

BSRM
THE ONLY STEEL FACTORY IN BANGLADESH TO RECEIVE THE
GREEN FACTORY AWARD 2025

DHAKA METRO RAIL PROJECT
Proud Construction Partner
SHAH CEMENT

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.

Lecmon 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 Bethel'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 Bethel, 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 Shaikupa 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.

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

he said, adding that data will be collected and the cards distributed to small, marginal, medium, large, and landless farmers.

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 Naye-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 Sadiya 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 ISLAMIC BANKING
البنكية الاسلامي
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 6

Fajr	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.

