



We will continue to thwart and hunt them all down.

Israel Katz, Israeli defence minister, on authorising the killing of any high-ranking Iranian official

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Eid journey largely smooth

Derailment in Bogura, tailbacks in Gazipur, launch accident in Sadarghat mar otherwise hassle-free travel

SHAMIMA RITA and MD ABBAS

Holidaymakers heading home for Eid-ul-Fitr have, for the most part, travelled on smoother roads and steady waterways – though rail disruptions cast a shadow over journeys to the north.

Passengers travelling by train to northern districts faced difficulties after eight coaches of the Nilsagar Express from Dhaka derailed Santahar Railway Station in Bogura around 2:00pm yesterday, leaving at least 66 people injured.

Following the accident, train communication between Dhaka and the northern districts remained suspended until the filing of this report at 10:00pm, stranding passengers and disrupting schedules.

Bangladesh Railway Director General Atzal Hossain said train movement from Dhaka to at least five northern districts was affected by the derailment.

He added that passengers were informed at stations and that disruptions could continue into the following day.



Sazedur Rahman Saju, Station master of Bogura Railway Station, told The Daily Star that it would take at least 8–10 hours to clear the line after two rescue teams from Pakshi and Parbatipur arrive.

Primarily, the accident is believed to have occurred due to a misunderstanding of signals, said Ahmed Hossain Masum, chief engineer of Bangladesh Railway, Rajshahi, and member of a probe committee formed over the accident.

On the roads, the picture was mixed.

A nearly 40-kilometre tailback formed between Gazipur's Chourasta and Chandra on the Dhaka-Tangail highway, causing severe congestion for buses from northern districts.

Another 10–12km jam developed in the Chandra Trimor area of Kaliakoir, where vehicles crawled through the morning.

Elsewhere, traffic remained relatively manageable.

Parts of the Dhaka-Chattoogram highway saw normal movement, although vehicles entering and leaving Dhaka faced delays of up to an hour, compared to the usual 10–15 minutes.

From Wednesday morning until 3:00pm, the Narayanganj and Cumilla stretches remained largely smooth.

The Dhaka-Mymensingh highway also experienced heavy pressure, but no major gridlock.

Despite pockets of congestion, transport operators said long-distance buses departed terminals on time this year, marking an improvement over previous Eids.

Better road conditions also helped ease travel, though some passengers alleged that operators charged extra fares amid the surge.

At Gabtoli bus terminal, most services left on schedule, with only a few delayed by about 30 minutes in the morning.

Transport workers said pressure has been rising steadily with the growing passenger volume.

The rush is expected to intensify as factories close.

After 1:00pm, when most factories in Gazipur's industrial belt shut for the holidays, large numbers of workers began heading home simultaneously, sharply increasing pressure on highways.

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WHERE THE HEART IS ... Sitting on a mini truck with bags tied tight, a man smiles and waves, his daughter in his arms, as they head home to Shariatpur to celebrate Eid with loved ones. The photo was taken near Postogola Bridge in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

War 'will hit us all'

Warns Iran's FM as Tehran vows strikes on Gulf oil facilities after its biggest gas field hit; Israel 'kills' Iran intel chief, tells military to hunt down officials; blasts rock Gulf states; at least 2 killed in Israel

Israel conducts wave of strikes on Beirut; at least 12 killed

Trump suggests US could leave allies alone to secure Hormuz

US hits missile sites near Strait with 'bunker buster' bombs

Iran says nuclear doctrine unlikely to change

Saudi Arabia to host Arab, Islamic ministers to discuss war

AGENCIES

The repercussions of the Middle East war will be felt globally, Tehran's top diplomat warned yesterday, as Iran's huge Pars gas field was hit in the first reported strikes on its energy infrastructure during the US-Israeli war.

The attack prompted Tehran to warn its neighbours to evacuate energy installations, an escalation that could further spook the already shaken global energy market.

Pars is the Iranian sector of the world's largest natural gas deposit, which Iran shares with Qatar across the Gulf. Iran's Fars news agency reported that gas tanks and parts of a refinery had been hit, workers had been evacuated to a safe location, and emergency crews were trying to put out a fire.

The attack was widely reported in Israeli media to have been carried out by Israel with the consent of the United

States. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Qatar, a close US ally which hosts the largest US airbase in the region, called it an Israeli attack without mentioning any US role. The Qatari foreign ministry spokesperson called it a "dangerous and irresponsible" escalation that put global energy security at risk.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards swiftly told Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar to evacuate several energy facilities. The warning was directed at Saudi Arabia's Samref Refinery and Jubail Petrochemical Complex, the United Arab Emirates' Al Hosn Gas Field, and Qatar's Mesaieed Petrochemical Complex, Mesaieed Holding Company and Ras Laffan Refinery.

The US and Israel had previously held back from targeting Iran's energy production facilities in the

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Rescuers carry a victim on a stretcher after airstrikes hit an area of Tehran yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Clarification from Biman

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has issued a clarification to a report published in The Daily Star on March 17 under the headline "Shady pilot licences expose Biman to risk".

The report stated that several pilots were operating flights with questionable licensing documentation and that a lack of rigorous verification was placing the national carrier and its passengers at risk.

The Biman clarification, sent on March 17, read, "The said report appears to be based on unverified documents, an anonymous email, and speculative information, which do not accurately reflect the current status of the matter."

The statement added that the airlines had issued an official press release on March 5, 2026, clearly stating that pilot licensing, verification, and regulatory compliance fall under the

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BNP to revamp central, grassroots bodies after Eid

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP is planning to overhaul its central and grassroots committees, along with affiliated and associate bodies, to address gaps that exist in the current organisational structure.

The party has largely been operating expired committees of affiliated and associate bodies that have been functioning on a limited scale.

Besides, after the February 12 election, several key leaders have taken on government roles, and dozens of others have been removed, creating a vacuum in the organisational structure, weakening coordination between central and grassroots units, and slowing decision implementation.

Party insiders say a major restructuring is long overdue, with plans to bring in fresh faces to policymaking so the BNP can strengthen its organisation and deliver on election promises.

At a recent meeting, advisers urged BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman to expedite the restructuring process to begin revitalising the organisation.

Four BNP Standing Committee members told this correspondent that the reorganisation is likely to begin after Eid.

The BNP last held its national council

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A fireball rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike on a building in Beirut's Bashoura neighbourhood early yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

IMF STAFF REPORT Educated youth return to farms as job market falters

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ZYMA ISLAM

Unemployed youth are finding an unlikely ally in the soil – turning, once more, to agriculture for survival.

Where higher education is often seen as an exit from the farm, Bangladesh tells a different story. As educational attainment rises, the expected shift away from agriculture has instead reversed.

Unable to secure a foothold in a sluggish industrial sector, many young people are being drawn back to their rural roots.

This paradox is laid bare in a staff report prepared by the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund following its 2025 consultation for Bangladesh, concluded on January 26, 2026.

On paper, the country appears to follow a familiar path of industrialisation. Manufacturing's share of the economy has grown by nearly 5 percentage points over the past decade. Yet this growth has been largely "jobless".

Employment in manufacturing and services has actually declined – by 2.2 and 2.6 percentage points respectively – creating a structural contradiction: the economy is industrialising, but the labour force is de-industrialising.



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