

Chinese vice foreign minister to pay visit April 2-3

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong will be visiting Bangladesh on April 2-3 2026 for the 14th Bangladesh-China Diplomatic Consultations.

This would be the first high-level visit by any Chinese official after the BNP government assumed office following the election on February 12, 18 months after the July uprising in 2024.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen briefed about the visit when he paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman at the foreign ministry yesterday.

Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kobir was present during



Sun Weidong



Workers pack plastic and metal bangles at a small factory in the Lalbagh area of Old Dhaka. Production rises ahead of festivals like Eid, with the bangles supplied to wholesalers across the country. Depending on the design and quality, each stack sells for around Tk 30 to Tk 100. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'I fell ill seeing blood on his body'

Father recalls finding son among bullet-hit bodies at ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A retired madrasa teacher broke down in tears before the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday as he recounted finding his 35-year-old son among rows of bullet-riddled bodies on a hospital floor after taking part in the July uprising.

Md Al Amin Patowary, 65, testified in a crimes against humanity case against former law minister Anisul Huq and former prime minister's adviser Salman F Rahman. He said he rushed to a hospital in Mirpur after hearing that his son had been shot on August 5, 2024.

"When I arrived, I saw my son and 15 to 20 others lying dead on the floor," he said, struggling to continue. "They had all been shot. Seeing the blood on their bodies, I fell ill."

He alleged that former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, alongside Obaidul Quader, Anisul Huq, and Salman F Rahman, were responsible, claiming that they held meetings and imposed a curfew to violently suppress the movement.

"For that reason, I hold them responsible for my son's death," he said, calling for justice and expressing hope that such incidents never happen again.

Meanwhile, 18-year-old student Abu Juhumul Islam testified that he was shot in the chest during protests in Mirpur on July 20.

After receiving initial treatment at a clinic in Kazipara, he was referred to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

He said he waited nearly 20 minutes there without receiving treatment before being transferred to the National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital for surgery.

Alleging that police and Chhatra League members later entered the hospital carrying sticks and bamboo, verbally abused patients, photographed them, and filed cases against them, the victim called for justice.



Police roll out Eid safety guidelines

DMP urges officials to stay vigilant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police yesterday issued a comprehensive set of safety guidelines for travellers and transport operators to ensure smooth journeys during the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr holidays.

The move comes as millions prepare to leave the capital, prompting the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to step up security measures against mugging and robbery in an emptying city.

In a press release, the police headquarters urged travellers to plan their trips in advance and remain mindful of personal safety. Passengers were advised not to pressure drivers to speed and were warned against travelling on the roofs of buses, trucks, or goods-laden vehicles.

"Accepting food or drinks from strangers during the journey is strictly discouraged," the statement said, referring to the risk of drugging gangs, commonly known as the "malam party".

Bus drivers were requested to avoid risky overtaking and refrain from driving when fatigued or ill. Transport operators were also instructed to carry valid licences and avoid overloading vehicles.

On waterways, passengers of launches, steamers, and speedboats were advised not to board vessels beyond their capacity or travel on roofs. Police also warned against travelling during adverse weather and urged speedboat passengers to wear life jackets.

Launch owners were instructed to ensure their vessels are operated by qualified masters and to suspend operations during bad weather. Vessels should also carry functional fire pumps

and buoys with ropes measuring 100 to 150 feet to help identify accident-hit vessels.

Train passengers were similarly cautioned against travelling on roofs, buffers, or engines. Police also warned of possible stone-throwing incidents and urged passengers to safeguard their belongings.

In case of emergencies, the public can contact the Police Headquarters control

KEY ADVICE

Don't pressure drivers to speed

Avoid travelling on vehicle roofs

No reckless driving or risky overtaking

Carry valid licence, ensure vehicle fitness

Avoid overloading vehicles

Wear life jackets on speedboats

Don't charge or pay extra fares

room at 01320001300 or 01320001299. Other emergency contacts include the Highway Police (01320182598), Railway Police (01320177598), and Naval Police (01320169598).

Meanwhile, Acting DMP Commissioner Md Sarwar instructed police members to remain alert to ensure safe and smooth travel during the Eid holidays.

Speaking at the monthly crime review meeting for February 2026 at the DMP headquarters yesterday, he said most people would leave Dhaka during

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Considering Bangladesh's call for fuel'

Says Indian external affairs ministry

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India is considering requests from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives for supplies of diesel and refined petroleum products amid the ongoing war in the Middle East, which has disrupted the oil supply globally.

"We have received a request from the government of Bangladesh for the supply of diesel, which is being examined," Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Indian external affairs ministry, told a media briefing yesterday, reports Indian newspaper The Hindu Businessline.

While diesel exports to Bangladesh have largely continued since 2017, India's refining capacity, its own requirements and diesel availability will be factored in while taking decisions, he said.

On Wednesday, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, minister for power, energy, and mineral resources, told reporters that Dhaka has written to New Delhi seeking additional fuel from India.

He added that fuel oil is imported from India through a pipeline and that, in the current emergency

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

DAY ONE OF 13TH PARLIAMENT

A walkout, a speech, and a few wry smiles

BAHARAM KHAN

The first day of the 13th National Parliament was marked by several notable moments, but what stood out most were the recurring subtle "wry" smiles.

The expressions appeared across the chamber, from President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to senior leaders on both sides of the House.

There had been talks that MPs from the Jamaat-led opposition would walk out during President Shahabuddin's address.

As soon as the president took his seat beside the speaker, opposition MPs stood up from their seats and began protesting. The protest quickly escalated into an uproar.

The commotion paused briefly for the national anthem but resumed immediately after it ended.

From Gallery-1, reserved for journalists, Shahabuddin's expression was clearly visible. Beneath his neatly groomed moustache appeared a faint smirk.

It seemed as though he had entered the chamber fully prepared for the unfolding drama.

Whether it was merely a smile or something tinged with irony is difficult to say. Yet the expression was striking, particularly as one of the protesters against his speech had previously taken the oath of office from Shahabuddin to join the interim government's advisory council.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Azam Khan new Liberation War affairs minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Vice-Chairman Ahmed Azam Khan, also a lawmaker from the Tangail-8 constituency, was sworn in as a member of the cabinet yesterday.

He has been given charge of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka.

The brief swearing-in ceremony was attended by senior government officials and political leaders.



Release Shahriar Kabir immediately

Global civil society orgs appeal to PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

European and global civil society organisations have issued an urgent appeal to the prime minister of Bangladesh, calling for the immediate release of 75-year-old journalist, writer, freedom fighter, and human rights activist Shahriar Kabir.

The organisations also requested that his immediate release and access to proper medical care be ensured, as reports indicate that his health has severely deteriorated while in custody.

In a joint statement, a coalition of international organisations – including the South Asia Democratic Forum in Belgium, European Bangladesh Forum (EU and United Kingdom), Working Group Bangladesh in Germany, Earth Civilisation Network, and Freedom and Justice Alliance – said that Kabir's health condition has reached a critical stage.

The joint appeal was led by Paulo Casaca, executive director of the South Asia Democratic

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Raise tobacco taxes to protect public health

Urge experts at workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Given that the country's existing tobacco tax structure is inadequate to discourage tobacco use, anti-tobacco campaigners and economists have recommended increasing taxes to reduce the affordability of tobacco products and protect public health.

They suggested merging the low and medium tiers and setting the maximum retail price at Tk 100 to prevent smokers from switching between closely priced low and medium-tier products.

The recommendations came at an orientation workshop on tobacco product pricing and taxation for the upcoming FY 2026-27 national budget held at the office of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) in Dhaka.

The workshop aimed to brief journalists and tobacco control advocates on the rationale and methodology behind a proposed reform of tobacco taxation.

The proposal was jointly developed by Economics for Health, World Health Organization, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Vital Strategies, and the Institute of Health Economics, Dhaka University.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Khalilur set for Türkiye trip today

His first bilateral visit since taking office

PORIMOL PALMA

In his first bilateral visit since taking office, Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman will travel to Türkiye today as the two countries see growing cooperation in trade and defence.



Apart from bilateral issues, the March 13-14 visit will also focus on Khalilur Rahman's campaign for the presidency of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), as well as trade, investment and the war in the Middle East, foreign ministry officials said yesterday.

Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir and Foreign Ministry Secretary M Fardadul Islam will also be part of the delegation. Khalilur will lead the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

HATHAZARI IN CHATTOGRAM

Historic WWII airbase lies in ruins

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The Hathazari Airfield, a World War II-era airbase in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila and a site of historic importance, has been lying in a state of decay due to decades of neglect.

Located in the Adarshapara area of the upazila, the airbase is now all but forgotten. A lone building stands abandoned beside a road inside a small orchard, its roof and walls crumbling as bushes take over the structure.

Nearby, the airbase's observation tower, now surrounded by numerous houses, is filled with garbage, while large sections of its walls are badly damaged.

Both structures sit amid farmland, reflecting how the area around the old airbase has gradually changed over the decades.

The airbase was established in 1944 as a strategic military installation towards the end of World War II and played a supporting role in the Allied



Burma Campaign (1942-1945), a brutal conflict in Southeast Asia in which Commonwealth, Chinese and American forces fought Imperial Japan.

Built near the Chattogram-Nazirhat rail route, the airfield was used as a supply point and

staging base for the United States Air Forces' 10th Air Force from May to September in the year 1945.

It also served as a radio relay station operated by the 128th Army Communications Squadron. In addition, several

Royal Air Force squadrons were based there at different times between December 1944 and May 1945, according to sources.

After the war ended, the airfield was closed and gradually fell out of use.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4