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Supply crunch worsens at fuel pumps

ASIFUR RAHMAN *and* MOHAMMAD SUMAN

The country's fuel supply chain is under strain as sharp post-Eid surge in demand collides with import uncertainty tied to the US-Israel war on Iran.

While officials insist there is no full-blown crisis and overall stocks remain adequate, the system is showing signs of stress. Reports of shortages, rationing, and long queues at filling stations have emerged across multiple districts.

At the centre of concern lies the import of fuel amid external supply risks, limited stock buffers, and sudden demand spikes.

According to the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), April's import plan includes 14 shipments via the sea and fuel via pipeline totaling 428,000 tonnes -- roughly 303,000 tonnes of diesel, 50,000 tonnes of jet fuel, 25,000 tonnes of octane, and 50,000 tonnes of furnace oil.

So far, however, only three diesel shipments of about 90,000 tonnes in total have been confirmed, alongside an additional 20,000 tonnes expected via pipeline.

SITUATION IN MARCH

Govt secured shipments of 11 out of 17	Rest shipments uncertain due to suppliers declaring "extraordinary event"	So far 8 shipments reached with 2,14,641 tonnes of diesel	10,000 tonnes of diesel came thru' pipeline

PLANS FOR APRIL

Total import: 4,28,000 tonnes	Diesel import: 3,03,000 tonnes	Confirmed diesel shipments: 90,000 tonnes	Diesel expected thru' pipeline: 20,000 tonnes

This has raised fears of a shortfall.

The uncertainty follows disruptions in March. Of 17 planned fuel shipments, 11 have been confirmed, with eight already at Chattogram port. These shipments brought in around 2,14,641 tonnes of diesel and 25,022 tonnes of furnace oil, along with another 10,000 tonnes of diesel via pipeline.

Several of the remaining shipments became uncertain after major suppliers, including Singapore-based Unipec and Malaysia's Petco

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Long queues of cars and motorcycles stretching from the Trust Filling Station in the capital's Bijoy Sarani beyond the BAF Officers' Mess in Tejgaon yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Jet fuel prices hiked by 80%

Passengers in for steep fares; airlines warn of flight suspensions

RASHIDUL HASAN *and* ASIFUR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, in an unprecedented move, yesterday hiked jet fuel prices by a whopping 80 percent at the consumer level, citing volatility in the global market linked to the US-Israel war on Iran.

Experts say the move will deal a blow to air travellers and the country's airline industry.

MORE ON B4 SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

War grinds on amid global push for talks

Iran acknowledges US 'outreach', denies Trump's ongoing negotiation claim; Pak PM offers hosting talks

AGENCIES

Iran and Israel traded fresh strikes yesterday as the Middle East war raged on, though a diplomatic push to bring Iran and the United States to the negotiating table appeared to be gathering pace.

Tehran has denied that talks with the US are taking place, and analysts say that even if they do go ahead, reaching a deal will be difficult given the deep distrust between the parties and Iran's hardening stance on conditions.

The war, sparked by US-Israel attacks on Iran that killed its supreme leader, has upended global energy markets, roiled the world economy, and spiralled throughout the region.

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OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT

55 years on, the scars are still fresh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The night of March 25, 1971, etched in history as the Black Night, remains a scar on Bangladesh's collective memory. On this night, the Pakistan military launched "Operation Searchlight," a brutal crackdown on unarmed Bangalees that marked the beginning of one of the darkest nights in the nation's history.

As darkness fell, tanks rolled through the streets while troops opened fire indiscriminately. Key locations such as Dhaka University, Pilkhana, Rajarbagh Police Lines, Hindu-dominated areas of Old Dhaka were attacked in coordinated strikes. Students and teachers were among those killed in large numbers, with university dormitories turning into scenes of mass killings.

The planned offensive aimed to crush the Bengalee nationalist movement following the election victory of the Awami League in 1970. It soon spread to other parts of the then East Pakistan,

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The Kamalapur Railway Station saw a surge of returnees yesterday as families came back to Dhaka after spending the Eid holidays in their village homes.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bangladesh seeks additional IMF funds for energy imports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has sought additional funds from the IMF as surging global energy prices, driven by the US-Israel war on Iran, threaten to deplete the country's dollar reserves.

At the time of filing the report, Brent crude prices were up almost 4 percent to just below $104 a barrel as Iran launched fresh strikes. Before the US-Israel strikes on Iran began on February 28, global oil prices were trading at $66 to $72 a barrel.

Since then, Bangladesh has purchased seven LNG cargoes from the international spot market at more than double the normal price as long-term supplier Qatar called force majeure.

As of March 12, gross foreign exchange reserves stand at $29.64 billion, enough to meet about five months' imports.

Besides, freight charges and insurance premiums have surged too.

Subsequently, at a meeting yesterday with an IMF delegation led by its Asia-Pacific Department Director Krishna Srinivasan, Finance Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury sought additional

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASE

Ex-Lt Gen Masud on 5-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Masud Uddin Chowdhury, a retired lieutenant general widely talked-about for his role during the army-backed caretaker rule in 2007-08, was placed on a five-day remand yesterday in a case filed over human trafficking and forgery.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Aminul Islam Junaid granted the remand, rejecting defence lawyer Morshed Hossain Shahin's plea for bail and cancellation of the remand.

Masud, also a former Jatiya Party lawmaker from Feni-3, was sued on September 3, 2024, by a proprietor of recruitment agency Afia Overseas, under the Prevention & Suppression of Human Trafficking Act with Paltan Police Station.

The case accuses 103 individuals, including former Awami League government minister Imran Ahmad. Of the accused, 40 are unnamed.

After the police's Detective Branch arrested Masud from Baridhara DOHS early yesterday, the law enforcers said the former general was accused in at least 11 cases, including five in Dhaka city and six in Feni district.

Courts issued arrest warrants against him in at least three of these cases, said Shafiqul Islam, additional commissioner (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

At a press conference at the DMP media centre, Shafiqul said they initially arrested him in the human trafficking case, where he is the third accused. The suspect was hiding within the country and several

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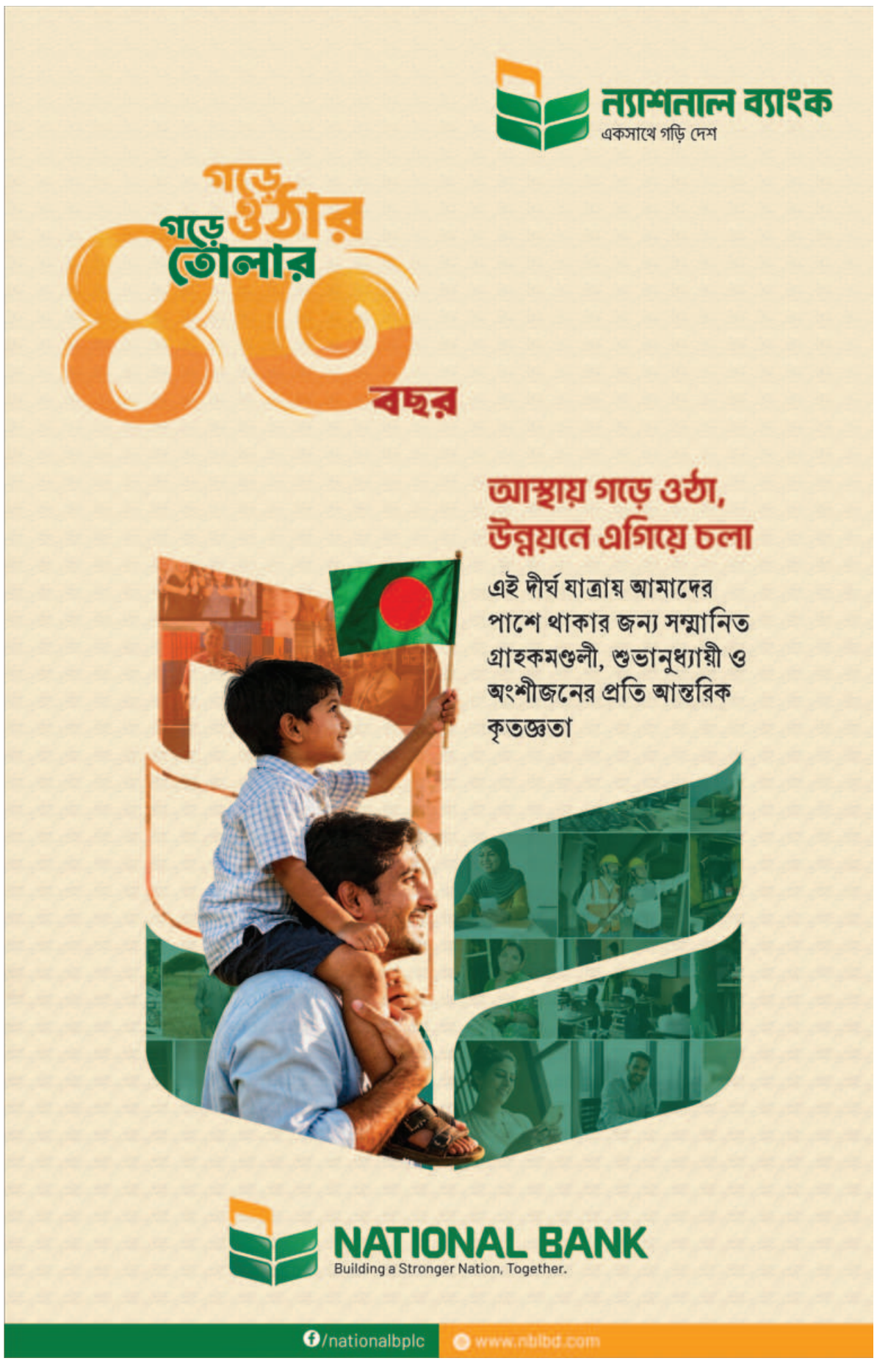

Sudan hospital attack toll rises to 70: WHO

AFP, *Geneva*

The death toll from a strike on a hospital in East Darfur has risen from 64 to 70, the WHO said yesterday, calling the hit an attack on survival in Sudan's devastating war.

The World Health Organization said the number of people injured in Friday's strike on the El-Daein Teaching Hospital in the state capital of East Darfur had also increased from 89 to 146, with the facility now out of action.

Hala Khudari, the deputy WHO representative in Sudan and the UN agency's health emergency lead in the country, called it an "atrocious attack".

She said the death toll included seven women and 13 children, one doctor and two nurses, while those injured included patients, their family members and eight health workers.

"The hospital sustained severe damage, particularly to the outpatient and emergency departments," she told a press briefing in Geneva, speaking from Port Sudan.

A plume of smoke and a fragment of concrete rise from the site of an Israeli airstrike on the eastern outskirts of Tyre in southern Lebanon yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Dhaka 'got green signal' for getting more diesel via pipeline

Khalilur likely to visit India

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman is likely to have a short trip to India in the second week of April on his way to or back from Mauritius, where he will attend the Indian Ocean Conference, diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi said.

"The stopover in India could be either before or after the Indian Ocean Conference in Mauritius. It is not fixed yet," a source told The Daily Star.

India Foundation, in association with Mauritius, will organise the 9th Indian Ocean Conference from April 10 to 12 on "Collective Stewardship for Indian Ocean Governance". It will bring together leaders, policymakers, and experts from across the Indian Ocean Region.

This will be the first foreign trip by Khalilur since the new government came to power in February.

After the BNP formed the government, Bangladesh and India are signaling positive gestures of mending bilateral relations that have been strained since the August 2024 political changeover.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent multiple messages to Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and invited him along with his family to visit India.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma has also called on several ministers, including Khalilur, and extended an invitation from Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

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Supply crunch worsens at fuel pumps

FROM PAGE 1

Trading Labuan, declared force majeure due to the war.

Industry insiders say the April outlook appears even more fragile as disruptions persist in key sourcing regions.

Octane supply is emerging as one of the most vulnerable segments.

Bangladesh meets most of its roughly 4,00,000-tonne annual demand through domestic production using crude oil, with the rest sourced from gas-based processing.

But that balance has been disrupted by the absence of recent crude imports.

A scheduled shipment of 1,00,000 tonnes of crude from Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura terminal was delayed earlier this month, while a charter arrangement with Abu Dhabi National Oil Company was cancelled. As a result, no fresh crude shipments are expected this month.

The country's only refinery, Eastern Refinery Ltd, now holds about 80,000 tonnes of crude -- enough to run the refinery for just 17 to 18 days at the current pace.

With domestic production under pressure, the government plans to import around 25,000 tonnes of octane by the end of next month, an unusual step underscoring growing concern.

The strain was already evident during Eid travel, when many filling stations ran out of octane and, in some cases, petrol. Districts including Munshiganj, Khulna, Bagerhat, Mymensingh, Chattogram, Gazipur, Bogura, Gaibandha, Rajshahi, Natore, and Brahmanbaria reported outages.

Current stock levels offer only limited short-term relief.

Diesel reserves stand at around 1,85,000 tonnes, sufficient for roughly 14 days, while octane stocks of 11,090 tonnes may last about nine days. Petrol stocks of 16,605 tonnes are expected to last around 11 days, according to BPC data.

Furnace oil stocks are relatively higher at 70,833 tonnes -- enough for about 29 days -- while jet fuel reserves of 34,877 tonnes can meet demand for around 23 days.

However, furnace oil figures do not reflect the actual picture, as most furnace-oil power plants import their own fuel.

Bangladesh remains heavily import-dependent. BPC officials warn that any prolonged disruption in global supply chains could quickly erode the existing buffer, putting pressure on power generation, transport, and industrial production.

LONG QUEUES

At the retail level, the strain is already visible.

Panic buying has further intensified the pressure. Supplies at many pumps are exhausted within hours, with some customers attempting to stockpile fuel amid fears of worsening shortages.

Tensions have flared in some areas, with reports of arguments between customers and staffers and law enforcement stepping in to manage crowds. Pump operators also raised safety concerns over handling volatile fuel under such pressure.

In Dhaka, Trust Filling Station on Bijoy Sarani, considered a reliable source, which had been supplying fuel continuously before Eid, ran out of fuel yesterday and the day before.

Motorists faced long waits, with queues stretching up to Jahangir Gate from Bijoy Sarani.

"I waited in line for more than three hours, but in the end I didn't get a drop of fuel," said motorcyclist Rafiqul Islam. "It's really frustrating and makes it hard for people to go about their daily lives."

Most other filling stations in the Tejgaon and Mohakhali areas also ran dry yesterday.

Across several other districts, many filling stations struggling with long queues continued informal restrictions, citing limited supply, although the government imposed rationing between March 6 and March 15. They resorted to limiting sales to around Tk 300 for motorcycles and Tk 1,500 for cars.

In Khulna, several filling stations ran out of octane and petrol on the first working day after Eid. Motorists reported visiting multiple pumps in vain, while some stations cordoned off dispensing units due to security fears after stocks ran dry.

In Noakhali, customers queued for two to three hours, often receiving less than two litres of fuel. In Munshiganj, many stations displayed "No Octane" signs, while others provided only a fraction of usual supplies. Similar disruptions were reported in Narayanganj.

The situation appears more severe in the north. In Bogura, pumps have begun self-imposed rationing, while in neighbouring Gaibandha several stations shut down temporarily due to stock shortages.

In Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, and Panchagarh, only a handful of stations were operating at times, supplying limited fuel as hundreds of motorcyclists queued for hours.

Pump owners say they are receiving far less fuel than required, often only a fraction of daily demand, forcing them to restrict sales. They also point to a sharp rise in demand following Eid travel and increased agricultural activity during the ongoing Boro harvest.

Syed Sajjadul Karim Kabul, a president of a faction of the Petrol Pump Owners Association, blamed logistical disruptions during the Eid holidays, when depots and banks remained closed, for difficulties in procuring fuel.

"A lack of coordination across the supply chain further complicated the situation," he said.

Despite the situation on the ground, authorities maintain that there is no overall supply crisis.

Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood said the disruption is driven mainly by an unexpected surge in demand.

"Earlier, tank lorries would be filled in the morning, and even after selling fuel throughout the day, there would be some surplus," he told reporters at the Secretariat yesterday. "But now, due to long queues, the fuel runs out quickly."

He also cited delays in transporting fuel from depots to stations, particularly in the early hours. "There is a shortage in the morning, but fuel becomes available later," he said.

Urging restraint, the minister asked consumers not to purchase beyond immediate needs. "There is enough fuel. People will get it, but they should not buy more than necessary," he said.

Officials added that distribution is being calibrated based on previous consumption patterns to prevent hoarding and market manipulation, warning that excess release could allow syndicates to create artificial scarcity.

BPC Chairman Md Rezanur Rahman could not be reached over the phone for the last two days.

Jet fuel prices hiked by 80%

FROM PAGE 1

Under the revised structure, the price of jet fuel for domestic flights has been set at Tk 202.29 per litre, up from Tk 112.41. Meanwhile, jet fuel for international flights will cost $1.3216 (Tk 162.21) per litre, up from the current $0.738 (Tk 90.58).

Aviation experts and top officials of different private air operators said that if the decision is implemented, airlines in the country will face severe financial pressure, and passengers will ultimately bear the burden.

They said the increase in taxes on jet fuel will further raise overall operating costs, hindering the sustainable development of the aviation industry. They also warned that the price hike could lead to a situation where flight operations on domestic routes may be completely suspended.

According to a BERC notification, the new rates were determined based on the average international market price, particularly Platts rates, between March 5 and 22.

On March 8, BERC raised the price from Tk 95.12 to Tk 112.41 per litre. Within 16 days, the price was increased again by around 80 percent to Tk 202.29 per litre.

Similarly, for international routes, jet fuel prices have been increased in two phases over the same period from $0.6257 (Tk 76.80) to $0.738 and then $1.3216 per litre.

Over the past 16 days, prices have gone up by about 115 percent, pushing the aviation sector towards a severe crisis.

For domestic flights, air operators will have to pay Tk 1,200 as duties and VAT, up from Tk 150, said Mofizur Rahman, secretary general of Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh.

BERC said the latest adjustment was made in line with its legal mandate under the BERC Act-2003, and follows a pricing framework introduced in May 2025 that allows periodic revisions in response to global fuel price movements.

The new rates came into effect from yesterday midnight and will remain in force until further notice.

Jet fuel prices in Bangladesh are significantly higher than in regional and global markets.

Data from different airports show prices at around $0.62 per litre in Kolkata, $0.603 in Muscat, $0.587 in Dubai, $0.581 in Jeddah and $0.584 in Doha. In other regional hubs, prices stand at $1.098 in Bangkok and $0.586 in Singapore -- all substantially lower than in Bangladesh.

Immediately after the BERC's announcement, Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh (AOAB), a platform of private air operators' owners, expressed deep concern over the 80 percent price hike -- terming it harmful and unjustified for the country's aviation sector.

Contacted by The Daily Star, AOAB Secretary General Mofizur Rahman said, "The relevant ministry has already stated that there is no shortage of fuel oil in the country. Around 25 oil-carrying vessels have arrived in the past 22 days and the oil was purchased at predetermined prices. At the same time, oil prices have declined in the international market in recent times.

"In this context, increasing jet fuel prices on such a large scale based on the apprehension of future price hikes is not justified in any way."

Mofizur, also managing director of private airline Novoair, added that the jet fuel price increase is unusually high compared to neighbouring countries.

"While India and Nepal have kept jet fuel prices unchanged, Pakistan increased prices by 24.49 percent and the Maldives by 18.54 percent, whereas the increase in Bangladesh is around 80 percent.

"Despite incurring loss, we will have to operate flights for those who have already bought tickets. But at one stage, we will have no alternative to grounding flights."

AOAB urged the government to urgently review the decision and set a realistic and acceptable price to ensure stability and growth in the country's aviation sector.

Contacted, Kazi Wahidul Islam, an aviation expert and editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, a weekly publication on aviation and tourism, said, "The aviation industry of Bangladesh has already been struggling for long for multiple reasons. They are crawling to survive. The latest decision of huge increase of jet fuel at one go will give a severe blow to the private air operators."

Alam, also a former board member of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, said it will also impact the country's tourism, economic and other sectors related to the aviation industry.

Another aviation expert, ATM Nazrul Islam, who is also former managing director of the now defunct United Airways, said, "After the US-Israel imposed war on Iran, we could assume that the price of jet fuel will increase ... . But such a large-scale hike at one go will have serious adverse impacts ... . and it is the passengers who will have to ultimately pay for it."

Kamrul Islam, general manager (public relations) of US-Bangla Airlines, a private air operator, said, "We will not be able to sustain under the present situation.... If local airlines lose sustainability, the aviation market will be fully controlled by the foreign carriers.

"Jet fuel accounts for around 50 percent of an airline's operating costs on any route... It is the passengers who will have to bear the additional cost, for which air traffic volume might decline."

Bangladesh seeks

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funds for energy imports.

The issue will be discussed in detail during the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings in Washington DC in April, Khasru told reporters after the meeting.

The government is already talking unofficially with many development partners for additional funding, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

"We have talked about the IMF's requirements -- what is feasible and what is not in Bangladesh's current economic context. Not everything can be implemented at once -- these need to be phased, because given the current state of the economy, we must proceed in a way that suits our own realities," Khasru said.

Discussions with Bangladesh are primarily focused on policy measures, Srinivasan said, adding that IMF financing is fundamentally anchored in policy dialogue.

Key issues are being discussed with both the finance minister and the prime minister, with further engagements planned in the coming days.

Bangladesh, like many other countries, is facing uncertainty due to global developments, but reaffirmed the IMF's continued support in addressing economic challenges, he added.

The IMF delegation also met with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

"We found an economy in a very poor state. To recover from that position, we told the IMF that the programmes outlined in the BNP's manifesto are particularly aimed at overcoming this crisis. To lift the economy from such a situation, we need a number of reforms and a significant degree of deregulation," Khasru said.

The banking sector is in a very poor state, the stock market is in bad shape and the tax-to-GDP ratio is extremely low.

"To overcome these challenges, we believe that implementing the commitments in our election manifesto is essential," he said.

The government has already begun taking steps in that direction, such as providing Family Cards and Farmers' Cards, and agricultural loan waivers.

Many development projects had stalled due to financial constraints, including during the tenure of the interim government.

These projects now need to be revived, he added.

After the Spring Meeting, a regular mission led by IMF Mission Chief to Bangladesh Chris Papageorgiou will come to review the $5.5 billion loan programme.

The government has asked the IMF to release the next $1.3 billion tranche of the loan by June, said a finance ministry official.

If the IMF mission can place it before the board in June, it may be possible to release the tranche that month. Otherwise, it may be released in July.

Earlier, two instalments were released together in June last year, but no further disbursement followed the fifth review in November last year.

Approved in January 2023, the IMF programme was initially worth $4.7 billion and was designed to be disbursed in seven instalments following periodic reviews.

The then Awami League government sought IMF support in 2022 as foreign exchange reserves came under pressure amid the fallout from the Ukraine war. By June last year, Bangladesh had received $3.65 billion in five tranches.

The Washington-based lender later expanded the programme to $5.5 billion in May last year following a request from the interim government.

55 years on, the scars are still fresh

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targeting civilians, students, intellectuals, and members of the security forces.

Eyewitness accounts and historical research indicate that thousands of unarmed civilians were killed in a single night. Homes were burned, and entire neighbourhoods were reduced to rubble. The scale and intensity of the violence shocked the world.

Dhaka University, being a bastion of protracted struggle of the repressed of the country, faced severe wrath of the Pakistan army. Armed with heavy weapons such as tanks, automatic rifles, rocket launchers, heavy mortars and light machine guns, Pakistan soldiers encircled the campus from east, south and north.

They stormed Iqbal Hall, now Sergeant Zahurul Haq Hall, as the Non-Cooperation Movement had been organised from the dormitory under the banner of the "Independent Bangladesh Students Movement Council".

After midnight, the army attacked Jagannath Hall, a dormitory of non-Muslim students, with mortar shelling and continuous gunfire. Troops entered through north and south gates and killed students indiscriminately in each room. Around 34 students were killed.

The Pakistani forces also launched crackdowns on Bangalee police personnel and members of the East Pakistan Rifles (EPR), cordoning off Pilkhana, the EPR headquarters, Rajarbagh Police Lines, and the Ansar headquarters in Khilgaon to prevent them from joining the armed struggle for freedom.

That same night, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of Awami League and the independence movement, was arrested by Pakistani forces. He was later taken to the then West Pakistan and kept in prison for nine months.

The events of March 25 are widely regarded as the beginning of the 1971 genocide, which ignited the nine-month Liberation War. Bangladesh was ultimately liberated on December 16, 1971, when Pakistani forces surrendered to the Bangladesh-India Allied Forces at the Race Course Maidan, now called Suhrawardy Udyan.

Today, Bangladesh observes March 25 as Genocide Day. The day was officially recognised in 2017 to honour the victims of the atrocities and to raise global awareness about the genocide.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman issued separate messages on the eve of the day, paying tribute to the victims and urging the nation to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War.

In his message, President Shahabuddin called upon all, irrespective of religions, caste, party or opinion to work together being imbued by patriotism to fulfill the spirit and expectations of the martyrs of the Liberation War, reports BSS.

"The hope, aspiration and dream of the martyrs in the Liberation War was to build a humane, democratic and real state - where there will be no discrimination, deprivation, misrule, corruption and injustice," he said.

"The declaration of independence by the then Major Ziaur Rahman from the Kalurghat radio station united the confused and hesitant entire nation, made it braver than ever, and inspired it to jump into armed struggle and sacrifice life," Shahabuddin said, reports BSS.

"The younger generation should clearly know about this cruel barbarity of history, on the other hand, about our glorious story and heroism as a nation," he added.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman said March 25, 1971, remains one of the most disgraceful and brutal days in the history of freedom-loving Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The genocide of March 25 was a pre-planned massacre, he said, adding: "Why this organised killing spree could not be resisted remains a matter of historical research regarding the visible role of the political leadership of that time."

However, on the night of March 25, the 8th East Bengal Regiment in Chattogram formally initiated armed resistance against the genocide by declaring "We Revolt," he said.

"Let us all strive to honour the sacrifices of the martyrs by establishing in the state and society the spirit of the great Liberation War -- equality, human dignity and social justice. Let us work together to build a just, developed, prosperous, self-reliant and democratic Bangladesh," he added.

The government has planned various programmes at the state level to mark the day with due respect.

Discussion and memorial programmes will be held at educational institutions including schools, colleges, madrasas, and technical institutes with participation from eminent personalities and valiant freedom fighters, highlighting the genocide and the Liberation War, according to the BSS report.

Documentary screenings and rare photographic exhibitions on the genocide will be arranged at selected locations in all city corporation areas, including Dhaka, starting from 12:00 noon.

Special prayers will be offered at mosques after Zuhr prayers or at convenient times, while prayers will also be held at other places of worship across the country in memory of the massacre victims. No illumination will be allowed on the night.

‘Set aside differences, move forward together’

PM exchanges Eid greetings at Jamuna

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Eid-ul-Fitr called for collective efforts beyond political differences and opinion to build a Bangladesh that meets people’s expectations.

“Setting aside political differences, we must move forward together to build the Bangladesh people aspire for,” he said after exchanging Eid greetings with people from different walks of life at the state guest house Jamuna on March 21, reports BSS.

“We pray to Allah this Eid that we can build the Bangladesh that meets people’s expectations,” he also said, adding that the government would continue its efforts to this end and sought cooperation from all sections of society.

He further stressed the importance of public support, saying the elected government would be able to move forward with full strength if it receives people’s cooperation.

This was Tarique Rahman’s first Eid celebration in the country upon his return to Bangladesh on December 25 last year after 17 years in London. He assumed office as prime minister after being elected in the 13th national election on February 12 this year.

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EID JOY SPILLS INTO STREETS, FIELDS, FAIRS

The Eid-ul-Fitr holidays saw people of all ages stepping out in groups and gathering at public spaces across the country, especially at tourist spots. In the capital, revellers in new clothes joined festive parades on Eid day, while families spent time outdoors. Meanwhile, popular tourist destinations, including Bholaganj’s Sada Pathar, were crowded with visitors. Local fairs with fun rides and activities also saw heavy footfall. Many also took part in traditional outdoor games such as Dariabandha, adding to the festive spirit.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN, SHEIKH NASIR, AZAHAR UDDIN, TAFSILUL AZIZ

Eid without loved ones’ embrace

In Agargaon’s Probin Nibash, celebration is shadowed by the ache of separation

DIPAN NANDY

Eid-ul-Fitr is a celebration of joy, togetherness, and family. Homes are filled with laughter, and loved ones gather to share meals and special moments. But for the elderly living in nursing homes, the day often carries a different tone -- one of quiet reflection, memories, and longing.

On Eid morning, during a visit to Probin Nibash in Dhaka’s Agargaon, this correspondent saw senior citizens wearing new clothes and preparing for prayers. Some joined small jamaats within the facility, while others walked to nearby mosques. After the Eid prayers, they exchanged greetings and embraced, yet the absence of close family members was clearly visible in their expressions.

In one of the rooms, 73-year-old Abdul Wakil Hakkani was listening to old songs on his phone. Initially reluctant to be photographed, he later agreed to speak to this correspondent. He said that none of his children had called him on Eid, and he was not expecting any calls.

“I have learned to control my emotions. I no longer think

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EID HOLIDAYS IN CAPITAL

Patient influx strains understaffed hospitals

SHAHEEN MOLLAH *and*
TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Around 4:45pm on Eid day, Mohammad Rubel and his wife were anxiously waiting in the emergency queue with their daughter, Fatema, aged two years and eight months.

The family had travelled from Tangail Sadar after local doctors suspected a gallbladder-related complication, along with fever and respiratory problems. According to them, the child had been vomiting after eating and her condition was not improving.

After waiting for about an hour, they managed to consult a doctor. Following examination, Fatema was admitted to a ward on the third floor for further treatment.

With many local hospitals closed or operating with limited services during Eid holidays, patients like Fatema were rushed to specialised and medical college hospitals in Dhaka. These hospitals, however, were running with limited manpower, mostly non-Muslim staff.

At the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR), the emergency department was busier than usual on Eid day (March 21), with a surge in patients injured in motorcycle accidents.

Patients of all ages arrived with various injuries, including broken arms, broken legs, and minor wounds.

During a visit by this correspondent, a youth was brought in on a stretcher. His maternal uncle said the patient, Jubayer, an 18-year-old HSC student, had taken his elder brother’s motorbike for a ride and met with an accident.

“His right leg is broken,” he said, adding that they brought him from Narayanganj Sadar by ambulance.

Prof Abul Kenan, director of NITOR, said road accident cases usually increase at the hospital

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Inu, Menon secure bail in defamation case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu and Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon yesterday secured bail in a defamation case filed over derogatory remarks about former president Ziaur Rahman, marking the first instance of bail for both since their arrest in August 2024.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Raunak Jahan Taki granted bail to the two former ministers after their lawyers moved petitions in the case, defence

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Dhaka urges global unity to combat racism

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has called for stronger global unity to combat all forms of racial discrimination, particularly against migrant workers, at a high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman made the call on Monday while addressing a commemorative session marking the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, according

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Bangladesh Air Force pilots soar through the sky in their jets, leaving trails of colourful smoke during the final day of rehearsals ahead of the March 26 parade. *Inset*, members of the Bangladesh Armed Forces rehearse drills at the National Parade Ground in Agargaon to ensure the Independence Day parade proceeds without a hitch.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Three raped in three districts

4 arrested, cases filed

STAR REPORT

At least three persons, including a minor, were raped in Moulvibazar, Habiganj, and Narayanganj districts since March 20.

A Moulvibazar court yesterday sent a man to jail after he was arrested in a case filed over rape of a four-year-old girl in Moulvibazar’s Kamalganj.

The accused, Raju Gar, 23, was arrested and produced before the court which sent him to jail, said Md Abdul Awal, officer-in-charge of Kamalganj Police Station.

The incident occurred on March 20 when Raju took the child to his house in a tea garden of the upazila and raped her.

After she went home, family members took her to a local hospital as her condition deteriorated. As the matter came to light, the doctors informed police.

Police later arrested Raju after the victim’s father filed a case with Kamalganj Police Station on March 22.

The victim is currently undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

In Habiganj, a court sent a man to jail after he was produced before it in a case filed over the rape of a 24-year-old woman in a tea garden near Satchari National Park in Madhabpur on Monday.

The victim was visiting Madhabpur from Brahmanbaria with two friends during Eid. While she was strolling through a secluded area, two men abducted and raped her. They also stole her gold jewellery.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

DHAKA-BAHRAIN

2 special flights for expatriates

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has arranged two special Gulf Air flights for expatriate Bangladeshis needing emergency travel to and from Bahrain.

The special flights will be flying from Bahrain to Dhaka via Dammam on March 27 and April 3, and will return from Dhaka to Dammam on the same dates respectively.

“Those interested in travelling to Bangladesh or returning to Bahrain from Bangladesh via these two special return flights are requested to register using the Google forms,” the Bangladesh embassy in Manama issued a notification regarding the matter on Monday.

The Google form to register for Dammam to Dhaka can be accessed using the link https://forms.gle/Z8pU1jhTEZVFBrqC6, and for Dhaka to Dammam using the link https://forms.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

5 children killed in Jamalpur bridge collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

Five children were killed after a floating bridge collapsed in Dewanganj upazila, Jamalpur on March 21, on the day of Eid.

The deceased were identified as Maya Moni, 10; Abir Hossain, 8; Khadija Akter, 12; Motaleb Hossain, 6; and Mrihad, 8.

The incident occurred in front of Dewanganj Police Station, where hundreds gathered on the bridge, which continued to attract locals despite being deemed unsafe.

Witnesses said the bridge gave way under excessive pressure, throwing over a hundred people into the river. While many managed to swim ashore, several children were swept away.

Dewanganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mansur confirmed the incident.

Savar 'serial killer' Samrat dies at DMCH

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Munshiganj*

Moshiur Rahman Khan Samrat -- widely known as "Psycho Samrat" -- who is accused of a series of brutal killings in Savar, has died.

He was declared dead around 7:30am on Monday at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Confirming the matter, Savar Model Police Station Inspector (Operations) Md Helal Uddin said the prison authorities informed them that Samrat, who had been at Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj, suddenly experienced severe chest pain early Monday.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

Eid brings little joy to Manta community

Excluded from govt support, the boat-dwelling people rely solely on fishing

SUSHANTA GHOSH, *Barishal*

For the people of the boat-dwelling Manta community in Barishal, Eid celebrations are rather short-lived. The hardships they face on a daily basis return the very next day.

On Eid day, many Manta families may manage to enjoy chicken and rice. However, they revert to their usual meals the following morning.

For decades, hundreds of Manta people have been living on boats along the riverbanks in the region.

For the floating community, their lives begin and end on water.

More than 500 people from around 115 boats make up the fleet along the Bukhainagar River. They travel long distances across the rivers with hooks and nets for fishing, their only livelihood.

"With strong winds and good availability of fish in the rivers, this is a busy time for us," said Jasim Uddin, a leader of the fleet.

"On Eid day, we all ate rice with chicken. However, on the next day, we returned to our usual meal of watered rice in the morning, and went out fishing in the Tetulia and

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

One-sided polls led to July uprising

Says info minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information and Broadcasting Minister Zahir Uddin Swapon yesterday said a decade of one-sided, non-participatory elections paved the way for the July 2024 uprising.

Speaking as chief guest at the unveiling of "Phire Dekha Shei Shomoy" by Debate for Democracy Chairman Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron at CIRDAP in Dhaka, he alleged that the 10th, 11th and 12th parliamentary polls were "detached from the people".

"The 151 uncontested seats and the culture of midnight voting severely damaged the country's democracy," he said.

Citing personal experience, Swapon claimed he was kept under house arrest for nearly 40 days during a "midnight election", while his supporters were detained.

PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 25

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-45	12-45	4-45	6-20	7-45
JAMAAT	5-20	1-15	5-00	6-25	8-15

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Road collapses before opening, 2 suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gazipur*

A project director and an engineer have been suspended after a newly constructed road collapsed prior to its inauguration last month in Kashimpur–Dhananjaykhali area under Gazipur City Corporation, raising concerns over construction quality.

Mir Shahe Alam, state minister for local government, rural development and cooperatives, disclosed the development yesterday afternoon after visiting the site, acting on the prime minister's directive.

Initial findings point to irregularities, including the use of substandard materials, alongside some impact from natural causes, he said.

Project director Harun Or Rashid and engineer Shamsur Rahman were suspended in this regard.

Following the inspection, the state minister handed over their suspension letters to GCC administrator Shawkat Hossain Sarkar.

Shahe Alam said multiple probe committees had been formed under the previous government, but many of their reports were not made public.

To ensure transparency, all previous committees have been dissolved and a new seven-member high-level committee has been formed and asked to submit its report within 15 days.

The road, constructed at a cost of nearly Tk 12 crore, collapsed shortly after completion due to river erosion. On February 15, a section of the road in Dhananjaykhali area of Kashimpur caved in. The issue drew attention after media reports.

Inu, Menon secure bail in defamation case

FROM PAGE 3

lawyer Mohammad Salim told The Daily Star.

"This is the first case in which they secured bail after their arrest in August 2024," Salim said.

The court also granted bail to AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik, a retired judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, in the same case following a bail petition.

According to the defence, Inu is currently facing more than 100 cases linked to the July uprising.

Court sources said Menon is facing several dozen cases filed after the uprising.

Inu was arrested on August 26, 2024, from a relative's house in Dhaka's Uttara, while Menon was arrested from Dhaka's Gulshan on August 22 the same year.

The case in which they secured bail was filed on August 22, 2024, by pro-BNP lawyer Ziaul Haque.

Case documents state that on February 15, 2021, speaking at a seminar, Inu said, "Ziaur Rahman was not a freedom fighter; he was an infiltrator in the Liberation War." On July 19, 2013, at separate events, Inu and Menon made objectionable remarks about Ziaur Rahman, it said.

The case also alleges that the accused made defamatory statements about the Zia family on various occasions.

Dhaka urges

FROM PAGE 3

to a statement from Bangladesh's Permanent Mission to the UN.

He urged the international community to intensify efforts to eliminate racism, promote equality and uphold human dignity worldwide.

Reiterating Bangladesh's constitutional commitment to equality and human rights, Rahman said the country remains firmly aligned with all major international conventions addressing racism and racial discrimination. He also underscored efforts to promote inclusivity, peaceful coexistence and stronger human rights institutions.

Highlighting persistent injustices, he pointed to the situations in Rakhine state of Myanmar and Gaza of Palestine, noting that the global community is still far from achieving the goals of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

He also drew attention to the plight of migrant workers, who continue to face exclusion, exploitation and limited access to justice, challenges that undermine the UN's core principles.

"Global unity is essential to fight against all kinds of racial discrimination, including those faced by migrant workers," he said.

Rahman further called for greater investment in education, decisive action against hate speech and enhanced intercultural dialogue to build a world free from racism.

11th DEATH ANNIVERSARY!

It's been 11 years we lost our honorable former Director, Veteran Industrialist

Mr. REZAUL KARIM ANSARI

on 22nd of March 2015.
We remember him on this day.

We all pray to Almighty Allah for granting him Jannat.

Directors and All Employees of AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

বাংলাদেশ বিমান বাহিনী ঘাঁটি জহুরুল হক, চট্টগ্রাম

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা ২০২৬-২০২৭ আর্থিক বৎসরে বাংলাদেশ বিমান বাহিনী ঘাঁটি জহুরুল হক, চট্টগ্রামের বিভিন্ন মেসে গরুর মাংস, মেষ/ছাগলের মাংস ও কলিজা ('ক' গ্রুপ), মাছ, মুরগী ও ডিম ('খ' গ্রুপ), সবজি, পাউরুটি ও ফল ('গ' গ্রুপ), মশল্লা সামগ্রী ('ঘ' গ্রুপ) সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে ঘাঁটির নির্ধারিত সিডিউলে প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/ ঠিকাদারের নিকট হতে (কালো তালিকাভুক্ত ব্যতীত) "এয়ার অধিনায়ক, বিমান বাহিনী ঘাঁটি জহুরুল হক, চট্টগ্রাম" বরাবর বন্ধ খামে নিজস্ব প্যাডে সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। টেন্ডার ফরম/সিডিউল ০১ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ হতে ০৯ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ ইং পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে (০৮০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১৪০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত) 'ক' গ্রুপের জন্য নগদ ৭,০০০/- (সাত হাজার) টাকার, 'খ' গ্রুপের জন্য নগদ ৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকার, 'গ' গ্রুপের জন্য নগদ ৪,০০০/- (চার হাজার) টাকার এবং 'ঘ' গ্রুপের জন্য নগদ ২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকার (অফেরতযোগ্য) বিনিময়ে ঘাঁটিস্থ সরবরাহ বহর, রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ শাখা দপ্তর হতে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। 'ক', 'খ', 'গ' ও 'ঘ' গ্রুপের ০৪ টি দরপত্র পৃথক সিডিউলের মাধ্যমে জমা করতে হবে। দরপত্র জমাদানের পূর্বে আগ্রহী দরদাতাগণকে ০৭ এপ্রিল ১০০০ ঘটিকায় সরবরাহ বহর, বিমান বাহিনী ঘাঁটি জহুরুল হক, চট্টগ্রাম এ দরপত্র-পূর্ব সভা (Pre-bid Meeting) এ উপস্থিত থাকার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। দরপত্র সমূহ ('ঘ' গ্রুপের প্রতিটি মশল্লার নমুনা সহ) আগামী ১২ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ থেকে ১৬ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ তারিখ ১১০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে বি বা ঘাঁটি জহুরুল হক, চট্টগ্রাম, সরবরাহ বহরের কার্যালয়ে রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাক্সে জমা করতে হবে। ১৬ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ তারিখ ১২০০ ঘটিকায় দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকে) জমাকৃত দরপত্র খোলা হবে। প্রতিটি দরপত্রের সহিত "এয়ার অধিনায়ক, বিমান বাহিনী ঘাঁটি জহুরুল হক, চট্টগ্রাম" (AOC, BAF Base Zahurul Haque, Chattogram) এর অনুকূলে নিরাপত্তা জামানত হিসেবে তফসিলভুক্ত ব্যাংক হতে 'ক' গ্রুপের জন্য ১৩,০০,০০০.০০ (তেরো লক্ষ) টাকা, 'খ' গ্রুপের জন্য ১০,০০,০০০.০০ (দশ লক্ষ) টাকা, 'গ' গ্রুপের জন্য ৬,০০,০০০০.০০ (ছয় লক্ষ) টাকা, 'ঘ' গ্রুপের জন্য ৩,০০,০০০.০০ (তিন লক্ষ) টাকার পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট (যাদের দরপত্র কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক বিবেচিত হবেনা তাদের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট সমূহ ফেরত দেয়া হবে) জমা দিতে হবে এবং নিম্নবর্ণিত প্রয়োজনীয় সনদ পত্রের প্রতিটির ০১ কপি সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি দাখিল করতে হবে ঃ

ক। হাল নাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স।
খ। ব্যাংক সলভেন্সী সনদ (ছয় মাসের প্রতিবেদন সহ)।
গ। টিআইএন সহ হাল নাগাদ আয়কর রিটার্ন সনদ।
ঘ। তাজা রসদ/মসলা সরবরাহের পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ পত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি (যদি থাকে)।
ঙ। ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন সনদ।
চ। জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্র ও নাগরিক সনদপত্র (সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি)।
ছ। দুই কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রঙ্গিন ছবি (সত্যায়িত)।
জ। কৃষি বিপণন লাইসেন্স।

টেন্ডার ফরম/সিডিউল ক্রয়ের সময় উল্লেখিত সকল নথিপত্রের মূল কপি এবং পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট প্রদর্শন করতে হবে। দরপত্র খোলার পর ১ম, ২য় ও ৩য় সর্বনিম্ন দরদাতার পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট ব্যতীত অন্য সকল দরদাতার পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট ঐ দিনই ফেরত প্রদান করা হবে। উল্লেখ্য যে প্রতিটি গ্রুপ থেকে পৃথকভাবে সর্বনিম্ন দরদাতাকে ঠিকাদার হিসেবে ১ম, ২য়, ও ৩য় নির্বাচন করা হবে। সরবরাহকৃত দ্রব্যাদির গুণগত মান সম্পর্কে ঠিকাদারকে নিশ্চয়তা প্রদান করতে হবে এবং কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক যাচাই বাছাই করা হবে। নির্বাচিত ঠিকাদার কোন কারণে তাজা রসদ ও মশল্লা সামগ্রী সরবরাহে অনাগ্রহ প্রকাশ করলে অথবা দ্রব্যাদির মানের তারতম্য হলে নিরাপত্তা জামানত বাজেয়াপ্ত করা হবে। সরবরাহকৃত তাজা রসদ ও মশল্লা সামগ্রীর বিল ক্রসড চেকের মাধ্যমে পরিশোধ করা হবে এবং সরকারি নিয়মানুযায়ী তাজা রসদ ও মশল্লা বিলের উপর হতে ভ্যাট ও আয়কর কর্তন করা হবে। ত্রুটিপূর্ণ দরপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। দ্রব্যের গুণগত মান ও দরপত্র যাচাই সাপেক্ষে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

আই এস পি আর/বিমান/২৭

ভারপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা সরবরাহ বহর
বিমান বাহিনী ঘাঁটি জহুরুল হক
চট্টগ্রাম
দূরাঃ ০২৩৩৩৩০১৬৩১ সম্প্রঃ ৫২৯০

GD-640

HEAT Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation

OFFICE OF THE SPM
ATF HEAT PROJECT (WINDOW 3Ai) PIN 13615
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT
JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIVERSITY

বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন THE WORLD BANK

Reference No.: HEAT13615JU/Procurement/G-2 Date: 25 March 2026

e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID	Package No.	Description of Goods	Last Selling Date and Time	Closing Date and Time
1231979	JU/PIN13615/G-2	Supply of ICT Equipment for SPMT and Geospatial Research Cell in the Department of Geography and Environment, Jahangirnagar University.	07-Apr-2026 13:00 pm	07-Apr-2026 17:00 pm

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).

Professor Dr Md Mizanur Rahman
Sub-Project Manager, HEAT 13615
Department of Geography and Environment
Jahangirnagar University

GD-644

HEAT Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation

OFFICE OF THE SPM
HEAT 12107 JU, WINDOW 2
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT
JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIVERSITY, DHAKA -1342.

বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন THE WORLD BANK

Memo No.: HEAT/12107JU/e-Tender/Notice/2025-26/01 Date: 25 March 2026

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl No.	Tender Invitation Reference No.	e-Tender ID No.	Description of Goods	Tender last selling data & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	HEAT12107/JU/WINDOW 2/ Procurement/G3	1231980	Supply of Laptop/desktop for Faculty Members for OBE teaching facility/tool for Department of Geography and Environment, Jahangirnagar University	07-Apr-2026 13:00 pm	07-Apr-2026 17:00 pm
2.	HEAT12107/JU/WINDOW 2/ Procurement/G4	1233767	Supply of Camera and accessories, RGB and Multispectral Drone (UAV), Machineries and Land Surveying equipment (RTK GNSS, Total Station) for Dept. of Geography and Environment, Jahangirnagar University	07-Apr-2026 13:00 pm	07-Apr-2026 17:00 pm

These are online tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tenders, registration in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to deposited online through any registered Banks' Branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Held Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Professor Dr. Mohammad Nayeem Aziz Ansari
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GD-643

World gave Israel 'licence to torture Palestinians'

Says UN expert

AFP, *Geneva*

The world has given Israel "a licence to torture Palestinians", a UN expert said Monday, with life in the occupied territories "a continuum of physical and mental suffering".

Francesca Albanese, the UN's special rapporteur on the rights situation in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, alleged that "torture has effectively become state policy" in Israel.

"Israel has effectively been given a licence to torture Palestinians, because most of your governments, your ministers, have allowed it," she said, as she presented her latest report to the UN Human Rights Council.

Albanese has faced harsh criticism, allegations of anti-Semitism and demands for her removal, from Israel and some of its allies, over her relentless

criticism and long-standing accusations of "genocide".

"Francesca Albanese is not a promoter of human rights; she is an agent of chaos... and any document she produces is nothing but a politically-charged, activist rant," Israel's mission in Geneva said in a statement Monday.

Albanese "advocates dangerous extremist narratives to undermine the very existence of the State of Israel", it said. Albanese's report claimed Israel was systematically torturing Palestinians on a scale "that suggests collective vengeance and destructive intent".

"Torture extends far beyond prison walls, in what can only be described as a torturous environment imposed by Israel across the entire occupied Palestinian territory," she told the Human Rights Council.

She said torture destroys the conditions that make life meaningful, stripping away human dignity, leaving empty shells behind.

"The testimonies that I and many others are documenting are not only tragic stories of suffering; they are evidence of atrocity crimes targeting the totality of the Palestinian people," she said.

An emergency worker walks at the site of a building damaged during overnight Iranian missile barrages in central Israel, amid the ongoing conflict involving the US, Israel, and Iran, in Tel Aviv, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

ATTACKS ON POWER PLANTS

Trump's halt to Iran ultimatum raises doubt

CNN ONLINE

President Donald Trump's recent reversal on his big red line for Iran is prompting some questions on what, exactly, is motivating his wartime decision-making.

On Saturday evening, Trump said Iran had 48 hours to either open up the Strait of Hormuz and unshackle the global economy or he would strike Iran's biggest power plant. By Monday morning, he said he would give it five more days, citing improved negotiations with Tehran.

But Iran has denied any dialogue with Washington. And while there's certainly reason to not take officials at their word, the diverging stories — and Trump's own credibility problems — open the possibility that something else motivated him to back down. That includes possible fears that such a move could escalate the war and global economic pain.

Trump's critics are calling it Trump's latest TACO — an acronym for "Trump Always Chickens Out." That's difficult to prove, but the decision follows another undeniable Trump pattern: His announcements often seem conveniently tied to the open and close of financial markets.

And he's repeatedly made these kinds of announcements at times that seem geared towards the markets — regardless of how substantive and lasting the declarations themselves turned out to be.

A member of the Iranian Red Crescent comforts a resident of a destroyed apartment block in northern Tehran. PHOTO: AFP

A major one was his "Liberation Day" global tariffs on April 2. The press conference was scheduled for 4:00 pm Eastern time, but after talking for a while, Trump announced the actual details shortly after markets closed at 4:30 pm.

He also said the tariffs wouldn't start until shortly after midnight on Saturday, April 5 — when markets would also be closed.

A week later, after a historically rough week for the stock market, Trump posted minutes after the markets opened at 9:30 am Eastern Time, "BE COOL! The next day, after markets had slumped to their lowest level of the year, he announced a 90-day pause on nearly all tariffs over 10 percent — which then sent stocks to their best single day since 2008.

It also seems telling that there was still about 12 hours left for Trump to sus out just how serious Iran was about its purported interest in a deal. That might have been wise, given how much Trump has warned Iran can't be trusted. Why not just wait a bit longer to make sure?

But now, Trump has conveniently delayed his own red line — as it happens, until after the markets are closed for the weekend.

Colombia military plane crash kills 66

Four still missing; rescuers shuttle dozens of survivors to nearby hospitals

REUTERS, *Bogota*

A Colombian military plane crashed in a takeoff disaster on Monday, killing 66 people as rescuers shuttled dozens of survivors to nearby hospitals and searched for four who were still missing, according to a top official.

The Lockheed Martin-built Hercules C-130 transport plane was carrying 128 people, including 11 Air Force members, 115 army personnel and two national police officers, according to Hugo Alejandro Lopez, head of the nation's armed forces.

The death toll was nearly double that of the previous figure given by authorities, who continued search and recovery efforts at the site of the deadly crash.

The accident occurred as the plane was taking off from Puerto Leguizamo, on the border with Peru, Defense Minister Pedro Sanchez said on X.

The plane was believed to have suffered an impact near the end of the runway as it was taking off, firefighter Eduardo San Juan Callejas told Caracol, with a wing of the plane later clipping a tree as it was plummeting.

Russia rains drones on Ukraine; 8 killed

AFP, *Lviv*

Russia fired almost 1,000 drones at Ukraine over the last 24-hours, unleashing one of its largest-ever daytime attacks, killing at least eight people and hitting the UNESCO-protected city centre of Lviv, officials said yesterday.

Two people were killed and a maternity hospital damaged in a drone strike on the western city of Ivano-Frankivsk, with another person killed in the central Vinnytsia region -- part of an assault that followed an overnight barrage on residential buildings in several cities that killed another five people.

In Lviv, a western city far from the front, an AFP reporter saw a column of flames rising from a building next to the 17th-century St. Andrew's Church and Bernardine Monastery in the city centre, which was struck during evening rush hour.

Firefighters were working to put out the blaze at the apartment building, whose roof had been smashed in and windows blown out.

Russia fired 550 drones during the day on Tuesday, following 392 overnight, Ukraine's air force said in a statement.

Moscow has typically fired its barrages overnight in the four-year war, which started with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and has killed hundreds of thousands of people.

The daytime strikes on the centre of Ivano-Frankivsk killed two people and wounded four, including a six-year-old child, regional head Svitlana Onyshchuk said on social media.

Around 10 residential buildings and a maternity hospital were damaged, she said.

In the Vinnytsia region, one person was killed and 11 wounded, the regional head said.

In Lviv, at least 13 people were hospitalised.

The attacks came with Ukraine concerned that it could struggle to repel relentless Russian aerial strikes as its supplies of US air defence systems dwindle amid the war in the Middle East.

"These numbers clearly show that more protection is needed to save lives from Russian strikes," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on social media.

Overnight, Russian missiles and drones rained down on residential areas and transport and energy infrastructure across Ukraine, local authorities said.

Five people were killed and dozens wounded in strikes across the central Poltava region, the eastern city of Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhia and Kherson in the south.

Dhaka 'got green signal'

FROM PAGE 2

Riaz Hamidullah, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India, also called on Jaishankar and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on March 20 to discuss ways to advance relationships and trade and economic partnership.

In late February, Bangladesh missions in India resumed issuance of all categories of visas to the Indians.

ENERGY

On March 12, Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources Minister Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku said Dhaka had written to New Delhi, seeking additional fuel through the existing pipeline amid the US-Israel war on Iran. Bangladesh has been importing diesel from India via this pipeline since 2017.

Asked if there is any update on the matter, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed yesterday told journalists that Dhaka "got a green signal".

However, she added, the energy ministry is in a better position to provide details.

EXTRADITION

West Bengal Police recently arrested three suspects in the killing of Inqilab Moncho leader Sharif Osman Hadi.

On the consular access sought by Bangladesh for meeting the suspects, Shama said the Bangladesh mission in Kolkata was yet to have the access.

"The home ministry is looking after the matter... Extraditing and trying the suspects is our top priority," she said.

With Pranay Verma in Dhaka, the government also discussed the issues of extraditing deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and others hiding in India, the state minister said, without elaboration.

Faisal Karim Masud, the main accused in the murder Hadi, and Faisal's associate Alamgir Hossain have been handed over to India's National Investigation Agency through a court in Bidhannagar, West Bengal.

On Monday night, the NIA took them to Delhi on transit remand. They will be presented before the NIA's special court there, reports the Prothom Alo.

Ex-Lt Gen Masud

FROM PAGE 1

attempts to arrest him had failed beforehand.

Replying to a query on the allegations regarding alleged illegal wealth of Masud, the DB officer said the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Criminal Investigation Department were investigating multiple complaints against him on these allegations.

Masud was general officer commanding (GOC) of 9 Infantry Division at Savar when a state of emergency was declared across the country on January 11, 2007. The same year, he was made chief coordinator of the National Coordination Committee on Serious Crimes and Corruption and shortly afterwards promoted to the position of lieutenant general. On June 2, 2008, he was appointed to the National Defence College, and in less than a week, he was assigned to the Bangladesh High Commission in Canberra.

The coordination committee, led by military officers, detained and interrogated prominent politicians and business figures, bringing corruption charges against them. Many of them alleged that they were tortured in custody.

Masud became an MP from Feni-3 in 2018, and then again in the January 2024 election boycotted by the BNP and many other parties. Rivals from the then ruling Awami League fought their own party candidates in the election, who were widely called dummy candidates.

Regarding allegations of torturing political leaders during the army-backed caretaker government, DB's Shafiqul said the law enforcers were focusing on specific cases which are under investigation.

However, he emphasised that no offender will be spared and urged victims to seek legal recourse if they have been affected.

Masud was escorted to a packed courtroom of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court amid tight security. When he was being taken back to the court lockup after the hearing, a group chanted slogans against him. Some of them were seen throwing eggs towards him.

During the hearing, Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Omar Faruq Faruqi alleged that Masud had tried to kill BNP leader Tarique Rahman, currently the prime minister, through torture.

He accused Masud of introducing harassment, torture and crippling of political leaders, and the "Minus-Two Formula" -- an alleged conspiracy to drive out then BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina from politics.

Masud, in cahoots with one side, led a "blueprint to destroy and eliminate Khaleda and her family", Faruqi said.

The prosecutor also alleged that Masud and his accomplices collected, embezzled and laundered abroad thousands of crores of taka by promising pardon to those who would confess to their crimes.

"After the 1/11 changeover, there was hardly any businessman in Bangladesh whom they did not detain and extort money from. And Masud was the mastermind behind all this," Faruqi further said.

Defence counsel Morshed told the court that the allegations against Masud were "fabricated". He also pleaded Masud's bail on the grounds of his age, which he claimed was 80, and different diseases.

War grinds on amid global push for talks

FROM PAGE 1

Israel's army said it had conducted a "large wave" of airstrikes across several areas of Iran, which had earlier launched a "direct hit" on a building in an upscale area of Tel Aviv.

Earlier, Iranian media reported US-Israeli warplanes had struck two gas facilities and a pipeline.

Gulf nations Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia said they intercepted renewed drone and missile attacks yesterday. The UAE defence ministry said that a Moroccan contractor with the Emirati military was killed in Bahrain in an Iranian attack.

On Monday, Trump said that his administration was speaking with an unidentified "top person," and paused his threat to attack Iranian energy sites for five days.

But Tehran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf rebuffed it as "fake news" and said no negotiations were underway. He said lies are being "used to manipulate financial and oil markets".

Despite the denial, Iran's foreign ministry acknowledged that messages had been relayed by "some friendly countries" indicating a "US request for negotiations aimed at ending the war".

Yesterday, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Islamabad was prepared to host negotiations to stop the war, a day after he spoke with Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian.

US media outlet Axios reported US negotiators Witkoff and Jared Kushner may meet an Iranian delegation for talks in Pakistan as soon as this week, with Vice President JD Vance possibly joining.

Traditional mediator Qatar yesterday said it "supports all diplomatic efforts" to end the war.

Amid the confusion over talks, China's top diplomat Wang Yi yesterday urged his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi in a phone call that "talking is always better" than fighting.

Araghchi told Wang that "the Iranian side is committed to achieving a comprehensive end to the conflict, not just a temporary ceasefire", and thanked China for its humanitarian assistance.

The US State Department announced that Secretary of State Marco Rubio would meet G7 counterparts in France on Friday to discuss Iran, his first foreign trip since the war began.

In unusually strong comments, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier yesterday said the US-Israeli war on Iran was "a politically disastrous mistake".

Israel meanwhile stepped up its campaign against the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon, saying its military would take control of south Lebanon up to the Litani river, around 30 kilometres from the border.

Israeli pounded Beirut's southern suburbs throughout the night while a strike on Bshamoun, south of the capital, killed two people yesterday, according to Lebanon's health ministry.

Meanwhile, Israeli emergency services said a woman was killed in the north of the country yesterday following rocket fire from Lebanon.

Israel's attacks in Lebanon have killed more than 1,000 people, according to Lebanon's health ministry, and displaced more than a million people.

The war has killed at least 3,230 Iranians, including 1,406 civilians, according to the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. AFP cannot access strike sites nor independently verify tolls in Iran.

Meanwhile, The New York Times, citing US officials, reported that Saudi Arabia's de facto leader, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has been pushing Trump to continue the war against Iran, arguing that the US-Israeli military campaign presents a "historic opportunity" to remake the Middle East.

According to the report, in a series of conversations over the last week, Prince Mohammed has conveyed to Trump that he must press toward the destruction of Iran's hard-line government.

Analysts familiar with Saudi government thinking say that while the prince probably preferred to avoid a war, he is concerned that if Trump pulls back now, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Middle East will be left to confront an emboldened and furious Iran on their own.

In this view, they say, a half-finished offensive would expose Saudi Arabia to frequent Iranian attacks. Such a scenario could also leave Iran with the power to periodically close the Strait of Hormuz.

Tehran had vowed to deploy naval mines and strike power and water infrastructure across the region if its power sites are targeted, threatening to escalate an energy crisis of already historic proportions.

Analysts also doubt a positive outcome from the talks, even if they take place, given the conditions likely to be set by Iran and the US.

Sources in Tehran say Iran's negotiating posture has hardened sharply since the war began, with the Revolutionary Guards exerting growing influence over decision-making.

In any talks with the US, Iran would not only demand an end to the war but concessions that are likely red lines for Trump -- guarantees against future military action, compensation for wartime losses and formal control of the Strait of Hormuz, the sources said.

Iran would also refuse to negotiate any limitations to its ballistic missile programme, they said.

The three senior sources said Iran had only had preliminary discussions with Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt over whether the groundwork existed for talks with the US over ending the war.

Three senior Israeli officials also yesterday said that, although Trump seemed determined to reach a deal, they viewed it as unlikely that Tehran would agree to US demands, which they believed would include an end to Iran's ballistic missile and nuclear programmes.

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

Another Eid, another train tragedy

How long will human negligence be tolerated?

It is unconscionable that every Eid, when we are supposed to be revelling in the chance to be with loved ones, tragedy strikes because of one transport-related accident or another. This Eid, too, saw the tragic deaths of 12 people—including seven men, three women, and two children—when a Chattogram-Dhaka mail train collided with a bus heading to Lakshmipur. A number of passengers were also seriously injured. The accident occurred early Sunday at an unmanned level crossing in Cumilla Sadar Dakshin upazila. Reportedly, the train dragged the bus for nearly a kilometre before stopping.

As has happened many times before, the reason for this horrific crash was negligence: there was no gateman present at the crossing at the time of the accident. How many times have we had to confront such news of precious lives being lost because of human error? Two gatemen who were on duty but actually absent at the time have been suspended, and three investigative committees have been formed. We have seen such reactive steps post-crashes many times before, and so cannot help but wonder: will it make any difference this time?

A major part of the problem, besides poor or absent gatekeeping and oversight, is the existence of illegal rail crossings that have been mushrooming despite the rising number of deaths from crashes. Over the four years between 2018 and 2022, according to a report by *The Daily Star*, various government agencies built at least 140 level crossings without taking permission from Bangladesh Railway. These agencies include the LGED, union parishads, municipalities, etc. In 2022, there were around 1,225 unauthorised crossings, making up roughly 40 percent of the total. Moreover, according to BR data cited in the report, more than 50 percent of the legal level crossings did not have designated gatekeepers.

The extent of the risks thus caused can be understood from an estimate by the Road Safety Foundation that said that at least 219 people were killed in 116 accidents in the first seven months of 2022 alone. That same year, in July, 11 people were killed when a train hit a microbus at a level crossing in Mirsharai upazila in Chattogram. It prompted the railways ministry to issue a circular to all government agencies, asking them not to build any level crossings without BR permission. Following this Eid's accident, the state minister for railways also said that the government plans to modernise level crossings and introduce automated signalling systems to improve safety.

But such assurances will only have meaning if they are backed by proper action, which rarely follows. Besides taking action against errant gatekeepers and officials in charge, whose negligence has contributed to so many deaths, we urge the government to identify all unattended crossings and appoint gatekeepers immediately. Unauthorised crossings must also be dealt with promptly, and only then should the government initiate other measures on a priority basis. We must remember that each day a crossing remains unattended is a day when tragedy may occur. The frequency of accidents, and the number of people killed or maimed, make human error at such crucial junctions unacceptable.

Embed accountability at every stage

Gazipur road collapse probe must set a precedent

The collapse of a newly constructed road in Gazipur last month—built at a cost of Tk 12 crore—highlighted the lack of responsibility and disregard for state resources among many civil servants who often remain unaccountable for such incidents. This time, however, a project director and an engineer were suspended after the state minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives visited the site on Monday (March 23, 2026), following directives from the prime minister. Since initial probes revealed irregularities—including the use of substandard materials—the suspension order undoubtedly signals the correct course of action.

In the past, several newly constructed bridges, culverts, and regional roads have similarly failed. Probe bodies were formed, but often with no visible consequences. In this case, too, several committees were reportedly set up to investigate the February 15 road collapse, including a probe by the Anti-Corruption Commission. Yet, action came more than a month later, only after extensive media reporting, intervention by the prime minister, and a subsequent visit by the state minister. According to a report in this daily, the state minister formed yet another probe committee, dissolving the earlier ones, many of whose findings were never made public.

In a well-governed society—where corruption, nepotism, favouritism, and political influence do not shape infrastructure implementation—this Tk 12 crore road would not have undergone the above-mentioned fate. Irregularities, including the use of substandard materials or gaps in the proper execution of construction methods, would have been detected early rather than after completion. Transparency and accountability must be embedded at every stage, from project feasibility and tendering to construction. This raises the question: was there no routine and rigorous audit of the project during its implementation phase? Unfortunately, infrastructure projects are often awarded on political grounds, and failures to meet standards are overlooked. At most, contractors face financial penalties which rarely account for reconstruction costs or the broader public suffering caused.

We hope this time the course of action will be different. The government has an opportunity to set a precedent by conducting a transparent investigation, publishing its findings, and holding all responsible parties accountable for the irregularities and failure of the Gazipur road project. It must also ensure that internal audits of all infrastructure projects are carried out properly to guarantee transparency and accountability during the implementation phase, and not in the aftermath of a collapse.

The July charter order has real legal authority

Barrister Imran A Siddiq
is a senior advocate. He has served as a member of the Constitution Reform Commission (2024-2025) and a member of the expert legal panel of the National Consensus Commission (2025).

IMRAN A SIDDIQ

The current discussions surrounding the July National Charter (Constitutional Reform) Implementation Order, 2025 stems largely from its nomenclature. Much of the debate has focused on whether the constitution empowers the president to issue a "president's order." Critics argue that such orders were permissible only during the immediate post-independence transition, up to the first sitting of parliament in April 1973, and that the present constitution contains no provision authorising an instrument of this kind. While this argument is not without basis, it ultimately misses the point.

The label attached to the instrument is of little legal consequence. Whether it is called an "order" or otherwise is not determinative of its validity. The real question is not one of form but of substance: does the implementation order derive from a lawful source of authority? If it does, its nomenclature becomes irrelevant.

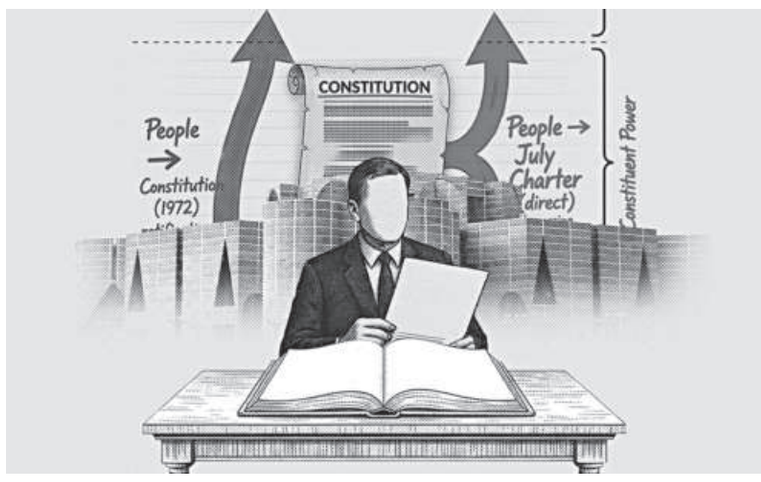
Critics insist that such authority must be found within the four corners of the 1972 constitution. But this assumption fails to engage with a deeper constitutional reality, one that has been clearly articulated in the recently released full judgment of the Appellate Division in the 13th Amendment case. The judgment affirms that the people, as the ultimate sovereign, retain constituent power, and this power is not extinguished upon the adoption of the constitution but continues to inhere in them. This is not merely a theoretical proposition; it provides the legal foundation for understanding moments of constitutional transformation—moments when authority flows not from the constitutional text but from the people themselves.

The July charter implementation order must be understood in this context. It was not the product of an ordinary exercise of constitutional power. It emerged from what can properly be described as a "constitutional moment" marked by widespread public engagement, mass mobilisation, and a fundamental reassessment of the existing constitutional order. The events of July-August 2024 represented a rupture that reactivated popular sovereignty in its most direct form. To evaluate the implementation order solely against the provisions of the 1972 constitution is, therefore, to apply the standards of ordinary governance to an extraordinary constitutional transformation.

Critics may likely object that the constituent power of the people cannot be invoked once the constitution has been enacted, and that post enactment of the constitution, all powers must be traceable to the provisions of the constitution. However, this issue has now been addressed by the Appellate Division in the 13th Amendment judgment. The Appellate Division, while endorsing "modern constitutional scholarship (e.g. Böckenförde, Rubinelli)," has held that "the constituent power does not expire after the Constitution's adoption but remains dormant within the people." The Appellate Division observed that the caretaker government provisions were enacted in exercise of the people's constituent power, which was triggered following mass mobilisations in the backdrop of a "crisis of electoral legitimacy," and that such an exercise of authority originate from a source "superior to the text" of the constitution itself. In such cases, where an act reflects the direct sovereign will of the people, it may stand beyond the scope of ordinary constitutional limitations.

This principle is directly relevant to the present context. In August 2024, following the collapse of an authoritarian regime, the people of Bangladesh reactivated their constituent power. The establishment of the interim government and the subsequent reform process were not ordinary political developments but were expressions of this deeper constitutional authority. The implementation order forms part of that process, and its legitimacy is further reinforced by the overwhelming public endorsement it received in the referendum of February 12, 2026.

The continued existence of the 1972 constitution does not undermine this conclusion. It is sometimes suggested that unless the constitution is formally abrogated or suspended, all authority must remain subordinate to it. This argument overlooks a critical point: constituent power does not cease to operate simply because the constitution remains in force. As the Appellate Division recognised, the people retain powers as "the final arbiter of the quality of governance and of the resultant change in the instrument and mode of governance." The constitution itself is a product of this authority, and in moments of transformation, that authority may reassert itself without undermining or negating the existing text.



VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

The 13th Amendment judgment further conceptualises the constitution as a form of social contract, with the people as its ultimate authors. In times of crisis, the people may renegotiate that contract. The court pointed to the mass movement of 1990 and the demand for a neutral caretaker government as an example of such renegotiation, describing them not as ordinary amendments but as expressions of constituent power reshaping the constitutional order. The events of 2024 must be understood in similar terms. The mass uprising triggered a process through which the people sought to redefine the structure and functioning of the state, a process reflected in the establishment of various reform commissions and the broader constitutional reform agenda.

In this light, the search for a specific constitutional provision authorising the implementation order is fundamentally misplaced. No such provision exists, and none is required. The authority for the order lies not in Article 93 or any other provision of the constitution, but in the sovereign will of the people expressed during a constitutional moment. To insist on textual authorisation is, in effect, to deny the legal significance of that moment altogether.

The implementation order is thus best understood as an instrument of transitional constitutionalism. It does not displace the constitution but places it within a broader framework in which the people's sovereign prevails in moments of transformation. By providing for a referendum and a Constitution Reform Assembly, it channels that will into a structured and deliberative process.

The democratic legitimacy of this process is clear. The order was issued well before the referendum and understood by voters, who knew their representatives would serve both legislative and constituent roles. All major political parties campaigned in favour of the "Yes" vote in the referendum. The referendum, approved by a substantial majority, constitutes a direct expression of popular sovereignty. As the 13th Amendment judgment recognises, constitutional change may rest on broad popular consensus, a condition which has been clearly met here. The implementation order is thus not an anomaly but an expression of a foundational principle—that sovereignty resides in the people, and when exercised in their constituent capacity, their will has legal force. To deny its validity is to reduce popular sovereignty to a mere abstraction, an outcome that the 13th Amendment judgment firmly rejects.

Why Bangladesh should declare Ganges treaty obsolete

Dr Ahad Chowdhury
is a geologist, currently teaching at Jefferson Community and Technical College in Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.

AHAD CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh should declare the 1996 Ganges Water Treaty obsolete before negotiations formally begin, because the alternative is negotiating from a position of considerable weakness as India demands more water from rivers that climate change has already dried up.

India has already made its position fairly clear: shorter treaty (10-15 years instead of 30) and more water (additional 30,000-35,000 cusecs [cubic feet per second, the unit to measure water flow] during the lean season, also referred to as dry season, citing "development needs". Additionally, West Bengal wrote a letter to the Indian internal committee tasked with consulting the stakeholders in the Ganga Water Treaty outlining its increased "industrial and drinking water needs" in the renewed post-2026 treaty. Unless Bangladesh reframes this discussion by declaring obsolescence due to climate change, it will negotiate over dividing water that no longer exists as before and under a framework designed for extinct climate conditions.

According to a 2015 report citing residents of the Matikata Union in Rajshahi's Godagari area, before the commissioning of the Farakka Barrage, the Padma reached 100 feet deep during peaks, and 60 feet during lean periods. However, by 2015, some 18 years after the treaty, water levels came down to 15 feet during peaks and no water at all during dry seasons; the level of underground water plummeted as well.The Barind Tract region—producing major rice crop portions—is turning barren. The 1996 treaty says Bangladesh and India share water "if there is water." Increasingly, there isn't. From 1997 to 2016, Bangladesh received less than its treaty shares in 94 of 300 cases. During critical dry spells, Bangladesh didn't receive the stipulated supply 39 times out of 60. Seventy-nine of Bangladesh's rivers are now dead or dying. This is what 30 years under the 1996 treaty helped produce. And India now wants less favorable terms.

India wants shorter treaty terms (10-15 years) that will give it more frequent negotiating leverage. It cites "climate change" but only as justification for taking more water, not for climate-adapted governance. This is nothing but extractive negotiation, not cooperative adaptation. We are currently facing an "unprecedented hydro-variability, where Himalayan glaciers are projected to decline by up to 40 percent by 2100." The Ganges basin experiences its worst droughts in 1,300 years. According to a 2023 study, climate change quadrupled flood-causing extreme monsoon rainfall events in Bangladesh and northeast India. Atmospheric rivers cause 73 percent of floods. The treaty allocates dry-season water but cannot manage droughts or flooding dominated by atmospheric floods. As Farhana Sultana said it in an article published by *The Daily Star*, the treaty "treats water as divisible commodity... rather than shared, interconnected ecological system. It lacks flexible mechanisms for climate adaptation, enforceable environmental flow regimes, or joint data-sharing platforms." In climate-stressed world, this static agreement "becomes another mechanism of control."

Climate extremes accelerate upstream erosion, filling reservoirs faster, forcing emergency releases during monsoons while sediment remains trapped. Research shows sediment could decline 15-80 percent if the extensive network of planned and under-construction dams across the Himalayan Ganges-Brahmaputra basin is completed. The 1996 treaty contains zero sediment provisions. Without sediment, Bangladesh's delta subsides at 5-7 mm yearly. Saltwater advanced 15-20 kilometres inland, up 64 percent since 1973. Bangladesh extracts around 32 cubic kilometres of groundwater annually, the vast majority for irrigation, with aquifer levels falling 15-20 mm yearly. In contrast, groundwater usage is increasingly surging. These compound crises cannot be addressed by negotiating slightly different dry-season allocations. They require climate-adapted transformation, which the 1996 framework was never designed to accommodate and India's position explicitly rejects.

If Bangladesh enters negotiations accepting 1996 framework validity, it accepts India's framing: this is about dividing existing water more favorably for India's "development." Bangladesh then negotiates from weakness, preserving inadequate allocations under voluntary framework that already failed while India demands more extraction. Declaring obsolescence based on climate change reframes everything. The problem, as we have already indicated, has fundamentally changed over the years: anthropocentric forces including climate change created worst droughts in 1,300 years, quadrupled extreme weathers, triggered atmospheric river floods, and drove unprecedented groundwater depletion. The 1996 framework was never designed to address any of this; modifications cannot fix conceptual obsolescence.

If the crisis is systemic, the response requires rethinking how the river itself is governed. Climate-adapted sediment management—such as mandatory bypass during monsoon periods and minimum annual sediment delivery targets—can extend reservoir life upstream while restoring downstream systems Bangladesh depends on. Dam operations should be integrated with climate forecasting, allowing pre-release of water ahead of extreme events. Governance must be basin-wide, covering all tributaries and seasons, and include upstream actors like China on the Yarlung Tsangpo. Crucially, any new framework must move beyond voluntary compliance towards enforceable mechanisms with third-party monitoring, binding arbitration, and real consequences.

Around 74 percent of Ganga basin stations decline 17 percent per decade—climate models underestimated severity. Each year means worse droughts, more catastrophic floods, more trapped sediment, and more subsidence. India won't propose climate adaptation on its own—it will try to extract maximum advantage unless Bangladesh forces transformation by declaring them invalid. Bangladesh has scientific evidence, documented failures, moral authority, and climate reality to make that declaration. The question is whether it will use that evidence while its negotiating position remains available, or negotiate defensively within obsolete parameters.

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NATIONAL GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Operation Searchlight and the unrecognised genocide of 1971

Tanziral Dilshad Ditan
works in communications.

TANZIRAL DILSHAD DITAN

History often remembers wars through the cold geometry of maps and the sterile ink of treaties, but for those who survived the tempest of 1971, history is a haunting sensory memory—the acrid scent of gunpowder mingling with the first rains of spring, and the terrifying, rhythmic clatter of tanks as they invaded the narrow, sleeping arteries of Dhaka.

On the fateful night of March 25, 1971, a military campaign was unleashed under the chillingly ironic title "Operation Searchlight." While the name suggests a quest to illuminate, its reality was a brutal, systematic attempt to extinguish the torch of a burgeoning democracy and the indomitable spirit of a nation. When the West Pakistan military issued orders from a couple of thousand miles away, they were aiming at the very heart and soul of the Bangalee people, attempting to erase a culture which refused to bow.

The tragedy of that dark night lay in its cold, clinical precision. It was a calculated, murderous strike designed to break our collective will. The primary targets were not fortified military installations, but the intellectual and cultural sanctuaries of our land. At Dhaka University, the "searchlight" fell upon dormitories where our brightest students and most revered professors—the visionary architects of our future—were hunted down the corridors of learning, treated as enemy combatants in the very rooms where they dreamt of a free tomorrow. The soil of the campus, once a garden of knowledge, was soaked in the blood of those whose only weapon was their conviction.

The arrest of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shortly after midnight was intended as a decapitation strike to silence the voice of the masses. The aggressors relied on a simple logic: remove the leader and the dream of freedom dies. But the planners of Searchlight committed the ultimate error of all authoritarian regimes—they mistook a single leader for the heartbeat of an entire population.

FILE VISUAL: **ALIZA RAHMAN**

The historical significance of that night is etched in blood and tears; a permanent scar on the conscience of the world. It was the precise moment when the fragile attempt of a unified Pakistan shattered forever, and the glorious, sovereign reality of Bangladesh was baptised in the ultimate sacrifice. Operation Searchlight was the catalyst for a humanitarian catastrophe of staggering proportions, forcing nearly one crore souls—mothers clutching infants, elderly men carrying the weight of their ancestors—to flee across the border in a desperate, heart-wrenching exodus for survival.

Despite the sheer scale of the atrocities—with a death toll that remains a scar on human history, estimated to be between 300,000 and 30 lakh—March 25 remains a national Genocide Remembrance Day in Bangladesh rather than a globally recognised UN observance. The path to international justice has been obstructed by a complex web of Cold War legacies, legal technicalities, and the cold calculations of modern realpolitik.

In 1971, the UN Security Council was paralysed by a "clash of titans." The United States (under the Nixon-Kissinger administration) and China viewed Pakistan as a strategic bridge for their secret diplomatic opening. Consequently, they used their immense influence to frame these horrors not as a genocide, but as an "internal matter," which would have done little to stop the violence. Vetoed by the Soviet Union, the resolution at the Security Council could not be passed. The UN was once again a stage for powerplay rather than a sanctuary for the oppressed.

A primary obstacle to early international condemnation was the unyielding stance of US leadership as then President Richard Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger maintained a notorious "tilt" towards Pakistan, prioritising their secret intermediary, Yahya Khan, over the lives of millions. Declassified White House tapes and documents reveal a haunting truth: Kissinger famously brushed aside the moral outcries of his own diplomats, viewing the carnage through the cold lens of realpolitik by refusing to name it a genocide.

While then UN Secretary-General U Thant described the events as "one of the most tragic episodes in human history," the UN as an institution remained a bystander. The organisation prioritised the abstract concept of state sovereignty over the lived reality of human suffering—a failure that preceded the Responsibility to Protect doctrine by decades.

The UN currently observes December 9 as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide. This date marks the 1948 signing of the Genocide Convention as the UN favours universal dates of remembrance to avoid "politicising" the calendar. To date, the UN has not officially recognised the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh.

The lack of a "unified" international forensic record, worsened by the systematic expulsion of foreign journalists during Operation Searchlight, has allowed revisionists to muddy the waters. Yet, documentation remains undeniable; the University College London (UCL) Fact Sheet estimates that up to 200,000 were slaughtered in the initial phase alone. Furthermore, the "Blood telegram" sent by US Consul General Archer Blood on April 6, 1971 remains a definitive witness which explicitly used the word "genocide" to describe the systematic erasure of the Hindu minority and Bangalee intellectuals.

Hope, however, is not lost. In 2023, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) passed a landmark resolution formally recognising the 1971 atrocities as genocide. Most significantly, on March 20 this year, US Congressman Greg Landsman introduced House Resolution 1130 to the US House of Representatives. This historic resolution calls on the US government to formally recognise the 1971 atrocities—specifically those directed towards Bangalee Hindus, intellectuals, and students—as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The resolution creates a framework for future US foreign policy in South Asia, and by formally using the term "genocide," the House aligns with the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This strengthens the legal basis for future international tribunals or reparations discussions. Together with the 2022 House Resolution 1430 to officially label the actions of the Pakistani military as genocide, the bills call on the Pakistan government to formally apologise to the people and government of Bangladesh, acknowledge its own role in the atrocities, and prosecute any surviving perpetrators in accordance with international law.

While these resolutions are significant for historical and diplomatic recognition, they are still "simple resolutions," meaning they express the "sense of the House" but neither carry the force of law nor mandate specific executive action unless adopted and followed by further legislative steps.

As we look back through the mist of history, we realise that March 25 was not merely a conflict of geography or "East versus West." It was a trial of fire for our shared values—a clash between the fundamental right to exist and the cruel hand of oppression. It was the moment the river delta found its voice: a voice that sang of liberation even as it wept for its fallen.

The searchlights of 1971 were meant to blind us with fear. Instead, they ignited a fire of patriotism that guided us to liberty. We owe it to all the martyrs of the Liberation War and every nameless soul massacred during the nine months of the war to ensure their story is told with the honour it deserves. Bangladesh did not just survive; she was born of a fire that cannot be put out.

How much more credibility can the US afford to lose?

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ABDULLAH A DEWAN

In a piece published by *The Daily Star* on July 16, 2008, titled "The Iranian missile tests," I tried to capture the nuclear illusion—an illusion not of Iran's making, but one constructed and amplified by US-Israeli strategic narratives that persists even today. Despite the relentless portrayal of Iran as an imminent nuclear power, the evidence even then pointed in the opposite direction: the 2007 US National Intelligence Estimate, representing 16 intelligence agencies, concluded with high confidence that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons programme in 2003 and was acting within rational strategic limits. Yet that reality was buried beneath waves of speculation, threat inflation, and geopolitical theatre. What endured was not the emergence of a nuclear Iran, but the persistence of a narrative powerful enough to justify pressure, polarisation, and ultimately conflict—setting the stage for a world in which winners and losers are determined less by facts than by the strategic manipulation of fear.

For nearly two decades, global political discourse was held captive by a single assertion: Iran stood on the brink of becoming a nuclear weapons state. The warnings were constant, urgent, and perpetually imminent, yet each passing year renewed the alarm without seeing the predicted outcome. What never materialised was the bomb; what instead materialised was war. This stark disjunction between prediction and reality is a systemic failure that compels a deeper inquiry into how a hypothetical threat was transformed into a real catastrophe, and what that transformation reveals about the evolving structure of global power.

By 2008, it was clear that Iran lacked both nuclear weapons and the conventional military capacity to pose an existential threat. Its defense spending was a fraction of that of the US—estimated at around $11.08 billion compared to over $600 billion for the US at the time—while its air force relied largely on ageing platforms and its naval strength remained confined to coastal deterrence.

Yet these realities did not moderate the discourse. Iran was elevated to be shown as one of the gravest threats in the international system, not because of what it demonstrably possessed but because of how it was strategically framed. Iran consistently maintained that its nuclear programme served peaceful purposes and engaged in negotiations that permitted monitored enrichment in exchange for sanctions relief. Still, suspicion displaced proof, and capability was treated as intent for harm.

The persistence of the claim that Iran was "months away" from a bomb—repeated for nearly 20 years—should have invited scepticism. Instead, repetition became validation. From the mid-2000s through the late 2010s, successive Israeli leaders warned that Iran was "on the threshold of," "a year away," or "months away" from producing nuclear weapons, yet the threshold itself never arrived. When the distinction between what a state can do and what it intends to do is blurred, policy becomes driven by baseless projection, not evidence. And as we can see now, a system that acts on imagined threats eventually produces real disasters.

The parallels with Iraq are unmistakable. There, too, weapons of mass destruction that did not exist became the basis for justifying an invasion, despite inspections and contested intelligence. The first casualty of such a reality is credibility. The consequences extend far beyond the battlefield.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil supply—nearly 20 million barrels per day—passes, remains a structural fulcrum of global stability today. Even limited disruption can trigger spikes in oil prices, transmitting inflationary shocks across the global economy and raising the risk of synchronised slowdown and stagflation. What elevates this moment beyond a regional conflict is the emergence of geopolitical economics—the deep entanglement of geopolitical behaviour with economic systems and currency stability. In this framework, the strength of a currency is no longer determined solely by macroeconomic fundamentals, but by the credibility of the political system that underwrites it. The US dollar's global dominance rests on predictability, rule-based conduct, and institutional trust. When policy shifts from evidence-based restraint to narrative-driven intervention, that foundation begins to fracture. Global actors respond not with abrupt withdrawal, but with gradual diversification that is reflected in rising gold purchases by central banks and the increasing use of non-dollar settlement mechanisms in parts of Asia and among BRICS economies. This is how systemic change occurs: not through sudden collapse, but via incremental erosion.

At the same time, the geopolitical landscape is undergoing a quiet but consequential realignment. The US remains militarily preeminent, yet its strategic position is increasingly constrained by declining trust among allies and partners. European nations are exploring more autonomous security arrangements, Middle Eastern states are hedging their alignments, and the BRICS grouping benefits from this erosion of confidence, positioning itself within a gradually decentralising global order. This is the paradox of contemporary power. Military superiority can secure outcomes on the battlefield, but it cannot sustain leadership in a system where legitimacy and trust determine long-term influence. Power today is not merely the capacity to act; it is the ability to persuade others that one will act predictably and within a framework of shared rules.

In seeking to eliminate a perceived threat, the US has contributed to a broader environment of systemic insecurity. The world did not confront a nuclear-armed Iran; it now confronts the economic, institutional, and geopolitical consequences of acting as if such a reality already existed. In the process, Iran and its 92 million people may be pushed into uncertainty for years to come.

The question is not about Iran's nuclear ambitions, but about the future of US power. A superpower cannot indefinitely sustain leadership through force combined with narrative construction. Durable leadership requires discipline—evidence-based policy, strategic restraint, and a commitment to credibility. Without such recalibration, the most enduring casualty will not be territory or alliances, but credibility itself. When credibility erodes, power does not necessarily disappear—but it only lingers, no longer leading.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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12 Battery end
13 Some wedding wear
15 Shaggy ox
16 Sty resident
17 Plopped down
18 Hive leader
20 Repair
23 Stuns
27 Opera piece
28 Despicable
29 Forays
31 Small, to Simone
32 Sales pitch
34 Back, on a boat
37 Pitcher's stat
38 Soak up
41 Tracks for equestrians
44 Caravan creature
45 Some tourneys
46 Meaty dishes
47 Train stop

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2 Gumbo veggie
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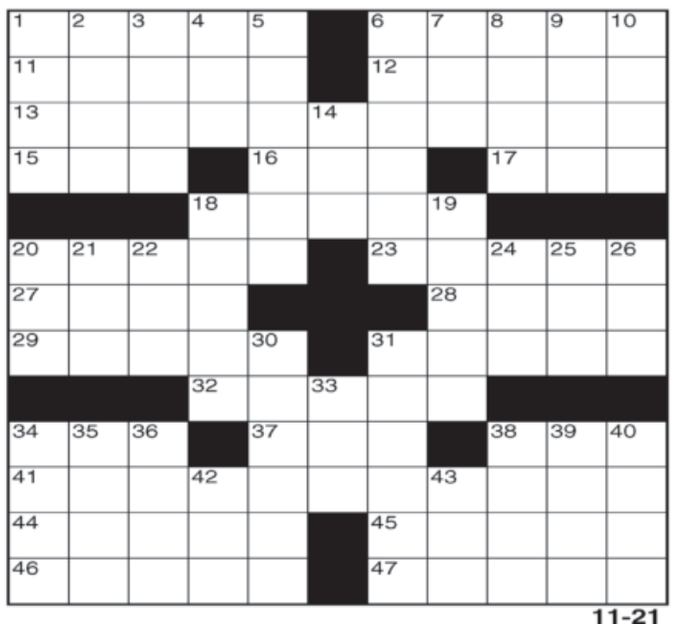
5 Buy eagerly
6 Like rough edges
7 First numero
8 Weather map spots
9 Writer Ferber
10 Nuisance
14 Tell whoppers
18 Campus areas
19 Belly feature
20 Remote
21 Lyricist Gershwin
22 Noon, on a clock
24 Pimple, informally
25 Yale student
26 Collection
30 Joins the bee
31 Stir-fry veggie
33 Wrath
34 Basics
35 Greek group
36 Clock reading
38 Dance part
39 "Dear me!"
40 Sibilant summons
42 Lawn coating
43 Chimp, for one



11-21

THURSDAY'S ANSWERS

B	O	E	R	S		J	U	L	E	P
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WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
dsopinion@gmail.com.

WORD-OF-MOUTH plays crucial role among houseful cinemagoers

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

"I personally compare every film release to the national elections," said Redoan Rony over the phone. "No matter what the hype machine churns out, the real test is on the day that the audience punches a ticket and has a say."

The director was referring to 'bot' attacks which attempt to skew perspectives of a film well before its release. His film ***Domm*** is also subject to such polarising opinions online. While alternative media—which in this case includes Facebook and Instagram film pages—now has loyal, growing fanbases, fringe elements that particularly target films have become a growing concern for new releases.

Amidst ongoing online debates, memes, and mockery, the five mainstream films that have been released have found their target audiences. ***Prince***, ***Domm***, ***Bonolota Express***, ***Pressure Cooker***, and ***Rakkhosh*** have lured audiences to theatres.

Groups and pages on social media, while now crucial to Bangladesh's film ecosystem, can give rise to much tribalism among fans, providing a window of opportunity for vested interests online. Abu Hayat Mahmud, director of the Shakib Khan starrer ***Prince***, feels strongly about this issue. "There was criticism regarding the trailer's VFX, which we were willing to work on. However, there were pages that edited screengrabs from the trailer and made a mockery of the situation. We all know that they are not done by 'neutral' fans. You will notice that there are no discussions regarding the plot, acting, or even direction—just the one thing that is perpetually making rounds online."

Despite that, largely due to the superstardom of Shakib Khan, ***Prince*** is the only film this season to make inroads in single-screen halls. "Eighty percent of the halls that we are currently showcasing the film in are going houseful," claims Mahmud.

Raihan Rafi, who has proven his mainstream appeal with ***Surongo***, ***Toofan***, and ***Taandob***, has taken a risk with his female-led film ***Pressure Cooker***. The film, starring Shobnom Bubly and Nazifa Tushi, among others, is being lauded online for its courageous storytelling. "While the mainstream media has always given us support, there is obviously room for improvement, especially during Eid," said the director. He claims that much of the audience has called it his best work yet, but with little reflection of it in mainstream media post-release. "Honestly, word-of-mouth and online opinions are carrying this film in a sea of star-studded releases. I am very happy with the response."

Hall allocations arguably play a crucial factor in Eid releases, especially when multiple star-studded projects are released. Siam Ahmed had successfully turned heads with his performance in the Mehedi Hasan Hridoy-directed ***Rakkhosh***. "We were given nine halls to start with by Star Cineplex, and it doubled after immense audience pressure. On the second day, we showcased the film in 22 halls." The actor, while happy with the audience's reception both in the theatre and online, insists that every film that releases should be given a chance to shine. "I can't complain, though. I am certain that if someone walks into the theatre to see this film, they will find something special in it." ***Rakkhosh*** is set in the same universe as the director's previous hit, ***Borbaad***.

Tanim Noor's ***Bonolota Express*** is the most star-studded film to release this Eid. "My target audience is always the middle class and families," he said. "Irrespective of how many halls a film manages to land, it is the people who have the power to share their opinions and write about their feelings—because at the end of the day, a cineplex is a business and they will decide what's best for them."

"My first film was a super-flop. I felt really bad when opinions ran rampant online, but I just took them as inspiration to improve myself and do better." The director's ***Utshob*** proved that there was still a place for entire families in cinema halls.

The biggest takeaway from this Eid's releases is that cinema, regardless of star power or mass appeal, can find its own audience after cutting through the noise from fringe elements. For the sake of the film industry, it matters that the people are in the halls, with a real choice of what they want to watch.

The author is Entertainment Editor at The Daily Star.

Jungkook sparks collaboration buzz with Arijit Singh

Speculation of a musical collaboration between BTS member Jungkook and Indian singer Arijit Singh has taken social media by storm after Jungkook shared photos of the two together on Instagram.

The images show Jungkook and Arijit Singh spending time together, sharing a meal, playing music, and sitting in a studio, suggesting a possible collaboration.

In his post, Jungkook said that he had recently travelled to India quietly for music. He added that it was not for a show or cameras, but to spend time with Arijit Singh, where they talked, shared memories, and worked on something special.

The potential collaboration between Jungkook and Arijit Singh, if confirmed, would mark a significant cross-cultural musical moment between K-pop and Indian music industries.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Laal Jatra'

Prachyanat stages its annual street procession ***Laal Jatra***, a living act of remembrance marking the genocide of March 25, 1971. Conceived by Rahul Ananda, the rally blends song, movement, and symbolism, inviting collective mourning, resistance, and reflection on histories that continue to shape the present.

Date: Wednesday | March 25, 2026
Time: 4 pm onwards
Venue: Shoparjito Shadhinota Chattar, TSC to Smriti Chirantan, Fuller Road

Chanchal Chowdhury returns to Tollywood with 'Azadi'

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

While his presence dominates this year's Eid releases in Bangladesh, Chanchal Chowdhury is also expanding his work across regions, currently filming a new project in Kolkata that revisits one of the subcontinent's most significant historical periods.

His upcoming film is titled ***Azadi,*** directed by Suman Mukhopadhyay, who earned widespread acclaim for ***Putulnacher Itikatha***.

Speaking about ***Azadi***, Chanchal said, "The film is essentially about the Partition. It's a powerful story—emotional and rooted in truth. This project is special to me. Suman Mukhopadhyay is a very talented and thoughtful director."

In the film, Chanchal portrays a Muslim police inspector named Selimullah. The narrative also explores a lesser-known aspect of the Partition era—how government employees from Kolkata could relocate to Dhaka for work, and vice versa.

"I've been shooting continuously, and we already shot one full night," he added. "The story of ***Azadi*** truly moved me. I believe it will turn out to be a remarkable film."

On the work front, three movies featuring Chanchal Chowdhury was released in theatres this Eid. Tanim Noor's ***Bonolota Express***, Redoan Rony's ***Domm***, and Raihan Rafi's ***Pressure Cooker***.

"Audiences are already familiar with ***Bonolota Express***, as it is based on a novel by Humayun Ahmed," he said. "They also know quite a bit about ***Domm***. As for ***Pressure Cooker***, viewers will understand my work once they watch it."

Extending his wishes to fellow actors, Chowdhury said, "I wish all films releasing this Eid the very best. My best wishes to Shakib Khan for ***Prince,*** and to Siam Ahmed for ***Rakkhosh***. Of course, my own films are there as well. I hope audiences watch and support all of them."

He added that this Eid promises to be a delightful one for audiences. "There are many good films releasing this festive season—that's what makes Eid so special. Viewers will truly enjoy it."

Throughout Eid, the actor shared, "I'll be visiting cinemas on Eid day to greet audiences. Since multiple films of mine are releasing, I plan to tour several theatres and interact with viewers."

SI Tutul drops Eid songs, honours Ayub Bachchu

Bangladeshi singer SI Tutul has released two new songs this Eid from the United States, where he has been based in recent years. Titled ***Bondhu Keu Noy*** and ***Tumi Krishok Bhalo Na***, the tracks were unveiled on his Facebook and YouTube platforms, with one released on the eve of Eid and the other on Eid day.

Bondhu Keu Noy has been dedicated to late rock icon Ayub Bachchu, founder of LRB, with Tutul describing him as a mentor. Written by Shahidul Haque Sohel, the song has been composed and arranged by Tutul himself.

A former member of LRB, Tutul continues to expand his solo career, adding fresh releases to this year's Eid music lineup while paying tribute to one of Bangladesh's most influential musicians.

Three raped in three districts

FROM PAGE 3

She filed a case with Madhabpur Police Station on Monday night.

Later, police arrested Jasim Mia, 35, from Teliapara area and recovered the jewellery yesterday morning and produced him before a Habiganj court which sent him to jail in the afternoon, said Madhabpur OC Md Sohel Rana.

Police are trying to arrest the other accused, he added.

In Nararyanganj, police arrested two men for allegedly raping a woman after holding her husband and child hostage at knifepoint in Rupganj.

The arrestees -- Afzal Khan, 30, and Abbas, 30 -- are from Tarabo municipality, said Shobzel Hossain, officer-in-charge of Rupganj Police Station, at a press briefing yesterday.

The incident took place around 4:30am on Monday when the accused allegedly broke into the victim's house, held the husband and their three-year-old child hostage at knifepoint and raped the woman. They also took away her mobile phone, police said.

Police later conducted a drive and arrested the two on Monday night. The stolen phone was also recovered.

The victim filed a case with Rupganj Police Station under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, accusing Afzal Khan and an unidentified accomplice.

OC Shobzel said they are continuing the investigation.

2 special flights

FROM PAGE 3

using the link https://forms.gle/oxBLPyCnMpxd6bdi6, said the notice.

"Further instructions will be provided once the passenger capacity for the flights is reached," it added.

Hundreds of thousands of migrants working in the Middle East or those wishing to migrate to those countries have been stranded as Gulf countries shut airspace amid US-Israel war on Iran and Iran's retaliation on the US bases and some energy facilities in the Gulf countries.

There are some 60 lakh Bangladeshis working in the Gulf countries.

Earlier, 282 Bangladeshis from Bahrain returned to Dhaka via Dammam on March 20 with a Gulf Air chartered flight.

The same day, 186 Bangladeshis returned from Baku, Azerbaijan to Bangladesh following their evacuation from Iran.

"The evacuees crossed the Iran–Azerbaijan border by land and arrived in Dhaka on a special flight operated by Biman Bangladesh Airlines from Baku, Azerbaijan," said a foreign ministry statement.

Bangladesh government in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration arranged the evacuation.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed yesterday told media that some 2,000 Bangladeshis, many of them students, are living in Tehran.

"They are all safe now. We will arrange evacuation if they feel unsafe. Our nationals' safety is our first priority," she said.

"Our missions are working round the clock to ensure their safety as well as repatriation or relocation -- whatever is required," she added.

Eid brings little

FROM PAGE 4

Arial Kha Rivers. After catching some fish, we came to the market in the afternoon to sell them. We bought essentials and returned to the boat," he said.

"The day after Eid is just like any other day for us. If we can catch fish, we can eat; if not, we survive on plain rice with salt," he added.

Mumtaz Begum, a community member, described similar struggles. "On Eid day, we could at least give our children some meat. But the next day, we had nothing. We managed with simple rice and lentils," she said.

Community members say their boat-based lifestyle leaves them excluded from government support. "Because we live on boats, we do not receive government assistance. Many of us do not even have national ID cards, so we are not eligible for social safety net programmes. We want an end to this situation," they said.

Mohammad Ali Jibon, chief coordinator of Chandradwip Development Society, said that more than 1,000 people from over 300 Manta families live across five unions in Barishal Sadar upazila, including Shayestabad, Charkaua, Charmonai, and Tungibaria.

Akhtaruzzaman Talukdar, district social services officer in Barishal, said 50 members of the Manta community have been brought under assistance programmes this year.

"Gradually, more others will be included under social allowance schemes," he added.

Patient influx strains understaffed hospitals

FROM PAGE 3

come to Dhaka when many hospitals remain closed or offer limited services.

"Last Eid, most road crash victims were three-wheeler passengers, but this time motorcyclists made up the majority," he told The Daily Star.

He added that 36 doctors, mostly non-Muslim, were working in two shifts during Eid. "More doctors will join in case of an emergency," he said.

Nilufar Begum, 45, from Cumilla, was admitted to the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases and Hospital (NICVD) on Sunday, a day after Eid, after falling ill suddenly.

Her nephew, Masud Rahman, said she had undergone valve replacement surgery about six months ago. After she suddenly became unwell, she was taken to the emergency department.

After examination, doctors confirmed she had suffered a heart attack. She was given initial treatment before being shifted to the coronary care unit (CCU).

A medical officer attended to her at the CCU, but senior doctors were not immediately available.

However, Prof Abdul Wadud Chowdhury, director of NICVD, said senior doctors examine patients upon admission and review them as needed. He added that assistant professors remain on duty during the Eid holidays.

Meanwhile, fifth-grade student Mehedi Hasan was seriously injured when a tree branch fell on his head.

His father, Kamal Hossain, first took him to a local hospital in Fatullah, Narayanganj, before he was transferred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on March 15.

A CT scan showed that blood had accumulated in his brain, and he underwent emergency surgery. He was later kept in a ramp area next to the neurosurgery department due to a lack of beds.

"We didn't get a bed, but what matters is that my son received treatment," said Kamal, sitting on the floor beside his son, where he was receiving treatment.

Brig Gen Md Asaduzzaman, director of DMCH, said the neurosurgery department has 300 beds but often accommodates more than 500 patients.

While patient numbers tend to drop in other departments during Eid, pressure in neurosurgery remains almost unchanged, he said.

He said many critically ill patients are referred to DMCH because of limited advanced neurosurgical services elsewhere in the country, which is why the department consistently faces high patient volume.

DMCH sources said the hospital was run by mostly non-Muslim doctors and nurses during Eid.

The 2,600-bed hospital often accommodates 3,600-4,000 patients. On Eid day, 2,250 patients were being treated at DMCH.

Set aside differences, move forward together

FROM PAGE 3

Tarique expressed gratitude for being able to celebrate Eid in the country after many years and hoped that future Eids would be observed in a more peaceful and uninterrupted environment.

Extending Eid greetings to all, he wished peace, happiness and prosperity for the people, and paid tribute to the martyrs of the 1971 Liberation War and the 2024 uprising.

Earlier on Eid day, the PM offered Eid prayers at the National Eidgah alongside President Mohammed Shahabuddin and thousands of devotees.

He exchanged greetings with the president before joining the main congregation, which began at 8:34am.

Baitul Mukarram National Mosque's Khatib Mufti Muhammad Abdul Malek led the prayers and conducted munajat seeking peace and welfare for the country and the Muslim world.

Despite cloudy skies and light drizzle, devotees thronged the Eidgah from early morning. Arrangements were made for around 35,000 worshippers to offer prayers at a time, with separate facilities for women.

Chief Justice, Supreme Court judges, cabinet members, lawmakers, senior political leaders, diplomats, and high civil and military officials joined the congregation.

After the prayers, the PM went to the state guest house Jamuna, where he first exchanged greetings with foreign diplomats, followed by cabinet members, lawmakers, distinguished citizens, academicians, ulema and mashayekh, artists, writers, senior civil servants, civil society members, and people from different strata of society, BSS reported.

Following the programme, the PM, along with his family members, went to Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and offered prayers at the graves of his father, former president Ziaur Rahman, and his mother, former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

His wife Zubaida Rahman, daughter Barrister Zaima Rahman, Arafat Rahman Koko's wife Syeda Sharmila Rahman, and their daughters Zahia Rahman and Zafia Rahman were present at the time.

As chairman of the BNP, Tarique also placed a floral wreath at the graves alongside senior party leaders, including secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, standing committee members Nazrul Islam Khan, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, and Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, among others.

Afterwards, the PM returned to his Gulshan residence with his family members, according to his press wing.

Eid without loved ones' embrace

FROM PAGE 3

about these things. Everyone is busy with their own lives. I do not depend on anyone," he said.

For several years now, Salimullah Khandakar has been living a solitary life. After retiring from a private job in 2018, he has been spending much of his time in idleness. He moved into the old home 15 months ago. Both of his sons work in reputable companies. Although they occasionally come to visit their father, they never talk about taking him back with them. At the age of 68, despite having everything, he feels he has nothing.

Salimullah says that due to some wrong decisions in life, he has had to spend his later years in an elderly care home.

He said, "Everyone here may have different stories. But, I made some mistakes when making decisions about my family, and now I am paying the price. The biggest thing is that now I have to live alone. This is the reality of my life."

Another resident, who requested anonymity, reflected on how Eid used to be. "There was a time when Eid meant a house full of my people, children's laughter. Now I am here with others, but my own children are not with me," he said.

One elderly woman shared that her daughter lives abroad and video calls her on Eid day. "We do talk, but without being physically present, the joy is not the same," she said.

According to the old home authorities, special arrangements are made for the occasion. Festive meals, including shemai, polao, and meat dishes, are served. Volunteers from various organisations visit throughout the day, bringing gifts, spending time with the residents, and organising small cultural programmes. For a few hours, the otherwise quiet environment becomes lively.

However, as the day progresses, the festivities gradually fade. By afternoon, many residents return to their rooms. Some watch Eid programmes on television, while others sit quietly, immersed in memories of Eids past.

40 lives lost on roads during Eid holidays

FROM PAGE 12

rickshaw at Nabinagar on the Ishwardi-Lalpur highway around 7:30am yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Md Monir Hossain, 27, Jahidul Islam, 50, and Md Babul Hossain, 50 -- all residents of Chotobadkoya village in Lalpur upazila, said police.

In a separate road accident in the same district, a man, who was to get married on Monday, died in a car crash in Garmati area on the Natore-Pabna highway on Sunday.

Julfikar Islam Jillur, 26, was from Nawdapara village in Ishwardi upazila, said police.

In Jashore, three members of a family were killed and three others injured after their car crashed into a tree on the Jashore-Magura highway in Bagherpara upazila early yesterday.

The deceased were Abdul Majid Sardar, 65, his son Mahmud Hasan Zakaria Joni, 42, and Joni's four-year-old daughter, Seherish. They were residents of Fatehabad village in Jashore's Monirampur upazila, said police.

In Thakurgaon, a woman was killed and six others injured when a bus hit a diesel-run three-wheeler at Salondar on the Thakurgaon-Panchagarh highway on Monday.

The victim was Baby Akhter, 20, said Nirmal Chandra Mahanto, OC of Boda Highway Police Station.

In Kishoreganj, a motorcyclist and his pillion were killed, and another was seriously injured after a pickup truck ran over their motorcycle in Kuliarchar upazila on Sunday.

The deceased are Bijoy, 18, and his friend Jabir Hossain, 18 -- both residents of Dariakandi, said Suman Kumar Chowdhury, in-charge of the Kuliarchar Highway Police outpost.

In Gazipur's Kaliganj, Juhura Begum, 60, was killed on Sunday night when she was hit by a CNG-run auto-rickshaw at Chuariakhola area.

In Feni, three people were killed and eight others injured when a bus ploughed into a crowd at Rampur on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway early Sunday.

The deceased are Md Sohag Rahman, 31, of Dhaka's Lalbagh area, Md Morshed, 39, of Dhaka's Banglamotor area, and Md Kaiser, 25, of Chattogram's Chandanaish upazila, said police.

In Habiganj Madhabpur upazila, four people were killed in a collision between a bus and a pickup truck on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway early Sunday.

The deceased are Asma Akhter, 35, of Kishoreganj's Sadar upazila and her son Sajib Ahmed, 13; Manik Miah, 32, of Sylhet's Kadamtali area and Ibrahim Miah, 28, of Sunamganj's Shalla upazila, said police.

Meanwhile, 10 others, who were injured in road accidents in different districts, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) between the early hours of Thursday and yesterday morning, according to the hospital register.

(Our correspondents from Pabna, Benapole, Thakurgaon, Cumilla, Kishoreganj Gazipur, Feni, Moulvibazar, Lalmonirhat, Bandarban contributed to the report.)

Parliament to discuss US trade deal

FROM PAGE 12

shipments to the US to 19 percent from 37 percent, but Bangladesh committed to purchasing $22 billion worth of goods from the US over 15 years along with "poison pill" provisions and other coercive clauses such as curbs on trade deals or purchases from non-market economies.

"Could you sustain with a 37 percent tariff if we did not sign the deal? Compare what we have gained and what others got," said Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman.

Earlier, Khalilur had said the two major political parties -- the BNP and Jamaat -- had given consent to the trade deal before it was signed.

The agreement has both "entry" and "exit" clauses and does not become effective until notification. Bangladesh can exit with a 60-day notice.

During the meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs S Paul Kapur on March 4, Khalilur requested the US official to lower the tariff on Bangladesh as the US Supreme Court had cancelled the tariffs on different countries imposed by US President Donald Trump.

Asked about the introduction of a resolution calling for recognising the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh, Shama said the BNP government will pursue it.

"The government has taken an initiative to observe March 25. Our independence day on March 26 is a very significant day for Bangladesh. We will pursue it," she said.

Democratic Congressman Greg Landsman of Ohio submitted the resolution in the US House of Representatives on March 20. It outlines historical events leading up to and during the 1971 Liberation War, citing widespread killings, sexual violence and targeted persecution of religious minorities.

The resolution recounts how the Pakistani military, alongside allied groups, launched a crackdown on March 25, 1971, under "Operation Searchlight", following the electoral victory of the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

It references reports, including dispatches by US Consul General Archer Blood, who described the violence as "selective genocide".

DGHS cracks down on errant clinics, diagnostic centres

FROM PAGE 12

have taken their documents and decided to take different actions upon those," DGHS Director (Hospital) Abu Hussain Md. Moinul Ahsan told The Daily Star after the drive.

Of the hospitals, the situation at Jamuna General Hospital and TG Multispecialty Hospital and Diagnostic Centre is worse, said Moinul, who led one of the teams.

Besides, one of the hospitals was treating a bullet-wound patient, which it is not authorised to handle as it involves a police matter.

Prime Blood Bank and Transfusion Centre was found closed, although blood banks are required to remain open 24 hours. So, it was shut down, he said, adding that the drive will continue.

The health authorities launched the drive a day after they sealed Doctor's Care Hospital and Diagnostic Centre in Shyamoli over various irregularities.

Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain on Monday led a raid on the private medical facility after private TV channel Jamuna TV aired footage showing an eighth-grade-passed staff member, not a doctor, performing an operation at the hospital.

Following the raid, the minister said drives would be launched against irregularities at private medical facilities from Tuesday.

ANOMALIES APLENTY

Muktijoddha Tower-1 is situated just opposite Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital.

Prime Hospital and Prime Blood Bank are located on the first floor of the building, while Royal Hospital and Radium Blood Bank are on the second floor, along with a residential hotel.

Dhaka Healthcare is on the third floor, while Jamuna General Hospital and a section of Royal Hospital are on the fourth floor. TG Hospital is located on the fifth floor.

On a visit to Jamuna Hospital, this correspondent found four children were admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit of the hospital.

Zahirul Islam Ripon took his two-year-old grandson Arif to the hospital from Cumilla's Burichang Upazila after they could not manage an ICU at any government hospital in Dhaka. Arif has a head infection.

"We came here at 11:00pm yesterday [Monday] but still no doctor visited him. Only nurses work here. Now, after the raid, they are telling us to take him to another hospital," he added.

Sayem, a staff member of the hospital, said within this limited space, they operate a five-bed neonatal/pediatric ICU, a six-bed ICU, one OT, two general wards with a combined capacity of 12 beds, three cabins for orthopaedic patients, as well as an office room and a pharmacy.

The medical facility's owner has a pharmacy and he established the hospital in 2018.

Sayem said they charge around Tk 8,000 to 10,000 per day for ICU services.

He claimed they have two permanent doctors and several on-call doctors to provide the services.

But the DGHS team did not find any medical officer there yesterday.

The team found Royal Hospital was running 19 beds, exceeding its sanctioned capacity of 10. Although the operation theatre is situated on the fifth floor, there is no post-operative room and the hospital is on the second floor.

The sample collection room is very small and the X-ray room was closed. The team shut down diagnosis activities and ordered to show cause within three days.

They also issued a show-cause notice to Dhaka Healthcare and Radium Blood Bank for several anomalies.

Another team did not find any doctor at TG Hospital during the visit and did not find any appointment letter for doctors and nurses. It has been running with an expired licence for three years.

The team shut down the hospital until further notice.

Over at Prime Hospital, there was no specialist in sight to run the ICU. The hospital is providing the service with a medical officer violating the rules. Besides, the hospital admitted patients to the ICU giving false information and overcharging patients with fake voucher.

The team closed down the ICU and the OT and issued a show-cause notice. It also directed to keep the Prime Blood Bank shut until further notice.

In the evening, the DGHS conducted another drive, led by Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain, in the Chankharpool area of the capital.

Earlier in the day, speaking to journalists at the Secretariat, the minister said the drive would be carried out across the country.

Savar 'serial

FROM PAGE 4

He was taken to DMCH, where doctors declared him dead in the morning.

According to police, Samrat was allegedly involved in at least seven killings between 2025 and 2026 in Savar. Investigators found that he used an abandoned community centre in the Savar municipality area as a "death trap".

CCTV footage showing him carrying victims' bodies on his shoulders later emerged as crucial evidence in the investigation, police said.

Law enforcement agencies arrested him in January 2026. Five cases were filed against him with Savar Model Police Station.

Police also said they obtained confessional statements and other evidence, including CCTV footage, in connection with the cases

2 dead in clashes

FROM PAGE 12

dozens of injured people were brought in for treatment.

"Two people came in critical condition and were referred to Dhaka for advanced care," said resident medical officer Shafiqul Islam. Many others received treatment locally for injuries caused by spears, sticks, and other weapons.

According to SP Shah Md Abdur Rauf, the clashes trace back to the national elections on February 12.

On that day, a BNP supporter, Ziaur Rahman, was detained over alleged irregularities at a polling centre, and was later sentenced to 10 days jail by a mobile court.

His associates suspected that Shishu Mia, a supporter of independent candidate Kamruzzaman Mamun, was behind his arrest, triggering tension between two local groups. Mediation by local leaders and MP Rahim Talukdar temporarily eased the situation, but underlying grievances persisted.

The police official said additional forces have been deployed to restore order.

Earlier, on March 17, at least 25 people were injured in similar clashes over the same dispute.

Special JS committee

FROM PAGE 12

or the aspirations of the July uprising would prevail in the event of a conflict, the law minister affirmed that the government would advance by harmonizing both, while underscoring that the constitution remains the ultimate authority.

Opposition Chief Whip and Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Rafiqul Islam Khan, however, said priority should be given to the aspirations of the uprising, as it made the current parliament possible.

"We agree with the provisions of the ordinance," he said.

Rafiqul said the committee discussed 27 ordinances on the first day and agreed on most aspects of all but five of them. He further said that some ordinances, including those related to enforced disappearance and the police commission, would require further discussion.

He said his party would support the government on issues that serve the country and its people but would take a firm stance on any matter that goes against the country, the people, or Islam.

Committee Chairman Zainul Abedin said the panel had completed initial scrutiny of less than half of the ordinances. Some members had raised observations on certain provisions, which would be discussed in the next meeting, he said, adding that members might also submit written opinions if needed.

The next meeting is at 2:00pm today, and more meetings will be held if necessary, he said.

The interim government issued the indemnity ordinance on January 26, providing legal protection to participants of the July uprising. It was deemed to have come into effect retrospectively from July 1, 2024, and covers actions carried out during the movement from July to August 2024.

In a separate decision, the committee also agreed to recommend placing the July Uprising Memorial Museum ordinance before parliament in its existing form. The ordinance, approved in October 2025, has provision for establishing a museum at the Gono Bhaban to preserve and honour the memory of the student-people uprising.

The ordinances promulgated during the tenure of the interim government were placed in the first sitting of the first session of the 13th Jatiya Sangsad. On the same day, parliament formed a special committee to review the ordinances. The committee was later asked to examine the ordinances and submit its report to parliament by April 2.

Dragged from home

FROM PAGE 12

Bhangora Police Station in Cumilla across the Buri river.

Kasba Police Station Officer-in-Charge Naznin Sultana said police rescued him in the afternoon and took him to Kasba Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

Family members alleged that an influential group was behind the killing over his reports exposing drug-related activities. They accused former UP member Abdul Awal and his associates.

Abdul Awal denied the allegations, claiming that he was being framed.

LAW VIEWS

Bail in our Criminal Justice System

KHALID KHAN

In Bangladesh, granting bail to the accused has often sparked public outrage, largely due to the negative perception surrounding it. It originates from the false premise that bails are granted in order to set the criminals free and thereby granting them impunity. However, in reality, bail is not a privilege extended to the accused, rather a cornerstone of any fair criminal justice system.

Imagine a person accused of committing culpable homicide not amounting to murder under section 304 of the Penal Code, 1860. The accused is then arrested by the police and kept in jail for years, only to be found innocent by the court later. How can we compensate the accused for the years lost by them owing to the lengthy trial process? This would amount to a punishment for the accused before conviction.

First, we need to understand that bail does not absolve the offenders of their criminal liabilities or allow them to flee justice. Bail also does not release the accused persons for good or put an end to their trials. Rather, it merely grants them a conditional liberty upon payment of security for their appearance on a certain day and place. On the other hand, breach of the conditions of bail may lead to its cancellation. Hence, bail does not set the accused persons at large but compels them to remain under the court's jurisdiction.

The rationale of granting bail to the accused stems from the well-known legal principle that 'every person charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty' (also known as the 'presumption of innocence'). This presumption forms one of the core foundations of any fair criminal justice system. It has also secured its place in several national and international instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in Article 14(2), and our Constitution in Articles 32 and 35—the right to personal liberty read with the right to fair trial).

Importantly, it is a well-settled principle of law that 'granting bail should be the rule, refusal should be the exception'. To understand why, imagine a person accused of committing culpable homicide not amounting to murder under section 304 of the Penal Code, 1860. The accused is then arrested by the police and kept in jail for years, only to be found innocent by the court later. How can we compensate the accused for the years lost by them owing to the lengthy trial process? This would amount to a punishment for the accused before conviction. Since we cannot know for sure whether the accused has actually committed the offence until they are tried, there must be some safeguard to protect their personal freedom albeit restrictively.

On the other hand, we should also remember that bail involves consideration of the rights of the victim/s as well. This is where we draw a line between bailable and non-bailable offences. Bailable offence is defined in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (the 'Code') as an offence shown as bailable in the Schedule II Column 5 of the Code, or which is made bailable by any other law for the time being in force. All other offences are therefore considered non-bailable.

However, in practical terms, bailable offences mean those offences in which bail can be claimed by the accused 'as of right.' It means that the authorities are bound to grant bail to the accused as soon as it is claimed under section 496 of the CrPC. Not granting bail in such cases, on the contrary, would lead to the prosecution of the concerned authorities on the ground of wrongful confinement.

Again, there is a misconception that no bail can be granted in non-bailable offences. As a matter of fact, the difference between a bailable and non-bailable offence is that granting bail in the latter case is subject to judicial discretion. Besides, according to section 497, the court or the officer granting bail in non-bailable cases must record in writing the reasons for doing so. That is why the court often looks into a number of considerations while granting bail, including the possibility of the accused (1) tampering with the evidence or threatening the witnesses, or (2) absconding or escaping the court's jurisdiction, or (3) repeating the same offence. Furthermore, if there appear reasonable grounds for believing that he has been guilty of an offence punishable with death or life imprisonment, the court shall not release him on bail. The exception is any woman, sick or infirm person, or person under the age of sixteen years, who may still be released on bail despite being accused of the offence. Hence, the public concern that the offender might flee justice owing to his release on bail is not ruled out altogether by the courts and is given due consideration in appropriate cases.

Interestingly, bail can also help reduce the filing of false cases. When bails are not duly granted, people often abuse the penal provisions in order to harass persons they despise by implicating them in false cases. This is because if bail is granted to a person on a particular ground, it is essential that all other persons satisfying the same ground be granted bail as well. In effect, this would lead to a more frequent granting of bail to the accused persons. With bails being granted more frequently, the accused may no longer be intimidated by unlawful detention, and thus the incentive to file or run a malicious prosecution will be, arguably, by far reduced.

Finally, in a society where individual freedom is valued, bail should in all cases be the general rule. If we want to build a society where democracy, rule of law and basic human rights can co-exist, bail should be given proper consideration as a part of the reformation of the criminal justice system.

The writer is Law Desk Assistant of Law & Our Rights, The Daily Star.

COURT CORRIDOR

Is a Title Suit Barred during pendency of RoR preparation?

RAJIB DEB

Whether a civil suit for declaration of title is barred or not during the pendency of the preparation of Records-of-Rights (RoR), is a matter of uncertainty in our jurisdiction, as no explicit statutory provision provides a clear answer thereto. Notably, ROR is a document maintained by the government that contains primary records of land ownership, relevant liabilities, and land classification. A comparative discussion on the two legal provisions, namely, section 144B of the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950 (SAT Act), and section 42 of the Specific Relief Act 1877 (SR Act), may sufficiently resolve it.

Notably, under section 42 of the SR Act, any person entitled to any legal character or to any right as to any property may sue for a declaration against anyone denying, or interested to deny, such right. Conversely, section 144B of the SAT Act bars civil courts from entertaining any suit or application for the alteration of any rent or determination of the status of any tenant of the incidents of any tenancy in such area, upon an order under section 144(1) for preparation of revision of RoR in respect of any area. A clear understanding of both provisions is important for delving further into the discussion.

The very purpose of section 42 of the SR Act is to determine and declare title. In contrast, section 144B of the SAT Act is intended to provide protection in matters relating to the preparation and publication of RoR. The objectives of title establishment and administrative protection are distinct, and do not, by themselves, create any legal contradiction.

On the one hand, the bar to civil jurisdiction under section 144B of the SAT Act encompasses matters of a limited scope, where the executive (revenue) authority corrects errors relating to incidents of tenancy. On the other hand, a declaration of title conclusively determines proprietary rights such as inheritance, transfer, settlement, or other substantive questions of ownership. Such legal character or legal right does not, in any circumstance, include arithmetical or administrative matters like alteration of rent, or determination of the status of a tenant as contemplated under section 144B (1) and (2). Hence, the subject-matter transcends the statutory bar applicable to administrative corrections.

Section 144 relates to the preparation, revision, or correction of the RoR by the revenue authority. Such proceedings are summary in nature and primarily for fiscal purposes. They do not finally adjudicate complex questions of title. Besides, it is a settled principle that title only carries a rebuttable presumption of correctness. As such, complex questions of titles should be left for adjudication by civil courts.

Section 144B bars the jurisdiction of civil courts in respect of matters which the revenue authority is empowered to determine under Chapter XVII of the SAT Act (Maintenance and Revision of Record-of-Rights). However, the bar is limited to: correction, preparation, or publication of ROR---matters directly falling within the statutory competence of revenue officers. It does not expressly bar a suit for declaration of title where the plaintiff seeks a declaration of title beyond mere correction of the record.

Moreover, it is a well-established principle that jurisdiction of civil courts is generally inferred not to be barred. Unless the statute expressly or by necessary implication excludes the jurisdiction of civil courts, such jurisdiction remains intact. Furthermore, law demands that no aggrieved person be left without relief. From that perspective, an aggrieved person cannot be compelled to wait for an uncertain period merely because final publication under section 144 of the SAT Act is pending or has been made.

Hence, I take the view that a civil suit for declaration of title is not barred merely because an order for preparation of the RoR has been made under section 144 of the SAT Act. It will be barred under section 144B only if the suit essentially seeks the correction of the record-of-rights and nothing more.

The writer is judge, Bangladesh Judicial Service.

LAW LETTER

Organ donation and the question of legal consent

Organ donation is considered one of the most humanitarian activities. It turns the tragedy of death into hope since the organs of a deceased person can save or improve the life of another suffering person. However, the authority to decide on the manner in which a deceased person's body is to be disposed of is one of the most important legal issues associated with the practice of organ donation. Any such law has to incorporate the considerations of human dignity, free consent, and the right not to be exploited. This is why the legal and ethical dilemma in such situations is hard to reconcile.

In Bangladesh, organ transplantation was previously regulated by the Human Organ Transplantation Act 1999, which has been repealed by the Human Organ Transplantation Ordinance 2025. The law not only allows the living relatives to donate their organs but also permits the donation of organs from brain-dead persons.

In Bangladesh, organ transplantation was previously regulated by the Human Organ Transplantation Act 1999, which has been repealed by the Human Organ Transplantation Ordinance 2025. This Ordinance sets clearly the eligibility criteria for both organ donors and recipients. The donors must not have serious health conditions or infectious diseases (like HIV or hepatitis), most types of cancer, kidney diseases, any condition that could affect the proper functioning of the organ, etc. The law not only allows the living relatives to donate their organs but also permits the donation of organs from brain-dead persons.

However, although the law allows organ donation from deceased persons, the actual number of such donation is low. In the majority of cases, organ transplants come from living family donors. In Bangladesh, experts estimate that about 5,000 kidney transplants are needed each year, but only about 400 such procedures are actually performed annually. In my opinion, this large gap between demand and supply hints towards the inadequacy and complications arising from our legal and policy framework. The first problem in our legal framework relating to organ transplantation has to do with consent. It remains a critical question whether a person's decision to donate their organs after death should be automatic, or whether relatives should still have the final say. In Bangladesh, the family's consent is essentially deemed final, even if the deceased had consented to donate their organs. However, I believe this can undermine the principle of personal autonomy. Moreover, such practice also discourages individuals to make the decision to donate their organs as the relatives in any case can choose to refuse later. As a result, this contributes to the inadequate amount of organ transplantation compared to the demand.

The other component that should be present in any ideal organ donation system in any country is public trust in the system. However, in South Asia, especially, we have a serious problem with illegal organ trade and unethical organ transplantation. This has naturally created fear in people for the possibility of forcible organ transplantation, extortion, abduction, etc. As a result, organ transplantation gets discouraged and becomes more difficult to do. This further worsens the already bad situation relating to organ transplantation.

Finally, the problem of organ donation in Bangladesh is not merely a medical problem; it is a legal, moral and human rights issue. The legal and policy framework should be modified to protect the individual decisions better, build public trust, and thereby encourage more ethical and legal organ transplantation.

Alph Imran Chowdhury
Law Student
The University of London.

Star
SPORT
DHAKA WEDNESDAY MARCH 25, 2026, CHAITRA 11, 1432 BS

What to WATCH

SONY SPORTS 1
New Zealand vs South Africa
5th T20I
Live from 12:15 pm

'WE'VE GOT TO WIN IT ALL'

Ronan Sullivan (2nd from L) sprints away in celebration after scoring a stunning free-kick to give Bangladesh the lead in the opening SAFF U-20 Championship fixture against Pakistan in Male yesterday. After a barren first half during which Bangladesh dominated their opposition but failed to find the target, Ronan picked the right spot with a curling 25-yard free-kick in the 54th minute. The Philadelphia Union Academy prodigy, playing his first match for Bangladesh, doubled the lead with a guiding header on a cross from Sheikh Sangram 13 minutes later. "It was amazing. It was great to win. On to the next, we've got to beat India and then win it all," the 18-year-old after the 2-0 victory. Bangladesh will play against India in their final Group B match on Saturday. PHOTO: SAFF

Hamza Choudhury is in deep conversation with Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera during a training session of the team in Hanoi on Tuesday, hours after the Leicester City midfielder joined the rest of the squad. Although Hamza skipped the physical drill, he said he was ready to go against Vietnam in the FIFA friendly on Thursday and the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture against Singapore five days later. PHOTO: BFF

PSL-bound players leave Dhaka

Among the six Bangladesh players called up for the upcoming 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), opener Tanzid Tamim (Peshawar Zalmi) and leg-spinner Rishad Hossain (Rawalpindi Pindiz) were the last two to depart for Pakistan yesterday. Mustafizur Rahman and Parvez Hossain Emon (Lahore Qalandars), as well as Shoriful Islam and Nahid Rana (Peshawar Zalmi), had left the country for Pakistan a day earlier after receiving clearance from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to participate in the PSL, following consultations with government authorities and security assurances from Islamabad. The PSL, set to begin on March 26, will proceed as scheduled but under significant restrictions due to Pakistan's ongoing fuel crisis. Mohsin Naqvi, chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, confirmed that the tournament will be held without spectators and limited to just two venues. Matches will only be held in Lahore and Karachi, with cities such as Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Multan, and Peshawar removed from the hosting list to minimise travel and resource usage. PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Bashar eyes bigger player pool

SPORTS REPORTER

With Bangladesh set for a hectic schedule in the coming months, newly appointed Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief selector Habibul Bashar said he aims to expand the player pool.

2026 is a crucial year for Bangladesh's World Cup qualification campaign. The national team is also continuing its transition period, with a majority of senior players making way for others in the white-ball formats.

Thus, Bashar, who will take over responsibilities from current chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu next month, is not solely focused on securing victories but on achieving them by introducing new faces to strengthen a compact player pool.

"Our primary target is [ODI World Cup] qualification, but what's more important is consistency in performance," Bashar told reporters during a media briefing in Mirpur yesterday.

Following the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation, a few players returned to Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium for gym sessions yesterday. After the conclusion of the Pakistan ODIs earlier this month,

Bangladesh players will regroup -- except those participating in the Pakistan Super League (PSL), which is set to begin on March 26 -- for a white-ball camp on March 27. The camp will serve as preparation for the upcoming ODI and T20I series against New Zealand, a series significant in terms of the points required for direct qualification to the 2027 ODI World Cup.

"Since we have a lot of matches this year, we have to work with a large group. With several series lined up, our player pool must be expanded. For sustained performance, it's important to work with around 10 additional players outside the core group of 14-15 players [in the national side]," Bashar added.

Speaking about the scope of the new four-member selection panel, Bashar said players outside the national team who are performing in domestic cricket will be closely monitored.

"Players in the national team are visible, and we follow up on them. But beyond this group, it's important to closely track performers in domestic cricket," Bashar said, adding that the domestic experience of Naeem Islam and Nadif Chowdhury -- new inclusions in the selection panel -- will be valuable in this aspect.

While Bashar will take over the selection process next month, the squad for the New Zealand series will be announced by the current selection panel. However, Bashar's panel is expected to face key challenges this year, including meeting qualification targets and building a strong player pool that will benefit the Tigers in the long run.

U-20 women to play against India today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-20 women's national football team will take on India in a closed-door friendly today as part of their ongoing preparations for the AFC Women's U-20 Asian Cup in Bangkok.

Ahead of the match, the team completed their third training session on Tuesday morning at Boonyachinda Stadium. The 90-minute session featured warm-up routines, technical passing drills and a 30-minute high-intensity intra-squad match, according to the Bangladesh Football Federation.

The coaching staff put special focus on tactical discipline and fine-tuning the game plan for the India match, while also working on the individual roles and responsibilities of the players.

Goalkeeping coach Masud Ahamad Uzzal said the session was centred on preparing for tomorrow's game and addressing areas that need improvement following the Asian Cup.

"The players were shown which areas we did well in the Asian Cup and which areas needed further improvement. We tried to minimise those mistakes,"Uzzal said in a video message shared by the BFF.

"The girls are fine. One or two have slight discomfort," Uzzal said. "They are getting habituated. It's too hot in here which is a bit difficult for us, but I hope the players can fully acclimatise within the next seven days that we have."

Following the India game, Bangladesh will play against Jordan before starting their U-20 Women's Asian Cup campaign where they will play against Thailand on April 1, China on April 4 and Vietnam on April 7.

78 DAYS TO GO

Fontaine's 13-goal WORLD CUP

At the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, Just Fontaine produced one of football's most remarkable feats, scoring a record 13 goals in a single tournament – a milestone that still stands. His journey, however, began with adversity when his boots were torn before the competition. With no replacements available, teammate Stephane Bruey lent him a pair that fit perfectly. Wearing those borrowed boots, Fontaine dominated the tournament, scoring freely and leading France to a third-place finish, including four goals in the playoff match. Despite France's semifinal loss to Brazil, his brilliance never faded. Fontaine's record remains unmatched, surpassing even legends like Pele, Lionel Messi and Miroslav Klose.

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

'Performance must be first priority'

In December last year, **Naeem Islam** was still playing for Rangpur Division in the National Cricket League. Four months on, he is part of the four-member national selection panel, contracted until the 2027 ICC World Cup – a transition that brought an unannounced end to his playing career. One of the country's most consistent domestic performers, with over 11,000 first-class runs to his credit, the 39-year-old spoke to **The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan** about his shift to selection, his goals in the new role, and the need for greater transparency. Excerpts follow:

The Daily Star (DS): ***Normally, after a playing career, players divert towards coaching or other roles. How would you describe this shift from player to selector?***

Naeem Islam (NI): It has been an unexpected journey, but if this hadn't worked out, I would have tried to enter the coaching line, having completed Level 1.

I was toward the end of my playing days, with perhaps another year left, when I saw this opportunity to work with the board. I felt that if I became a selector, I would try to achieve things for Bangladesh that I couldn't quite achieve as a player.

DS: ***You've also experienced being a 'victim' of the system, where you performed but weren't selected. What is your vision for this big role?***

NI: It was very difficult to keep yourself motivated for years while performing and not getting a call-up. I want to ensure that if a player performs, he gets an opportunity.

One thing I felt was lacking during our time was communication. I don't remember ever receiving a phone call to clarify why I was dropped or what I needed to improve. While I can only pick a 15-man squad and must drop others, I believe we should discuss these decisions. If a player asks why they aren't in the team, we should tell them what they need to improve or do in domestic cricket to make a comeback. This keeps them motivated.

DS: ***Will you bring more transparency to domestic team selections, where teams are sometimes put together haphazardly?***

NI: I have been a captain in the NCL and have sat with selectors. In this digital age, all the data – runs, strike rates, performance over the years – are available online. If I am being paid for this job, I must use my head. If management or a captain wants a player who hasn't performed for three years, I will ask for a valid reason. If they can't provide one, I won't agree. Performance must be the first priority.

DS: ***In the past, players have been picked for Tests based on white-ball performance. Will you focus on format-specific consistency?***

NI: We used to discuss this as players too. For example, [Anamul Haque] Bijoy scored thousand runs in the Premier League (DPL) and was then picked for a Test match in the West Indies [in 2022]. It's very tough for a player to jump into international red-ball cricket when they've been performing in white-ball cricket. Their preparation time is reduced, and it becomes hard to survive.

We are human and will make mistakes, but we will try to minimize decisions that make players wonder how someone got into the team.

DS: ***Since you are now a selector and won't return to the field, do you have any regrets about your playing days?***

NI: I played qualifying in 2001-02 and played until 2026. It has been a very long journey, and I am grateful for it. I don't want to think about what I didn't get; I am satisfied with what I have.

Ex-England players hit out as ECB backs McCullum, Stokes

AGENCIES

Brendon McCullum will continue as England's head coach across all three formats, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed on Monday, despite poor results and concerns over team culture.

Ben Stokes will remain Test captain with Harry Brook as his deputy, while Rob Key continues as managing director following a review triggered by England's 4-1 Ashes defeat in Australia.

The series drew criticism for England's casual preparations. They also lost to eventual champions India in the T20 World Cup semifinals this month, a side led by Brook. His off-field altercation with a nightclub bouncer in New Zealand last year remained a distraction.

ECB chief executive Richard Gould defended the leadership group, saying: "I've seen the driving ambition and determination... to take the lessons from the Ashes and move forward."

McCullum remains contracted until the 50-over World Cup in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia next year. England host New Zealand for a three-Test series in June before eight limited-overs matches against India.

Stokes admitted the past three months had been his toughest as captain but backed the leadership to improve. "Baz, Rob and myself have the passion and desire to take this team forward... you learn more from failure than success," he said on social media.

Key, whose role was also under scrutiny, told Sky Sports McCullum was still the right man. "It was a winter that did not go well... but that doesn't mean they're bad leaders."

On England's ultra-aggressive 'Bazball' approach, Key said it needed evolution rather than abandonment. "If you lose authenticity... you're done. Brendon has not done that."

Former England opener Geoffrey Boycott criticised the lack of accountability, saying McCullum and Key had "sabotaged" the Ashes campaign. He argued the team had become complacent, with limited competition for places.

Former captains Michael Vaughan and Mike Atherton also questioned the decision to retain the leadership, with Atherton saying fans would find the "lack of accountability hard to stomach."

40 lives lost on roads during Eid holidays

STAR REPORT

At least 40 people were killed and 69 others were injured in road accidents in 14 districts during the Eid holidays, between Thursday and yesterday.

In Cumilla, at least 12 people were killed and 18 injured after a Chattogram-Dhaka mail train hit a bus at a level crossing in Sadar Dakshin upazila early Sunday.

69 injured in road accidents across 14 districts

Accidents involved buses, trains, trucks, pickups, auto-rickshaws and motorcycles

Additional deaths reported from multiple districts and DMCH

The deceased are: Md Babul Chowdhury, 53, of Noakhali's Sonaimuri and a resident of Tejturi Bazar, Dhaka; Laiju Akter, 29, wife of Pintu Mia of Jhenaidah's Maheshpur, along with their two daughters Khadija Akter, 9, and Mariam Akter, 3; Sohel Rana, 48, of Chuadanga's Jibannagar; Khandakar Sirajul Alam, 60, of Jashore's Chaugachha, and his wife Kohinur Begum, 55; Nazrul Islam Raihan, 28, of Sudharam in Noakhali Sadar; Sayeda, 9, daughter of Sirajul Doula of Lakshmipur Sadar; Md Jowad Hossain Biswas, 25, son of Moktar Hossain Biswas of Jhenaidah Sadar; Fosiar Rahman, 25, son of Wahab Sheikh of Magura's Mohammadpur; and Mohammad Tajul Islam, 70, of Chandpur's Kachua.

The incident occurred around 2:45am at the Paduar Bazar level crossing, said Md Abdul Momin, OC of Moynamoti Crossing Highway Police Station.

The train dragged the bus, travelling from Chuadanga to Lakshmipur, for nearly a kilometre, according to witness accounts and police.

Authorities said no gateman was found on duty at the time of the accident. After the accident, two gatemen were suspended for negligence.

In Natore's Lalpur upazila, three people were killed and four others injured when a sand-carrying truck hit a battery-run auto-

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Onlookers gather around the wreckage of a bus after it collided with a Dhaka-bound mail train from Chattogram at the Paduar Bazar rail crossing in Cumilla Sadar Dakshin, leaving 12 bus passengers dead and 18 injured early Sunday.

PHOTO: KHALID NAZRUL

UPRISING PARTICIPANTS

Special JS committee endorses indemnity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary special committee yesterday agreed to recommend placing the July Mass Uprising (Protection and Liability Determination) Ordinance before parliament as a bill.

The ordinance was issued to provide legal protection to the people who took part in the July mass uprising.

The decision came at the committee's first meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. It also decided to complete scrutiny of 133 ordinances promulgated by the interim government and submit its report by April 2, officials said.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said the committee was fully in agreement with the indemnity ordinance.

He said ensuring legal protection for the brave fighters of the uprising is a moral and state responsibility. He also said the government could amend the law after its passage if necessary.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Asaduzzaman said the committee had begun reviewing the 133 ordinances.

On how many issues consensus had been reached, he said it was too early to disclose details and that the findings would be made public once the report is finalised. He said the committee would prepare the report by April 2.

When asked whether the constitution

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DGHS cracks down on errant clinics, diagnostic centres

Finds no doctors in ICUs; closes one hospital

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Muktijoddha Tower-1, a residential-slash-commercial building in Mohammadpur's College Gate area, houses five private hospitals and two blood banks on its first to fifth floors, along with a residential hotel.

One of the establishments is Jamuna General Hospital, occupying 10 very small rooms in a portion of the building's fourth floor.

However, it has been operating with an expired licence since June 2024 and is running 29 beds, exceeding its sanctioned capacity of 20.

Its intensive care unit (ICU) facilities have no dedicated doctors and are run by nurses with support from an on-call physician. No ICU protocols are being followed. The operating theatre (OT) is also in a highly unhygienic condition. Patients are being managed through illegal practices.

Finding these irregularities, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) shut down two blood banks in the building: Dhaka Healthcare Hospital and Diagnostic Centre; Prime Orthopaedic and General Hospital and Digital Diagnostic Centre; Royal Multispecialty Hospital and Diagnostic Centre; Radium Blood Bank and TC; and Prime Blood Bank and Transfusion Centre.

"We have visited all facilities at the building and found different kinds of irregularities. We

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the hospital's ICU services yesterday, the first day of its drive against anomalies at private medical facilities.

Four children admitted there were transferred to other hospitals. The hospital authority was asked to show cause within three days about the anomalies.

The DGHS found TG Multispecialty Hospital and Diagnostic Centre in such a horrendous situation that it shut it down.

Two DGHS teams also found various irregularities at three other hospitals and

Its intensive care unit (ICU) facilities have no dedicated doctors and are run by nurses with support from an on-call physician. No ICU protocols are being followed. The operating theatre (OT) is also in a highly unhygienic condition. Patients are being managed through illegal practices.

The DGHS said about Jamuna General Hospital

Bangladesh air 2nd worst in the world

Says IQAir's 2025 survey

REUTERS, *Singapore*

Bangladesh was ranked the world's smoggiest country in 2025, with concentrations of hazardous small particles known as PM2.5 up to 13 times higher than the recommended World Health Organization level, research showed yesterday.Pakistan topped the list, while Tajikistan ranked third among the most polluted countries.

Swiss air quality monitoring firm IQAir said in its annual report that 13 countries and territories kept average PM2.5 levels at the WHO standard of less than 5 microgrammes per cubic metre last year, up from seven in 2024.

However, 130 out of 143 monitored countries and territories failed to meet the WHO guideline.

India's Loni was the world's most polluted city in 2025, with average PM2.5 levels of 112.5 micrograms, followed by Hotan in the northwestern Chinese region of Xinjiang at 109.6 microgrammes.

The world's top 25 most polluted cities were all in India, Pakistan and China.

Only 14 percent of the world's cities met the WHO standard in 2025, down from 17 percent a year earlier, with Canadian wildfires driving up PM2.5 across the United States and as far as Europe.

Among the countries that met the standard in 2025 were Australia, Iceland, Estonia and Panama.

Laos, Cambodia and Indonesia all reported significant PM2.5 reductions compared to the previous year, thanks mainly to wetter and windier La Nina weather. Mongolia saw average concentrations fall 31% to 17.8 micrograms per cubic metre.

In all, 75 countries reported lower PM2.5 levels in 2025 compared to a year earlier, with 54 recording higher average concentrations, IQAir said.

Parliament to discuss US trade deal

Says Shama Obaed

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The reciprocal trade deal with the US will be discussed in and outside parliament and will be implemented by maintaining national interest, said Shama Obaed Islam, the state minister for foreign affairs.

She, however, did not specify whether the deal, signed by the interim government three days before the 13th national election, would be reviewed or not.

"Bangladesh's economy, the people, the private sector, all are impacted by the deal -- we will ensure national interest as we implement the deal," she told reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday.

Before that, it will be discussed in and outside the parliament.

"If needed, we will also discuss it with the US," she added.

The US lowered the tariff for Bangladesh's

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2 dead in clashes over polls rivalry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Brahmanbaria*

Two people, including the imam of a mosque, were killed and over 100 others injured in violent clashes in Nasirnagar upazila of Brahmanbaria district yesterday.

Inspector Abul Kalam Azad, in charge of Chatalpar Investigation Centre, confirmed the deaths and described the situation as "still volatile." He added that police have yet to reach the site in full force and stop the violence, as it is in a very remote area.

Brahmanbaria Superintendent of Police Shah Md Abdur Rauf said during the clash, Habibullah, the local mosque's imam, was injured by a spear and later died at the Ashtagram Upazila Health Complex in nearby Kishoreganj district. Akhtar Mia, the other deceased, was also injured by a spear and died on the spot; his body remains at the scene.

The clashes are linked to a longstanding dispute between supporters of BNP leader and newly elected MP Rahim Talukdar and those of defeated independent candidate Kamruzzaman Mamun.

While Akhtar Mia was a supporter of Rahim Talukdar, Habibullah was a supporter of Kamruzzaman Mamun.

According to police and locals, the violence erupted last morning in Goalnagar union, a remote area surrounded by rivers, when rival groups attacked each other with local weapons, including spears, bows and arrows.

Witnesses said the clash appeared premeditated, with both sides reportedly mobilising supporters from nearby villages. The fighting quickly spread across multiple villages in the union.

Doctors at Nasirnagar Upazila Health Complex said

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People wielding sticks and spears gathered on a farmland during a clash that left two people, including a mosque imam, dead and at least a hundred injured in Goalnagar village of Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: MASHUK HRIDOY

Dragged from home, beaten to death

Brahmanbaria anti-narcotics activist slain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Brahmanbaria*

An admin of an anti-narcotics Facebook page was forcibly taken out of his home and then beaten to death yesterday afternoon in Brahmanbaria's Kasba upazila.

Deen Islam, 30, was the son of Shafiqul Islam, of Shimrail village under Mehari union, said police.

He ran the page and a YouTube channel called, "Talash Crime Dristi", where he regularly published video reports on drug trafficking, drug trade, and drug abuse.

According to police and locals, a group of 20 to 30 people forcibly took him from his house around noon and severely beat him. They later left him in the Gangerkut area under

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