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Too many holidays are bad for any growth economy
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We must restore momentum in environmental governance
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No talks until US, Israel ‘brought to their knees’

Says a defiant Khamenei; Iran’s security chief Larijani, head of Basij militia ‘killed’; Trump blasts Nato, says US needs no help

AGENCIES

Israel yesterday claimed to have killed Iran’s security chief, Ali Larijani, while a senior Iranian official said the new supreme leader had rejected de-escalation offers conveyed by intermediaries, demanding Israel and the US first be “brought to their knees”.
Larijani’s death would be a massive blow to Iran just weeks after US Israeli strikes on February 28 killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the republic’s long serving supreme leader, throwing the Middle East into war and upending global markets.

A senior Iranian official, who asked not to be identified, said two intermediary countries had conveyed proposals to Iran’s Foreign Ministry for “reducing tensions or ceasefire with the United States”.
Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, who had held his first foreign policy session since being named supreme leader, had responded that it was not “the right time for peace until the US and Israel are brought to their knees, accept defeat, and pay compensation”, the official said.
He did not clarify whether Khamenei, who has not yet been pictured since being named last week to replace his slain father,



Vehicles crawled along the Dhaka–Sylhet highway yesterday due to the ongoing expansion work there. This bottleneck is raising fears of suffering for Eid holidaymakers. The photo was taken at Ashuganj Gol Chatter in Brahmanbaria around noon yesterday. PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

EID JOURNEY HOME Dhaka–Sylhet highway a major concern

Other key routes may also see delays over roadworks, bottlenecks

SHAMIMA RITA

Around 11:00am on Sunday, pickup van driver Elias Mia switched off his engine on the Dhaka–Sylhet highway in Tarabo, seeing no chance of reaching Kanchpur Bridge in a short period although it was only about two kilometres away.
He finally crossed that short stretch around 4:00pm. On a route where a trip should take five to six hours now often takes 12 to 15, Elias said, adding that gridlock has become part of daily life.
“Work is already going on along this road. On top of that, look at how vehicles are being driven,” he said, pointing at a vehicle coming from the opposite direction.
His experience may soon become common for those heading home for Eid, as major highways face mounting pressure from roadworks, bottlenecks and poor traffic discipline.
With millions expected to leave Dhaka over the next two days, officials fear long tailbacks on key corridors, especially on southern and northern routes, despite expanded traffic management efforts.

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Police said the main causes include ongoing road construction, illegal roadside shops and temporary markets, unauthorised bus stoppages, battery-run rickshaws, auto-rickshaws and legunas, passengers boarding and alighting on highways, wrong-way driving, and slow toll collection.

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PM orders drive to curb violence against women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has instructed cabinet members and senior government officials to launch a special nationwide drive to curb rape and violence against women, warning that immediate and visible action is needed to prevent further incidents.
The government has decided to take coordinated, multi-agency measures to prevent such crimes and ensure faster disposal of cases already under trial.
The directive came at a cabinet meeting chaired by the prime minister yesterday, the last such meeting before the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, Cabinet Secretary Nasimul Ghani told reporters afterwards.
The authorities have been instructed to ensure swift investigation and trial through closer coordination among law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and the judiciary.
The aim is to strengthen the institutional structure by reinforcing courts in every district so that speedy trials can be ensured, he added.
Meanwhile, law enforcement agencies warned that incidents of violence against women could increase during and immediately after the Eid period, prompting the government’s emphasis on preventive measures.

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Tehran says post-war ME has no place for US

War ‘generational opportunity’ to change region, says Israel

Israel pounds Beirut suburbs; issues new evacuation order

Missiles, drone target UAE, Kuwait, Qatar; Fujairah attacked again

US counterterrorism chief resigns, protesting war

200 US troops wounded so far

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz yesterday said Larijani was “eliminated last night”, although Iran has not confirmed this. Katz also said Gholamreza Soleimani, who led the volunteer Basij militia, which plays a major role in domestic security, was also killed by Israeli strikes.
His killing came as strikes pounded Iran and Lebanon yesterday. Missiles and drones also targeted Israel, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, killing one person in Abu Dhabi and setting the critical Fujairah oil facility on fire.

had attended the meeting in person or remotely.
The war has been framed by both Iranian and Israeli leaders as a test of survival.
Iran’s influential parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, yesterday said the US has no place in the Middle East’s post-war order.
“The order here will change, but it will not be an order in which the will of the United States prevails,” Ghalibaf said in

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Firefighters work at the site of an Israeli airstrike in the southern suburbs of Beirut yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

SCRAPPING OF LOTTERY SYSTEM A return to the old admission rat race?

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

It is rare for a government decision in Bangladesh to move at lightning speed – raised in parliament one day and implemented the very next.
Responding to a lawmaker’s question in parliament on Sunday, Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon said the government would review the existing lottery system for school admissions. He argued that the lottery was not a rational approach and said the government intended to consult stakeholders, including parents, education experts, and lawmakers, before finalising a new framework for admissions starting in January 2027.

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Yet within roughly 24 hours, the minister announced that the government had decided to scrap the lottery system altogether.
Asked about the swift turnaround, Ehsanul said the decision followed “extensive discussions” and a month-long review process. He added that admission tests would not be reintroduced immediately, though simple exams could be considered for the primary level, with further adjustments later. The government also plans to gradually introduce a zoning system under which school admissions will be determined by locality.
So what does this decision mean?
The lottery-based admission system will no longer be used for new intakes from classes one to nine.
The lottery itself was not introduced overnight. It began in 2010 for first-grade admissions and was later expanded to other levels in response to long-standing demands from parents and educationists seeking relief from an increasingly stressful and inequitable admission process.

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