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শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

People run to safety as smoke rises following an explosion in Tehran yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Govt urges fuel saving as LNG import cost doubles

Asks people not to panic-buy fuel

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh yesterday secured two LNG cargoes from the international spot market after failing to attract bidders for two consecutive days, although at more than double the normal rate.

The move comes as two scheduled LNG shipments from Qatar remained uncertain due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran, The Daily Star has learnt from Petrobangla officials involved with the proceedings.

One cargo will be delivered at $24.5 per one million British Thermal Units (MMBtu) by VitolAsia and another at $28 per MMbtu by Gunvor.

It cost more than double the usual rate: each shipment would cost about Tk 1,300 crore compared with about Tk 500 crore previously, they said.

Besides, with the view to safeguarding the fuel stock amid a looming global energy crisis, the government yesterday called for conservation of natural gas and fuel oil and urged people to shun panic buying and fuel hoarding.

The country currently has 15 days' stock of petrol and 30 days' octane, while diesel reserves stand at about 12 days, according to officials at the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).

- Adequate petrol, octane in stock
- Demand for diesel spikes, two shipments arrive
- Supply to be cut by 10 percent from today
- Govt secured two shipments of LNG from spot market
- LPG importers spend extra

As per latest data, the country has around 37,000 tonnes of petrol and 53,000 tonnes of octane in stock. Besides, there are local condensate sources for producing such fuel oils.

Though diesel stock is now at around 180,000 tonnes in the depots, two consignments of diesel have already anchored at the port, which contains another 57,000 tonnes combined, according to BPC officials.

Usually, the average daily diesel sales range between 12,000 and 13,000 tonnes, but over the last couple of days, sales have exceeded 20,000 tonnes on average.

About 20 percent of Bangladesh's fuel imports are crude oil shipped through the Strait of Hormuz, while the remaining 80 percent of refined petroleum products are imported from ports in China, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

As a result, although crude oil supply has been disrupted, there is no problem regarding the refined oil. In some cases, the shipments are being delayed, but none of the contracts has been cancelled yet, said an official who was involved with the proceedings.

"There is no major problem with fuel supply, but panic buying is creating some pressure -- people should avoid hoarding fuel," Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku, the power, energy and mineral resources minister, told The Daily Star.

The government has taken precautionary steps to conserve energy so that existing stocks can last longer, he added.

In separate notices, the power, energy and mineral resources ministry and the cabinet division asked all government offices, autonomous bodies and corporations

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Trump backs Kurds for Iran offensive

Says US should have role in choosing Iran's next leader; Tehran says ground invasion would be 'disaster' for foes

AGENCIES

US and Israel pounded Iran and Lebanon yesterday as President Donald Trump encouraged Kurdish opposition groups to go on the offensive against Tehran, potentially opening a dangerous new front in the widening war that may draw in more countries.

Trump, in a telephone interview with Reuters, also said he wants the United States to play a role in choosing Iran's next leader, but opposed the candidacy of late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's son Mojtaba, without elaborating.

His comments came as more tankers were attacked in Gulf waters yesterday amid the escalating war, snarling shipping and energy markets.

Meanwhile, Tehran said it again targeted Kurdish groups in Iraq and warned the "separatist groups" against entering the conflict.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said his country was prepared for any potential ground invasion, saying such a move would spell "disaster" for the Islamic republic's foes.

"We are waiting for them," Araghchi told US broadcaster NBC News. "We are confident that we can confront them and that would be a big disaster for them."

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan became the latest target in the spreading war as Tehran stepped up its attacks on Gulf nations, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain.

"I think it's wonderful that they want to do that, I'd be all for it," Trump said, referring to the floated Kurdish offensive.

Trump declined to say if the United States would provide air cover to Kurdish forces.

Since the United States and Israel launched the war on Saturday, Iran has been striking Iranian Kurdish groups based in autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan whom Tehran accuses of serving Western and Israeli interests.

According to reports, Iranian Kurdish militias have consulted with the US in recent days about whether, and how, to attack Iran's security forces in the western part of the country.

The Iranian Kurdish coalition of groups based on the Iran-Iraq border in the semi-autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan has been training to mount such an attack in

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- Tehran hits Kurdish forces HQ over 'CIA plot'
- Iran FM says no plan to close Strait of Hormuz, for now
- US Senate backs Trump's war powers
- Death toll soars as strikes pound Iran, Lebanon
- Drones target KSA, UAE, Azerbaijan, Qatar, Bahrain
- Australia, European powers to deploy war machines in ME, Cyprus
- US, Israel 'trying to drag' Arab countries into war: Russia

Good governance must be your mantra

TIB also urges govt to cancel BB governor's appointment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday urged the BNP-led government to place anti-corruption and good governance at the top of its reform agenda, saying visible control and prevention of corruption is a precondition for delivering its wider pledges.

"If corruption cannot be controlled and prevented effectively and visibly, the government's other pledges and initiatives will not be implemented in reality," said TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman.

His comment came at a programme styled "Ensuring the highest strategic priority for implementing the BNP-led government's commitments to good governance and anti-corruption" held at the TIB office in the capital.

TIB's proposals were formulated based on four key references: the BNP's 31-point state reform programme, the party's election manifesto, the prime minister's address to the nation and the July Charter signed by the BNP and other political parties.

Iftekharuzzaman urged the government to prepare an integrated strategy and implementation roadmap so that commitments reflected in the four key references do not remain fragmented.

Anti-corruption and good governance measures must be made mandatory in the mainstream of all action plans under the government's five-year work strategy, he said.

Internal resistance could block reforms, as seen under past governments that declared zero tolerance but failed to implement it, he said.

The authorities should identify and map risks, including resistance from within, and take targeted steps to address them.

TIB stressed the need for independent functioning of oversight bodies, including the Election Commission, the ACC and the National Human Rights Commission, with the appointments based on competence rather than political considerations.

In that spirit, Iftekharuzzaman demanded the cancellation of the appointment of Md. Mostaqur Rahman as the Bangladesh Bank governor, citing possible conflicts of interest.

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Khaleda among 15 named for Swadhinata Padak

5 institutions also selected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifteen individuals, including late BNP chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia and late Milestone College teacher Maherin Chowdhury, and five institutions have been selected for this year's Swadhinata Padak, the country's highest state honour.

The government will confer the award in recognition of the recipients' "glorious and outstanding contributions at the national level", said a press release issued by the Cabinet Division yesterday.

Three-time prime minister Khaleda Zia has been selected posthumously for her contributions to democracy, women's education, and nation-building. Khaleda passed away in Dhaka on December 30 last year.

She had long suffered from multiple

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Govt declares 7-day holiday for Eid-ul-Fitr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has extended the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr holidays by a day to include March 18.

This year, the Eid vacation will span seven days, beginning with the Shab-e-Qadr holiday on March 17 and ending on March 23.

The decision to add March 18 as an extra holiday was approved at a cabinet meeting held at the Secretariat yesterday.

After the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Nasimul Ghani stated that the government took this decision to ensure people can travel home comfortably for Eid and return to work without disruption.

Eid-ul-Fitr is likely to be observed on March 21, subject to moon sighting.

Based on this possible date, the Ministry of Public Administration had earlier fixed five days of holiday from March 19 to March 23.

Under that schedule, March 21 would be a general holiday marking Eid, while March 19 and 20 (before Eid) and March 22 and 23 (after Eid) were to be observed as holidays by executive order.

Women sidelined in national politics

Experts regret 4% candidates were female

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts and politicians have raised alarm over the fact that women made up only around four percent of the candidates in the 13th national election.

Referring to the seven women who were elected as members of parliament, they said overcoming obstacles to participating and winning in the polls carries special significance for women in politics

To ensure women's participation in politics and policymaking, coordinated initiatives must be taken, they added.

Speakers made these remarks at a dialogue and award ceremony titled "Ensuring Women's Leadership and Protection in Politics".

Ahead of International Women's Day on March 8, ActionAid Bangladesh and Prothom Alo jointly organised the event at a city hotel yesterday.

At the programme, women who contested the February 12 election shared their experiences.

"If women are vital as voters, why is their leadership always questioned?" asked Rasheda K Chowdhury, executive director, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

"We are yet to accord women the dignity they deserve. Our nation was founded on equality, yet women are being sidelined," she added.

Rumeen Farhana, who won as an independent candidate from Brahmanbaria-2, delivered a scathing critique of societal double standards.

"We are ready to see strong women as daughters or sisters, but not

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ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন
নগর ভবন, ৫, ফিনিক্স রোড, রমনা, ঢাকা

মশক নিয়ন্ত্রণে প্রয়োজন জনগণের অংশগ্রহণ

নিয়মিত প্রতিদিন জমা পানি ফেলে দিন

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের আওতাধীন এলাকার দীর্ঘদিনের নানাবিধ সমস্যা জনগণের সক্রিয় অংশগ্রহণ ও নাগরিক সম্পৃক্ততার মাধ্যমে টেকসই সমাধানের লক্ষ্যে ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের মাননীয় প্রশাসক বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা মোঃ আবদুস সালাম প্রতি শনিবার সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকাল ৩:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (রমজান ব্যতিত সময় ১০:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা) নগর ভবনস্থ তার কার্যালয়ে সর্বসাধারণের সাথে মতবিনিময়কল্পে 'পাবলিক হেয়ারিং ডে' হিসেবে পালন করবেন।

০২। ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের সম্মানিত নাগরিকগণকে 'পাবলিক হেয়ারিং ডে' তে মাননীয় প্রশাসক মহোদয়ের সহিত মত বিনিময়ের জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

নিজ আঙ্গিনা পরিষ্কার রাখি, সবাই মিলে সুস্থ থাকি

কর্তৃপক্ষ
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৯১/২০২৫-২০২৬

GD-506

Pro-BNP transport workers' leader murdered in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

A pro-BNP transport workers' leader was shot dead by unidentified criminals in Khulna city on Wednesday night.

Deceased Masum Billah, 55, was the former president of Rupsha upazila unit of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal and former president of the Rupsha–Bagerhat inter-district road transport workers' union.

He hailed from Bagmara village in Rupsha upazila.

Quoting witnesses, police said Masum was standing near Dakbangla intersection in the city around 9:00pm when a group of people opened fire on him. They also stabbed him.

Injured Masum was taken to the Khulna Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead, said police.

Mohammad Tazul Islam, deputy commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, said traffic police, with the help of locals, detained a suspect while he was fleeing the scene.

Six to seven attackers were involved in the killing, he said.

A plume of smoke rises over buildings in Doha after a drone strike; mourners in the city of Kerman attend the funeral of those killed in the US-Israeli war with Iran; and protesters carry placards reading "Hands off Iran!" as they march toward the US embassy during a rally condemning the US and Israeli attacks on Iran in Seoul. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS, AFP**

Writ petition challenges Ahsan H Mansur's removal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed yesterday with the High Court challenging the legality of the government's decision to remove Ahsan H Mansur from the post of Bangladesh Bank governor and appoint Md Mostaqur Rahman in his place.

Supreme Court lawyer Abdullah Al Mamun submitted the petition as a public interest litigation. The petition also seeks a stay on the government order that ended Ahsan H Mansur's tenure and installed Mostaqur Rahman as the new head of the central bank.

The government's decision violated the relevant provisions of the Bangladesh Bank Order, 1972, said Sarwar Hossain, counsel for the petitioner.

According to the law, a BB governor cannot be removed from office unless they are found to be incapable or incompetent.

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Trump backs Kurds for Iran offensive

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hopes of weakening the country's military.

The forces are in talks with the United States about CIA help to provide weapons, they added.

Tehran yesterday carried out a drone strike on the headquarters of Iraq-based Kurdish groups, killing one.

CNN was the first to report on the CIA's involvement with the groups. Axios said this week that Trump held a telephone call with two of Iraqi Kurdistan's top leaders.

Iran's military yesterday also claimed an attack on a base hosting US troops in Erbil in northern Iraq using drones, causing "significant damage".

Trump also signalled confidence that the major shipping route near Iran, the Strait of Hormuz, will remain open.

Closing the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow chokepoint between Iran and Oman through which a fifth of the world's crude oil and liquefied natural gas passes, has been one of Iran's main objectives, and shipping through the crucial energy artery has ground to a near halt after Iranian hits on six vessels.

"They have no navy, you know, the navy is now at the bottom of the sea," Trump said. "I'm watching Hormuz very closely."

Araghchi yesterday said that the Islamic republic was neither asking for a ceasefire nor negotiations with the US, adding that Iran had no plans to close the Strait of Hormuz for now.

Meanwhile, the US Senate backed Trump's military campaign against Iran. The US Senate voted 53 to 47 not to advance the bipartisan resolution aimed at stopping the war, largely along party lines.

The House was expected to vote on a similar Iran war powers resolution later yesterday. Even if a resolution were to pass both the Senate and House, it would not go into effect unless it could garner two-thirds majorities in both chambers to survive an expected Trump veto.

The war has touched as far afield as the Sri Lankan coast, where a US submarine torpedoed an Iranian warship, killing at least 87 sailors, and Azerbaijan, which threatened retaliation after a drone hit an airport.

Iran denied it launched the drone attack on Azerbaijan.

In Lebanon, AFPTV images showed buildings in rubble and plumes of black smoke over Beirut after Israeli strikes aimed at Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, Australia deployed two military aircraft in the Middle East, while Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney said he could not rule out his armed forces taking part in hostilities.

The United Kingdom said it will send helicopters with anti-drone capabilities to Cyprus. Britain is also deploying HMS Dragon to the eastern Mediterranean, as well as four additional Typhoon fighter jets to Qatar.

Earlier, Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto told parliament that Italy, Spain, France, and the Netherlands are sending naval assets to Cyprus to protect the island in the coming days.

The war has also dragged in Nato member Turkey after Nato air defences destroyed a missile launched from Iran heading towards Turkish airspace.

Meanwhile, the European Union and the Gulf nations yesterday issued a joint statement urging "dialogue and diplomacy" to resolve the ongoing war.

"The ministers reiterated their commitment to regional stability and called for protection of civilians and full respect of international law," said the EU and GCC, following a videoconference of European and Gulf foreign ministers.

Following yesterday's strikes on Tehran, AFPTV images showed blackened vehicles and mangled buildings, with smoke still rising from some.

Iran's official IRNA news agency said 1,045 military personnel and civilians have been killed since the war began on Saturday, a toll AFP could not independently verify.

Iranian media yesterday reported that a sports complex, football stadium, municipality building, and shop fronts across Tehran were damaged in Israeli and US strikes on the city.

The country is effectively cut off from the rest of the world, with the internet operating at around one percent of capacity, according to the Netblocks monitor.

Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz said his US counterpart Pete Hegseth had assured him of Washington's firm backing for their joint military campaign against Iran and urged him to continue the operation "to the end".

Israel's military said its air force had hit and disabled more than 300 ballistic missile launchers in Iran since the war began.

Hamish Falconer, the UK's minister for the Middle East, told parliament that it was possible the Iran crisis could continue for months.

Meanwhile, AFP reporters in Jerusalem heard explosions following warnings of incoming Iranian missile fire, but residents were quickly cleared to leave their shelters.

Across the border in Lebanon, Israel said its forces had hit "several command centres belonging to the Hezbollah terrorist organisation" in south Beirut.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) said a separate pre-dawn Israeli drone strike hit an apartment in Beddawi, a Palestinian refugee camp near Tripoli, killing senior Hamas official Wassim Atallah al-Ali and his wife.

Lebanese authorities said at least 102 people had been killed, 437 wounded, and tens of thousands displaced from their homes since Monday.

The war could usher in a "prolonged period of flux" for the global economy, warned International Monetary Fund chief Kristalina Georgieva.

The conflict has not spared the rich Gulf monarchies, usually seen as a safe haven in a volatile region, as Iran has lashed out at cities and energy infrastructure.

Thirteen people, seven of them civilians, have been killed in countries around the Gulf since the war began, including an 11-year-old girl in Kuwait.

Qatar yesterday said it intercepted 14 ballistic missiles and four drones as loud blasts reverberated across Doha. It had earlier evacuated residents living near the US embassy in Doha after thwarting attacks on Hamad International Airport.

Falling debris from an intercepted drone also injured six people in the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi, officials said.

Riyadh also said it intercepted Iranian missiles and drones yesterday.

Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Ministry yesterday accused the US and Israel of "trying to drag" Arab nations into war with their strikes on Iran. The ministry said the only path to stabilisation was to stop the attacks on Iran, but there were no signs for now of this happening.

Khaleda among 15

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health complications, including liver cirrhosis.

Khaleda was the first female prime minister of Bangladesh. She assumed office through a popular vote in the 1991 national election and played a key role in introducing the parliamentary form of government.

Maherin Chowdhury, a teacher and coordinator at the Diabari campus of Milestone College, has also been awarded posthumously in the social service and public service category for her heroic actions.

She died after sustaining 100 percent burns while rescuing at least 20 students when a Bangladesh Air Force F-7 fighter jet crashed into the primary section of Milestone School and College on July 21 last year. She succumbed to her injuries at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery later that day.

Talking to The Daily Star, her husband Monsur Helal said the honour reflects the respect and love of the entire nation.

"As human beings, many of us might wish we could take such a brave step in that moment. She was able to do it, and the nation has given her this recognition for that."

Helal added, "This honour actually belongs to all 180 million people of Bangladesh. I believe it was a heartfelt wish of the nation, and perhaps that wish has now been fulfilled."

Other individual recipients include Major Mohammad Abdul Jalil (posthumous) for his role in the Liberation War, Professor Zahurul Karim for contributions to science and technology, Dr Ashraf Siddiqui (posthumous) in literature, Hanif Sanket (AKM Hanif) and Bashir Ahmed (posthumous) in culture, and Jobera Rahman (Linu) in sports.

In rural development, the Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) has been selected.

Several others will be honoured in social service and public service, including Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury (posthumous), Md Saidul Haque, SOS Children's Village International in Bangladesh, and Gonoshasthaya Kendra. Kazi Fazlur Rahman (posthumous) has been selected for contributions to public administration.

Zafrullah Chowdhury received the award once in 1977, the year it was first introduced, and since then no one has ever been honoured twice.

In the field of research and training, Mohammad Abdul Baki, Prof MA Rahim, and Prof Sukomal Barua have been named recipients. Abdul Mukit Majumder (Mukit Majumder Babu) will receive the award for environment conservation.

Faujdarhat Cadet College has been honoured for its role in the Liberation War.

Women sidelined

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as partners in change," she said, calling for an end to the "good girl" stereotype that stifles political ambition.

Supporting this, Nayab Yusuf Ahmed, the BNP candidate who won from Faridpur-3, highlighted how marginalised women are denied basic rights, with their vulnerabilities "exploited to confine them within the home".

Tasnim Jara, who contested independently from Dhaka-9, exposed the political machinery that treats women as tokens, not decision-makers.

She noted that while women drive grassroots campaigning, "male-dominated structures" systematically block them during the nomination stage.

She also critiqued the reserved seat system, arguing it renders women "more accountable to party leadership than to voters."

Leader of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist) Sima Dutta said that women are often treated as third-class citizens across sectors, from agriculture to garments.

She called for equal pay, legal recognition of women in the informal sector and stronger government action against discriminatory attitudes.

The dialogue also highlighted a chilling rise in violence against women.

Morium Nessa, Lead for Women's Rights at ActionAid, presented data showing a 52.3 percent increase in reported rape cases in 2025 compared to 2024.

In January 2026 alone, 272 cases of violence against women and girls were reported.

Furthermore, the dialogue revealed a massive institutional failure: 39 percent of the country's universities still lack sexual harassment prevention committees.

ActionAid Country Director Farah Kabir hailed the candidates as the "bravest citizens" for navigating hostile conditions.

"We do not seek only an increase in numbers. We seek meaningful change. Ensuring women's safety and dignity remains the greatest challenge," she said.

Meanwhile, Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman admitted that civil society and the media could have offered stronger support to independent women candidates.

Expressing optimism that women's participation and visible presence in the next election will increase significantly, he said, "If we all work together in the days ahead, we can play a more effective role in strengthening women's leadership."

The session concluded with a call for stricter enforcement of laws against gender-based violence, robust cyber-safety measures, and a genuine shift in party cultures to move beyond "lip service" to equality.

A highlight of the event was an interactive forum theatre performance titled "Chena Porobash" presented by theatre group Palakar.

Through drama, the performance illustrated child marriage, workplace harassment and the challenges faced by women candidates during elections.

Among those present were the British High Commission's Social Development Adviser Tahera Jabeen, Sharmin Islam, Gender Team Leader at the United Nations Development Programme Bangladesh, Korvi Rakshand, founder of JAAGO Foundation, and Sadaf Saaz of the National Political Rights Forum.

Women candidates present included Meghna Alam of Ganodhikar Parishad, Taslima Akter of Ganosamhati Andolon, independent candidate Anwara Islam Rani, Barrister Nasrin Sultana Mili of AB Party, and Arifa Akter Baby of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal.

Govt urges saving fuel as LNG import cost doubles

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to adopt strict energy-saving practices, including limiting lighting and setting air conditioners at 25 degrees Celsius or higher.

The directives also urged households, institutions and businesses to conserve natural gas and fuel oil by avoiding unnecessary use, preventing gas leakages and encouraging the use of public transport and carpooling to reduce fuel consumption.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman also instructed the ministers and secretaries to practice austerity in the use of electricity and fuel.

He asked cabinet members and secretaries who live in the same residential buildings to consider using shared transport when commuting to and from the Secretariat, as part of broader efforts to reduce fuel consumption.

The meeting happened in reduced lighting, as part of the government's austerity drives to conserve electricity and energy.

The Daily Star visited two separate cabinet members after the meeting and found both working by using daylight through open curtains and having their air conditioning systems set to 25 degrees Celsius.

Queue of vehicles trying to buy fuel at a filling station near Asad Gate yesterday.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

And yet, fears of a possible fuel shortage triggered panic buying in Dhaka yesterday, with long queues of private cars and motorcycles seen at petrol pumps across the capital.

At several stations, the lines of vehicles stretched beyond the pump premises onto nearby roads, causing traffic congestion and requiring additional traffic police intervention.

The pressure on pumps has more than doubled in recent days, said Mohammad Nazmul Haque, president of the Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers, Distributors, Agents and Petrol Pump Owners Association.

"It's happening everywhere across the country. Earlier, if a vehicle usually took 10 litres, now it is filling the tank. Even motorcycles that normally buy very small amounts are filling up."

If this panic buying continues, the fuel stock could be exhausted in 10 days even if the government maintains enough to last a month normally.

The fuel supply remained normal until noon yesterday.

"After that, we received instructions that supply would be reduced by about 10 percent, compared with the amount sold during March–May last year," he added.

Meanwhile, bottled liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) importers yesterday met with Tuku at his office and informed him that they were facing difficulties importing LPG, including problems in opening letters of credit.

A cargo containing 10,000 tonnes of LPG had halted its journey near Sri Lanka after a ship was attacked in the area, they said.

Another cargo carrying 35,000 tonnes of LPG was on its way, which may help achieve the target of importing 150,000 tonnes of LPG in March.

However, shipping costs have nearly doubled compared with the usual rates.

Subsequently, they urged the ministry to increase LPG prices.

In response, Tuku said the matter would be considered by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission but urged businesses not to increase prices on their own.

Good governance

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He questioned Mostaqur's ability to independently perform the central bank's regulatory role.

"To ensure Bangladesh Bank functions independently, impartially and without conflicts of interest, the appointment of the newly designated governor must be revoked," he said, while urging the government to appoint a qualified, conflict-free replacement and warned that the appointment process had raised serious concerns.

Similarly, ACC should be formed through a proper search process, with competent and experienced persons free from partisan influence, and that its membership should be increased from three to five.

The ACC Ordinance 2025 must be amended to address "key gaps", including shifting the authority to nominate the opposition representative in the ACC selection committee from the speaker to the leader of the opposition.

Iftekharuzzaman called for transparency over the 130-odd ordinances issued during the interim government's tenure.

The government should publicly explain, with reasons, which ordinances would be placed before the parliament and which would not.

He also warned against an "this is our turn now" culture among sections of party activists, supporters, business groups, the bureaucracy and professional bodies.

The leadership must send a clear message that corruption would not be tolerated and that integrity must begin within the party and the government.

TIB reiterated its demand to abolish Rab and called for investigations and exemplary punishment over allegations of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, corruption and abuse of power.

It also sought repeal of the Police Commission Ordinance 2025, saying it failed to meet expectations, and called for a new law to establish an independent police commission through stakeholder consultations.

It sought reforms to intelligence agencies, including the DGFI, SB, DB and NSI, and urged the government to form the Information Commission without delay.

TIB's recommendations also included a national anti-corruption strategy assigning responsibilities across state institutions, regulators, the public and private sectors, and the media, along with an ombudsman mechanism to monitor compliance and implementation.

It called for a code of conduct for the members of parliament and other public representatives to prevent the abuse of power, extortion, grabbing and partisan misuse of office.

The other proposals included a permanent legal end to black money whitening, a conflict-of-interest legal framework for public decision-makers and Bangladesh joining the Common Reporting Standard for the automatic exchange of financial account information.

TIB also recommended stopping government employees from taking part, directly or indirectly, in any political activities.

Verdict on Abu Sayed killing on April 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday fixed April 9 for delivering the verdict in the crimes against humanity case over the killing of Begum Rokeya University student Abu Sayed during the July 2024 uprising in Rangpur.

On January 28, the prosecution and defence concluded arguments in the case.

Yesterday, the three-member tribunal led by Justice Md Nozrul Islam Chowdhury set the date for delivering the judgement.

In this case, the accused, including the former vice-chancellor of BRU Md Hasibur Rashid, former Rangpur Metropolitan Police commissioner Md Moniruzzaman, and 28 others, faced charges of murder, attempted murder, abetment, and complicity in crimes against humanity.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Young women browse through books at the ongoing Amar Ekushey Book Fair at Dhaka's Suhrawardy Udyan. Although the crowd turnout this year is lower than usual, visitors with a habit of exploring the fair continue to do so, inspiring others along the way. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

133 interim govt ordinances to be placed in JS

Some may face further scrutiny, say cabinet sources

BAHARAM KHAN

The government has decided to place 133 ordinances -- issued during the tenure of the interim government -- before Parliament.

According to government sources, the decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Secretariat yesterday.

The ordinances were originally promulgated under Article 93(1) of the Constitution, which allows the president to issue laws in emergency situations when Parliament is not in session.

Under constitutional rules, any ordinance must be placed before Parliament within 30 days of the start of a session; otherwise, it loses its legal validity.

Cabinet sources said the ordinances will be reviewed once tabled. Those considered necessary will be converted into formal laws, with amendments if required.

Ordinances that do not conflict with the Constitution and align with the BNP's election manifesto may be enacted without amendments.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

75% women leave jobs for motherhood, family duties

Shows 1200 applicants' data from BRAC's BRIDGE programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Professional women in Bangladesh often face interruptions in their careers, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Around 75 percent of them leave the workforce mainly due to family responsibilities and motherhood, according to an applicants' survey conducted by BRAC.

BRAC's Chief People and Culture Officer Moutushi Kabir shared the findings at a media briefing yesterday at BRAC Centre Inn in Dhaka's Mohakhali.

The information was taken from data provided by 1200 applicants, who applied for the BRAC's Bridge Returnship programme.

BRAC has relaunched the programme to support professional women returning to the workforce following a break.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

'Conviction rate in rape cases close to zero'

Over 10,000 cases unresolved for more than 5 years, says Rape Law Reform Coalition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 10 lakh cases are currently pending in the country's Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals, with over 10,000 rape cases remaining unresolved for more than five years.

Expressing deep concern over the massive backlog and the prolonged judicial process, the Rape Law Reform Coalition -- a group of 17 legal and rights organisations -- has demanded sweeping reforms to existing rape laws, as well as the judicial and law enforcement systems.

Calling the 109 national helpline only plays a welcome message without connecting callers to any actual assistance. Also, the One-Stop Crisis Centres close early. If a survivor knocks on the OCC door after 2:00pm and finds it closed, nothing could be more horrific.

KAMRUN NAHAR
A member of the coalition

The coalition, in collaboration with Feminist Opportunity Now, raised the demands at a press conference held at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) in the capital's Segunbagicha yesterday.

Addressing the event, Shashwatee Biplob, associate director of BRAC's Gender Justice and Diversity programme, highlighted the bleak conviction rate. "The conviction rate in rape cases is less than 1 percent, which is close to zero," she said.

Zakia Anarkoli, vice president of the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association, pointed to police non-cooperation when victims try to file general diaries (GD).

Sharing her experience, she said police often force complainants

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

'Welfare funds by registered bodies not extortion'

Rabiul reiterates earlier claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Shaikh Rabiul Alam yesterday reiterated that it's not "extortion" if registered associations for transport owners and workers collect funds for organisational welfare.

Saying there is no scope for exploitation during Eid travel, the minister said, "However, if associations for [transport] owners or workers collect funds for their welfare in a lawful manner, it cannot be called extortion."

He made the remarks while speaking to reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting on Eid travel arrangements at the Secretariat.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

'Let my mother know I am here'

Survivor recounts horrors of secret detention at ICT-1

SHARIFUL ISLAM *and* SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

A haunting message scrawled on the wall of a secret detention cell has revealed the grim reality of enforced disappearances, a survivor told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

Freedom fighter Iqbal Chowdhury, testifying as the fourth witness in a high-profile crimes against humanity case, described the windowless cell at DGFI's Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) as roughly 15 to 16 feet high, with a single overhead light.

The walls, he said, were marked with brick scratches and blood-like red stains bearing desperate messages from previous detainees.

One inscription, written beneath a Banglalink mobile phone number, read: "If any brother sees this, please call this number and tell my mother

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Anis Alamgir gets bail from HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail to senior journalist Anis Alamgir in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

The bench of Justice KM Zahid Sarwar and Justice Sheikh Abu Taher delivered the verdict after final hearing of a petition filed by Anis Alamgir seeking bail in the case.

However, Anis cannot get released from jail as he is still arrested in a corruption case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission, said his lawyer Md Aslam Miah.

He said Anis was picked up from a gym in Dhaka's Dhanmondi and taken to the DB office on December 14 last year.

The following day, Arian Ahmed, a central organiser of the July Revolutionary Alliance, filed the case with Uttara West Police Station under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Anis was accused of making provocative statements on Facebook and talk shows against Grameen Bank, established by Prof Muhammad Yunus, said lawyer Aslam Miah, adding that the allegation does not fall under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009.

People from low-income groups buy food items such as dates and chickpeas from a government-run TCB truck. With food prices rising during Ramadan, many families rely on these subsidised goods. The photo was taken in the capital's Shahbagh area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

10 killed, 476 injured in post-polls violence

Says Odhikar report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people were killed and 476 injured in 104 incidents of post-election violence across the country between February 13 and 28, according to rights organisation Odhikar.

The latest figures were released on Wednesday under Odhikar's ongoing project, "Supporting the Restoration of Democracy: Monitoring and Reporting Electoral Violence in Bangladesh", supported by the European Partnership for Democracy.

The report states that 28 percent of the incidents -- 29 in total -- involved factional clashes within the BNP and its splinter groups. These confrontations alone resulted in four fatalities and 136 injuries.

Victims included BNP activists and their affiliates, supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami, Awami League backers, followers of BNP-aligned independent candidates, and non-partisan civilians.

Regionally, Khulna division recorded the highest number of casualties, with three deaths and 191 injuries.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Question Rizwana, Khalilur over 'election engineering'

Demands Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami has demanded that Syeda Rizwana Hasan, a former adviser to the interim government, and Khalilur Rahman, former security adviser who currently serves as the country's foreign minister, be questioned and put on trial over allegations of "election engineering".

The demands were made yesterday at a press conference at the party's central office in Dhaka's Moghbazar, where Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer and Deputy Leader of the Opposition Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher spoke about the country's political situation.

Taher alleged that remarks made by Rizwana during a conversation with a journalist suggested interference in the electoral process.

Referring to her comments, he said they implied that certain political parties were not allowed to emerge as a "main force" in national politics, which he described as "an admission of election engineering".

"We want to know from the then interim government and the present government whether there was any

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Let my mother know I am here

FROM PAGE 3

that I have been brought here from Rupganj and kept detained."

Chowdhury recounted spending days that turned into months surrounded by the pleas of unknown captives, whose anguish remained etched on the walls.

The case against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 12 others, including her former defence adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, five former directors general of DGFI, and five directors of DGFI's Counter Terrorism and Intelligence Bureau (CTIB), involves allegations of enforced disappearance, secret detention, and torture of at least 24 individuals at the JIC between 2016 and August 2024.

Iqbal testified that he was abducted from his Mohammadpur home on May 7, 2018, and taken to the secret cell, where he endured inhuman torture.

After two days in confinement, two men took him for a bath. When he asked why none of his relatives had contacted him and when he would be produced in court, they replied, "No one from outside can enter this place, and no one who comes here can leave either. Here is the court, and here the judgement is delivered."

He was eventually released on April 25, 2019, nearly a year later. By then, two of his elder sisters had died, and his younger brother had passed away just 40 days before his release.

During his detention, Iqbal said he was repeatedly blindfolded and taken to a cold, air-conditioned interrogation room. There, men questioned him about his background, education, and connections with military officers and police officials. They also interrogated him about Facebook posts critical of the Awami League government and India. The witness said he did not oppose the government but criticised and wrote against India's influence in Bangladesh.

He described brutal physical torture. On one occasion, an interrogator beat his knees, shins, and ankles with a thick stick until he screamed in pain. On another, clips were attached to his left ring finger and ear, and electric shocks were administered, leaving his fingernail damaged and part of his left hand partially numb.

At one point, he overheard an interrogator speaking in Hindi, calling him "a dangerous man, very talented and intelligent," leading him to suspect the man to be an Indian.

One day, he heard election announcements and a local funeral notice mentioning Kafrul. From these random announcements outside, he later sensed that he was being held inside or near the cantonment area where the DGFI headquarters is located.

Iqbal said an interrogator eventually informed him that orders to release him had come "from the highest level", but he was warned to never reveal what had happened. He was instructed to fabricate a story denying knowledge of who had taken him or where he had been held.

Blindfolded and handcuffed, he was driven for about 20 minutes and dropped near the Shia Mosque area in Mohammadpur.

Addressing the tribunal, Iqbal said he was seeking justice for the mental and physical torture and enforced disappearance he endured. He placed responsibility on the authorities in power at the time, including Sheikh Hasina, Tarique Ahmed Siddique, DGFI leadership, and the officials who ran the interrogation cell. "I want justice for what was done to me," he told the court.

SC chamber judge stays Ivy's bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday stayed the High Court orders that on February 26 granted ad-interim bail to Selina Hayat Ivy, former mayor of Narayanganj City Corporation, in five cases, including four over murder, filed in connection with the July uprising.

Justice Md Rezaul Haque, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, passed the stay orders following five separate petitions filed by the state challenging the HC orders of bail.

The apex court chamber judge also sent the state's petitions to its full bench for their detailed hearing on March 9, Advocate SM Hridoy Rahman, a lawyer for Ivy, told The Daily Star.

Earlier in November last year, the Appellate Division has stayed the HC bail orders, he said.

NOTICE FOR EXTENSION OF SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Expression of Interest (EOI) Franchise Ownership Rights
Women 's Bangladesh Premier League T 20 (WBPL T20)

Bangladesh Cricket Board

Ref: BCB/Franchise Ownership Rights /WBPL T20/ 2026/172 (Ka)
Date: 06th March 2026

EXTENSION OF EOI SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Reference is made to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) previously published Expression of Interest (EOI) notice dated **18th February 2026**, inviting reputed Business Houses/Companies /Agencies/Consortiums for acquiring the **Franchise Ownership Rights of the Women's Bangladesh Premier League T20 (WBPL T20)** for the inaugural edition.

This is to inform all concerned that the submission deadline has been extended to **Sunday, 08th March 2026.** All other terms and conditions of the EOI shall remain unchanged.

WBPL Governing Council
Bangladesh Cricket Board
Management Office : Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka-1216

Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Lalmonirhat.
+Tel: 0591-61770, FAX: 0591-61770
email: eerhdlal@yahoo.com, eelal@rhd.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

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

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Executive Engineer(PE), RHD, Road Division, Lalmonirhat for:

Construction of Rigid Pavement Under PMP Major of Tista Toll Plaza at 23rd Km (P) of Rangpur-Barabari-Kurigram (N-506) National Highway Road under Road Division, Lalmonirhat during the year 2025-2026.

Sl no	Tender ID no	Tender ref., no	Tender last selling	Tender closing/opening date	Procurement Method
1.	1235999	eGP-28/EE/LRD/PMP Major Road/2025-2026	29-Mar-2026 17:00	30-Mar-2026 12:30	OTM

4.3.26
(Md Azharul Islam)
ID No. 602306
Executive Engineer(C.C.), RHD
Road Division, Lalmonirhat.

Reference No. 590
Date:- 04-03-2026

GD-503

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Amtali Govt. Technical School & College, Amtali, Borguna.
e-mail : amtoligovtsc@gmail.com, Web :www.shtsc.barguna.gov.bd
Memo No: 37.03.0409.001.07.04.26.40 Date: 04-03-2026

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

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

Tender ID	Description of *Goods*	'Tender opening date & time
1216859	Supply of Cleaning items(Code: 3211102)	16/03/2026 Time: 16.00
1216860	Supply & Installation of Computer Accessories (Code: 3255101)	16/03/2026 Time: 16.00
1216861	Supply of Other Stationery (Code: 3255105)	16/03/2026 Time: 16.00
1216862	Supply of Raw Materials & Spare Parts (Code: 3256105))	16/03/2026 Time: 16.00
1216863	Supply & Installation of Engineering & Others Machineries (Code: 4112304)	16/03/2026 Time: 16.00
1216866	Supply & Installation of Office Accessories (Code: 4112310)	16/03/2026 Time: 16.00
1216865	Supply & Installation of Teaching & Learning Materials (Code: 4112312)	16/03/2026 Time: 16.00
1216866	Supply & Installation of Furniture (Code: 4112314)	16/03/2026 Time: 16.00

This is online Tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

Md Mahbubur Rahman
Principal
Amtali Govt. Technical School & College, Amtali, Borguna. Phone - 01711106714

GD-495

APARTMENT SALE
Own 4450 sft south-facing luxury apartment in Gulshan North With infinity pool, movie room, BBQ, Gym facilities and marble floors.
Cont: 01970555542

– দুর্লভ এ গ্রন্থটি পাওয়া যাচ্ছে –

প্রসিদ্ধ পাবলিশার্স

অমর একুশে বইমেলা ২০২৬

স্টল নং : ৫১৬-১৭

এম এ সামাদের সার্বিক ব্যবস্থাপনায় এবং ফওজিয়া সামাদের সম্পাদনায় ১৯৪৯ সালে বাংলা ভাষায় প্রকাশিত শিশু-কিশোরদের প্রথম পত্রিকা মাসিক মিনার। মিনার ইতিহাসের একটি উল্লেযোগ্য অংশ। শিশু-কিশোর সাহিত্যের ঐতিহাসিক পটভূমিতে এই পত্রিকাটির রয়েছে একটি উজ্জ্বল অধ্যায়। পূর্ব পাকিস্তান ও পশ্চিমবঙ্গের শ্রেষ্ঠ লেখকদের উন্নতমানের লেখায় জ্ঞান ও সৃজনশীলতার বর্ণিল ভান্ডার হিসেবে মিনার অল্প সময়েই পাঠকপ্রিয়তা অর্জন করে।

মিনার সমগ্রে যারা লিখেছেন:
ডক্টর মুহম্মদ শহীদুল্লাহ, ডক্টর মুহম্মদ কুদরত-এ-খুদা, শ্রী অন্নদা শংকর রায়, ডক্টর সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলী, অধ্যক্ষ ইব্রাহীম খান, কবি জসীমউদ্দীন, শিল্পাচার্য জয়নুল আবেদীন, সৈয়দ ওয়ালীউল্লাহ, কবি কাদের নওয়াজ, সৈয়দ আলী আহসান, শওকত ওসমান, সৈয়দ আব্দুস সুলতান, এম. এ. আজম, বেগম সুফিয়া কামাল, কবি আহসান হাবিব, মোহাম্মদ ওয়াজেদ আলী, মোহাম্মদ মোদাব্বের, কামরুল হাসান, ডক্টর আব্দুল্লাহ আল-মুতী শরফদ্দিন, হাবিবুর রহমান, ফতেহ লোহানী, আব্দুল আহাদ, নাজির আহমদ, রোকনুজ্জামান খান (দাদাভাই), আবু জাফর ওবায়দুল্লাহ, এস. এম. আলী, মুহম্মদ মকসুদ আলী, এ. এস. মাহমুদ, মহবুব আনাম, জিয়াউল হক (টুলু), ডক্টর মুস্তফা নূরউল ইসলাম, ডক্টর আশ্রাফ সিদ্দিকী, এনায়েত উল্লাহ খান, নুরুল হোসেন খান, ফারুক চৌধুরী, ইনাম আহমদ চৌধুরী, রাবেয়া খাতুন, দিলারা হাশেম, সলমা চৌধুরী, মোহাম্মদ আব্দুল হক, লেঃ কর্ণেল ডাঃ এ রহমান, মোফাজ্জল হোসেন।

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer
Itna Upazila Health Complex
Kishoreganj

Memo No. UHC/Itna/2026/219 Date: 05-Mar-2026

e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of goods	Document last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Opening date and time
1142733	UHC/ITNA/KISHOR/MSR - MEDICINE/2025-2026/01	Procurement of Non EDCL Medicine	15-Mar-2026 16:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00
1142732	UHC/ITNA/KISHOR/MSR - EQUIPMENT/2025-2026/02	Procurement of Surgical Equipments	15-Mar-2026 16:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00
1142731	UHC/ITNA/KISHOR/MSR - GAUZE/2025-2026/03	Procurement of Gauze, Bandage and Cotton etc.	15-Mar-2026 16:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00
1142730	UHC/ITNA/KISHOR/MSR - LINEN/2025-2026/04	Procurement of Linen	15-Mar-2026 16:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00
1142729	UHC/ITNA/KISHOR/MSR - CHEMICALS/2025-206/05	Procurement of Chemical Reagents	15-Mar-2026 16:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00
1142728	UHC/ITNA/KISHOR/MSR - FURNITURE/2025-206/06	Procurement of Medical Furniture	15-Mar-2026 16:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00	16-Mar-2026 11:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

05.03.2026
Dr. Bidhan Chandra Debnath
UH&FPO
Itna Upazila Health Complex
Kishoreganj

GD-499

IRAN'S ONE-WAY DRONES

US defences may not stop full barrage

Say top military officials

CNN ONLINE

Trump administration officials told lawmakers during a closed-door briefing on Capitol Hill Tuesday that Iran's Shahed attack drones represent a major challenge and US air defences will not be able to intercept them all, according to a source in the briefing.

The drones, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dan Caine acknowledged, are posing a bigger problem than anticipated, two sources in the briefing told CNN. They are known to fly low and slow – a feature that makes them more able to evade air defences than ballistic missiles. Another source familiar with the briefing said the officials made an attempt to downplay concerns about the drones and noted that Gulf state partners had been stockpiling interceptors.

The officials were on the Hill briefing lawmakers as the war with Iran escalates, threatening to spark a global energy crisis and destabilize the Middle East. President

Shahed attack drones are known to fly low and slow – a feature that makes them more able to evade air defences than ballistic missiles.

Donald Trump said on Tuesday that most of Iran's military installations have been "knocked out" and that new strikes have targeted Iranian leadership.

The officials, a source familiar with the briefing told CNN, were dismissive of questions about how the US would prevent Iran from becoming a failed state, and they said that regime change was an ancillary goal. In their presentation to lawmakers, they reiterated Trump's recently laid out goals: to destroy Iran's missile capabilities, its navy, end its nuclear weapon ambitions and stop the country from arming militant groups.

The officials also did not indicate who they thought the next supreme leader would be, according to a source familiar with the briefing.

Lawmakers emerged from the meeting with vastly different expectations on how long the conflict could drag on. Republican Sen. Tommy Tuberville of Alabama said the briefers, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, presented a timeline for US involvement in the conflict to be wrapped up in three to five weeks — echoing some of the president's own public comments.

But GOP Sen Josh Hawley of Missouri, said he believed the officials did not communicate a possible end date. "It sounded very open-ended to me," he said.

People survey damage in central Israel after missiles launched from Iran amid the ongoing US–Israeli conflict, on Wednesday. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they targeted Ben Gurion Airport and an air force base in the area.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Turkey 'closely' following actions of Kurdish groups

AFP, *Ankara*

Turkey's defence ministry yesterday said it was "closely" following the actions of Kurdish militant groups over concerns they are being drawn into the war, reportedly by US-led efforts to destabilise Iran.

The conflict began on Saturday when US-Israeli strikes hit Iran, which retaliated with strikes across the region, with Tehran on Wednesday saying it had hit Kurdish militant groups based in Iraq.

The move came as reports suggested Washington was looking to arm Kurdish guerrillas to infiltrate Iran -- a move that would likely raise hackles in Turkey.

"We are closely following PJAK's activities in Iran and regional developments," the Turkish defence ministry said of an Iran-based Kurdish group which is an offshoot of the outlawed Kurdish militant PKK.

"Activities of groups like the PJAK terrorist organisation, which promote ethnic separatism, negatively affect not only Iran's security but also the overall peace and stability of the region," the ministry said.

The move came as reports suggested Washington was looking to arm Kurdish guerrillas to infiltrate Iran -- a move that would likely raise hackles in Turkey.

"Turkey supports the territorial integrity of neighbouring states, not their fragmentation."

On February 22, the PJAK (the Kurdistan Free Life Party) and four other exiled Kurdish groups announced a political coalition to seek the overthrow of the Islamic Republic and ultimately to secure Kurdish self-determination.

Spread across Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, the Kurds are one of Iran's most important non-Persian ethnic minority groups and have long supported anti-government protests in the Islamic Republic.

Turkey has been seeking to end its conflict with the PKK, which formally disbanded last year after four decades of violence that claimed some 50,000 lives. Although most PKK-linked groups embraced the call to disarm, the PJAK did not, with Ankara concerned any regional unrest could embolden recalcitrant Kurdish separatists.

In late January, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi that "the complete neutralisation of PJAK constitutes an urgent necessity for Iran's security".

'Narrative war'

Disinformation surges as conflict roils Middle East

AFP, *Washington*

Recycled images, video game footage passed off as missile strikes, and AI-generated combat visuals: the US-Israeli assault on Iran has unleashed a torrent of online disinformation that analysts are calling a war of narratives.

Since US and Israeli strikes over the weekend ignited a regional conflict, a parallel information war has erupted, with supporters on both sides flooding social media with falsehoods that often spread faster than the facts on the ground.

AFP's fact-checkers have debunked a series of claims by pro-Iranian accounts posting old videos to exaggerate the damage from Tehran's missile strikes on Israel and Gulf states including the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

"There is definitely a narrative war unfolding online," Moustafa Ayad, from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), told AFP.

"Whether it was to rationalize the strikes across the Gulf, or to trumpet Iranian military might in the face of the Israeli and US strikes, the goals seem to be wear down 'enemies.'"

US, Canada spot Russian jets near Alaska

AFP, *Washington*

The United States and Canada detected two Russian military aircraft near the US state of Alaska on Wednesday, the joint US-Canadian North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said.

The organization said it launched 12 aircraft, including F-35 and F-22 fighter jets, to "identify, monitor, and intercept" the two detected Russian TU-142 military aircraft, which are used for maritime patrols.

"The Russian aircraft remained in international airspace and did not enter American or Canadian sovereign airspace," NORAD said in a statement.

"This Russian activity in the Alaskan and Canadian ADIZ occurs regularly and is not seen as a threat." ADIZ refers to the Alaskan and Canadian Air Defense Identification Zones.

Jamaat softens stance

FROM PAGE 12

"The government may have informed you of those details," BNP Standing Committee Member Abdul Moyeen Khan told reporters after a BNP delegation led by him met Paul Kapur at the ambassador's residence separately yesterday.

Kapur, who arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday night, met the ministers of foreign affairs, commerce, energy and power on Wednesday and attended a dinner hosted by the American Chamber of Commerce.

Yesterday, he also met Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir and delegations of BNP and Jamaat.

Economists have said the reciprocal trade deal with the US contains provisions restricting purchase and trade deals with non-market economies that can affect Bangladesh in the long run. They also questioned why the interim government had to sign it only three days before the polls.

On Wednesday, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, however, said the deal was better compared to those between the US and India, Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia, and questioned if Bangladesh could sustain trade with the 37 percent tariff if the deal had not been signed.

On the issue, Jamaat leader Taher, also the deputy leader of the opposition in parliament, said Bangladesh imports a large volume of cotton and soybean from the US and requested Paul Kapur that the US allow Bangladeshi goods into the US market at tariffs lower than 19 percent as in the agreement.

Taher said there is significant scope for US investments in Bangladesh, especially in AI and technology, which can create substantial jobs.

He added that Bangladesh seeks friendly relations with all countries while safeguarding its national interests.

Speaking to reporters, BNP leader Moyeen Khan said the US officials wanted to understand what is happening in Bangladesh, BNP policies and future courses of action.

He added that discussions included the relationship between the two countries' peoples, government policies, global developments, economic cooperation and the freedom of expression that aligns with the US priorities.

The meeting between Paul Kapur and the prime minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser, Humayun Kabir, touched upon bilateral relations, regional cooperation, increasing trade and investment, and development partnership, among others.

In a statement, the PMO press wing said Humayun Kabir hoped to make this relationship stronger and multi-dimensional in the future, emphasising the importance of increasing economic cooperation, trade expansion, and joint initiatives across various development sectors.

Assistant Secretary Paul Kapur reiterated the United States' interest in further advancing the Bangladesh-US relationship and highlighted the potential for expanding various areas of mutual cooperation.

China puts energy, diplomacy before Iran

AFP, *Beijing*

China has expressed its anger over Israeli-US strikes on Iran but, despite hits to its oil imports, will not risk its interests by confronting Washington and helping its long-standing partner, analysts say.

The war in the Middle East has sparked global fears of an energy supply crunch, with traffic in the vital Strait of Hormuz blocked.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Wednesday they had "complete control" of the waterway as it kept up its missile and drone barrages across the Gulf.

China, a net importer of oil, is one of several major Asian economies that depend on the narrow strait for energy.

However, experts say strategic stockpiles will help Beijing endure short-term disruptions, allowing it to pursue other diplomatic priorities.

Looming ahead is a high-stakes summit in China between President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Donald Trump, which the White House says will begin on March 31.

"The Iran crisis is unlikely to derail the Trump-Xi summit unless the United States launches a sweeping crackdown on Iran-China (oil) flows," Dan Wang, China Director for the Eurasia Group, told AFP.

"Beijing views Iran as a strategic partner rather than a military ally," said Wang.

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বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানির দক্ষ ও সাশ্রয়ী ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত নির্দেশিকা

ক্রমিক নং	বিদ্যুৎ/জ্বালানি ব্যবহারের ক্ষেত্রসমূহ	জ্বালানি দক্ষতা ও সংরক্ষণ সংক্রান্ত কার্যক্রম
১.	লাইটিং	অপ্রয়োজনে লাইটের ব্যবহার পরিহার করুন।
		প্রয়োজনের অতিরিক্ত লাইটের ব্যবহার হতে বিরত থাকুন।
		নির্ধারিত উজ্জ্বলতা বজায় রাখতে টাস্ক লাইটিং সিস্টেম (যেমন: এলইডি স্পট লাইট, টেবিল ল্যাম্প ইত্যাদি) ব্যবহার করুন।
		দিনের আলোর (ডে-লাইট) সর্বোচ্চ ব্যবহার নিশ্চিত করতে প্রয়োজনে কক্ষের আসবাবপত্র পুনর্বিন্যাস করুন।
		বৈদ্যুতিক বাল্বের উপরিভাগে ধুলাবালি জমলে এর উজ্জ্বলতা কমে যায় বিধায় বাল্বসহ লাইটিং সিস্টেম নিয়মিত পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্ন রাখুন।
		বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ী এবং জ্বালানি দক্ষ লাইটিং সিস্টেম (যেমন: ইনক্যান্ডেসেন্ট/ সিএফএল লাইটের পরিবর্তে বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ী এলইডি লাইট) ব্যবহার করুন।
২.	শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রণ যন্ত্র	অপ্রয়োজনে শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রণ যন্ত্র বন্ধ রাখুন।
		শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রণ যন্ত্রের তাপমাত্রা ২৬ ডিগ্রি সেলসিয়াস বা এর উপরে রাখুন, কারণ প্রতি ১ ডিগ্রি সেলসিয়াস তাপমাত্রা বাড়ালে ১০ শতাংশ বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয় করা যায়।
		শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রণ যন্ত্র সাশ্রয়ী ও দক্ষভাবে ব্যবহার করতে এবং সর্বাধিক স্বস্তি নিশ্চিত করতে কক্ষের দরজা জানালাসহ বায়ু চলাচল স্থান যতদূর সম্ভব বন্ধ রাখুন, যেমন: দরজার নীচ, ভেন্টিলেটর ইত্যাদি।
		তাপপ্রবাহ রোধে কক্ষের পূর্বদিকের জানালার পর্দা সকাল ১০:০০ টা পর্যন্ত এবং পশ্চিম দিকের জানালার পর্দা দুপুর ২:০০ টার পর থেকে নামিয়ে রাখুন, এতে কক্ষ অপেক্ষাকৃত ঠাণ্ডা থাকবে।
		শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রণ যন্ত্রের ফিল্টার মাসে কমপক্ষে একবার পরিষ্কার করুন।
		শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রণ যন্ত্র প্রতি বছর কমপক্ষে একবার সার্ভিসিং করুন।
		পুরনো/ অকেজো শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রণ যন্ত্র পরিবর্তনের প্রয়োজন হলে ইনভার্টার টেকনোলজিযুক্ত বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ী শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রণ যন্ত্র ক্রয় করুন।
৩.	রেফ্রিজারেটর	গরম খাবার ঠাণ্ডা করার পর রেফ্রিজারেটরে সংরক্ষণ করুন।
		পুরনো/ অকেজো রেফ্রিজারেটর পরিবর্তনের প্রয়োজন হলে ইনভার্টার টেকনোলজিযুক্ত বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ী রেফ্রিজারেটর ক্রয় করুন।
৪.	ফ্যান	অপ্রয়োজনে ফ্যান বন্ধ রাখুন।
		পুরনো/ অকেজো ফ্যান পরিবর্তনের প্রয়োজন হলে বাজারে প্রাপ্যতা সাপেক্ষে বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ী (যেমন: বিএলডিসি ফ্যান) ফ্যান ক্রয় করুন।
৫.	গ্যাসের চুলা	অপ্রয়োজনে গ্যাসের চুলা বন্ধ রাখুন।
		রান্নার সময় পাত্র ঢেকে রান্না করুন।
		সম্ভব হলে রান্নার জন্য প্রেশার কুকার ব্যবহার করুন।
৬.	অন্যান্য	বৈদ্যুতিক ইস্ত্রির ব্যবহার সীমিত করুন।
		ব্যবহার শেষে মাইক্রোওয়েভ, কম্পিউটার, টিভি, ওভেন, প্রিন্টার, ফটোকপিয়ার, চার্জার, হ্যান্ড ড্রায়ার ইত্যাদি যন্ত্রপাতির সুইচ বন্ধ রাখুন।
		সম্ভব হলে প্রাত্যহিক কার্যক্রম যেমন: আহার গ্রহণ, টিভি দেখা ইত্যাদি পরিবারের সকলে একসাথে করুন। এতে বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহার সীমিত রাখা যায়।

বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ে উল্লিখিত কার্যক্রমসমূহ প্রতিপালন করুন এবং দেশের মূল্যবান জাতীয় সম্পদ সংরক্ষণে দায়িত্বশীল ও গৌরবময় ভূমিকা রাখুন।

National Museum of Science and Technology
Ministry of Science and Technology
Sere-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

Reference No-39.03.0000.000.002.07.0005.25.63 Date: 03.03.2026

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Director (Joint Secretary)
National Museum of Science and Technology

GD- 496

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Iran war threatens our energy lifeline

Govt must urgently plan to manage potential LNG shortages

As conflict fractures the Middle East following US and Israeli strikes on Iran and the subsequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz, economic repercussions are no longer confined to the Gulf. The shockwaves are already reaching South Asia, including Bangladesh. Faced with the prospect of a severe squeeze on fuel supplies, the government appears to be shifting from caution to urgency. Officials are reportedly preparing sector-wise rationing and potential power cuts to manage dwindling energy availability. The message to the public is simple: use energy sparingly, or be prepared to go without it.

To understand the scale of the threat to Bangladesh is to recognise the fragile, hyper-connected architecture of the modern energy market. According to a recent analysis by BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage, every $10 increase in global oil prices raises Bangladesh's monthly import bill by roughly $80 million. That vulnerability is particularly acute given that the country imports the overwhelming majority of its petroleum. Bangladesh spends about $1 billion annually to bring in about 60 lakh tonnes of petroleum products, mostly through the Strait of Hormuz. Oil markets are already reacting. Brent crude, the benchmark for roughly two-thirds of the world's internationally traded oil, has climbed past $82 a barrel. Analysts warn that a prolonged blockade of Hormuz could easily push prices beyond the $100 mark. New price levels will sharply increase energy costs for Bangladesh, which purchased crude oil at an average price of about $72 per barrel in 2025.

The more immediate vulnerability, however, lies in liquefied natural gas. Bangladesh meets nearly 30 percent of its gas demand through imported LNG, making it highly exposed to volatility in global spot markets. Petrobangla recently issued two tenders for LNG purchases—the new government's first attempt to procure cargoes from the spot market—but suppliers appear to be holding back, betting that prices will climb further.

The consequences could quickly spill over into the broader economy. Persistently higher energy costs would feed inflationary pressures just as policymakers hope to stabilise prices. If that happens, the central bank may be forced to reconsider its plans for monetary easing, slowing growth at a delicate moment when the economy is attempting to regain momentum.

The government should move swiftly to activate contingency plans that can temporarily offset LNG shortages. Ensuring adequate dollar liquidity for commercial banks will be equally important so that letters of credit for essential imports—particularly fuel—continue to flow. At the same time, tighter restrictions on luxury imports may be necessary to conserve foreign exchange reserves. The current crisis also exposes a deeper structural weakness. Bangladesh's long-delayed transition towards renewable energy has now become an economic imperative. For decades, policymakers have tethered the country's growth model to imported fossil fuels, assuming global supply chains would remain uninterrupted. The closure of Hormuz is a reminder that such assumptions can collapse overnight.

Fix the systemic loopholes

Laws without protection will not save women and children from abuse

Irrespective of how many strong laws we draft and enact to deter violence against women and children in Bangladesh, the heinous crime of rape continues to take place unabated. A recent compilation of data by Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) shows that over the last 13 months, since February 2025, there have been reports of 776 rape cases, and in nearly half of them, the victims were minors. Stricter punishments, clauses limiting the time for trial completion, and redefinition of consent and age limits—none seem to invoke fear in the minds of the perpetrators. Very little changes for the victims and survivors and their families. They continue to face barriers in reporting cases and accessing safe, gender-sensitive, compassionate and comprehensive police, medical and legal services and safe homes.

Worse still, fatwa or informal arbitration—although their enforcement has been banned by the Supreme Court in 2011—continues to be used to settle rape cases in rural areas. The consequences are often dire, as evident in the Madhabdi rape case. The 15-year-old victim did try to report when she was gang-raped, but the accused and his accomplices prevented her and her father from going to the police station, forcing them to approach the local government representative. This person, rather than ensuring that the complaint of this grievous crime was reported to the police, "settled" the matter through arbitration. As a result, the accused remained free and emboldened to commit an even more grievous act of murdering the girl.

Every sequence of this tragedy reflects the state's failure. The initial abduction of the victim when she was returning home from work highlights a fear shared daily by many women across Bangladesh. Then comes the issue of reporting: many people are still unaware of the existence of 24/7 hotlines, such as 109 or even 999, to report such crimes. Worse still, a public representative became complicit in the crime by attempting to "settle" a serious criminal offence through arbitration.

Therefore, what the government must prioritise is not another law or harsher provisions. Instead, it must address the systemic loopholes—from reporting to prosecution—so that conviction rates for rape and other crimes of violence don't remain low. Public awareness campaigns must inform people about available services, and investment in safe homes must increase. Most importantly, men and young boys must be taught—through avenues ranging from religious sermons to school textbooks—that women are not inferior beings and have equal rights to live free from fear and abuse in this society.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Tikka Khan appointed East Pakistan governor

On this day in 1971, the appointment of Tikka Khan as the governor of East Pakistan was officially announced.

FATE OF 133 ORDINANCES

The 30-day test of the new parliament

Zillur Rahman
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ZILLUR RAHMAN

When the interim government assumed office following the upheaval of July-August 2024, it took on a nation still trembling from shock. Institutions were fragile, the bureaucracy uncertain, and public expectations overwhelming. Citizens demanded justice, reform, and visible change, and they demanded them quickly. In such moments, governments instinctively reach for speed. Constitutionally, speed comes in the form of ordinances.

Article 93 of the constitution allows the president to promulgate ordinances when parliament is not in session and when "circumstances exist which render immediate action necessary." The provision exists for instability and vacuum—it is a constitutional safety valve. But it is also limited. Ordinances cannot amend the constitution. They cannot override constitutional prohibitions, and they are inherently temporary.

Over the 18 months of the interim government, 133 ordinances were issued. The number is significant enough to prompt reflection: were there truly 133 instances of urgent necessity? Or did urgency gradually evolve into a governing habit? The interim authorities may argue, reasonably, that extraordinary circumstances required rapid intervention. Yet, constitutional systems are defined not only by how they respond to crises but also by how they restore normalcy afterwards. That restoration now begins.

On March 12, when the 13th parliament convenes, every ordinance must be laid before it. From that first sitting, a 30-day clock begins. Under Article 93(2), unless parliament approves an ordinance within that period, it automatically ceases to have effect. No dramatic vote is required. No formal repeal motion is necessary. This provision is not procedural trivia—it is a structural safeguard. Executive acceleration must eventually yield to legislative scrutiny.

Parliament now faces difficult choices. It may reject certain ordinances outright. It may selectively convert some into bills and enact them after debate and committee review. Or it may allow some to lapse. None of these options are cost-free. If ordinances expire, questions will arise about actions already taken under their authority: appointments made, bodies constituted, restrictions imposed, cases withdrawn. The disappearance of the legal basis does not automatically dissolve practical consequences. Courts may be asked to determine the continuing validity of steps taken under by-then-defunct instruments.

VISUAL: **ALIZA RAHMAN**

Each ordinance carries distinct legal implications.

Some of these measures are politically and constitutionally sensitive. The ordinance granting immunity related to the July uprising is perhaps the most emotionally charged. It provided for the withdrawal of cases against participants and barred new proceedings in certain circumstances. For many families, the uprising came to symbolise personal loss as more than a thousand lives were lost while several thousands of others were injured. The ordinance was seen by many as moral recognition of that sacrifice.

Yet, constitutional democracies operate on legal principles that must endure beyond emotion. Broad criminal immunity, especially when granted through an ordinance, raises difficult questions about compatibility with constitutional guarantees and the rule of law. Even if parliament converts the ordinance into a statute, judicial scrutiny may follow. Courts assess legality through constitutional standards, not historical sympathy.

Another significant ordinance established a Constitution Reform Assembly pursuant to the July National Charter and a referendum in which a "Yes" vote prevailed. Referendums generate political momentum, but constitutional amendment procedures must be defined within the constitution itself, so parliament must determine whether the institutional pathway created through the ordinance aligns with those procedures. Given the ongoing controversy surrounding this assembly now—with the newly elected parliamentarians of the Jamaat-led alliance having taken oath as its members, but BNP and allies choosing not to do so on account of it being "unconstitutional" at this moment—the need for clarity and structural coherence cannot be emphasised enough.

There are also socially sensitive ordinances. The one raising the age limit for entry into public service from 30 to 32 years was widely welcomed by young aspirants who felt disadvantaged by disrupted academic cycles. Allowing it to lapse may provoke frustration. Retaining it requires administrative recalibration. The parliament must weigh public expectation against institutional sustainability, recognising that popularity cannot be the sole measure of permanence. Similarly, the ordinance restricting political activities of the ousted Awami League carries profound democratic implications. While the popular pressure that led to the ordinance needs to be acknowledged, the question now is whether its continuation would serve our democracy in the coming days, or if it's time to revisit it in light of ongoing ICT trials and post-election realities. Whatever the parliament decides, it will no doubt shape our future political trajectory.

The broader issue transcends individual ordinances, however. It concerns the hierarchy of governance. The interim administration governed without parliament and relied heavily on executive authority. That reliance was constitutionally permissible in the absence of a functioning legislature. But the restoration of parliament changes the constitutional balance. The logic of urgency must now give way to the logic of deliberation.

The practical challenge is formidable. Converting so many ordinances into statutes within 30 days requires more than procedural speed. The legislative process involves ministry review, cabinet approval, drafting, committee scrutiny, debate, passage, and presidential assent. Meaningful examination cannot be reduced to ritual. If parliament validates measures without scrutiny, critics may argue that executive exceptionalism has simply been retroactively endorsed. If it allows many to lapse without preparation, governance gaps and legal uncertainty may follow.

What is ultimately at stake is the constitutional culture. Emergency governance may justify exceptional measures, but exceptionalism cannot become routine. Bangladesh, from that respect, now stands at a crucial juncture. The transition of 2024 reshaped political alignments, the election last month restored parliamentary form, and the coming 30 days in parliament will determine whether legislative authority is meaningfully reasserted.

Thirty days may seem brief, but constitutionally they will be decisive. They will require lawmakers to separate urgency from necessity, popularity from legality, and political advantage from institutional stability, compelling a choice between governing by acceleration and governing by principle. The fate of 133 ordinances, therefore, will be watched closely. It will signal whether the country's constitutional order can move from emergency improvisation to accountable, deliberative governance.

Will artificial intelligence widen inequality?

Owais Parray
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OWAIS PARRAY

Artificial intelligence (AI) holds a lot of promise but also carries enormous risks. Aptly titled "The Great Divergence," the UNDP Regional Human Development Report (RHDR) warns that, without decisive action, many developing countries in the region, owing to their weak capabilities, risk being left behind in the AI race. They will be unable to harness the upside of AI while mitigating the disruptions that have often accompanied frontier technologies. The risks are high as AI emerges amidst growing socioeconomic disparities among and within economies.

Like every major technological revolution—from steam power to electricity—should we expect a repeat of past trends from the emergence of AI, where inequality initially rises before benefits begin to diffuse? But we are entering the age of AI when inequality is already rising, exacerbated by the weakening relationship between GDP growth and job creation. For example, between 1995 and 2020, the top one percent captured 38 percent of global wealth, while the bottom 50 percent accounted for just two percent.

RHDR calls for embedding equity into policymaking. Equity cannot simply mean waiting for AI's accrued benefits and redistributing them. It begins with AI that serves people and enhances human capabilities—a message that lies at the heart of human development. However, it cannot create equal opportunities for all if existing deficits in human, institutional, and financial capital are not recognised. Disparities in human development could be amplified by AI, a technology potentially as transformative as the steam engine and electricity. It is becoming a critical infrastructure that will determine the nature and pace of future development.

As the UNDP report shows, the Asia-Pacific will be a testing ground to see if AI-led development converges development outcomes or drives countries further apart. Countries in this region lie across a broad development spectrum: very large economies, small island nations, landlocked countries, and high-income economies (greater than $90,000 per capita GDP), alongside least developed countries (less than $500 per capita GDP).

From labour-intensive manufacturing, Bangladesh aspires to move into high-value production of goods and services—towards a more diversified, globally competitive economy, a country with a social safety net that supports not only those temporarily affected by the vagaries of the market but also those who are vulnerable and excluded. Moreover, a country with a public administration that is accountable and capable of delivering good quality services at scale. In all of this, AI could potentially play a critical role.

A forward-looking AI agenda for Bangladesh should focus on aligning it with the needs of people. Without a purpose-driven focus, there is a danger that AI won't deliver its promise to improve human welfare. A good starting point for public policy is narrowing the digital gap. While connectivity has expanded in Bangladesh over the years, gaps still persist across rural areas, income groups, and gender. Women in Bangladesh are less likely to own a smartphone. Only 38 percent of women use mobile internet compared to 52 percent of men, severely limiting their ability to benefit from AI.

A forward-looking AI agenda for Bangladesh should focus on aligning it with the needs of people. Without a purpose-driven focus, there is a danger that AI won't deliver its promise to improve human welfare. A good starting point for public policy is narrowing the digital gap. While connectivity has expanded in Bangladesh over the years, gaps still persist across rural areas, income groups, and gender.

There may not be consensus on whether the net benefits of AI will outweigh its disruptions in the labour market, but many agree that countries must rethink education and training systems. Previous waves—such as industrial automation in the 1970s, ICT diffusion in the 1990s, or the introduction of robotics in manufacturing—initially caused job losses but eventually contributed to productivity booms. We cannot necessarily take past evidence and extrapolate it to the future. However, a key lesson is that education and training systems should be adaptive to rapid technological change, embracing lifelong learning. It serves as an insurance policy against joblessness as the labour market adjusts to technological change.

Furthermore, AI in public services should be underpinned by transparency. AI-assisted services should be clearly explained, open to scrutiny, and corrected when errors or biases occur. For example, Canada provides a set of guidelines for the use of AI and automated decision-making. Public trust must not be undermined. Without safeguards, biased algorithms can erode trust and cause lasting harm.

Bangladesh is in a region that is likely to drive future global growth. According to recent estimates, the Asia-Pacific region will contribute 60 percent of the global GDP growth. Asia is also emerging as an important hub of AI investment and AI patents. A large country with a young population, Bangladesh has a stake in championing responsible AI for prosperity, while strongly advocating for minimum standards and collective safeguards essential for human-centric AI development. Bangladesh has already conducted an AI Readiness Assessment that provides a solid foundation for developing an AI roadmap for the future.

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Gangster imperialism and the threat to global peace

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ANU MUHAMMAD

The way a neighbourhood thug flaunts his power, boasts about violence, bullies at will, harasses, assaults, or kills—while proudly disregarding any law or rule—is eerily similar to what we are now witnessing from the president of the world's most powerful state and his allies. Their greatest pride lies in possessing the most advanced weapons capable of killing people and destroying nations far beyond their borders. Their primary ambition is to ensure corporate empires across the globe, eliminate all competition, impose sanctions at will, launch military campaigns freely, and make everyone bow in fear. And it is affecting the entire world.

But this is not merely about one person's thuggery. It reflects a global order. When we see prominent elites, media outlets, international organisations, and leaders of various states in Europe and elsewhere endorsing or enabling this conduct, it becomes clear that this is the latest face of imperialism openly adopting the methods of gangsterism. In this order, "peace" means war, "development" means human and environmental catastrophe, "commitment" means deception, and the highest use of resources is channelled into weapons and destruction.

In January, the United States launched a bloody military assault on Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, abducted President Nicolás Maduro, and flew himto New York to face criminal charges. Alongside decades-long sanctions, it continues to threaten and attack Cuba and other countries such as Brazil and Mexico. Then, at the end of February, while so-called peace negotiations with Iran were underway, the US, alongside Israel, attacked Iran. At least a thousand, including school students, were killed, along with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The US president and the Israeli prime minister even publicly celebrated the attack.

One major reason for this audacity is the loyalty of Iran's neighbouring states. Saudi Arabia alone has purchased over $60 billion worth of weapons from the US in recent years. Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the UAE have similar agreements with the US. All of these countries host US military bases. Their support is a key pillar behind US and Israeli military actions against countries like Iraq, Palestine, and Iran.

But can such invasions, abductions, and killings be carried out at will? Where are the international institutions, law, human rights, and sovereignty? The United Nations appears largely ineffective. The European Union has shown little willingness to confront US or Israeli violations on human rights grounds. Notably, both Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu face convictions or investigations in their own countries for various offences. If international courts functioned properly, they would stand trial as war criminals. There is already a ruling implicating Netanyahu in the Gaza killings.

The US role in global violence is not new. During the final days of World War II, it dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing hundreds of thousands instantly. Later, in Vietnam, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Iraq, and numerous other countries, millions were killed, and entire societies were destroyed, often with decisive US involvement.

After September 11, 2001, the US launched military operations in Afghanistan. Even

VISUAL: **MONOROM POLOK**

then, discussions among the US officials included plans for deadly attacks on Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Iran. In March 2003, Iraq—already weakened by sanctions—was invaded and occupied. The justification was fabricated claims about weapons of mass destruction. None were ever found, however. Years of propaganda terrified ordinary people, redirected massive public resources from education and healthcare into war, and culminated in invasion, mass killing, and occupation—based entirely on deception. Yet no US administration or president has been held accountable for these war crimes.

After Iraq came Libya and Syria, and now Iran faces sustained aggression. Countries have been torn apart. Countless men, women, children, and elderly people have been killed or injured. Enormous wealth has been destroyed, ecosystems devastated, and societies traumatised. It is clear that Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, and Bashar al-Assad were not targeted for autocratic rule; their "crime" was refusing to remain compliant with US dominance. When compliant, notorious leaders can be tolerated. Under the banner of fighting terrorism, secular governments in Iraq, Libya, and Syria were replaced by sectarian and extremist forces.

In Iran today, the US-led bloc is openly calling for regime change. In recent years, millions of Iranians have protested economic hardship and repression, but that does not mean they wish to hand their country over to US control or to its preferred proxies. The model of governance the US envisions can be seen in neighbouring Middle Eastern states such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, and Bahrain. Actually, democracy or religion is not the real issue for them. The issue is securing rulers who will protect imperial interests. In 1953, the elected government of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran was overthrown, and the puppet Shah was installed. Since the 1950s, across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, military and monarchical dictatorships have often been empowered by US-European imperial forces. A vast global surveillance and intelligence network reinforces this structure. There is no example where US aggression has brought genuine democratic transformation.

Bangladesh is not outside this dynamic. Under the banner of the "war on terror," US troops, technology, and immunity agreements were introduced here over two decades ago. Recently, the interim government took further risky steps. While many countries resisted providing military support to the US-led International Stabilisation Force (ISF) for Gaza, Bangladesh's interim government initially expressed interest in joining. Furthermore, although the US Supreme Court declared Trump's global tariff aggression illegal, the interim government appeared eager to appease him. Just days before the February 12 elections, it signed agreements with the US that may bind Bangladesh into long-term economic and political dependency. Incidentally, the successive BNP government did not signal any intention to back out from it either.

Trump and Netanyahu claim Iran poses an existential threat to them. In reality, it is their actions that now threaten global security. The US-led bloc seeks to eliminate those who reject imperial authority. Without strengthening resistance against the imperial agenda and aggression around the world, there is no other path to safeguarding humanity and the planet itself.

Can the new govt break our energy paradox?

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KHONDAKER GOLAM MOAZZEM

The new minister of power, energy and mineral resources is facing his first test to ensure energy security as the whole world reels from the shock of the Strait of Hormuz closure. Several initiatives have already been announced to address any short-term supply shock. The minister must also prepare for medium-term challenges if the Hormuz closure continues beyond March. On the other hand, the global energy crisis and price volatility of major fossil fuels, including crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG), could bring opportunities to explore alternative energies, particularly renewable energy-based power generation and electrification.

In Bangladesh, renewable energy is often framed as a distant aspiration. Something futuristic, desirable, yet perpetually just out of reach. This narrative, while common, is misleading. Renewable technology exists, it works under local conditions, and it is commercially viable. Solar home systems, rooftop solar under net metering, and small-scale renewable projects have already proven this. The real barriers lie not in technology, but in structural, institutional, and political-economic factors. At the heart of the problem is the dominance of fossil fuels in the country's energy market. As long as fossil fuel-based projects remain more profitable, less risky, and heavily supported institutionally, renewables will struggle to compete. Banks, investors, and industry actors follow incentives and guaranteed returns. Fossil fuel projects often benefit from mechanisms such as capacity payments, long-term guarantees, and public subsidies—security that renewable energy projects rarely enjoy. In this context, expanding renewables is directly linked to phasing out fossil fuels: the faster fossil fuels retreat, the greater space renewables can occupy.

Bangladesh's energy transition debate has also been overly focused on macro-level policy targets. National plans, aspirational targets, and international declarations are necessary but insufficient. What is missing is engagement at the meso and micro levels, within institutions, infrastructure planning, financing mechanisms, and operational decision-making. Without reform and participation at these levels, policy remains rhetorical rather than transformative.

The institutional architecture itself is a barrier. Major energy institutions from planning bodies to utilities were designed around fossil fuel systems. Their norms, procurement practices, technical standards, and performance metrics reflect this legacy. Expecting these institutions to deliver a clean energy transition without restructuring is unrealistic. Institutional reform is not peripheral—it is central to scaling up renewable energy.

This structural bias becomes visible in the gap between policy rhetoric and reality. Documents such as the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP) and the Energy and Power Sector Master Plan (EPSMP) emphasise clean energy and decarbonisation. Yet, the internal projections and investment pathways remain overwhelmingly fossil fuel-centric. This inconsistency sends confusing signals to investors and undermines confidence in renewable energy projects.

Technical and human capacity constraints further exacerbate the problem. Most graduates entering the energy sector are trained in fossil fuel-based systems. Many lack orientation towards renewables, and some even carry an implicit bias against it. Within institutions such as the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), this translates into hesitation or outright resistance to renewable energy initiatives. Capacity-building is therefore not just about skill development, but also about reshaping institutional culture.

Fiscal and structural incentives also discriminate against renewables. Fossil fuel plants can be sited almost anywhere and connected to the grid with minimal cost, often subsidised via public funds. Renewable projects, by contrast, are frequently located in remote areas where grid connectivity is expensive and left to private investors. Tax benefits, subsidies, and other policy privileges further tilt the playing field towards fossil fuels, making renewables appear less attractive despite their long-term economic and environmental benefits.

The banking sector reflects a similar risk-averse mindset. Banks prioritise guaranteed returns and avoid perceived risks. Many renewable energy projects lack assured payments if electricity dispatch is uncertain, so banks remain reluctant to finance them.

All of these dynamics are reinforced by a powerful fossil fuel nexus—a close relationship between segments of the private fossil fuel industry and certain state institutions. In some cases, high-level energy decisions are influenced by this nexus. This distorted political economy actively resists energy transition, regardless of policy declarations.

Foreign influence complicates the situation further. Some external actors exert disproportionate influence over Bangladesh's energy strategies, steering priorities towards fossil fuel finance, hydrogen, or carbon capture technologies. While international engagement is important, national energy policy must remain sovereign and aligned with domestic needs.

Even foreign direct investment (FDI) in renewables faces hurdles. International investors typically prefer incremental entry with low-risk projects. Bangladesh has not yet created such entry points, expecting instead large-scale investments upfront, a mismatch that discourages participation.

The renewable energy discourse also needs recalibration. Too much focus remains on utility-scale projects, while distributed renewables like rooftop solar and mini-grids receive less attention. Yet, evidence shows these decentralised systems are growing rapidly. Net metering has more than doubled in recent years, and the overall renewable capacity is expanding quietly but steadily. Bangladesh's energy transition is happening but in forms that are often overlooked.

The private sector's role is crucial. Industries like RMG, textile, leather, and even fossil fuel businesses can drive renewable energy expansion if they actively participate. The RMG sector can invest in rooftop solar, deploy electricity generation projects for factories, and integrate renewables into industrial processes. Employee training and awareness programmes can further scale up green initiatives. The leather industry, meanwhile, can generate biogas or bioenergy from waste, use solar or bioenergy for electricity and heat, and invest in rooftop solar to enhance energy efficiency. Fossil fuel businesses can diversify into renewables, promote biofuel or solar-electric hybrid policies, and incorporate renewables into trading and distribution networks.

Through such investments and technology adoption, the private sector can play an entrepreneurial, market-driven role in scaling renewable energy in Bangladesh. Businesses are uniquely positioned to bridge gaps left by institutions and public policy.

The renewable energy narrative in Bangladesh must shift. Policies must become more transparent and nationally owned, media engagement must be sustained, and a new generation of renewable energy experts and journalists must emerge. Energy transition is not a one-off story; it is a long-term, ongoing process that demands sustained attention.

Bangladesh no longer needs generic energy planners. It needs bold renewable energy leaders, within the government, industry, and civil society, who can drive innovation, secure investment, and ensure that clean energy becomes the foundation of a sustainable future. The challenge is to remove structural, institutional and political barriers, and to empower businesses and communities to lead the charge.

Against this backdrop, CSOs are looking forward to bold and concrete steps from the new minister and state minister of power, energy and mineral resources to ensure sustainable energy transition in the next five years. To build a resilient and future-ready energy sector, the new government should prioritise the following measures: i) adopt a structured and time-bound plan to gradually phase out inefficient, high-emission conventional power plants, creating space for scaling up renewables while ensuring energy security and system stability; ii) invest substantially in grid modernisation, including transmission and distribution upgrades and the development of smart grid systems to effectively integrate variable renewable energy sources; iii) review and withdraw discriminatory fiscal and policy measures that disadvantage renewable energy, ensuring a level playing field for investors; iv) introduce diversified and innovative financial instruments to support distributed renewable energy across households, industries, agriculture and commercial sectors; and v) undertake comprehensive institutional reforms to strengthen governance, coordination, and regulatory capacity, ensuring a coherent and just energy transition.

CROSSWORD
BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Raucous fliers
6 Poet Shelley
11 Send in
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13 Justice Kagan
14 Gymnast Comaneci
15 Without moderation
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18 Genesis name
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32 Owned by us
33 Rugged range
35 Vigilant
38 Choose to participate
39 Haas of "Witness"
40 Flower girl, often
41 Hit bottom?
42 Boston entree

DOWN
1 Some embroidery
2 Experience over
3 Eggy dish
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5 Mares' mates
6 Piper of myth
7 Greek vowel
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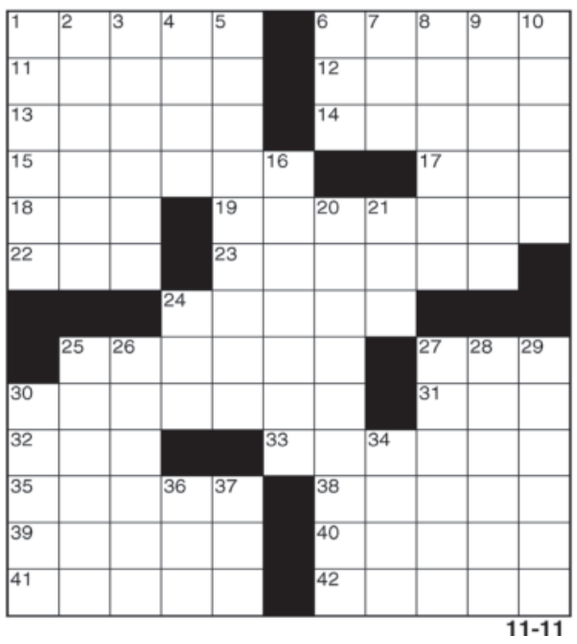
9 Coterie
10 Baker's need
16 Big Apple team
20 Long-necked onions
21 Loft contents
24 Writer Beattie
25 Botch
26 Cry of discovery
27 Station worker
28 Fermi of physics
29 Made independent
30 Glowing embers
34 Sweeping tale
36 Operated
37 Reproachful sound



11-11

WEDNESDAY'S ANSWERS

J	A	C	K	S	■	I	R	A	Q	I
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A filmy, star-studded Eid mired by logistical questions

SAEED KHAN SHAGOR

The biggest religious festival in Bangladesh is Eid-ul-Fitr, and in just a few days, it will be celebrated in harmony with the rest of the world. This is a crucial window for the film industry, as it is the time when most moviegoers choose to grace the halls.

Several major films are set to release this Eid, starting with Tanim Noor's ***Bonolota Express***. Following the success of his previous work, ***Utshob***, Noor presents a story based on the novel ***Kichukkhon*** by the late Humayun Ahmed. The film has already generated buzz with its poster, featuring a powerhouse cast including Mosharraf Karim, Chanchal Chowdhury, Azmeri Haque Badhan, Zakia Bari Mamo, Sariful Razz, and Sabila Nur. Notably, it marks the onscreen reunion of Mosharraf Karim and Chanchal Chowdhury after nearly sixteen years. By focusing on the diverse lives of passengers on a train journey, Noor continues to cater to the distinct audience he built through ***Utshob***—viewers who appreciate ordinary life portrayed beyond the tropes of global violence or thrillers.

After a long hiatus, filmmaker Redoan Rony returns to the camera with ***Domm***. Since its announcement, the film has been widely discussed and is finally arriving on the big screen this Eid. Shot partly in Kazakhstan, the film stars Afran Nisho in the title role, alongside Chanchal Chowdhury and Puja Chery. The narrative explores the perilous journey of illegal immigrants and the obstacles they face while attempting to go abroad through unlawful means.

Meanwhile, ***Prince***, starring superstar Shakib Khan, is considered a frontrunner for the season. Directed by Abu Hayat, the film features a cast from both Bangladesh and India and is set within the crime world of the nineties. Despite the pressure of a tight schedule and filming locations spanning Hyderabad, Sri Lanka, and Kolkata, the director maintains that no compromise is being made on quality. Opposite Shakib Khan are Jyotirmoyee Kundu and Tasnia Farin, making this high-budget action film a main attraction, provided the final shooting wraps in time for its scheduled release.

This Eid also sees Mehedi Hasan Hridoy helming ***Rakkhosh***, an action-packed film starring Siam Ahmed and Kolkata's Sushmita Chatterjee. The film's first look hints at a story wrapped in violence, psychological conflict, and darkness, with scenes shot in Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Parallel to this, Raihan Rafi presents ***Pressure Cooker***, his first self-produced film, which he has dedicated to the late filmmaker Tareque Masud. The story focuses on the internal struggles of women living in Dhaka, a city Rafi metaphorically describes as a "pressure cooker" where the "whistle" represents their silent cries. The central roles are enacted by Shabnam Bubly, Nazifa Tushi, Maria Shanta, and Snigdha Chowdhury.

While these five major films are poised to dominate the conversation, a lingering concern remains regarding their financial viability. Productions like ***Prince*** and ***Domm*** far exceed typical budgets, yet Bangladesh currently has only 60 to 70 cinema halls suitable for high-quality screenings. This infrastructure limitation makes it extremely difficult to recoup massive investments, especially when distributing multiple big-budget films simultaneously. While some old halls may undergo temporary renovations to meet demand, issues like poor management and the persistent threat of piracy—both locally and during international releases—remain significant hurdles. Ultimately, for these films to succeed commercially, they must find ways to sustain longer theatrical runs through superior storytelling and visual treatment. In a crowded market, the films that truly resonate with the audience will survive, eventually increasing their number of screenings while others fade. One can only hope that the dedication shown by these filmmakers results in a successful season that defies these logistical odds.

Govt weighs review of National Film Awards 2023

Bangladesh's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is considering a review of the National Film Awards 2023 after allegations that the jury's recommendations were not fully reflected in the final gazette.

Officials have begun contacting jury members following questions over several categories, including lifetime achievement and best screenplay.

The gazette named filmmaker Tareque Masud and cinematographer Abdul Latif Bachchu for lifetime achievement. However, the awards guidelines state that the honour should be considered for living individuals. Both recipients had died before the announcement, raising concerns over whether the rules were followed.

Controversy also emerged over the film ***Roktojoba***, amid claims that the best screenplay award went to someone who did not write the script.

Jury members Maksud Jamil Mintu and Nazmun Munira Nancy said some recommendations appeared to have been overlooked.

Officials said the review aims to ensure transparency in the final list.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

FILM SCREENING
Le Procès du chien

A courtroom takes an unexpected turn in ***Le Procès du chien*** (***Dog on Trial***), the acclaimed Swiss film by Laetitia Dosch. At the centre stands a dog whose trial unfolds with sly humour and sharp intelligence, quietly probing questions of justice, responsibility, and the fragile line between law and compassion.

Date: Monday | March 9, 2026
Time: 2 pm onwards
Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi

NEWS

Don't make NHRC 'toothless' again

FROM PAGE 12

"We want these powers to remain intact and the ordinances to be enacted into law without any changes," he said, urging the NHRC to remain independent and not function as "an extension of the executive".

NHRC Chairperson Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury assured those at the meeting that the commission will take firm action on behalf of the victims of human rights violations.

He said the previous legal framework -- the National Human Rights Commission Act 2009 -- was fundamentally flawed.

The old law, he noted, lacked the "potency, biting teeth, and pointed claws" required to hold powerful violators accountable.

Justice Moyeenul expressed hope that the relevant ordinances would be preserved in their current form and swiftly enacted into law to ensure effective remedies.

NHRC Commissioner Nur Khan said the commission will stand by the victims and will not bow down to any pressure -- "even at gunpoint". He urged people to judge the new body by its actions over the next 12 months.

Another commissioner, Professor Shariful Islam, said, "We are not here just for the salary; if we cannot work, we will leave."

Commissioner Elira Dewan said the NHRC would fully exercise its legal powers under the current ordinances and work independently.

Commissioner Nabila Idris moderated the meeting.

The discussion brought together officials from prominent rights organisations, including Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Ain o Salish Kendra, Odhikar, and Human Rights Support Society, who represented families seeking justice after years of state-led intimidation.

Reshma Akter, whose husband Mohammad Chanchal has been missing since 2013, broke down while recounting how her child knows his father only through a photograph.

A similar story of survival was shared by the wife of Mohammad Firoz Khan Kalu, who was forcibly disappeared from Chattogram in 2012. She still does not know his fate and struggles to make ends meet through tailoring work.

Shahed Shahriar, son of Sultana Jesmin, who died in RAB custody in 2023, said that the family was still unable to collect her death certificate or pension.

Shahadat Hossain, who was shot in the leg by police in 2019, spoke about the "price" of justice. He alleged the officer responsible was fined a mere Tk 15.

"Is the price of my leg only Tk 15?"

Some testimonies focused on religious persecution and mob violence.

Meer Mahbub Mostafa Ali, secretary (external affairs) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Bangladesh, said 117 homes were burned in Panchagarh in August 2024, and that one 16-year-old -- Shariar Rakib -- died.

Sunil Das, uncle of Dipu Das, a Hindu man who was killed and burned by a mob over what the family described as false blasphemy allegations, broke down while describing how Dipu was beaten, dragged for around one-and-a-half kilometres, and then burned. He demanded the maximum punishment for those responsible.

Joy and Dulal Robidas said their fathers, Pradip Lal and Rup Lal, were beaten to death after being branded "thieves", while police allegedly did not intervene.

Others who spoke at the meeting included Rocky, brother of custodial death victim Johnny; Ema Akhter, wife of bodybuilder Faruk, who also died in custody; and Kajol Mia, who survived a gunshot to the head in Jatrabari during the July uprising.

The NHRC concluded the session by assuring the victims that their recommendations would be reviewed and that the commission would take the necessary steps to make remedy mechanisms more effective.

25,000 to be picked

FROM PAGE 12

It will be finalised in a meeting next Sunday, the official added.

During the pre-pilot phase of the Farmers' Card programme, information for all categories of farmers will be collected, and the cards will be distributed within the next 45 days.

The government has allocated Tk 17,000 crore in the fiscal year 2024-25 budget and Tk 17,000 crore in the fiscal year 2025-26 budget for subsidies in fertiliser, seeds, machinery, and other agricultural inputs.

For the fiscal year 2025-26, the government has proposed allocating Tk 27,224 crore to support the agriculture sector, according to the finance ministry document.

In Bangladesh, agriculture continues to be the chief source of employment in 2022. In 2016-17, the sector accounted for 40.6 percent of employment. In 2022, that ratio increased to 45.33 percent, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Agriculture Minister Mohammad Amin Ur Rashid told this newspaper that they hope the pre-pilot phase will start by Pahela Baishakh. Farmers at the very margins, the most vulnerable, will receive certain benefits similar to those provided under a Family Card.

He added that the main purpose of this card will be to ensure that farmers can systematically access everything related to production, consumers, agricultural land, crops, and crop varieties, while the government receives all the information accurately.

After the pre-pilot and pilot phases, the Farmers' Card programme will be rolled out across all upazilas in the country over the next four years, he added.

Obaidur, director of the DAE's field service wing, said the government has identified the need for a centralised digital registry of farmers. Currently, no comprehensive database exists, which limits data-driven policy decisions.

A digital system will provide real-time information on crop production and subsidy needs while preventing ineligible individuals from receiving benefits, he said.

The government is drafting the Farmers' Card Implementation Policy 2026, which will be finalised soon. The data will follow international security standards and be stored at the National Data Centre, he added.

Farmer information will be updated every agricultural season (three times a year) to support production forecasting for seasons such as Boro, he said.

Lost cards or data errors can be corrected through online applications or via the local agriculture officer, with the final validation at the central level, he said.

The number of agriculture-based households in the country has increased to over 16.88 million, according to the report of the Agriculture Census-2019.

Writ petition

FROM PAGE 2

Mansur was removed from the post without any prior notice, which he was supposed to get before his termination, as per the law.

The same legal framework bars the appointment of a loan defaulter as the central bank governor.

Mostaqur is a loan defaulter and has connections with a company belonging to the controversial S Alam Group, Sarwar said.

The HC may hold a hearing on the writ petition before a bench as early as next week.

On February 25, the government removed Mansur from the post of central bank governor and appointed Mostaqur Rahman to the position.

The decision was announced through separate gazette notifications issued by the Financial Institutions Division of the finance ministry.

One notification stated that Mansur's remaining tenure as governor had been cancelled with immediate effect "in the public interest".

Another notification said Mostaqur had been appointed governor on a four-year term from the date of joining, subject to relinquishing all professional ties with other institutions and organisations.

The order was also stated to take immediate effect "in the public interest".

India edge England

FROM PAGE 12

bat by Brook, earlier flayed England's attack to all parts of the ground, hitting 19 sixes and 18 fours.

Samson signalled his intent with a four and six off Jofra Archer's first over but was given a life on 15 when Brook dropped a simple chance at mid-off off Archer.

It proved a costly mistake as, helped by some ill-disciplined bowling, Samson raced to his half-century off 26 balls with another huge six as Liam Dawson's first over was pummelled for 19 runs.

Ishan Kishan put on 97 from 48 balls with Samson for the second wicket before the left-hander holed out to Jacks off Adil Rashid in the 10th over to make it 117-2.

Samson powered on until Jacks returned to have him caught by Salt in the deep in the 14th over at which point India were 160-3.

Dube continued the onslaught with 43 off 25 balls before being run out by Brook's direct hit.

Hardik Pandya hit 27 off 12 balls and Tilak Varma 21 off seven to take India past the 250 mark. Jacks claimed 2-40 but the wayward Archer was plundered, leaking 1-61 off his four overs.

Voters seek change after youth-led protests

FROM PAGE 12

chill in the capital Kathmandu to vote early.

Voting started at 7:00 am local time (0115 GMT) and closed at 5:00 pm, with counting scheduled to start soon after, according to the country's election commission.

Early trends are likely to emerge by today but complete results could take a week or more as counting of proportional representation votes would take time, election commission officials said.

Officials said more than 300,000 security personnel, including the military, had been deployed to ensure peaceful voting in the more than 23,000 polling booths across the country.

Oli, who leads the moderate Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist, UML), is once again in the fray, along with more than 3,400 other candidates from 65 parties.

They include the country's oldest party, the Nepali Congress led by 49-year-old Gagan Thapa, and the Nepali Communist Party (NCP) comprising former Maoist insurgents who joined mainstream politics.

Together with UML, these parties have dominated Nepali politics for the last three decades, although the country has seen 32 government changes in the past 35 years.

But the frontrunner for these polls is the three-year-old Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), which has fielded the charismatic rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah as its prime ministerial candidate.

The 35-year-old former mayor of Nepal's capital Kathmandu is drawing large crowds, connecting with legions of young voters clamouring for change on the ground and online, even as he takes on Oli, 74, on his home turf in the Jhapa constituency along the Indian border.

In Jhapa, Menuka Chauhan,70, standing in line for more than 40 minutes at a polling booth, said she was worried about her son who was working in Qatar as a security guard, as tensions in the Middle East escalated.

"I can't sleep at night. I worry all the time. My son tells me bombs keep dropping there. I wish there were employment opportunities here," she said.

Promises of jobs, reining in corruption and improving governance – all demands raised during the September protests – have dominated much of the election campaign.

"The election is critical to address the aspirations of the youths expressed during the Gen Z protests," said political analyst Puranjan Acharya.

"If the newly elected leaders are seen as unfit to do so, there is a risk of further trouble."

Some 19 million voters are eligible to cast their ballot for 275 members of parliament through a mixed electoral system – 165 seats in direct first-past-the-post elections and 110 through proportional representation.

"Voting is not just about sending someone to victory," Interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki, who took over after Oli, said in a public broadcast this week. "It's a decision you make about your future and that of your children."

Husband accuses staffer

FROM PAGE 12

"During Shyam Sundar's tenure as chairman, Fazlur, Biswajit, and he allegedly embezzled and misused departmental funds. Biswajit and Shyam Sundar used office assistant Fazlu at different times to refuse to cooperate with and harass my wife. At one stage, Fazlur told my wife, 'You cannot act like a saint and leave the department's money untouched.'"

The statement further said when Fazlur was served a show-cause notice for breaching departmental discipline and non-cooperation, he apologised. However, at the instigation of Biswajit and Shyam Sundar, he again continued non-cooperation, which led to him being relieved of his duties.

Fazlu was transferred to the political science department and he joined there on February 18.

Biswajit also received a transfer order from the university administration. Unable to accept the transfer orders, they collectively planned the murder, the FIR said.

Another accused, Habibur, was promoted from lecturer to assistant professor and he began harbouring intentions to become chair of the social welfare department, the FIR added.

Shyam Sundar and Biswajit could not be contacted over phone despite repeated attempts.

Talking to this correspondent, Habibur said he did not know why he was accused in the case.

Runa was buried at the central municipal graveyard in Kushtia town after Zohr prayers yesterday.

While conducting the autopsy, doctors found 20 stab wounds to her chest, abdomen, hands, and legs, said Hossain Imam, resident medical officer of 250-bed Kushtia General Hospital.

133 interim govt ordinances

FROM PAGE 3

For instance, meeting sources said the BNP agrees in principle that local government elections should not be held under party symbols. As a result, ordinances related to local government elections are likely to be enacted easily.

Some ordinances may be passed after revisions. According to a source, other state institutions have raised objections to certain provisions introduced by the interim government regarding the separation of the judiciary and the National Board of Revenue. These may be enacted after specific amendments.

On the other hand, ordinances that conflict with the Constitution or government policies are unlikely to be enacted. However, the ruling party does not want to reject any ordinance outright. After being presented in Parliament, these will be reviewed by expert committees to determine which ones should be repealed.

When asked whether reviewing such a large number of ordinances within 30 days would be possible, a legal expert told The Daily Star that the period refers to 30 working days of Parliament. This allows the government to take sufficient time for review by scheduling sessions with longer intervals.

Meanwhile, at yesterday's meeting, the prime minister directed cabinet members to limit their protocols and also instructed officials to reduce his own.

The Cabinet Division has already issued an order to scale down the prime minister's foreign travel protocol. Under the new directive issued yesterday, only the senior-most cabinet minister, the chief whip of Parliament, the cabinet secretary, and the principal secretary to the prime minister will be present at the airport during the prime minister's departure or arrival.

Commenting on the change, a cabinet member told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, "The prime minister is moving through Dhaka with minimal protocol. Other ministers are also avoiding excessive protocol. As a result, traffic congestion in Dhaka has decreased compared to before."

Conviction rate in rape cases

FROM PAGE 3

to use a rigid online GD format. "They say they cannot write down all our statements... but there are vital details that need to be included. This weakens the backbone of the case right from the start."

Kamrun Nahar, a member of the coalition who moderated the event, criticised the ineffectiveness of government support services.

She alleged that calling the 109 national helpline only plays a welcome message without connecting callers to any actual assistance.

She also said One-Stop Crisis Centres (OCC) close early. "If a survivor knocks on the OCC door after 2:00pm and finds it closed, nothing could be more horrific," she added.

Advocate Ayesha Akhter read out the coalition's 10-point demand. She noted that false cases related to violence against women are sometimes filed to harass rivals over land disputes, which further congests the judicial system.

In the concluding remarks, the coalition demanded the formation of a special state task force to quickly dispose of the 10,000 pending rape cases. It also stressed the need to stop political interference and forced out-of-court settlements that allow perpetrators to walk free.

The 10-point demands include conducting fair investigations and ensuring swift justice for perpetrators; ensuring protection and compensation for victims and witnesses; holding government service providers accountable for negligence; expanding the legal definition of rape to make it non-discriminatory and aligned with human rights standards; ensuring justice for victims with disabilities and enacting a comprehensive victim and witness protection law; strictly enforcing the amended Evidence Act to ban questioning a victim's character during cross-examinations; establishing proper coordination among healthcare services, the judiciary, and non-governmental organisations; and transforming the Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Daman (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, into a comprehensive law.

10 killed, 476 injured in post-polls

FROM PAGE 4

Rajshahi and Barishal divisions each reported two deaths, while Dhaka division registered one fatality alongside 90 injuries. Chattogram and Mymensingh divisions each reported one death.

Through direct observation across 50 constituencies, Odhikar documented 32 incidents in 17 areas, resulting in five deaths and 41 injuries. Khulna-3 constituency alone accounted for the highest number of injuries among the monitored locations.

Reported incidents ranged from physical assaults and intimidation to property damage, including a nocturnal attack on a temple in Sylhet.

Investigations, case filings, detentions or crowd control measures were noted in 44 percent of the incidents, while others saw little or no official intervention.

Odhikar called on authorities to conduct prompt and impartial investigations, strengthen protection for civilians -- particularly for vulnerable groups, and implement early warning and rapid response mechanisms to prevent further post-election violence.

Verdict on

FROM PAGE 3

Apart from the former VC and RMP commissioner, RMP deputy commissioner Md Abu Maruf Hossain; additional deputy commissioner Md Shah Nur Alam Patwari, who was later promoted to superintendent of police; assistant commissioner Md Arifuzzaman (Kotwali zone); Tajhat police station officer-in-charge Rabiul Islam; the university's police outpost in-charge and sub-inspector Bibhuti Bhusan Roy; pro-Awami League Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad leader Sarwar Hossain Chandan, are among the accused.

Of them, 24 accused, including the former VC, are currently absconding.

The remaining six accused are currently in jail custody. They are former university proctor Shariful Islam, former assistant registrar Rafiul Hasan, former contractual employee of the registrar's office Anwar Parvez, former assistant sub-inspector of police Amir Hossain, former constable Sujan Chandra Roy, and banned Chhatra League leader Imran Chowdhury, alias Akash.

On August 5, 2025, the tribunal framed charges against all 30, detailing their alleged roles in aiding, inciting, or directly carrying out the shooting that killed Sayed, who was unarmed at the time.

The same year, the prosecution had submitted the formal charge on June 30, following the investigation agency's probe report filed on June 24.

On August 27, the trial began with the deposition of Sayed's father, Mokbul Hossain. Twenty-five prosecution witnesses testified in the case.

Abu Sayed was shot dead on July 16, 2024, during a student protest in Rangpur against the quota system in government jobs.

A video showing him being shot by police with arms outstretched in defiance went viral, turning him into an icon of resistance.

His killing is widely seen as a turning point that galvanised the mass uprising, which culminated in the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime on August 5, 2024.

75% women leave

FROM PAGE 3

This year, from over 1,200 applicants, 24 women were selected after several rounds of screening to work with different BRAC programmes for six months.

The data found that 38.8 percent of women who had taken career breaks cited family responsibilities and 36 percent maternity as the main reasons for leaving their jobs.

Other reasons included personal causes (18.8 percent), higher education (14.4 percent), unfavourable workplace environments (8.5 percent), and social pressure (4.7 percent).

The event was organised ahead of International Women's Day on March 8, with speakers expressing hope that initiatives supporting women's return to work would help build a more inclusive and women-friendly society.

Women seeking to return to work cited career advancement (76.5 percent) as their main motivation, followed by building a personal identity (62.2 percent), boosting self-confidence (57.7 percent), financial independence (56.5 percent), and contributing to family well-being (42.7 percent).

The data also showed that 6.6 percent of applicants had career breaks of more than six years, while the largest group -- 67.9 percent -- had breaks of one to two years.

Meanwhile, 28.6 percent had more than seven years of professional experience, while 58 percent had between three and five years.

Later, a session was held where Farah Mahboob, deputy manager at BRAC's Innovation Ecosystem and Partnership, and Elizabeth Marandy, senior officer at BRAC's Microfinance programme, shared their experiences of returning to work after career breaks.

Both speakers said they had stepped away from their careers after the birth of their children to focus on family responsibilities.

They emphasised that more organisations should create supportive opportunities so women can return to work after such breaks.

Question Rizwana

FROM PAGE 4

collusion to engineer the election in order to prevent Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami from securing a majority as a mainstream party," Taher said.

He called on the government to question Rizwana and clarify the situation.

Taher also said that Khalilur should be interrogated over his role during the interim government period.

He said the interim administration had pledged to maintain neutrality similar to that of a caretaker government, assuring that its advisers would not assume ministerial roles under a partisan administration.

However, he noted that Khalilur Rahman later took oath as foreign minister, a move he described as "contradictory to that position".

Alleging that Khalilur played a role in influencing the government in favour of the current ruling party, Taher said he should be removed from the cabinet and brought under questioning "in the interest of transparency".

Welfare funds

FROM PAGE 3

When asked if this practice legitimises extortion, Rabiul clarified that if any unregistered association or organisation arbitrarily collects money from owners or workers, it will be considered extortion. "They will face immediate action and punishment," he warned.

Earlier, on February 19, he had said funds collected from transport operators through mutual agreement should not be considered extortion. "What is described as extortion on the roads, I don't see it that way. Owners' and workers' associations spend it on their welfare. I would call it extortion only when someone is forced to pay," he said.

On allegations that AC bus fares are being doubled, the minister said there will be no opportunity to charge extra fares during Eid. "If anyone charges even one taka above the fixed fare, their route permits will be cancelled, and legal action will be taken," he said.

He also said, "We will control three-wheelers, low-speed battery-powered vehicles, temporary roadside markets, and illegal parking on highways."

Regarding unfit vehicles, Rabiul said workshops will be monitored to prevent unsafe vehicles from entering highways. Ongoing road and bridge construction projects have been instructed to remove materials and equipment from highways to keep lanes open.

Trucks and lorries carrying non-essential goods will face restrictions around Eid. Cargo movement from Chattogram port will be limited in the days leading up to Eid, except for essential and perishable items, to reduce highway congestion.

To reduce pressure on waterways, two additional river terminals -- Bosila Ghat and Kanchan Ghat -- have been opened alongside Sadarghat Launch Terminal, allowing passengers to board launches from those locations.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Office of the Superintendent of Police
Tangail District.

Memo No- 1462/E

Date: 4 Mar 2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for 05 Nos Packages Repair & Maintenance under FY 2025-2026 for District Police Tangail.

SL No.	Package Name	Tender ID No	Online Tender Notice publication Date and Time	Online Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	Repairing Works of Thana Bhabon, Delduar, Tangail.	1236987	5 Mar 2026 14:00	30 Mar 2026 14:00
2.	Repairing Works of Thana Bhabon, Gopalpur, Tangail.	1237092		
3.	Entire Repairing Works of Kagmari Fari Under Tangail Sadar Thana.	1238199		
4.	Repairing Works of Boundary Wall of Hemnagar Police Investigation Centre of Gopalpur Thana at Tangail District.	1239065		
5.	Repairing Works of NCO Quarter at Police Lines of Tangail District.	1239744		

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 portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

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

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

04.03.2026
Mohammad Shamsul Alam Sarker
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GD-500

কৃষিব্যবসা ও উন্নয়ন শিক্ষা ইনস্টিটিউট (IADS)
বাংলাদেশ কৃষি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ময়মনসিংহ।

এপ্রিল-সেপ্টেম্বর/২০২৬ (Summer Semester) সিমেস্টারে
MBA in Agribusiness কোর্সে ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি বিশ্ববিদ্যায়ের আওতাধীন কৃষিব্যবসা ও উন্নয়ন শিক্ষা ইনস্টিটিউট (IADS) এ **এপ্রিল-সেপ্টেম্বর/২০২৬ (Summer Semester)** সিমেস্টারে পূর্ণকালীন **MBA in Agribusiness** কোর্সে ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ভর্তির জন্য যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্যাদি নিম্নে প্রদান করা হলো ঃ

ডিগ্রী: MBA in Agribusiness
সময়কাল: দুই বছর (থিসিস সিমেস্টারসহ চার সিমেস্টার)
ক্রেডিট: ৬৪

আবেদনের যোগ্যতাঃ

১. প্রার্থীদেরকে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে কৃষি বিজ্ঞানে (যেমন: এগ্রিকালচার, এগ্রিকালচারাল ইকোনমিক্স, এগ্রিকালচারাল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ভেটেরিনারি সাইন্স, এনিমেল হাজবেন্ড্রি, ফিসারিজ, ফুড টেকনলজি, ফুড সেফটি ম্যানেজমেন্ট, বায়ো-ইনফরম্যাটিক্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং) চার (৪) বছর মেয়াদী অনার্স ডিগ্রি থাকতে হবে। অথবা,
প্রার্থীদেরকে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে নিম্নোক্ত বিষয়ে চার (৪) বছর মেয়াদী বিবিএ/ অনার্স ডিগ্রি থাকতে হবে: বিবিএ, বিজনেস স্টাডিজ, ফাইন্যান্স, একাউন্টিং, মার্কেটিং, ম্যানেজমেন্ট, ম্যানেজমেন্ট ইনফরমেশন সিস্টেমস, ব্যাংকিং এন্ড ইনস্যুরেন্স, হিউমেন রিসোর্স ম্যানেজমেন্ট, ট্যুরিজম এন্ড হসপিটালিটি ম্যানেজমেন্ট, ইকোনমিক্স, এনভাইরনমেন্টাল ইকোনমিক্স, জিওগ্রাফি, জুওলজি (প্রাণিবিদ্যা), বোটানি, ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, স্ট্যাটিসটিক্স।

২. ক্রেডিট কোর্স পদ্ধতিতে পাশকৃত প্রার্থীদেরকে সিজিপিএ ৪.০০ এর মধ্যে কমপক্ষে ২.৫০ অথবা ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে কমপক্ষে ৩.৫০ অথবা এনোয়াল সিস্টেম এ ৫০% মার্কস থাকতে হবে।

আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া ও আবেদন ফি প্রদান ঃ

৩. **০৯ মার্চ ২০২৬ থেকে ১৬ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ এর মধ্যে অনলাইনে** (https://bau.edu.bd/iads_mba/form) আবেদন করে আবেদন ফি প্রদান করতে হবে।

৪. আবেদন ফি ৫০০.০০ (পাঁচশত) টাকা মাত্র। আবেদন সম্পন্নের পর আবেদনের সময় প্রদত্ত ই-মেইলে পিন ও পাসওয়ার্ড প্রদান করা হবে। অনলাইনে আবেদনের প্রোফাইলে প্রাপ্ত পিন ও পাসওয়ার্ড ব্যবহার করে লগইন করার পর Pay Now বাটনে ক্লিক করে Sonali Payment Gateway দিয়ে Sonali Bank (Account, e-Wallet), Card (Visa, Master, Nexus), Mobile Banking (Nagad, bKash, Rocket, Upay, Cellfin, Tap, OKwallet, MeghnaPay, TeleCash, Islamic Wallet), Internet Banking (South East, Meghna, MTB, Citytouch) এর মাধ্যমে আবেদন ফি প্রদান করা যাবে।

৫. আবেদনের সময় নিম্নবর্ণিত ডকুমেন্ট সমূহ আপলোড করতে হবে। প্রত্যেকটি ডকুমেন্ট হবে সর্বোচ্চ 2MB এর PDF ফরম্যাট। কোন ডকুমেন্ট একাধিক পৃষ্ঠার হলে সবগুলো পৃষ্ঠাকে একটি PDF ফাইলে রুপান্তর করে আপলোড করতে হবে।
ক) ব্যাচেলর ডিগ্রীর সকল মার্কশীট/একাডেমিক ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট, মাইগ্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট (অন্যান্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে পাশ করা ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের ক্ষেত্রে) এবং সাম্প্রতিক তোলা রঙ্গিন পাসপোর্ট সাইজ ছবি।
খ) চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীদেরকে নিজ নিজ নিয়োগকর্তার নিকট থেকে "অধ্যয়নকালীন সময়কাল অর্থাৎ ২৪ মাসের ছুটি প্রদান করা হবে"- এই মর্মে প্রত্যয়নপত্র/অফিস আদেশের কপি। ভর্তির তারিখ হতে তিন মাসের মধ্যে ছুটির চূড়ান্ত কাগজ শিক্ষা বিষয়ক শাখায় জমা না দিলে, ভর্তি আপনা-আপনি (Automatically stand cancelled) বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

অন্যান্য তথ্যাদি ঃ

৬. ইনস্টিটিউটের একাডেমিক কমিটির সভার মাধ্যমে-
ক) একাডেমিক কমিটির সুপারিশক্রমে এবং ইকুভ্যালেন্ট কমিটির অনুমোদনক্রমে কেবলমাত্র বাছাইকৃত প্রার্থীগণ ভর্তি পরীক্ষায় অংশ গ্রহণের সুযোগ পাবে। পরিচালক অনলাইন প্যানেলে আবেদনটিতে Approval দিবেন অথবা আবেদনটি Reject করবেন। আবেদনকারী আবেদনের সময় প্রোফাইলে প্রাপ্ত পিন ও পাসওয়ার্ড ব্যবহার করে লগইন করার মাধ্যমে তার আবেদনের অবস্থান সনাক্ত করতে পারবে।
খ) ভর্তি পরীক্ষা নৈর্ব্যক্তিক (Communication, Mathematics & Analytical Ability) এবং রচনামূলক (Essay writing & Interpretation skill) এই দুই ভাগে বিভক্ত থাকবে।

গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তারিখ ঃ

আবেদনপত্র সংগ্রহ ও জমাদান	**০৯ মার্চ ২০২৬ - ১৬ এপ্রিল ২০২৬**
ভর্তি পরীক্ষা	**২১ এপ্রিল ২০২৬**
ভর্তি পরীক্ষার ফলাফল প্রকাশ	**২৩ এপ্রিল ২০২৬**

২৪ নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের ভর্তি প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্নের জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত ধাপসমূহ অনুসরণ করা হবে।

দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত	করণীয়	তারিখ
পরিচালক	একাডেমিক কমিটির সভার মাধ্যমে সুপারভাইজার নির্ধারণ করত ঃ তালিকাটি অনলাইন প্যানেলে আপডেট করা	২৭ এপ্রিল থেকে ২৮ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ এর মধ্যে
সুপারভাইজার	প্রার্থীকে সুপারভাইজ করার বিষয়ে অনলাইন প্যানেলে সম্মতি/অসম্মতি প্রদান	২৯ এপ্রিল থেকে ০৪ মে ২০২৬ এর মধ্যে
প্রক্টর	প্রার্থীদের জন্য অনলাইন প্যানেলে আবাসিক হল নির্ধারণ	
প্রভোস্ট	প্রার্থীর হল Attachment বিষয়ে অনলাইন প্যানেলে সম্মতি/অসম্মতি প্রদান	
কো-অর্ডিনেটর	আবেদনসমূহ ভর্তির জন্য সম্মতি/অসম্মতি প্রদান করা	০৬ মে ২০২৬ এর মধ্যে
রেজিস্ট্রার	ভর্তির জন্য সম্মতি প্রদান	০৭ মে ২০২৬ এর মধ্যে

ভর্তি ফি প্রদান ঃ

২৫ রেজিস্ট্রার ভর্তির জন্য সম্মতি প্রদান করার সাথে সাথে ভর্তিযোগ্য ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ভর্তি ফি প্রদান সংক্রান্ত মেইল পাবে। মেইল পাওয়ার পর ভর্তিযোগ্য ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদেরকে নিম্নবর্ণিত তারিখের মধ্যে ক্রমিক নং ৪ এ উল্লেখিত পদ্ধতি অনুসরন করে ভর্তি ও আনুষাঙ্গিক ফি অনলাইনে প্রদান করে ভর্তি নিশ্চিত করতে হবে। নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে অনলাইনে ফি প্রদান না করলে আবেদনটি বাতিল হয়ে যাবে এবং পরবর্তীতে এ সংক্রান্ত কোন আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। মোট ফি-র সাথে ব্যাংক/মোবাইল ব্যাংকিং চার্জ স্বয়ংক্রিয়ভাবে যুক্ত হবে।

ক্যাটাগরি	ভর্তি ও আনুষাঙ্গিক ফি	রেজিস্ট্রেশন সংক্রান্ত ফি	মোট	তারিখ
এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ভর্তিযোগ্য প্রার্থী	১৮,৮৬০/-	-	১৮,৮৬০/-	১০ মে থেকে ১৪ মে ২০২৬
অন্যান্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ভর্তিযোগ্য প্রার্থী	১৮,৮৬০/-	৪০০/-	১৯,২৬০/-	

২৬ ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদেরকে ওয়েবসাইট থেকে মেডিক্যাল ফরম ডাউনলোড করে ক্লাশ শুরুর পর থেকে ৭ (সাত) দিনের মধ্যে হেল্থ কেয়ার সেন্টার, বাকৃবি-তে স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষা সম্পন্ন করে মেডিক্যাল ফরমটি শিক্ষা বিষয়ক শাখায় জমা দিতে হবে।

২৭ অন্যান্য পাবলিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে আগত ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা ক্লাশ শুরুর পর থেকে ৭ (সাত) দিনের মধ্যে ব্যাচেলর ডিগ্রীর সকল মার্কশীট/ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট সংশ্লিষ্ট পরিচালকের নিকট জমা দিবে। পরিচালক আবেদনের সময় অনলাইনে আপলোডকৃত মার্কশীট/ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট এর সাথে মূল মার্কশীট/ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট মিলিয়ে দেখে মূল কপি ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদেরকে ফেরত দেবেন। পরিচালক কোন গড়মিল পেলে উক্ত ছাত্র-ছাত্রীর নাম ভর্তি বাতিলের জন্য শিক্ষা বিষয়ক শাখায় প্রেরণ করবেন।

২৮ ভর্তিকৃত ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের ক্লাশ ১৭ মে ২০২৬ তারিখ থেকে শুরু হবে।

04.03.2026
প্রফেসর ড. ছাদেকা হক
পরিচালক, আইএডিএস

GD-504

The lost art of boredom

ILLUSTRATION: **AZRA HUMAYRA**

ANICA BUSHRA RAHMAAN

The day is gradually coming to an end. At last, you finally have some time to yourself. So, for the next few hours, you endlessly scroll through reels, watch a few episodes of the series you're currently obsessed with or maybe game for a bit.

Not once do you allow your brain to rest. Not once do you leave space for boredom.

At a time when productivity defines you as a person, when short-form content is the norm, when we are constantly caving in to the latest trending movie or series, and when silence must be filled with music, we have lost the art of doing nothing.

Is it far-fetched to dwell upon the growing dismissal of boredom? Or is it scary? Is it the emptiness we fear? Or exposure?

Boredom is not relaxing, I must admit, not because it's mundane but because it's uncomfortable. Far too many of us are afraid to be alone with our thoughts, even when we realise it's a rabbit hole. Feelings shoved under the rug, moments we don't want to relive, questions we don't want to ask. We never stay in this moment long enough to see the good it might do, as thoughts take shape, associations are formed, and critical thinking is put into place. We don't want to look deep into the emptiness and uncover how profound it can actually be.

There's an image problem with boredom; it's frowned upon and best if avoided. It's an itch which must be scratched. Yet, according to the neuroscience of boredom, in the moments of "emptiness", our brain actually shifts. When you are not occupied, the brain triggers the default mode network (DMN), inducing self-reflection, daydreaming, sifting through memories, etc. In the simplest of words, it makes space for new things. Boredom is misunderstood. It's not a dead state. It's our brain at its most active. We just refuse to let it be.

We love to romanticise the notion of philosophy, the strange allure of deep conversations, and the idea of life's meaning, its existence, and its purpose, as long as we don't extend it to ourselves.

"We figured out a way to eliminate boredom. We've been able, almost completely, to shut off the default mode network in our brains," says Harvard professor Arthur C Brooks.

We love to romanticise the notion of philosophy, the strange allure of deep conversations, and the idea of life's meaning, its existence, and its purpose, as long as we don't extend it to ourselves. When we get to the ugly bits of understanding too much, we give up. Boredom is confrontation. We don't like it, so we must get on our phones immediately.

Anytime there is a moment of pause, we reach for instant gratification, enveloping the silence with a song, watching a movie, or going out for a snack. Anything but stillness. Not allowing ourselves to be bored might come off as always giving in to distractions. Yet, it is ultimately deprivation.

Yes, it could be reflexive. Guilt manifests when we do nothing. "Why am I sitting still?" and "Why am I not doing enough?" are some of the questions we ask ourselves. Productivity in a capitalistic world has robbed us of being by ourselves and shamed us into always being on the go.

This moment of shame also surfaces when we intentionally stumble upon people creating something, whether it's a recipe from scratch or a quirky piece of art. "God, I wish I were that creative," we wonder. But do we allow ourselves to be? When the brain is constantly stimulated, when relentless entertainment erases our imagination, when there is no space for thoughts to be mulled over, for an idea to form, for it to be materialised, how can one expect creativity? In the process, we have rendered ourselves as passive beings, always consuming, seldom thinking, and never creating.

Boredom isn't something that happens to us. It's a skill that needs practice. The next time you have that urge to reach for your phone, the pressure to do something productive, resist it. Sit with it. Allow your thoughts to drift. You never know what you might discover.

Reference:
Harvard Business Review (August 28, 2025). *You Need to Be Bored. Here's Why.*

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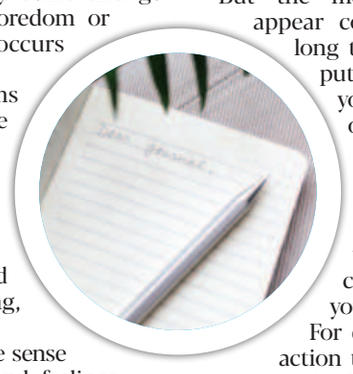
How journaling can help you improve yourself

AYAZ KADER

In our lives, we track our transactions, work hours, calories, and steps, but an essential component remains untouched: our thoughts and feelings. In the bustle of life, running and commuting from place to place, we sometimes seem absorbed in thoughts about different aspects of our lives, be they sources of problems or merriments. They come and go in harmony with boredom or tiredness, and it occurs subconsciously.



There always seems to be this unfortunate disconnect between your conscious and subconscious. You control the former, but the latter feels spontaneous and sometimes unnerving, too.

To track and make sense of these thoughts and feelings you always get, journaling can be a befitting cathartic outlet. Simply, journaling just means externalising all your day-to-day thoughts so you can preserve and inspect them at your will.

"Thoughts" here can refer to anything from simple things like "I'm tired" to stronger emotions like grief. In your leisure time, you could just sit down and jot them down in a diary or your phone.

A direct and immediate benefit is that writing down your emotions can be an excellent emotional regulation strategy. A study titled "Putting feelings into words: Affect labelling as implicit emotion regulation" has shown externalising your thoughts in this way results in the attenuation of your emotions and can significantly improve mood. In technical terms, this is called "affect labelling".

But the merits of journaling appear conspicuously in the long term if you regularly put in entries to track your thoughts instead of putting them in every now and then. When a stimulus triggers a negative emotion and bugs you, writing it down can sometimes help you notice patterns. For example, if a certain action triggers your anxiety recurrently, if you write it down, you can later analyse the patterns behind the anxiety and take deliberate steps to deal with the cause.

You may ask, why can't I think about these in my own mind instead of writing them down, which can get tedious? There are several reasons for this. You can hardly ever "think" about an issue that bothers you and then sort it out. Pondering about negative emotions can just lead to more self-consciousness and biases to cloud your reasoning. As I said in the beginning, there is always this disconnect between your conscious and subconscious.

Recollection of memory in your mind is sometimes spontaneous and selective or dependent on preconceived biases, which can lead to a vicious cycle of cognitive distortions which might dilute your perception of reality. This will lead to more problems than solutions. Your mind is not a book where the facts are laid out for you to peruse and reach conclusions. Your mental faculties may be great at reasoning, but they falter when it comes to remembering information verbatim.

However, your journal exists to make up for this. A journal doesn't distort reality or garble your memory. It will stay there as you've kept it, so you can analyse it later and understand yourself better, and hopefully become a better version of yourself gradually.

Reference:
Sage Journals (2018). *Putting feelings into words: Affect labelling as implicit emotion regulation.*

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Three digital platforms for journaling

Day One
The Day One app is a virtual haven for journaling. It captures the essence of owning a physical journal while introducing dynamic features that surpass traditional mediums. Day One's calendar view provides a captivating visual journey through your entries, with coloured dots marking each day's musings. You can hover over a date and get a glimpse of your entry, inviting you to revisit past moments.

GoodNotes
GoodNotes is a popular note-taking app that allows you to create and organise your journals digitally. It offers an extensive library of custom templates, handwriting recognition, and multimedia integration, making it convenient for bullet journaling purposes. The app facilitates users with a range of functional features including the "Lasso" tool that enables precise selection and dragging of elements across templates.

Journey
Journey is a secure and versatile journaling app that offers a sleek interface to chronicle your thoughts, memories, and personal growth. With seamless integration of photos and videos, mood tracking and location tagging, Journey enriches your journaling experience with a rich tapestry of multimedia. Journey's design features a captivating calendar and timeline view, allowing you to track your journaling progress and revisit past entries.

Is tipping a matter of culture or morality?

FAIZA ADIL

Clutching the bill after finishing a heavy meal and wondering how big the hole in your wallet is about to get might be a worthwhile worry, a necessary evil, even. That's why we've got taxes and service charges on most meals ordered outside. And then we've got the waiter who's standing right behind you while you struggle to bite into the too-big burger without seeming like a leashed dog being offered a treat. How much should you tip them, you wonder?

Tipping is a form of gratuity, which is derived from the word "gratitude". So how does one quantify gratefulness? You could dilute it to a percentage or a matter of feeling – different cultures practise this mundane task in wildly different ways. In most instances, it should be the customer's discretion how they wish to tip.

Unfortunately, we don't live in a world devoid of judgement, so based on where you're sitting right now, tipping isn't morally ambiguous, and this minute action may be seen as a token of character. But how different is this phenomenon in other cultures?

A charitable person in Dhaka might be seen differently in Japan or America, although in completely different contexts. Some cultures find the act of tipping offensive – an insinuation that you look down on them. In Japan, *omotenashi*, or hospitality, is a source of pride, so tips are seen as disrespectful, and a genuine expression of thanks is preferred. The amount you pay at a restaurant or café in Japan accounts for the service you'll receive at their establishment, which makes sense considering the fact that a customer pays to eat and a server gets paid to bring out said food.

Across the ocean, the West observes tipping in a much more aggressive fashion, with a moral obligation to tip about 20 percent of your bill. This makes sense sometimes, but basically reduces gratuity to a fixed ratio regardless of effort, quality, and even gratefulness. This also means that a server would get USD 100 in tips if they worked at an upscale place, and another would get much less elsewhere. Americans tip under the scrutiny of their fairly strict societal obligation to make up for the obscenely low wages paid to service workers.

Dhaka has a much more lenient culture when it comes to tipping, relying more on the tone of gratuity, sometimes bordering on bribery. Tipping is often customary for services that employ minimum wage workers and don't deduct proportionate service charges. But depending on where you are and what you're getting, the server displays social cues for the average customer to communicate their expectation.

Most people agree that they don't feel pressured to tip but do so on a case-by-case basis. This is largely thanks to a tip culture that rewards good service rather than imposing unwritten social obligations. Unlike either of the extremes of Japan or America, the amount you tip is almost wholly dependent on you and the service you're asking for. Regular at the roadside hotel? They'll definitely remember a good tipper, so you'll always have better seats and faster service.

Our approach to tipping is also largely attributed to the fact that a tip of BDT 50 to 200 is acceptable in most establishments, regardless of your bill. This isn't to say that a moral obligation doesn't exist when it comes to tipping. A charitable individual would leave a tip to encourage great work – to help servers and generally reward a service well done. And as the word suggests, gratuity is innate appreciation. Which means tip at your own discretion – not a set percentage, but a gracious amount as an extension of your thanks, a practice common in Dhaka.

So, place a tip when the server deserves it or you know they're getting paid way too little for demanding work.

Faiza *is trying to calculate the socially acceptable tip for her bill, send her your thoughts on the matter on IG @fizouis*

Star
DHAKA FRIDAY MARCH 6, 2026, FALGUN 21, 1432 BS

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Women's Asian Cup
Bangladesh vs DPR Korea
Live from 8:00 am
China vs Uzbekistan
Live from 2:00 pm

Spirited Bangladesh dare to defy North Korea

SPORTS REPORTER

After going toe to toe against defending champions China in their AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 opener, Bangladesh are set to face another tournament favourites in North Korea in their second Group B match at the Western Sydney Stadium in Australia today, eyeing another bold showing.

Bangladesh, ranked 112th in the FIFA rankings, surpassed all expectations in their 2-0 defeat against China, but will arguably face an even tougher test against North Korea, currently ranked 9th in the world.

The three-time Asian Cup champions had recently clinched the FIFA Under-20 Women's World Cup 2024 and five players from that squad have been added in the Asian Cup contingent.

Bangladesh coach Peter Butler termed North Korea as the technically superior team but said his charges will not back down.

"We are here again to face a very strong North Korea. They are technically gifted, well-supported, and well-funded. Based on their FIFA ranking, they are likely one of the favorites for the tournament. It is going to be a tall order to win, and we are under no illusions about that," said Butler at a pre-match conference in Sydney.

"However, it is about giving the best of oneself and being authentic. We won't be sitting back and parking the bus; we're going to have a go. We hope to win over the hearts and minds of the supporters, just as we did with the Chinese fans the other night," said the English coach.

Against China, Bangladesh kept a cleansheet for the first 43 minutes and did not concede in the second half. However, two goals inside three minutes late in the first half decided the fate of the contest.

Butler was aware that a similar lapse against North Korea, who began their campaign with an easy 3-0 win over Uzbekistan, could also cost them dearly.

"Against teams like North Korea and China, they can hurt you in an instant, so you must track runners and stay on your feet. It's about finding that fine balance between being solid defensively and maintaining an offensive mindset."

Afeida Khandaker and Co impressed many with their spirited showing against China, including North Korean coach Ri Song-Ho, who is especially wary about Bangladesh's speed.

"I watched the China versus Bangladesh match, and I feel Bangladesh is much stronger than I expected. For example, their attack is very fast, and their speed and skill in transitioning from defense to attack are quite sharp. Generally speaking, they are a very speedy team. So, our defense needs to be more focused to ensure they [Bangladesh] don't get any scoring chances," said Korean coach.

97 DAYS TO GO

'An awesome force of nature'

In the 2022 final, Kylian Mbappe scored twice in just 97 seconds (79:41 to 81:18). France were trailing 2-0 before his stunning comeback levelled the match, prompting Peter Dury to label him as "an awesome force of nature" in the commentary box. Mbappe later completed his hattrick -- only the second player after England's Geoff Hurst (against West Germany in 1966) to score a treble in a World Cup final. But France lost on penalties after a 3-3 draw, finishing runners-up to Argentina.

***** Read full story on The Daily Star's website***

Litton, Afif back to steady middle order

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have brought Litton Das and Afif Hossain back into the ODI fold for the upcoming series against Pakistan, starting on March 11, as middle-order failures saw Jaker Ali Anik, Shamim Hossain and Nurul Hasan Sohan get dropped.

The Tigers named a 15-member squad yesterday, with T20I skipper Litton -- who last played an ODI in July last year -- slotted into the squad to fulfil a middle-order role. He was dropped after the first ODI against Sri Lanka owing to poor form while injuries saw him miss the Afghanistan and West Indies series.

In his last eight ODI innings, Litton could not reach double digits and produced four ducks. In the recent Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL), he struck one fifty in three knocks.

"There may be questions about Littos recent ODI form, but he has been working closely with the coaches on his game. We believe he can soon produce his best in this format and are considering him as an option to strengthen the middle order," BCB chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu was quoted as saying in the BCB media release on Thursday.

Afif struck a hundred in the BCL. Before that, the left-hander managed 317 runs in the last Dhaka Premier League (DPL) in 15 games, with one fifty at an average of 35.22.

Apparently, these numbers were enough to convince the board bring back Afif into the middle-order.

It was also apparent that Jaker, Shamim and Sohan have not done enough with the opportunities they were provided. "We have provided opportunities to several players in the middle order, but unfortunately, some have not done enough to secure their places. With that in mind, Afif Hossain has been recalled. He brings valuable experience and currently appears to be in fine touch," Lipu said.

Meanwhile, pacer Hasan Mahmud, who is nursing a tennis elbow injury, has been left out of the squad. Tanzim Sakib, who is recovering from a back issue, was also left out as the BCB opted for precaution. Shoriful Islam and Nahid Rana came in as replacements for the duo.

Bangladesh squad: Mehidy Hasan Miraz (capt), Soumya Sarkar, Saif Hassan, Tanzid Hasan, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Tawhid Hridoy, Litton Das, Afif Hossain, Mahidul Islam Bhuiyan, Rishad Hossain, Tanvir Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam and Nahid Rana.

Meanwhile, Nasum Ahmed, who had appeared in the last two ODIs against the Windies, has also been excluded from the squad.

The squad for the Pakistan series are set to play a practice match against BCL All Stars XI on March 7.

Independence Award for TT legend Linu

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh table tennis legend Zobera Rahman Linu has been selected for the Independence Award 2026, the country's highest state honour. The government yesterday decided to confer the award on 15 individuals and five institutions for their "glorious and outstanding contributions at the national level".

Linu becomes the 15th sportsperson to receive the honour, after Habilder Mostaq Ahmed (1977), Abbas Mirza (posthumously, 1981), M Mosharraf Hossain Khan (1986), Niaz Murshed (1989), Shah Alam (1991), Kazi Abdul Alem (1993), Atiqur Rahman (1994), Zakaria Pintu (1995), Kazi Salahuddin (1996), Sheikh Kamal (posthumously, 1998), Brojen Das (1999), Sultana Kamal (posthumously, 2000), ASM Rakibul Hasan (2023) and Firoza Khatun (2024).

Since the award's introduction in 1977, two organisations -- Bangladesh Cricket Board (2001) and Bangladesh Ansar and VDP (2004) -- have also been honoured.

A dominant force in her era, Linu won a record 16 national women's singles titles between 1979 and 2001 and represented Bangladesh at the Asian and World Table Tennis Championships.

She received the National Sports Award in 1999 and later served as president of the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation and chairperson of the Athletes Commission of the Bangladesh Olympic Association from 2019 to 2023.

When Allen clicks, even the best crumble

STAR SPORTS DESK

On Wednesday, New Zealand's Finn Allen produced an innings that showcased just how destructive the right-hander can be on his day. A closer look at his career, however, shows that such days have not been very common for the opener.

Chasing a 170-run target, Allen smashed the fastest century in the history of T20 World Cups -- an unbeaten 100 off just 33 deliveries -- to propel the Black Caps past South Africa in Kolkata and into the final of this edition.

South Africa coach Shukri Conrad dismissed the notion that it was another instance of the Proteas choking in the knockout stages of major global competitions, instead describing the nine-wicket thumping, with 43 balls to spare, as a "bloody walloping".

The main reason behind that "walloping" was Allen -- a player who does not produce staggering numbers consistently, but when he does, even the most in-form teams can look helpless in the face of his onslaught. South Africa were unbeaten heading into the semifinal but could do little to contain him.

Allen scored just 95 runs in five matches at an average of 19 during the 2022 T20 World Cup. His numbers dipped further in the following edition in 2024, when he managed only 35 runs at an average of 8.75.

Even in this World Cup, before his swashbuckling century against the Proteas, he had struck an unbeaten 84 against lower-ranked UAE in the group stage but failed to cross the 30-run mark in the other five matches.

Despite blowing hot and cold, Allen has never compromised on one aspect -- his strike rate. In this edition of the tournament, he has scored at a staggering strike rate of 203.52. It also reflects the freedom he has been given to play his natural game, rarely straying from his aggressive approach, with the Proteas the unfortunate side to bear the brunt of it this time.

Allen was also well supported by opening partner Tim Seifert, who struck a brisk fifty.

New Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner also endorsed the approach taken by the openers, praising their intent.

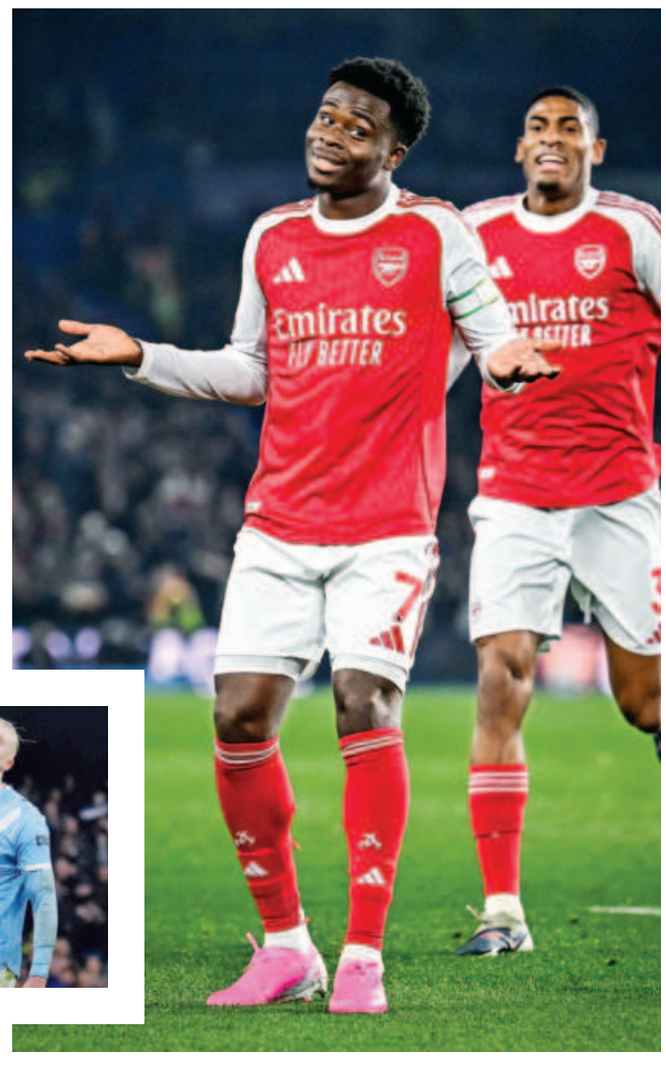
"They (the openers) kind of just went out there and played their game and took it on, which was cool to see," Santner said after the match.

"Finny (Allen) just carried on and, I mean, 33 balls for 100, it's not bad. Not bad at all. It'd be nice if we could (repeat this in the final)," Santner added.

For New Zealand, Santner's words will reflect their main hope. Given Allen's nature as a batter, the Black Caps will simply hope he can fire once more and have another day of his own when they take the field for the final in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

GUNNERS 7 CLEAR AFTER CITY SLIP

Premier League leaders Arsenal struck first in the latest twist of the title race, edging Brighton 1-0 on Wednesday as Bukayo Saka marked his 300th appearance with a goal at the Amex Stadium. The result stretched the Gunners' lead to seven points after Manchester City were held to a costly 2-2 draw at home by relegation-threatened Nottingham Forest. City twice led through January signing Antoine Semenyo and a Rodri header but Morgan Gibbs-White and Elliot Anderson rescued a valuable point for Forest. Arsenal now have 67 points from 30 games, while second-placed City sit on 60 from 29 with a game in hand. The title race, however, still holds a decisive twist, with Mikel Arteta's side set to visit the Etihad on April 19.



PHOTOS: FACEBOOK

Don't make NHRC 'toothless' again

Victims of human rights violations urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Victims of grave human rights violations and their families yesterday urged the government to retain the enhanced powers granted to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), warning that any move to dilute the new ordinance would render the rights body "toothless" once again.

At an exchange meeting at the NHRC headquarters in the capital, the newly appointed chairperson and commissioners heard harrowing accounts of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and custodial torture.

The victims and their families warned that if the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance 2025 and the Enforced Disappearance Remedies and Prevention Ordinance 2025, along with other related ordinances, are amended in ways that would curtail the commission's powers, it could once again become weak, as in the past.

They said this would make it harder to secure protection and effective remedies in cases involving serious human rights violations.

Leemon Hossain, who became a symbol of state brutality after losing a leg in a Rapid Action Battalion shooting in 2011, told the meeting that the new ordinances finally provide the commission with the authority needed to seek remedies.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Jacob Bethel's heroic 45-ball 108 proved insufficient as England fell seven runs short of chasing a mammoth 253-7 against India in the second semifinal of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday. Bethel kept England in the match till the final over before getting run out in the first ball of the 20th. Defending champions India will now face New Zealand in the final on March 8.

PHOTO: AFP

India edge England in run-fest to set up NZ final

AFP, *Mumbai*

India clung on to beat England by seven runs in a thrilling ICC Men's T20 World Cup semifinal in Mumbai on Thursday, despite Jacob Bethell's superb 105.

After Sanju Samson's scintillating 89 laid the platform for India to pile up a massive 253-7, England fell just short in what would have been a record chase, finishing on 246-7.

Phil Salt (5), Harry Brook (7) and Jos Buttler (25) fell early, but Bethell, aided by Will Jacks (35) kept England in the hunt.

The left-hander hit seven sixes and eight fours in his 48-ball thrash before his run out in the final over finally allowed India to celebrate in front of 35,000 jubilant fans in Mumbai's Wankhede stadium.

India will face New Zealand in Sunday's final in Ahmedabad as they attempt to become the first team to retain the trophy and the first to win it on home soil.

The hosts, having been asked to

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

NEPAL GOES TO THE POLLS

Voters seek change after youth-led protests

REUTERS, *Kathmandu*

Nearly six months after a wave of unprecedented youth-led protests and the deaths of 77 people forced Nepal's then prime minister to quit, people began voting yesterday in a general election that will choose a new parliament in the Himalayan nation.

Perched between China and India, the country of 30 million people has been plagued for decades by political instability, crippling a largely agrarian economy and worsening unemployment – structural issues compounded by rampant corruption.

The long-festering malaise erupted into street demonstrations last September, triggered by a social media ban, that brought thousands on the streets, leading to clashes and fatalities that forced the resignation of Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli.

Yesterday, voters flocked to schools, temples and ancient courtyards that have been converted into polling booths across the country, with some braving the morning

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

25,000 to be picked for Farmers' Card pre-pilot phase

SUKANTA HALDER

The Farmers' Card will be launched on a pre-pilot basis by April 14 this year, with around 25,000 farmers in nine upazilas of eight districts set to get the benefit.

The upazilas are Shibganj in Chapainawabganj, Tangail Sadar, Islampur in Jamalpur, Teknaf in Cox's Bazar, Nesarabad in Pirojpur, Cumilla Sadar, Panchagarh Sadar, Juri in Moulvibazar, and Shailkupa in Jhenaidah.

The initiative's pre-pilot phase will be implemented by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), which will build comprehensive farmer database, distribute the subsidy cards, and manage data collection.

Agriculture contributed approximately 11.03 percent to Bangladesh's gross domestic product in fiscal year 2024-25, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Obaidur Rahman Mondol, director of the DAE's field service wing, told The Daily Star that farmers will receive various services through the card, including agricultural inputs at fair prices, government subsidies and incentives, access to agricultural machinery at affordable rates, and irrigation facilities at fair prices.

The card will help farmers obtain agricultural loans on easy terms and benefits from agricultural insurance, he said.

Besides, farmers will have opportunities to sell agricultural products at fair prices, receive training, and access weather and market information through digital platforms, he added.

The card will also provide guidance on crop diseases and pest control, he said, adding that data will be collected and the cards distributed to small, marginal, medium, large, and landless farmers.

After the pre-pilot and pilot phases, the Farmers' Card programme will be rolled out across all upazilas over the next four years.

In addition to crop farmers, fish farmers, livestock rearers, and dairy farmers will also be eligible for the benefits of the Farmers' Card, Obaidur added.

The subsidy amount is still under discussion but is expected to be around Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,500 for a specific category of farmer for crop production during the upcoming Kharif season (mid-March to mid-November), he said.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Jamaat softens stance on US trade deal

Meets Paul Kapur

STAR REPORT

Jamaat-e-Islami does not oppose the reciprocal trade agreement with the US at this moment, arguing that certain aspects of the deal are important for Bangladesh and thus should continue.

"We are not strongly opposing them at this moment, as many trade-related issues involving Bangladesh are linked to these agreements," Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher told reporters yesterday.

He also told journalists that Jamaat requested the US lower the tariff from 19 percent during a meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs S Paul Kapur at the residence of US Ambassador Brent Christensen in the capital.

BNP, however, did not make any comment on the trade deal when asked about Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman's statement that the major political parties had given consent to the deal before it was signed on February 9.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

TEACHER MURDER

Husband accuses staffer, teachers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

A case was filed yesterday in connection with the killing of a female teacher of Islamic University in Kushtia.

Victim Asma Sadia Runa's husband Imtiaz Sultan lodged the case with Islamic University Police Station, accusing Asma's two colleagues, Shyam Sundar Sarkar and Habibur Rahman, along with university's officer Biswajit Kumar Biswas and employee Fazlur Rahman.

Faisal Mahmud, additional superintendent of Kushtia police, told The Daily Star that Shyam Sundar and Habibur are assistant professors of the social welfare department. Biswajit was a former assistant registrar and now works at a dormitory, while Fazlur is a temporary staffer of the university.

On Wednesday afternoon, Runa, 40, an assistant professor and the chairperson of the social welfare department, was stabbed to death by Fazlur at her department office. Fazlur also tried to kill himself by slitting his own throat.

Fazlur, who is now undergoing treatment at the 250-bed Kushtia General Hospital, has made a confessional statement to police, said Faisal.

A doctor at the hospital said Fazlur told him that he killed Runa, triggered by anger over issues such as unpaid salary, misbehaviour, and his transfer to another department. Fazlur added that he had not been paid for around nine months.

In the case statement, Runa's husband Imtiaz said, "My wife joined as the chairperson of the department in September 2024. Before her, the department was headed by Shyam Sundar. He did not hand over the income and expenditure accounts of the department during his tenure to Runa at the time of her assuming charge.

"At that time, Biswajit told my wife, 'You have become chair like the previous one. You will just sign wherever we tell you and wherever we place the papers.'"

My wife was astonished to hear this and told them that the department's funds must be spent with transparency.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Rape case conviction rate close to zero in country

P3

HASANAH
ISLAMI BANKING
البنكية الاسلامي
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 6

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5-03	12-30	4-30	6-05	7-30
JAMAAT	5-13	1-15	4-45	6-15	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAR	SEHRI	IFTAR
16	6		6:05
17	7	4:59	6:06
18	8	4:58	6:06

Police fire water cannons to disperse demonstrators gathered in front of Bangladesh Bank headquarters yesterday, demanding the return of their deposits, along with profits, from five merged Islamic banks. Story on B3.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Ancient pottery reveals Europeans' diet secrets

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Millennia-old pottery remains from across Europe reveal that ancient communities in the region made elaborate meals using a much greater variety of plant and animal products than previously believed, according to a new study.

Archaeologists interpret diets of ancient cultures by analysing fatty residues in pottery remains. But this method mostly only provides insights into meat-based foods.

The new study combined multiple techniques, including microscopic examination and chemical analysis, to identify the remains of plants eaten by ancient European hunter-gatherers.

It examined organic residues left behind on nearly 60 pottery shards found across 13 archaeological sites in northern and eastern Europe, dating to between the 6th and 3rd millennium BC.

Using this multipronged approach, researchers recovered tissue samples of a variety of plants, including grasses, berries, leaves, and seeds, alongside residues of fish and other seafood.