education and health budgets have consistently remained low over the years in Bangladesh—1.7 percent of GDP for education and 0.75 percent for health—thus failing to improve the quality of education and healthcare service delivery in the country. By contrast, the education budget in EU countries averages about 4.7 percent of GDP in 2025, with the highest allocations in Sweden (7.1 percent) and Denmark (6.4 percent). The average government expenditure on health in EU countries was 7.3 percent of GDP in 2023, rising to 12 percent in Germany and France, and over 10 percent in Austria, Belgium, Sweden and Portugal. These comparisons highlight the inadequacies of public spending on health and education in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, microfinance institutions (MFIs) play a significant role in economically and socially empowering women. By 2023, as many as 731 MFIs certified by the Microcredit Regulatory Authority had benefited over 40.86 million members, around 90 percent of whom are women. These MFIs disbursed a total of Tk 2,500 billion in soft loans to their members for undertaking small and medium enterprises. They also provide various services such as basic education, training, maternal health and technical support. According to World Bank estimates, microfinance

lifted about five million people out of poverty between 2000 and 2020.

In terms of quantitative estimates, the coverage of disadvantaged women under government and NGO programmes may appear impressive but remains insufficient. Various structural weaknesses persist in these programmes. One of the key areas where women continue to lag behind is in financial inclusion. There are gender gaps and exclusions in financial literacy and numeracy, access to finance, and digital financing, all of which prevent women from fully benefiting from available financial services in Bangladesh.

Data shows that around 65 percent of women remain unbanked, only 7 percent of registered small and medium sized borrowers are women, and the gender gap in mobile phone ownership is approximately 30 percent. These barriers limit women's access to adequate finance and hinder the achievement of true

economic empowerment. Although several banks now offer female-friendly financial products, these require greater promotion, trust-building, and improvements in women's financial literacy. However, this alone will not address the root challenge faced by poor women who lack assets and income and who are therefore likely to remain unbankable—reliant solely on small-scale NGO loans.

To expedite women's economic empowerment and ensure inclusive economic growth, certain practical steps are necessary. These include taking bold decisions to increase sustainable investment in health, education, and skills development to reach 10 percent of GDP, alongside establishing proper monitoring systems, gender-disaggregated databases, and evaluation mechanisms to ensure accountability; promoting women's employment in suitable service

and industrial enterprises such as leather, food processing, toy-making, sustainable energy solutions, and cottage industries; adopting stronger policy measures to expand access to soft loans for building women-friendly enterprises and providing inclusive financial literacy training; creating special industrial zones for female entrepreneurs and promoting both local and export market opportunities; prioritising women's access to industrial land, financial resources, and vocational training, as well as creating decent work opportunities; and last but not least, taking critical steps to reduce early marriage and early pregnancy in the country.

We need to accelerate efforts in these areas to enable the large and potentially productive population of working-age young women to participate meaningfully in the economy and help raise Bangladesh's stagnating growth rate.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Rangamati
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.8400.000.000.14.0025.25.706

Date: 07-07-2025

Invitation for Tenders (IFT for Works)
e-Tender Notice No. 01/2025-26

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

SL No.	Tender ID	Procurement method	Name of works with Package No.	Documents selling last date and time	Last date & time of tender security submission	Tender opening & closing date and time
1.	1130087	OTM	e-Tender/PEDP4/RMT/2024-25/W20.719 Repair Work of Internal Road and Supply of Furniture & Generator at Rangamati PTI.	30-Jul-2025 12:00	30-Jul-2025 14:00	30-Jul-2025 15:00

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 fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any 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).

Ahamad Shafi
 Executive Engineer
 LGED, Rangamati
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OTT brings complex stories to the screen: PARTHO SHEIKH

Partho Sheikh impressed fans with his OTT debut in 'BnG', and since then, he has continued to win over viewers with standout performances in productions like 'Karagar', 'Odrisshyo', and 'Baaji'. Reflecting on his journey and the growth of OTT platforms, the actor shared his thoughts on how the digital space has transformed storytelling in Bangladesh.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

"OTT platforms allow us to present stories that don't typically make it to mainstream media," Partho said. "They provide opportunities for new directors to showcase their talent and give actors the chance to explore diverse and complex characters. Since the rise of OTT, we've seen many new artists emerge and flourish. Even technical crews have been able to push their creative boundaries."

Comparing OTT to platforms like YouTube, Partho noted the depth OTT content offers. "On YouTube, we often find lighter stories, but OTT gives us room for deeper narratives—often spread over eight episodes—where almost every character has their own arc. It allows viewers to experience a more detailed version of the story. OTT is truly a blessing."

He further underscored the importance of quality storytelling in the OTT era. "When you dive deep into a story, quality becomes crucial. Many nuanced layers that would usually be left out now get properly explored. Viewers can truly follow the complete journey of a character, which elevates the overall experience."

Reflecting on his own work, Partho said, "Karagar made a remarkable impact on the OTT space, and the same goes for Odrisshyo, Baaji, and Shaaticup. The latter told a story based in Rajshahi—something we wouldn't typically see on platforms like YouTube. Thanks to OTT platforms like Chorki, such regional stories are now reaching wider audiences. It's a very encouraging shift."

Most recently, Partho appeared in the Bongo original web series *Fyakra*, directed by Asif Chowdhury. In the series, he portrays Samad, a man desperate to win the heart of his beloved Golapi (played by Nidra Dey Neha). Seeking financial help from his friends, Samad becomes entangled in a robbery that takes a tragic turn when a woman is accidentally killed. What follows is a gripping tale of revenge, fear, and survival, as the woman's husband seeks retribution and police closes in.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSVED

NEWS

9-yr-old's body found in a mosque

FROM PAGE 12

maktab (elementary religious classes) at the mosque found the girl's body on the second floor and alerted her family. After going to the spot, the family saw the child's body with a cloth around her neck. They informed the police immediately, who recovered the body and sent it to hospital for forensic tests.

Police and army personnel arrived at the scene shortly afterwards.

Speaking to reporters, the grieving mother demanded justice, saying, "My beloved child was tortured and murdered."

The child's uncle alleged, "She was brutally killed after being raped. We demand the highest punishment for those responsible."

The victim's mother that same day filed a case with Sarail Police Station against unidentified individuals.

Morsved Alam Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Sarail Police Station, said, "There is evidence of sexual assault and injury marks on her body. She was

strangled."

Following the case filing, the mosque's imam, Hamidur Rahman, and muezzin, Saidul Islam, were taken into police custody for questioning, he said, adding an inquest report has been prepared, and the child's body was sent for autopsy.

Superintendent of Brahmanbaria Police Ehteshamul Haque said, "We have launched an investigation and are working to bring those responsible to justice."

The Police Bureau of Investigation and the Criminal Investigation Department are conducting parallel probes into the incident.

Meanwhile, the child's father reached Dhaka from Brahmanbaria last evening to his daughter before her burial.

MAN SENT TO JAIL OVER ATTEMPTED RAPE OF 4YR-OLD

A Netrokona court yesterday sent a man to jail for the attempted rape of a four-year-old girl in Kalmakanda upazila on Sunday.

The accused, Nabi Hossain, 40,

was sent to jail after being produced before the Netrokona Judicial Court around 4:00pm, said Netrokona Court Inspector Mofiz Uddin Sheikh.

The child's father filed a case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000, with Kalmakanda Police Station around 12:15am, said Officer-in-Charge Md Lutfur Rahman.

According to the case statement, the girl was playing in her yard on Sunday evening when her neighbour, Nabi, took her to his house and attempted to rape her.

Hearing her screams, her parents and neighbours rushed to the scene, rescued the child, and apprehended Nabi. They later informed police.

"Nabi Hossain was immediately arrested and brought to the police station. After primary investigation, he was presented before the court today [yesterday] and sent to jail," said OCLLutfur. (Our Brahmanbaria and Netrokona correspondents contributed to this report)

this [Huawei] was the lowest bidder, and the misinformation regarding the capacity has already been clarified by BUET, we will form a committee to verify whether the equipment they committed to supplying is indeed being delivered as promised."

When he visited the ACC, they requested him to provide detailed information.

"Based on that, I wrote a letter to the Honourable ACC Chairman, where I mainly outlined my arguments. Since the money has already been disbursed, and since BTCL urgently needs to expand its capacity -- you are all aware that the current capacity at the district level is only 1 Gbps, which makes it practically impossible to provide better-quality internet service."

"As much as Tk 290 crore had been paid through that irrevocable LC before the interim government took charge, Taiyeb said.

"Taking all this into account, we have spoken to the Honourable Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission. I personally visited his office and said, 'Sir, since Tk 290 crore has already been disbursed, and since

allegations of corruption and other issues stemming from the previous government's tenure.

As a result, BTCL's fibre network expansion remains stalled, he said.

"This issue has been misrepresented in the media in an attempt to malign me personally, my ministry and the character of the government. I strongly condemn this and want to state clearly: neither I nor any of the current officials in my ministry are involved in any form of corruption."

All the activities in question were initiated under the previous government.

"We have only exchanged a few letters to express our opinions, and at the end of those letters, we respectfully sought the kind cooperation of the Honourable ACC Chairman. Beyond that, we issued no instructions. It is also worth noting that, regarding this project, there is no formal case only ACC's ongoing observation. So, what we are saying is: if this project is not implemented and the LC is not processed, two things will happen."

If BTCL does not upgrade its network, it could soon be pushed out of the market, he said.

Its competitors are already upgrading their networks, while BTCL has been unable to proceed due to various complications, mainly

Another drama at JP as Quader fires

FROM PAGE 12

Quader from leadership through the party's 10th central council.

Anisul and Hawlader took the key role in planning the council on June 28 despite the party chief's decision to postpone the event citing that the venue authority -- Bangladesh-China Friendship Convention Centre

-- cancelled the permission.

They were planning to amend the controversial sections of the party's constitution. Chunnu, who became secretary general in 2021, had expressed solidarity with the move.

Anisul and others, finally backtracked on their decision to hold the council, accepting the reality at the party's grassroots.

According to the release, at a views exchange meeting on June 25, district and city unit presidents and general secretaries made allegations of breaching party discipline against the three senior leaders and demanded disciplinary action.

Based on the complaints, the party's presidium members decided to relieve the three leaders of their duties on June 28.

In the afternoon yesterday, another press release announced the

appointment of Patwary as secretary general.

Just before their removal yesterday, Anisul and Hawlader issued a joint statement, opposing the replacement of Chunnu with Patwary.

They termed the appointment "grossly undemocratic and a direct violation of the party charter".

They said the move reflects "individual centric authoritarianism", putting the very existence of the party at risk.

"Freedom fighter Mujibul Haque is the legitimate and respected secretary general of Jatiya Party. No appointment or dismissal can be valid before the announced council," the statement said.

They further said, "The national council has already been announced based on a decision of the Jatiya Party Presidium. Under such circumstances, any appointment, dismissal, or removal made outside the party constitution is completely illegal and void."

"These decisions are dismantling the party's democratic framework. We are shocked that responsible presidium members, despite regularly contributing to the party fund, have been relieved based on

and regulators to hold inclusive consultations with industry stakeholders to ensure the final policy supports Bangladesh's national digitalisation goals while maintaining investor confidence.

The CEOs expressed optimism about Bangladesh's digital future: "As long term investors in Bangladesh who firmly believe in the country's great potential, we are highly optimistic about the potential for the Interim Government to set Bangladesh on a path towards a bright new future. We stand ready to offer our full assistance in supporting all of your efforts to keep Bangladesh on the right path towards it."

The alliance announced a series of programmes for July and August, including events marking the anniversary of the mass uprising on August 5.

The LDA leaders also highlighted the road march organised on June 27 and 28 protesting the government's decision to lease out the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) of Chattogram Port to a foreign company.

The coalition leaders called on the government to withdraw its decision to lease the port, which they deemed is contrary to national interests.

The alliance reiterated its demand for urgent reforms and called for the immediate announcement of a specific date for the next parliamentary election.

Foreign telco investors raise

FROM PAGE 12

and restrict telecom operators' flexibility to respond to evolving market conditions.

"These prescriptive mandates may lead to inefficient resource allocation and increased operational costs and risk undermining the flexibility and agility that telecom operators need to respond to dynamic market conditions," the letter states.

The letter was signed by Vivek Sood, Group CEO and Managing Director of Axiata Group; Jon Omund Revhaug, Executive Vice President and Head of Telenor Asia; and Kaan Terzioglu, Group CEO of VEON. They urged the government



BANSHKHALI IN CTG Parts of embankment collapse in just 2yrs

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

A Tk 293 crore embankment in Chatogram's Banskhali upazila has partially collapsed just over two years after its completion, raising serious concerns about the quality of construction and oversight.

At least three sections of the structure have already eroded. With the monsoon season approaching, hundreds of coastal residents now fear floods and crop losses.

"I had to rebuild my house four times over the last three decades due to coastal erosion," said Ali Ahmed, a 55-year-old resident of Kadamrasul area. "Now the new embankment, which was supposed to protect us, is already breaking apart."

The embankment, constructed by the Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB), was inaugurated in late 2022. The 15-kilometre embankment project along the Bay of Bengal and Sangu river in Banskhali was approved by Ecom in May 2015, with a budget of Tk 293.6 crore.

During a recent visit, it was found that several points along the

embankment have been damaged, particularly in Kadamrasul and Khankhanabab areas.

Geo-bags and tubes had been dumped at the damaged embankment sites to prevent tidal and cyclone-driven water from entering nearby communities.

Rafiqul Islam, an assistant teacher at Hamidia Dakhil Madrasah in Kadamrasul, said, "The embankment has started to fail in just over two years. This clearly points to substandard work. The government must take action against those responsible."

The Khankhanabab Union Parishad had a population of over 33,000 people as per the 2022 census.

Sohidul Islam Shikder, acting UP chairman, said several villages have become increasingly vulnerable, especially during high tides and storms.

Notable, a team from BUET identified 3,787 of the 11,036 concrete blocks as substandard and recommended their rejection in 2020. Acting on the recommendation, the WDB later

discarded the faulty blocks.

Contacted, KM Julfiqar Tareq, superintending engineer of the BWDB, acknowledged the damage.

However, he denied allegations of substandard work. "We had the blocks tested by a team of experts and rejected only those that met the required standards. So, there was no scope for irregularities."

He attributed the collapse to changes in Sangu's course. "The most severe erosion has occurred along an 800-metre stretch near the river's estuary, where newly formed sandbars have altered its course. As a result, strong currents are hitting the embankment directly, causing sections to collapse," he said.

He said the embankment was constructed a few years ago under severe budget constraints.

"At that time, we could only afford to build a basic structure. Now, we are working on a more sustainable embankment, with a focus on integrated river management. The damaged portion will be reinforced under the ongoing project aimed at strengthening the embankment in vulnerable areas," he added.

During a recent visit, it was found that several points along the

Eight killed in road

FROM PAGE 4

The victim is Motiar Rahman, 70, a tea-factory worker, said OC Abdullah Hil Zaman of Panchagarh Police Station.

The injured were taken to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

In Mymensingh, two persons were killed and two others injured in a head-on collision between a dump truck and an auto-rickshaw in Gafargaon upazila around noon.

The victims are Md Wasim Mia, 22, a passenger, and Md Iqbal Hossain, 50, the driver of the auto-rickshaw. Police seized the truck and detained its driver, Sohan

Mia.

In Chattogram, Afia, a five-year-old girl, was killed after falling from her mother's lap when a tank-lorry rear-ended their CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Mirsarai upazila.

The driver of the tank-lorry had been arrested.

In Munshiganj, a man was killed and at least six others injured when a bus collided with a goods-laden truck on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Gazaria upazila this afternoon.

The victim is Azgar Ali, bus helper. The accident took place around 1:00pm at Anarpura U-turn.

Release the detained

FROM PAGE 3

including journalists -- including journalist killings, death threats, job terminations, fabricated murder charges, arbitrary arrests and prolonged detentions, asset freezes, travel bans, accreditation revocations, membership suspensions, and attacks on media offices -- has plunged the journalistic profession into a climate of fear and extreme insecurity, it said.

According to statistics from local and international media and human rights organisations, the past 11 months have seen at least 10 journalists killed, 412 journalists detained in "politically motivated or baseless cases," and 39 journalists formally arrested. Additionally, 168 press accreditations were revoked, 101 press club memberships suspended or cancelled, more than 300 journalists subjected to international travel bans, over 100 journalists' bank accounts frozen, over 1,000 journalists terminated from their jobs, and the office of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) has remained forcibly locked for 11 months.

Patient admissions

FROM PAGE 4

of the lowest bidders, but there are others with similar quotes. We are still reviewing the bids to finalise a suitable supplier," said Shafkat Wahid, director of Pabna Mental Hospital.

The director confirmed that no new patients have been admitted since July 3 due to the lack of food support.

"Until the food supply is secured, we cannot admit new patients. However, we expect to resolve the issue within the next one or two

days," he told The Daily Star.

At least 434 patients were receiving treatment at the 500-bed facility yesterday. While new admissions remain halted, the hospital's outdoor services continue to operate.

"More than 100 outdoor patients are treated at the hospital daily. We've admitted some serious cases from outdoor, but no new admissions have been made in recent days," said Dr Masud Rana Sarkar, assistant professor at the hospital.

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How to create a career roadmap that adapts with you



A great career roadmap isn't set in stone. It's a living guide: one that evolves as you do. Check in quarterly, stay open to surprises, and focus on skills that keep your options wide.
The best careers aren't planned. They're built, adjusted, and rebuilt along the way.

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Let's cut through the clichés: most career advice about planning sounds like, "Write down your dreams! Manifest your future!" But real careers don't work like that. They're not straight ladders to climb; they're more like rivers, winding through unexpected terrain, with detours that often lead to better opportunities than you'd ever planned for.

The key isn't rigid five-year plans. It's building a 'flexible' roadmap, i.e. one that gives you direction without locking you into a single path. Here's how to do it.

Start with a vision, not a job title

Most people fixate on roles: "In 10 years, I'll be a VP." But titles change, industries shift, and your own interests evolve. Instead, ask: "What do I want my work life to feel like?" Do you crave autonomy? The chance to build things from scratch? The ability to mentor others? These are your true guideposts, not promotions or pay grades. A decade is too far for specifics, but it's the perfect horizon for defining the 'essence' of what you want.

Explore multiple paths (because life rarely goes to plan)

Now, zoom in on the five-year mark. Here's where you brainstorm several realistic routes to

that vision. Maybe one path involves climbing the ladder in your current field. Another might mean pivoting into a related industry. A third could be freelancing or launching a side hustle. The magic? You don't have to choose just one yet. The best careers unfold through experimentation, which involves trying things, learning what fits, and adjusting as you go. Be sure to enjoy the experience along the way!

Break it down into actionable experiments

For the next 12 months, focus on 'doing' rather than obsessing over the distant future. Pick 3-5 concrete steps that move you forward, but frame them as experiments, not ultimatums. For example, instead of "I must become a manager this year," try "I'll lead one cross-functional project to test if I enjoy leadership." Rather than "I need to switch industries now," explore "I'll ask three people in that field to see if it's a fit for me." This will keep you progressing without boxing you into a path that might not suit you later.

Skills - the real career currency

Job titles are fleeting. Today's "Social Media Guru" is tomorrow's "Director of Social Engagement". What lasts? Skills. Focus on building three layers: technical abilities (what's emerging in your field?), power skills

(communication, resilience, negotiation), and the ability to learn quickly (the ultimate future-proof skill). A marketer obsessed with becoming VP might miss the bigger opportunity: mastering data storytelling and team leadership makes you valuable anywhere, regardless of title.

Expect detours. They're part of the journey

Careers will throw curveballs: layoffs, burnout, unexpected passions. Instead of panicking, ask: "What did this teach me about what I don't want?" "What skills did I gain that transfer elsewhere?" "How can I adjust my next steps to reflect this?" Remember, flexibility isn't just about surviving changes; it's about leveraging them.

The bottom line

A great career roadmap isn't set in stone. It's a living guide: one that evolves as you do. Check in quarterly, stay open to surprises, and focus on skills that keep your options wide. The best careers aren't planned. They're built, adjusted, and rebuilt along the way.

Want to start? Block 30 minutes this week to sketch your 10-year vision, brainstorm 2-3 five-year paths, and pick 3 experiments for the next 12 months. Then revisit it every few months, and watch how it grows with you!

Quiet thriving: finding purpose in a 'just fine' job

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Let's be honest - not every job is meant to be your life's passion. Some roles simply pay the bills, offer reasonable hours, and maybe even provide decent coffee. But when you're not ready (or able) to move on, spending 40+ hours each week in an uninspiring position can feel like running on a treadmill: all effort, no destination.

Here's the good news: you don't need to wait for the perfect job to feel engaged at work. A new approach called 'quiet thriving' - the positive counterpart to 'quiet quitting' - focuses on making small, intentional changes to rediscover meaning and even joy in your current role. Here's how you can embrace this concept.

Redefine success on your terms

Society often tells us that work should be our passion, our identity, our grand purpose in life. But what if it doesn't have to be all those things? Instead, try defining success by your own standards. Maybe it's about acquiring new skills,

cultivating meaningful relationships with colleagues, or simply establishing healthy boundaries that allow time for personal pursuits. By viewing your job as just one element of a fulfilling life - even if it's not particularly remarkable - you're likely to find greater satisfaction in your daily experience.

Discover the hidden lessons

Every position offers valuable takeaways if you know where to look. Shift your perspective from what you're doing to what you're learning. Are you developing patience through bureaucratic processes? Improving communication skills with challenging colleagues? Even repetitive tasks can enhance precision and efficiency. Maintain a 'skills journal' to track these subtle but important developments.



Turn routine into opportunity
Combat monotony by creating personal challenges. For example, if your work involves creativity, you could keep the joy alive by testing new techniques on ordinary projects. These small innovations not only make the workday more engaging but also keep your skills sharp for future opportunities.

Leverage hidden benefits

Your job offers value beyond your salary. View this stable position as a springboard for personal growth. Connect with coworkers who share your passions outside work, or leverage your predictable schedule to launch that passion project you've been postponing.

Trust the bigger picture

As Steve Jobs once said, we can only connect life's dots looking backwards.

That tedious data entry job might later explain your exceptional attention to detail. The office politics you navigated could demonstrate your conflict resolution skills. Have faith that even this 'just okay' chapter contributes to your professional story in ways you can't yet see.

Embrace the 'for now' mindset

Give yourself permission to view this as a temporary season rather than a permanent situation. Repeat: "I'm here for now because it serves a purpose." Whether that purpose is financial stability, skill development, or simply buying time to plan your next move, there's dignity in recognising the value of this phase.

Quiet thriving isn't about pretending to love a mediocre job - it's about actively shaping your experience to find fulfilment where you are. Because meaningful careers aren't just built on the jobs we adore, but on how we grow through all our professional experiences.

NEXT STEP DESK

Amazon has recently reached a milestone in warehouse automation, deploying its one-millionth robot across its global operations network. The company announced the achievement alongside a new AI system designed to enhance the efficiency of its robotic workforce.

The e-commerce giant's growing automation system now includes Hercules lifting robots, Pegasus package handlers, and autonomous Proteus units operating in more than 300 facilities worldwide. In an official press release, Amazon Robotics VP Scott Dresser confirmed the millionth unit was recently placed in a Japanese fulfilment centre, describing it as "a significant milestone in our robotics journey".

Additionally, a new AI coordination system called DeepFleet aims to improve the robotic network's efficiency by 10%. "This means less congestion, more efficient paths, and faster processing of customer orders," Dresser said, comparing the technology to an "intelligent traffic management system" for warehouse robots.

Amazon reports it has trained over 700,000 employees since 2019 to work with automated systems. The company notes its newer facilities require more

technical maintenance roles while reducing some manual handling positions.

The deployment reflects Amazon's substantial investments in warehouse automation technology, including robots capable of lifting 1,250 pounds and navigating autonomously. Industry analysts note the expansion comes as many logistics operations increasingly



incorporate automation, with potential long-term impacts on warehouse employment patterns.

Amazon maintains that its automation technology is designed to work collaboratively with human employees, though economists continue to study the broader workforce implications of such large-scale robotic deployments in the logistics sector.

Microsoft to cut 9,000 jobs; continues focus on AI

NEXT STEP DESK

Microsoft has recently confirmed plans to lay off up to 9,000 employees - just under 4% of its global workforce - as the company shifts its focus further toward artificial intelligence and streamlines internal operations.

The job cuts, which span multiple departments and regions, mark the company's third major round of layoffs this year, according to reports by Reuters, CNBC, and The Verge. In May, Microsoft cut over 6,000 roles, followed by at least 300 more in June. As of June 2024, the company employed 228,000 people.

Gaming is one of the hardest-hit divisions. Microsoft is reportedly cancelling development of the Perfect Dark reboot and Everwild, and shutting down The Initiative, the studio behind Perfect Dark, according to The Verge. Staff at other game studios, including Turn 10 and ZeniMax Online Studios, have also been affected.

The layoffs come as Microsoft doubles down on AI investment, including \$80 billion in new data centres. The company remains highly profitable, reporting \$26 billion in net income on \$70 billion in revenue last quarter, and expects continued growth through Azure cloud and AI services, states the reports.

Saudi launches skill-based work permit for expats

NEXT STEP DESK

Saudi Arabia has introduced a new classification system for expatriate work permits, according to a recent report by Gulf news. The initiative, announced by the Saudi Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, divides permits into three categories: high-skill, skilled, and basic.

The classification process began on June 18, 2025, for existing foreign workers, with full implementation set for July 6. New expatriates entering Saudi Arabia will fall under the system starting August 3. The Ministry has published detailed guidance outlining criteria such as education, work experience, professional skills, wage levels, and age as key factors in determining classification.

The reform is part of Saudi Arabia's broader strategy to modernise its labour market in line with 2030 and the National Transformation Program. The system is designed to align workers' qualifications with job requirements, improve performance and regulatory compliance, and enhance the country's ability to attract global talent, according to Saudi officials.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Royal Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka



Programme Officer

Deadline: July 15

Eligibility:

② Higher university degree in relevant disciplines, with prior experience in project cycle management, including results management, financial management, audit, and monitoring and evaluation.

Minimum experience: 3 years

BADAS Centre for Health Research and Implementation

Supervisor, DiaDeM

Deadline: July 15

Eligibility:

② Master's/ MPhil in any discipline of Psychology from a reputed institution in Bangladesh or abroad.

Minimum experience: 2-3 years



NRBC Bank PLC

EO/SEO, Risk Management Division

Deadline: July 17

Eligibility:

② Prior hands-on experience in credit analysis or risk evaluation in any bank or financial institution.

Minimum experience: 3-4 years



UNDP

Project Analyst, Sustainable Environment & Public Health

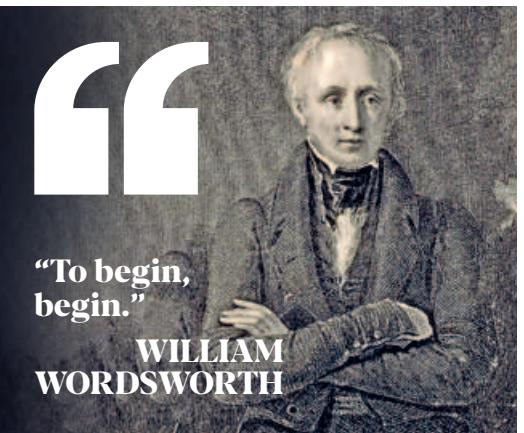
Deadline: July 14

Eligibility:

② Advanced university degree/ Master's/ equivalent experience in any of: Civil or Environmental Engineering, Environmental Management, Urban or Rural Planning, Programme Development, or a closely related discipline.

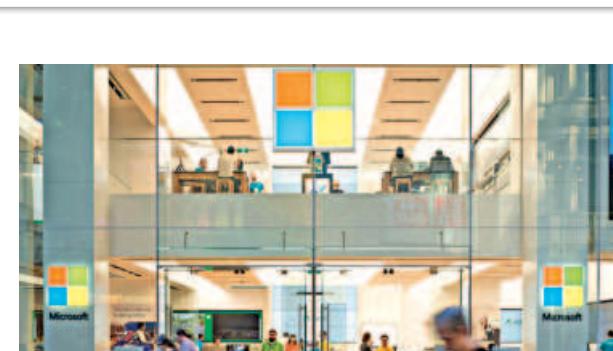
Minimum experience: 2 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



"To begin, begin."

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



Microsoft to cut 9,000 jobs; continues focus on AI

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Tigers look to history but wary of creaky middle-order

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh go into the third and final ODI at Pallekele against Sri Lanka on Tuesday, hoping to clinch a first-ever ODI series win against Sri Lanka in the island nation.

Bangladesh twice drew series against Sri Lanka on their home turf but have not scaled the heights of a series win against the South Asian rivals yet.

Batting concerns remain, especially in the middle-order following the retirements of Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim. Despite win in the second ODI, Bangladesh did not bat out 50 overs while in the first ODI, a record-breaking collapse ensured that Tigers had to look for a quick turnaround in the first place.

Bangladesh's ODI form has been concerning for a while. Since their last ODI series win, incidentally against Sri Lanka at home in March last year, Bangladesh have fallen to series defeats against Afghanistan and West Indies while also exiting the Champions Trophy without a single win.

They have, however, been able to regain some confidence in the second ODI in Colombo. The win was their first after seven consecutive defeats and having clawed their way back in, the Tigers will look to repeat a feat from 2015.

Only once in their history have Bangladesh managed to win a three-match ODI series after losing the first ODI, when a confident Soumya Sarkar took

Pallekele International Cricket Stadium favours pace bowling in ODIs and is known for high-scoring games, with 15 out of 43 matches seeing totals above 300. The highest score at the venue is 381-3, made by Sri Lanka against Afghanistan in 2024. Pace bowlers have taken the majority of wickets here (329 out of 568). However, rain has heavily impacted recent matches, with the last five ODIs at Pallekele shortened or abandoned due to weather. The upcoming third ODI also faces rain threats. Bangladesh holds a mixed record here, winning once in 2013 but losing the last meeting in 2023 during the Asia Cup.



South Africa apart at home in 2015.

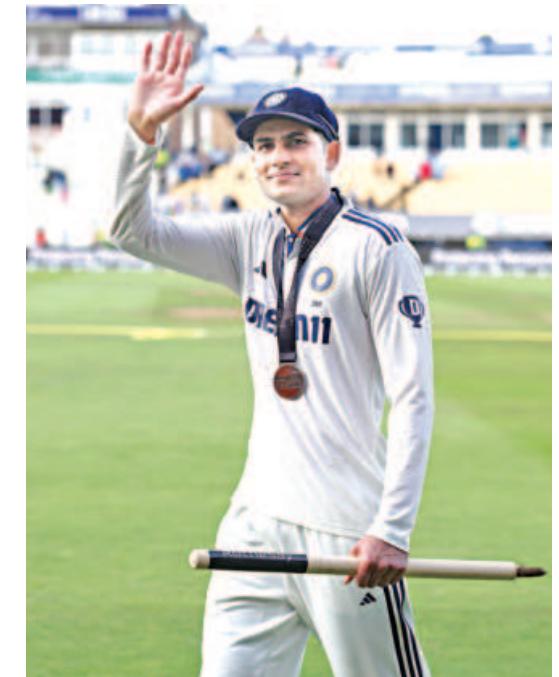
In comparison with Colombo, things are expected to be a bit different in Pallekele where Sri Lanka and Afghanistan have been involved in high-scoring affairs last year. But there have also been some low scoring affairs, something that should keep the batters guessing.

Bangladesh have Tanzid Hasan and Parvez Hossain, openers with a bit of flair about them. The duo has scored runs this series but has not been able to carry on for bigger scores.

It is, however, the middle-order that Sri Lanka would like to put pressure on. Tawhid Hridoy got some runs in the last game but skipper Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Shamin Hossain or Jaker Ali did not make big contributions. It took some effort from Tanzim Sakib to take Bangladesh to a competitive total in the end.

The bowling department is where the Tigers have found solace this series. Taskin Ahmed is expected to return after being rested for the second ODI. The pacer bagged four wickets to set Bangladesh up for a chaseable total and would be keen to play a hand to clinch the series.

Spinner Tanvir Islam's filler set up the victory in the second game, turning things around at a crucial period and managing to break important partnerships. If spin comes to play, Shamin, too, is an option, having bowled nine economical overs in the second ODI.



Gill turns burden into brilliance

AGENCIES

In a summer of change for Indian cricket, it took just two Tests for Shubman Gill to silence every doubt. From stepping into the massive shoes of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli to rewriting the record books in his second match as captain, Gill's Edgbaston epic announced the arrival of a new leader – and perhaps a new era.

India's thumping 336-run win over England on Sunday wasn't just a series-levelling statement – it was history made. It was their first victory in nine attempts at Edgbaston, and their biggest overseas win by runs.

At the heart of it stood Gill, composed and commanding, scoring 269 and 161 in the same match – a feat no Test batter had ever achieved before.

Gill's performances in England have transformed his Test narrative. He arrived with an average below 36. Now, after knocks of 147, 269 and 161, he has piled up 585 runs in just two Tests at an eye-watering average of 146.25.

Captaincy, often a burden for young players, has had the opposite effect on Gill. Instead of weighing him down, it has unlocked a sharper, more assured version of himself – a transformation marked not just by runs but by leadership under pressure.

"Especially when you're captain, you need to lead by example," Gill said. "If a good ball gets me out, it gets me out. But as long as I'm there, I want to play as long as possible."

What stood out wasn't just the volume of runs – it was the rhythm. His first-innings 269 was built on patience, timing and classical stroke play. In the second, with India looking to declare, he unleashed his attacking instincts, hammering 161 off just 162 balls with Rishabh Pant-like flair.

"Just as incredible as the numbers are his concentration levels," wrote former England captain Nasser Hussain. "He has elegance too."

But Gill wasn't alone in India's turnaround. After a sloppy fielding effort cost them the opener at Headingley, India were razor-sharp in the field.

Gill himself held a sharp slip catch to dismiss Ben Duckett, and Mohammed Siraj produced a stunning diving grab to remove Josh Tongue. Leading the bowling was Akash Deep, who seized his opportunity with 10 wickets for 187 – the best match figures by an Indian bowler in England.

This was also the first time India managed to level a Test series in England immediately after losing the first match – something they had failed to do in 13 previous attempts.

With three Tests still to play, Gill is now within striking distance of Don Bradman's legendary 974-run series record. But more than numbers, it's his ability to convert pressure into opportunity that suggests Indian cricket may have found its next great leader.

Will women's team receive deserved facilities?

SPORTS REPORTER

If the Bangladesh women's football team had surpassed all expectations by emerging as SAFF champions in 2022, they have completely blown it out of the water in 2025, by qualifying for the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) did not want to waste the occasion of their return from Myanmar and arranged a reception at Hatiirjheel Amphitheatre at the dead of the night on Monday.

The women in red and green looked understandably tired on the stage but not short of enthusiasm and listened intently to the current BFF president Tabith Awal promising to provide all kinds of support for their upcoming "Mission Australia" in next year's March.

"You have accomplished two things: you are making history, and you are taking us forward in our journey to changing our society's mindset," were Tabith's words of praise for the triumphant footballers.

"We, the 18 crore people, are putting our trust in you. We give our commitment that we will support you. Move forward, you don't have to look back. We will extend all of our support, prayers, and expertise for you. Please carry on," he added



"We, the girls of Bangladesh, know how to fight through adversity. Please keep believing in us. We will not let you down. Our goal is to take Bangladesh beyond Asia, to the world stage."

Ritu Porna Chakma

Tabith then concluded his speech with, "From now on, we have only one commitment, one slogan, one tagline: Mission Australia."

It was a strong message from a young leader like Tabith which should make the players feel optimistic about what lies ahead.

However, the BFF had made many lofty promises after the SAFF triumphs in 2022 and 2024 as well, but did not follow through on most of them.

The BFF, no doubt, deserves credit for the team's success as they had provided them with a foreign coach, given them accommodation, sustenance and also a salary.

But what the BFF is yet to provide the girls is a solid domestic structure from where they can earn a decent livelihood and live a better life as the salary provided by the federation is not fitting for a champion team. Moreover, the players have also gone months without receiving even that meagre amount in the past.

Hopefully, this time the BFF will fulfill all of its promises so that in the future, captain Afeda Khandokar would not have to request the BFF women's wing chief Mahfuza Akhter Kiron to clear their wages during an international tournament.

Although the BFF boss did not divulge anything specific about their 'Mission Australia': captain Afeda made a few valid demands while talking to the media in the afternoon, such as better training facilities, better grounds, improved diet, more international friendly matches against strong teams and a domestic women's football league through which female footballers across the country can earn some bucks.

Considering the many challenges the women's team have had to face, the true potential of this team is arguably still unknown. It's about time the BFF steps up with visible initiatives for this team who, according to star player Ritu Porna Chakma, "know how to fight through adversity".

'I've shaken it up': Butler credits regimen change

AGENCIES

Bangladesh women's team head coach Peter Butler admitted he had to bring about a disruption and demand more from his players to elevate their performance, a move that ultimately paid off with a historic qualification for the AFC Women's Asian Cup.

Few had expected Bangladesh to secure a spot at next year's continental tournament in Australia but the women in red and green defied the odds at the qualifiers in Yangon, winning all three group matches – 7-0 against Bahrain, 2-1 against hosts Myanmar, and 7-0 against Turkmenistan – to top their group and clinch one of the 12 places at the finals.

Butler, appointed in early 2024, implemented a new regimen, placing a big focus on fitness, making big demands on the players, asserting discipline had to be at the forefront of his agenda. He also sought to inject fresh blood into the squad.

However, his changes were not without controversy.

A group of senior players revolted earlier this year, sending a letter to the federation demanding his removal. They accused the Englishman of favouritism, team division, making inappropriate remarks about their personal lives, and using insulting language.

Despite the rebellion, Butler ploughed on with his new regimen, prioritising discipline and fitness in his program.

"It had five o'clock wake-up calls, six o'clock starts, 90-minute sessions, high tempo, high-intensity. Not easy," Butler told Reuters on Sunday, before flying to Dhaka.

"I think it was a defining moment of change in Bangladesh football when discipline came into the



frontline where previously there was none. They were put through the mill and they have reaped the rewards."

Reflecting on the state of the team when he took charge, Butler added:

"When I came into the national team ... some of the players were picking themselves. There was no discipline. Unfortunately, if there's no discipline, you're really on the road to nowhere."

In a culture where seniority is highly prized, Butler continued with his mission to bring younger talent through to complement the veterans. More than half of the squad at the qualifiers were under 20 – players he said had not been previously given a chance.

"Young players bring a competitive edge... it takes people out of their comfort zones. That's what I've done, I've shaken it up," he said.

"Our brand of football really surprised a lot of people. You've got to have the belief, and I had the belief in my players."

"I'd like to think I've helped change the women's football landscape in Bangladesh."

Respect for Lara stops Mulder

AFP, BULAWAYO

South Africa captain Wiaan Mulder said respect for Brian Lara convinced him to declare 33 runs short of the former West Indies star's world Test record against Zimbabwe at Queens Sports Club on Monday.

Mulder hammered an unbeaten 367 – a South African record and the fifth highest score in Test cricket – before declaring on 626-5 at lunch on the second day of the second Test.

South Africa's then bundled out Zimbabwe before 170 and were 51-1 in their second innings after being forced to follow on.

"Brian Lara is a legend. He got 401 or whatever it was (it was 400) against England. For someone of that stature to keep the record is pretty special," Mulder said at the close.

"I think if I get the chance again I would do the same again."

Mulder spoke to South African

coach Shukri Conrad who agreed with his decision.

"He said to me as well, let the legend keep the record. I never know what my fate will be but letting Brian Lara keep the record is the way it should be."

Mulder took two wickets and held a catch at slip as Zimbabwe crumbled in reply.

Resuming on 264 not out, Mulder became the second South African triple centurion, reaching the mark off 297 balls – the second-fastest behind India's Virender Sehwag, who took 278 deliveries against South Africa in Chennai in 2007/08.

Mulder went past the previous highest South African individual score of 311 not out by Hashim Amla against England at The Oval in London in 2012.

Mulder faced 334 balls and hit 49 fours and four sixes off an increasingly dispirited and largely toothless Zimbabwe bowling attack.



Novak Djokovic shook off a sluggish start to defeat Alex de Minaur 1-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 and book his 16th Wimbledon quarterfinal spot on Monday, rediscovering his rhythm under the watchful eyes of eight-time champion Roger Federer on Centre Court.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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PROPOSED OWNERSHIP CAPS Foreign telco investors raise concerns

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Leading foreign investors in Bangladesh's telecommunications sector have urged the government to reconsider proposed restrictions on foreign ownership in the upcoming Telecommunications Network and Licensing Reform Policy 2025.

In a letter addressed to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, the CEOs of Axiata Group, Telenor Asia, and VEON warned that the new policy's proposed retroactive caps on foreign ownership could jeopardise future investments and slow the sector's growth.

The letter highlights concerns over a new maximum foreign ownership limit of 80 percent for Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), and tighter caps of 55 percent on other digital infrastructure operators, both proposed to be applied retroactively.

"We are deeply concerned about the proposed imposition of a new maximum foreign ownership limitation of 80 percent Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to be retroactively imposed on present licence holders, in addition to further regressive revisions of existing maximum foreign ownership limits of 55 percent imposed on other digital infrastructure operators, also to be applied with retroactive effect," the letter reads.

They also cautioned against overly prescriptive regulatory mandates such as stringent liberalisation targets and the transfer of international SMS rights to third parties, they said these could raise operational costs

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Govt high-ups
'encouraging
mob violence'
Says left alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Left Democratic Alliance (LDA) has expressed concern over what it termed the indirect endorsement of mob violence by certain government high-ups.

In a statement issued yesterday, the alliance said, "Remarks made by several government authorities are alarming and are serving to encourage mob violence across the country."

The alliance demanded exemplary punishment of those involved in mob attacks, irrespective of political affiliation. It also called for strong action against perpetrators of rape and violence against women.

The statement followed a meeting of the alliance held at its temporary office, located at the central office of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB).

The meeting was presided over by LDA coordinator and CPB General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince.

Other leaders who addressed the meeting

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

**Polls delay will
push nation
backwards
Warns Fakhrul, says
elected-govt needed**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday warned against delaying the upcoming election, saying the fight for democracy is far from over.

Addressing a party gathering in Sylhet, he urged leaders and activists to earn the trust and love of people.

The BNP secretary general thanked Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus for meeting Tarique Rahman, BNP's acting chairman, in London and agreeing on a tentative election timeline around mid-February 2026.

"Let me make it clear -- to the government and to other political parties -- the longer the election is delayed, the further behind Bangladesh will fall," he said while addressing a doa mahfil (prayer gathering) for party founder Ziaul Rahman and Chairman Khaleda Zia as the chief guest in Sylhet's Pathantula area.

"Investments won't come. Our mothers and daughters will be more insecure. Mobocracy will increase. The judicial system will collapse. Law and



SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

**Playing field not
level for nat'l
election
Says Jamaat**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday said a level playing field for the next general election is still absent, and the party will not accept polls in such a situation.

The party, however, clarified that it is not demanding a deferral of the polls, expected to be held by February 2026.

Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, at an event in Rangpur on Friday, condemned recent mob attacks, saying that these incidents have created such an environment that is not conducive to election.

A day later, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said at a programme in Dhaka that the Jamaat was questioning the electoral atmosphere under the interim government because the party wanted to delay the polls.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar faced questions about the issue while talking with reporters during a visit to the Suhrawardy Udyan, the venue of the party's rally scheduled for July 19.

"We never talked about delaying or advancing the election date," he said.

"The Jamaat-e-Islami has clearly said it is ready



SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

**Reform blockers
are to blame for
polls delay
Says Nahid**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

National Citizen Party does not want to delay election, but those who want to delay reforms are delaying the polls, said its Convener Nahid Islam.

"Somebody says the NCP wants to delay the election, this is not right. The NCP wants the polls with reforms. Those who are preventing necessary reforms are trying to delay election," said Nahid while addressing a rally in Pabna town last night as part of the party's nationwide programme "July March to Build the Nation".

He said after the nationwide march ends, the party will hold a mass rally in Dhaka on August 3, demanding justice, reforms, and new constitution.

At the event, Hasnat Abdullah, chief coordinator (south) of NCP, said people do not want to see extortionists, rapists, and corrupt people in politics anymore.

Earlier at a rally in the Sirajganj station area, Nahid urged people not to support them blindly, but to evaluate them for their role in the July movement.

"We are not asking for blind support -- keep your support after proper evaluation. Evaluate who were on the streets, who led the movement against



SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

**9-yr-old's
body found
in a mosque
Police suspect rape
before murder**

STAR REPORT

The body of a nine-year-old girl was found on the second floor of a mosque in Brahmanbaria's Sarail upazila on Sunday morning.

The victim, a fifth grader and daughter of a Bahraini expatriate, had been missing since Saturday afternoon. Police suspect she was raped before being murdered.

According to law enforcers and the victim's family, the child left home around 4:00pm on Saturday and never returned. Her uncle filed a general diary with Sarail Police Station around 1:00am after repeated search efforts failed.

The family, with the help of locals, also announced her disappearance over loudspeakers in the village.

Around 9:00am on Sunday, a group of children attending

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**BTCL 5G NETWORK
Taiyeb bins
corruption
allegations**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, the chief adviser's special assistant for Posts, Telecommunications and ICT, yesterday said neither he nor any current officials overseeing the ministry are involved in any form of corruption.

All activities related to the Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) 5G network infrastructure project were completed under the previous government, he said in a press conference to address the recent media reports concerning his letter to the chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission regarding the continuation of BTCL's 5G readiness project.

Earlier in November 2023, Huawei was awarded the tender for being the lowest bidder at Tk 326 crore.

However, the board of BTCL, the implementing agency, violated procurement laws outlined in the standard tender documents of the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU), the government body responsible for overseeing public procurement, during the process.

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**Another drama
at JP as Quader
fires secy gen
Patwary replaces Chunnu,
Anisul, Hawlader removed**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday replaced Mujibul Haque Chunnu with Shameem Haider Patwary as secretary general.

He also relieved two other senior leaders -- Anisul Islam Mahmud and ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader -- of their duties as senior co-chairman and co-chairman, according to a press release.

Quader's latest move came when his feud with Anisul reached its peak over the party's council and debate over the arbitrary powers of the chairman in line with the party constitution.

Party insiders said the Jatiya Party is on the verge of another split following the removal of the three senior leaders. The party has suffered split at least four times since its formation in 1986.

Relations between Quader and the three leaders deteriorated recently as they spoke against the arbitrary powers of the party chairman through which he can unilaterally make any decision such as appointing or dismissing anyone.

A section of senior leaders had moved to remove



A volunteer looks for missing people, following severe flash flooding that occurred during the July 4 holiday weekend, in Hunt, Texas. The photo was taken on Sunday.

**Texas floods
toll nears 90**

**27 missing girls from youth
camp confirmed dead**

AFP, Hunt

Rescuers in Texas yesterday searched for bodies swept away by flash floods that killed almost 90 people, including 27 girls and counsellors at a summer camp that was destroyed by torrents of water.

The United States was shocked at the disaster over the Fourth of July holiday weekend, and forecasters warned of more flooding as rain continued to fall on saturated ground.

"Our hearts are broken alongside our families that are enduring this unimaginable tragedy," Camp Mystic said in a statement confirming the 27 deaths at the all-girls camp that was located next to a river.

State officials yesterday put the overall number of dead from the flooding at 88, and Texas Senator Ted Cruz told reporters that the toll was continuing to rise.

"Texas is grieving right now -- the pain, the shock of what has transpired these last few days has broken the heart of our state," Cruz told reporters.

"The children, little girls, who were lost at Camp Mystic, that's every parent's nightmare."