



Italy refuses US aircraft use of Sicily base

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When wars far away hit home

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## Fuel prices hold steady for April

### Govt absorbs high import costs to shield consumers

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government has decided to keep domestic fuel prices unchanged this month by absorbing rising import costs through heavy subsidies.

The decision has been taken to cushion consumers from the global energy shock amid escalating tensions in the Middle East, now in its fifth week.

Diesel will be sold at Tk 100 per litre, while octane and petrol prices will remain at Tk 120 and Tk 116 per litre, according to a gazette issued by the Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources yesterday.

With this, fuel prices remain unchanged for the third consecutive month.

To achieve this, the government spent over Tk 5,000 crore in subsidies in March alone, risking intensifying fiscal pressure and widening the gap with international market rates.

FUEL TYPE	ACTUAL COST PER LITRE (TK)	CURRENT RETAIL PRICE PER LITRE (TK)	TOTAL SUBSIDY IN MARCH (TK CRORE)
DIESEL	198.00	100.00	4,231
OCTANE	150.72	120.00	779
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>5,010</b>

SOURCE: ENERGY DIVISION

At the same time, the authorities have also been working to curb panic buying and have intensified drives against fuel hoarding nationwide, which the government blames for the shortages.

The move comes as import costs continue to climb due to geopolitical tensions disrupting supply chains, particularly in the Middle East – Bangladesh's primary fuel sourcing region.

Officials say the government is deliberately holding prices steady to avoid triggering inflationary pressure on transport and essential commodities.

Ministry analysis shows the import-adjusted cost of diesel has risen to about Tk 198 per litre, while the retail price is Tk 100. For octane, the cost stands at Tk 150.72 per litre compared to a retail price of Tk 120.

In March alone, this translated into an estimated subsidy burden of roughly Tk 4,231 crore for diesel and Tk 779 crore for octane.

A day earlier, Energy Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku said the government may need to spend up to Tk 16,045 crore in subsidies by June to sustain the current pricing structure.

The latest move also signals a shift from the earlier adjustment trend.

In January, the government reduced fuel prices by Tk 2 per litre across diesel, petrol, octane, and kerosene, in line with easing global prices at the time.

World Bank data show Brent crude oil was about \$71.1 per barrel before the war, but it surged past \$100 by March 10 and is currently trading around \$120.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7



The Kuwait-flagged Al-Salmi crude oil tanker shows damage after a reported strike amid US-Israeli tensions with Iran, yesterday. Dubai authorities said the blaze on the tanker was contained, with no oil leakage or injuries.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Govt moves to repatriate illicit funds from 10 territories

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh authorities are seeking to establish legal agreements with nine countries and one territory, which have been identified as the primary destinations for laundered money, as part of efforts to recover illicit funds transferred abroad.

The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) has submitted an updated report to the government detailing the scale of the problem and the steps being taken to address it.

According to a Bangladesh Bank official, the destinations now under focus are Canada, the US, the UK, the UAE, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Switzerland, Thailand, and Hong Kong.

Negotiations are underway to sign mutual legal assistance treaties (MLATs) with these countries.

However, progress has been uneven.

Malaysia, Hong Kong and the UAE have agreed to sign treaties, while the US, the UK and Switzerland have proposed alternative arrangements, including memoranda of understanding and case-by-case agreements.

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## JS heats up with debate over reform council

### BNP seeks all-party panel for constitutional changes, Jamaat for separate body to convene council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Calling the July charter implementation order "a document of endless deceit and national betrayal", the treasury bench yesterday proposed forming an all-party special parliamentary committee to amend the constitution.

In response, opposition leader Shafiqur Rahman proposed a separate special parliamentary committee to convene the Constitution Reform Council. "But our appeal is that the committee should have an equal number of members from both sides, so that we can present our views properly."

The opposition argued that the July National Charter (Constitutional Reform) Implementation Order, 2025 was legal and that all should respect the mandate of the referendum and the spirit of the July charter.

The lawmakers were participating in a discussion on an adjournment motion brought by the opposition leader, calling for convening the Constitution Reform Council in accordance with the July charter implementation order.

The debate ended without any resolution.

According to the order, the first session of the council should be convened in the same

manner as the first session of parliament -- within 30 calendar days of the election results being declared.

However, this has not yet been done.

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said the July charter implementation order was "void ab initio" (invalid from the beginning), adding that between March 26, 1971 and April 7, 1973, the president had the authority to issue such orders, but after the formation of the first parliament in 1973, that power no longer existed.

He noted that 133 ordinances were placed before parliament, but the July charter implementation order was not among them, because it was neither an ordinance nor a law.

He also described the order as "a document of endless deception by the interim government" and "a document of national betrayal", adding that he had asked the president whether such an order could be issued. "The president replied, 'I cannot, but I am being forced to,'" he said.

Salahuddin then asked, "Under which provision can the president convene a session of the Constitution Reform Council?" He added that the question of an oath would arise only if the constitution had been amended,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## US-Israeli strikes hit key Iran sites

### Qeshm Island's desalination plant out of service; Iranian strikes hit oil tanker, telecom building, US sites in Gulf states

China expresses 'gratitude' after three ships allowed thru Hormuz

Trump tells countries to go to Strait of Hormuz and 'just take it'

Pakistan and China outline five-point plan to end war

AGENCIES

Iranian media yesterday reported that a wave of US-Israeli strikes hit military bases, a cancer drug plant and a religious site -- a day after President Donald Trump threatened to destroy the country's oil wells and power grid.

Video footage verified by AFP showed at least two massive explosions and columns of smoke in Isfahan, central Iran.

"Initial investigations indicate that some military locations in Isfahan were targeted," the Fars news agency quoted Akbar Salehi, a security official at the governor's office in Isfahan province, as saying.

State media reported the Grand Husseiniya, a Shia religious centre, was damaged in Zanjan in the northwest.

The Iranian government also said airstrikes had hit a pharmaceutical plant producing cancer drugs and anaesthetics, while a health ministry official told the ISNA news agency that a bombing had left a desalination plant on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz "completely out of service".

It was not clear when the reported strike on the desalination plant had taken place, but Iran has vowed throughout the month-old conflict to match

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

## Noab seeks tax relief on newsprint

### Warns rising costs threatening industry survival

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newspaper owners yesterday urged the government to scrap import duty, advance income tax (AIT), and value-added tax (VAT) on newsprint in the national budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year, warning that mounting burdens are threatening the industry's survival.

The Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) raised the issue with NBR Chairman Md Abdur Rahman Khan at a pre-budget meeting with stakeholders at the revenue board's headquarters in Dhaka.

Newsprint, the primary raw material for newspapers, is currently subject to a 3 percent import duty, 15 percent VAT, 5 percent AIT, and around 7.5 percent in other charges, according to Noab.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Mothers tend to children infected with measles at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday. The hospital has opened a separate ward for measles patients amid an outbreak that has claimed the lives of at least 44 children so far.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

## Bangladesh highly exposed to Hormuz squeeze

### European think-tank says all crude, 71% LNG imports of the country depend on the strait

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh is among the countries most vulnerable to disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, with virtually all of its crude oil imports and a large share of LNG supplies dependent on the strategic chokepoint, according to a new global report.

The study by European energy think-tank E3G finds that 100 percent of Bangladesh's crude imports and about 71 percent of its LNG supplies rely on routes passing through the Strait of Hormuz, placing the country at the highest level of exposure alongside Pakistan.

The warning comes amid escalating conflict in the Middle East, where tensions involving the US, Israel and Iran have already disrupted shipping routes and triggered sharp increases in global energy prices.

The report identifies Bangladesh as one of the "most vulnerable" import-dependent economies, citing its heavy reliance on seaborne fossil fuels and limited capacity to absorb price shocks.

Only Pakistan is listed on top of Bangladesh: as much as 100 percent of the country's crude and 89 percent of LNG come through the chokepoint.

"South Asia [Pakistan and Bangladesh] is highly exposed because it relies on Gulf LNG via the Strait of Hormuz with few alternatives and thin buffers," the report

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7



# YOU WANT AN EMPTY DHAKA, but can it survive without people?

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

"Go back to where you came from, leave us alone," I bet that line made you angry. It's one of those lines you hear from certain elitists across the world, and, ironically, even in Dhaka.

During Eid or other long holidays, most people leave the metropolitan city to return to their hometowns or villages to spend the occasion with their loved ones. The numbers are staggering, and as a result, this leaves Dhaka practically empty.

This is where the elitists chime in, riding their high horse and sneering at people who return home. They say provocative things that get under your skin, such as: "why can't we have Dhaka like this all the time?" and "Dhaka is so much better without the invaders." Then it escalates – from bad to worse, one sentence at a time.

They go on to say offensive things like: "Go back to your village, leave Dhaka alone. Dhaka is dying because of you."

I've heard different versions of these comments here and there, and they are heard more often during long holidays. It's amusing when people go down this route, because it is not only funny but also highly hypocritical. For one thing, these are the same people who condemn others for saying things like "Go back to your country". Such comments, and the thinking behind



them, are racist and hostile in every sense and context. But for these people, that morality applies only when others say it; when they say it, it's fine (It's not!). The irony remains because those who say 'do not come into Dhaka' had to come to Dhaka someday, right? Many of them have been living in Dhaka for one or two generations –

maybe three at most. It is rare to find people who are what younger people would call "OG Dhakaiyans".

Also, when people say go back where you came from, it makes me wonder: how far back, and back to where, should I go? As far back as the primordial ages, when everything was essentially a protein stew in water? People who

are overzealously protective of Dhaka – were they still living in these "Dhaka lands" back then, when only single-celled organisms existed?

Given the long holiday, surely you have got a taste of what Dhaka would look like without all these "outsiders" over the past few days. These people, dismissively labelled "outsiders", are the ones who built Dhaka. Because of them, Dhaka is what it is today: a metropolitan city. And it's not like Dhaka nursed them because Dhaka loved them. Everyone knows Dhaka is probably the most unforgiving city in the country. Whoever stays in Dhaka does so because they fight every day, and Dhaka deems them worthy.

Without these "outsiders", Dhaka would be a ghost town – like it seemed during the Eid holidays. Many of the shops were closed, the city barely functioned, and whatever you needed had to wait because the people who run this city were on vacation.

Civilisation builds on collaboration. People from different places, knowledge, faith, and communities come together to build something greater. They might be "strangers" in the beginning, but once you work together, there are no more "outsiders". So, next time you think about sneering at the "outsiders", consider the fact that Dhaka needs them just as much as they need Dhaka. It is a symbiotic relationship.

## Fuel prices hold steady for April

FROM PAGE 1

With prices climbing, the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) is likely to incur losses. Audit data show that over the last decade, BPC incurred losses in just one fiscal year – Tk 2,705 crore in FY22 – when domestic prices were kept below import costs as the Russia-Ukraine war drove up global oil prices.

Although the subsidy-backed pricing comes with trade-offs, the government has chosen this time to bridge the gap through the state exchequer, according to officials involved in the proceedings.

While the latest decision offers short-term relief to consumers and businesses, it risks straining public finances and complicating future price adjustments, especially if global volatility persists, the officials added.

They added that the move was driven by two priorities: providing relief to the public and curbing hoarding, which the government views as a major factor behind the current shortages at filling stations.

As of yesterday noon, district administrations seized 87,700 litres of illegally hoarded fuel in nationwide drives over the previous 24 hours. And over the month of March, authorities recovered 2.96 lakh litres of hoarded fuel during 3,559 drives and filed 1,244 cases across the country, Energy Division spokesperson Monir Hossain Chowdhury said at a Secretariat briefing yesterday.

He noted that courts fined Tk 84.51 lakh and sentenced 19 people during the month-long drive.

According to the briefing, 2,284 government

officials have been appointed as "tag officers" to monitor filling stations nationwide.

The government has, meanwhile, maintained that there is no supply shortage.

As of yesterday, stocks stood at 1,28,939 tonnes of diesel, 7,940 tonnes of octane, 11,431 tonnes of petrol, and 44,609 tonnes of jet fuel, with regular consignments on the way.

The ministry spokesperson also mentioned that there is a plan to roll out the "fuel pass" system this month.

The system would operate through a digital platform recording vehicle registration details, purchase time, and fuel quantities, allowing authorities to monitor distribution more closely.

"We are already developing an app. We hope to launch it on a trial basis in one or two locations within a week," he said.

Monir added that district administrations have been informed, and in some areas they have already begun implementing the system manually on their own initiative.

"It is not easy to implement. Bringing so many people under a single system at once is challenging. So we plan to initially target specific categories of vehicles and move to an effective stage within a week," he said.

The Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission said yesterday that it will announce the prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tomorrow at a press conference.

The prices are set in line with Saudi CP benchmarks each month.

## JS heats up with debate over reform council

FROM PAGE 1

the oath format for members defined, and the individual responsible for administering it clearly identified.

He further argued that by administering oaths to members of the Constitution Reform Council, the chief election commissioner had violated the constitution. "I could have asked the CEC who authorised him to issue such oath forms, but since the CEC is not present in parliament, that question cannot be raised."

The order stated that constitutional reforms must be completed within 180 days.

Salahuddin asked: "Where, then, is the supremacy of parliament and the people?" About the 70 percent "yes" vote, he said the referendum was meant only to test support for the July charter. He criticised the referendum format, saying that only one answer was given to four questions, calling the implementation order "a document of national fraud".

He stressed that no parliament can be bound or stripped of its jurisdiction by a previous parliament, and no presidential order can undermine parliamentary

sovereignty. "Under article 93 of the constitution, even ordinances cannot alter constitutional provisions. Therefore, the July charter implementation order is illegal."

The home minister said there was confusion over whether the BNP opposed reforms or the July charter. "In fact, every word of the charter signed is embraced by the BNP," he added, pointing out that he himself had proposed the referendum in the National Consensus Commission, and that the charter explicitly allows dissent notes, meaning a party can act on its manifesto if it receives a mandate.

He then affirmed that they are committed to implementing the July charter. "The people endorsed the BNP's manifesto with a 51 percent mandate, and the BNP wants to bring democratic constitutional amendments through discussions involving both ruling and opposition parties."

Proposing the special parliamentary committee on behalf of the Leader of the House Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, he said, "In that committee, we should all sit together, hold discussions, and through consensus bring forward a

constitution amendment bill that reflects the people's aspirations in this great national parliament, and adopt it on the basis of agreement."

Later, Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman also made a similar proposal.

In response, Opposition Leader Shafiqur Rahman said the discussion was about the Constitution Reform Council and convening its session, and proposed a separate special committee to convene the council.

"If you consider it appropriate after this discussion, you may form the special committee. But our appeal is that the committee should have equal numbers of members from both sides. That way, we can present our views properly."

"If the committee is formed on the basis of majority alone, then the same kind of debate we see here will continue there as well. In that case, nothing new will come out – it will be the same old story. We have expressed our intent. Now the decision rests with you."

He added, "We sincerely call upon the ruling party – since the people have accepted the referendum, if we also accept it, we will be honoring the people,

and this parliament will be honored. Let the people's aspirations be reflected through our collective initiative. If we continue to move in parallel lines – government on one side, opposition on the other – then how can there be a solution? We all understand this."

The Jamaat ameer further said, "The home minister called this order an endless deception. He said that the interim government and the president together did this. The order was issued on November 13 last year. And the vote took place on February 12 this year. Because of their [BNP's] demand, the parliament and the referendum were held on the same day, and the government formally congratulated them. So, the referendum was also their demand."

Also, Shafiqur said that both he and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman sought "yes" vote in the referendum.

"We did not change our position," he said, adding that if the referendum is called unconstitutional, then many past referendums will come into question.

Law Minister Asaduzzaman, in his address, termed the July

charter implementation order both a "colourable legislation" – a law that appears valid but exceeds the legislature's power, often disguising an unconstitutional purpose – and a "fraud on the constitution".

He criticised the opposition's demand for a "50-50" membership split in the proposed committee, terming it unfair as the BNP has 209 MPs while the opposition alliance has 77 MPs.

Jamaat-e-Islami MP Najibur Rahman said that, according to article 152 of the constitution, a president's order is a law. Jamaat's Nurul Islam said, "According to the constitution, elections must be held within 90 days of parliament's dissolution. Was that done? No... The current constitution says elections should be in 2029. How did we hold them in 2026 then? Does that mean parliament, government – everything – is illegal?"

National Citizen Party MP Akhtar Hossain said that the implementation of the July charter and the formation of a Constitution Reform Council are matters of political goodwill on the part of the ruling party.

"Why do they now refuse to accept the verdict

of the referendum? The people voted in favour of implementing the July National Charter. To call that verdict unconstitutional is arrogant and a disgrace to parliament."

NCP MP Hasnat Abdullah pointed out how the constitution is valued only when certain sections suit certain parties. "The fall of Hasina came through blood, sweat, and toil of every anti-fascist party. Popular verdicts never bow their heads to books."

Andaleev Rahman Partha said they are not against the July charter but are raising questions about the process. "We respect the July charter and its spirit. We respect the constitution... At the same time, we must find a way to uplift the spirit of July."

"Many talk about discarding the constitution. Is it because the constitution reminds them of the defeat of 1971? Why should I throw it away? If I dislike it, there are provisions within the constitution itself to amend it. Why discard it entirely?"

To the NCP and July fighters, he said, "You represent Gen-Z. Don't make yourselves a part of the Jamaat generation."

## Govt moves to repatriate illicit funds from 10 territories

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh already has MLATs with India and South Africa.

Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, cautioned that treaties alone are insufficient, because laundered funds are, in his words, "very footloose".

Once launderers learn that Bangladesh has signed an agreement with a particular country, they move the money elsewhere, forcing investigators to begin the chase anew.

"You are chasing a moving target," Zahid said.

Zahid is sceptical about the prospect of recovering much of the funds, with legal obstacles adding to the challenge.

"The possibility [of recovering the funds] is very low," he told The Daily Star

yesterday. He explained that the legal process lies outside Bangladesh's jurisdiction.

"One has to apply the laws of the country where the money entered. First, it must be frozen, then seized, and then transferred by applying the laws of both countries," he said.

Even securing a freeze is only the beginning. Authorities must prove not only that funds left Bangladesh illegally, but also how they were originally earned, since both legitimate and illicit money flows abroad. "That's why I say the process is very long," Zahid said.

The picture is more encouraging where assets have been sunk into physical property, according to him.

Cases involving real estate investment, such as that of Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, former land

minister under the Awami League government, offer better prospects.

"You can sell them and move the cash, but you cannot move the house itself." By contrast, he said, "assets like cash in banks, the share market, or bond markets can travel very easily."

Additionally, the forensic work required to trace funds is formidable. "One has to identify who took the money, through which route, what form it is in now, and where it is invested," Zahid said. "It requires capacity and involves costs, and after spending for it, the return you might get is not certain."

To sharpen its asset recovery efforts, the BFIU has established a dedicated Stolen Asset Recovery Division.

The unit has received

technical assistance and training from international bodies, including the US Department of Justice, the International Anti-Corruption Centre, the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative and the International Centre for Asset Recovery.

Bangladeshi courts have ordered the attachment of immovable properties worth Tk 8,900 crore and the freezing of movable assets worth Tk 4,400 crore held overseas – a combined total of Tk 13,200 crore.

To enforce those orders, 23 mutual legal assistance requests have been dispatched to relevant jurisdictions, with another 21 in preparation.

According to the White Paper Drafting Committee established by the interim government, illicit financial

outflows from Bangladesh between 2009 and 2023 totalled an estimated \$234 billion, an average of \$16 billion a year.

An inter-agency task force, comprising 11 members from across the government and chaired by the governor of Bangladesh Bank, was formed in September 2024 to coordinate recovery efforts and prevent future outflows.

Data from Washington-based think tank Global Financial Integrity (GFI) underscores the severity of the problem. In a report published on March 27, the organisation estimated that Bangladesh lost approximately \$68 billion to illicit financial outflows between 2013 and 2022 – about \$6.8 billion a year.

Zahid noted the sharp deterioration. Between

2003 and 2012, the figure was \$1.3 billion. "It has increased sixfold," he said.

Of the total, around \$32.8 billion flowed to advanced economies, according to the report.

GFI's analysis, covering 24 developing Asian economies, placed Bangladesh among the 10 worst-affected countries in the region.

The dominant mechanism, Zahid said, was trade misinvoicing: under-invoicing in export and over-invoicing in import.

"For those matters, the roles of the Financial Intelligence Unit and the NBR [National Board of Revenue] are the most significant," he said. "They must take on this role and increase surveillance." Between

## Bangladesh highly exposed to Hormuz squeeze

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh, Japan, Thailand, South Korea, Singapore, India, China and the EU depend most on the Strait, with their dependency ranging from 95 percent to 7 percent respectively.

In LNG segment, the most dependent countries are Pakistan and Bangladesh (89 and 71 percent respectively). India imports 53 percent of its LNG through the strait. The other named countries depend between 6-25 percent on that single strait, which is 55 kilometre wide at its narrowest point.

With the Hormuz, two-thirds of global seaborne oil and gas supplies depend on a small number of chokepoints including the Strait of Malacca, Suez Canal and Panama Canal.

Global energy markets can appear stable until such chokepoints are disrupted, at which point vulnerabilities become immediately visible through price spikes and supply constraints, the report said.

Bangladesh and Pakistan have previously experienced such shocks, such as the 2022 global gas crisis when rising prices forced them out of the LNG spot market.

Despite expectations of ample global supply in the coming years, the report cautions that structural dependence on a handful of maritime routes leaves import-reliant economies exposed to recurring volatility.

Analysts warn that without diversifying supply routes and expanding domestic refining capacity, the country will remain exposed to recurring crises driven by geopolitical tensions far beyond its borders.

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## AL added 1 lakh 'fake freedom fighters' to list

Liberation War affairs minister tells JS

STAR REPORT

Liberation War Affairs Minister Ahmed Azam Khan told the parliament yesterday that nearly one lakh people, who were not freedom fighters, were included in the official list of freedom fighters during Awami League's tenure.

He said the government would remove those names and add the names of genuine freedom fighters.

Responding to a question from BNP MP Abul Kalam Azad Siddiqui, the minister said the government is committed to ensuring proper recognition for genuine freedom fighters and excluding non-freedom fighters from all benefits.

He said many freedom

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Twenty sets of DEMU trains lie idle in the capital's Kamalapur area after major technical faults rendered them inoperable. These trains, imported from China in 2013 under a government initiative at a cost of around Tk 600 crore, travelled almost all over the country. Expected to run for at least 35 years, the trains became defunct within seven years due to poor maintenance and high repair costs and are now set to be scrapped. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

## March marked by rise in accidents and violence

MSF report flags worsening human rights situation

### AT A GLANCE

- 116 killed, 460 injured in Eid travel accidents
- 14 killed, 390 injured in political violence
- 48 rape cases reported
- 19 killed, 31 injured in mob violence
- 2 deaths in custody, 11 in prisons
- 10 incidents of attacks on religious minorities

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A surge in accidents during Eid journey, alongside a sharp rise in political violence and attacks on women and children, marked a significant deterioration in Bangladesh's human rights situation in March, according to a report released by Manabdhikar Sangskriti Foundation (MSF) yesterday.

The report said at least 116 people – including 30 women, 62 men, and 24 children – were killed and 460

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## DNCC moves to address Mirpur waterlogging

Launches drainage dev work

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday inaugurated around 4km of road and drainage development work from Mirpur-10 to Taltola to address the area's long-standing waterlogging problem.

The work is being carried out under the "Improvement of Damaged Road Infrastructure in DNCC Zones 2 and 4 and Service Packages in Zone 5 (IDRISP)" project.

The inauguration took place yesterday morning at Mirpur-10 Falpatti, where DNCC Administrator Shafiqul Islam Khan attended as chief guest.

Speaking at the event, he said the construction of the road, along with drains and sewerage on both sides, would significantly reduce waterlogging in the area.

"The project is scheduled for completion by October 31, 2026. If no major natural disasters occur, the work will be completed within the stipulated timeframe," he said.

Shafiqul also expressed his commitment to working with local residents to keep footpaths free from encroachment.

He urged residents not to occupy footpaths or set up shops after the development work is completed.

"You must cooperate with us in keeping the footpaths free from encroachment. Locally, you must also help ensure this," he said.

He added that special emphasis has been placed on planning to prevent repeated excavation of roads and wastage of public funds, as seen in the past. The project is being implemented with regular monitoring.



## 33 waterlogging hotspots in Dhaka South

DSCC starts cleaning drive ahead of monsoon



Cleaning work on four box culverts in the capital began today. Although the scheduled timeframe is five months, special instructions have been given to complete waste removal and ensure water flow within one month, considering the monsoon is ahead.

ABDUS SALAM, DSCC Administrator

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has identified 33 waterlogging hotspots within the areas under its jurisdiction and launched a month-long special cleaning drive to mitigate waterlogging ahead of the monsoon.

DSCC Administrator Md Abdus Salam yesterday inaugurated the programme through cleaning up a DSCC box culvert in the capital's Segunbagicha.

"To relieve residents from sufferings caused by waterlogging during monsoon, DSCC has already taken multifaceted initiatives, including cleaning canals and box culverts," Abdus Salam said.

"As part of short-term planning, cleaning work on four box culverts in the capital began today. Although the scheduled timeframe is five months, special instructions have been given to complete waste removal

and ensure water flow within one month, considering the monsoon is ahead," he said.

The administrator also informed that DSCC had conducted a crash programme over the past month for mosquito control and cleanliness.

He noted that Dhaka currently has only three drainage outlets – Kamalapur (TT Para), Dholai Khal, and Hatirjheel – which serve approximately 109 square kilometres and are insufficient for the city's needs.

"We are planning to build two additional outlets, approved by the prime minister – one for the New Market-Dhanmondi area and another for Old Dhaka at Sowari Ghat. We have also identified 33 critical waterlogging spots and are working to improve drainage in those areas," he added.

Mentioning that there are 24 canals and four box culverts within DSCC areas, Abdus Salam said, "We aim

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## CRACKDOWN AT SHAPLA

### ICT-1 orders to send ex-DIG Abdul Jalil to jail

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday sent former deputy inspector general (DIG) of police Abdul Jalil Mondal to jail in a case filed over alleged crimes against humanity during the 2013 crackdown of Hefazat-e-Islam's rally at Shapla Chattar in Motijheel.

The tribunal passed the order after Jalil was produced before it.

According to the prosecution, Jalil, then an additional commissioner of DMP, is accused in a case over the killing, torture, and other alleged crimes against leaders and activists of Hefazat-e-Islam during the operation on May 5-6, 2013. The case also names several high-profile individuals, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Mentioning that an arrest warrant had been issued against Jalil on May 14 last year, prosecutor Abdus Sattar sought him to be placed in custody after he was produced before the tribunal. The tribunal accepted the plea and ordered his imprisonment.

Earlier, Jalil was arrested by the Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police on Monday evening from the capital's Sabujbagh area.

Chief Prosecutor Md Aminul Islam described Jalil as a key architect of the alleged incidents.

He also said the prosecution is trying to submit its investigation report in the case before the next scheduled date on April 5.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

### FUEL CRISIS

## Public sufferings worsen nationwide

Govt continues drive against hoarders

### STAR REPORT

Public sufferings caused by the nationwide fuel crisis have intensified, with many desperately trying to get fuel cards from the district and upazila administrations.

Meanwhile, the government has continued its drive against fuel hoarders in several districts.

In Narayanganj, a mobile court led by the district administration seized around 9,100 litres of fuel near the Meghna Petroleum Ltd depot in Siddhirganj and jailed one person named Md Sifat for two months last evening.

The court conducted by Executive Magistrate Rashed Khan also fined him Tk 6,000.

In Sirajganj, motorcyclists thronged the Deputy Commissioner's Office yesterday morning, demanding fuel cards for purchasing petrol and octane, prompting authorities to extend the issuance deadline till April 4.

A directive earlier issued on Monday by DC Md Aminul Islam said no vehicle would be allowed to purchase fuel without a card from today.

Around 3,000 people from nine upazilas and the municipality have received their cards till yesterday afternoon.

DC Aminul said, "Many motorcyclists refuel frequently, creating artificial pressure on the supply. With these cards, we are issuing a 15-day fuel allotment based on users' needs."

Cardholders will need to renew their allotment at the DC office every 15 days.

To obtain a fuel card, applicants must submit photocopies of their NID card, vehicle registration papers, valid driving licence, fitness certificate, tax token, a passport-sized photograph, and professional documents to justify fuel needs.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Firefighters extinguish a blaze triggered by a gas cylinder explosion at a restaurant on Nasirullah Road in the capital's Hatirpool area around 2:30pm yesterday. No casualties were reported.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

## Nine brokers sued over deaths of 12 youths

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The deaths of at least 12 youths from Sunamganj on the Mediterranean route have prompted two cases against nine alleged human traffickers, as families accuse brokers of luring victims with false promises of safe passage to Europe via Libya.

Police said the cases were filed with Derai and Jagannathpur police stations, naming local and overseas-based suspects believed to be part of trafficking networks.

In Derai, Saliqur Rahman, one of the victim's father, filed a case naming four accused – Mujibur Miah of Tarapasha, Italy-based Saleh Ahmed of Jagdal, Sayek Ahmed of Jagannathpur upazila, and Jashim Miah, a Libya-based man from Chhatak upazila – along with several unidentified suspects.

In Jagannathpur, Habibur Rahman, father of the deceased Aminur Rahman, filed another case against five, accusing Libya-based Jashim Miah, Azizul Islam of Ishgaon village, and three others identified as Bilal, Dulal and Enam.

Among the victims was Sajidur Rahman, a madrasa teacher from Derai upazila, who allegedly set out for Greece via Libya after being persuaded by a local broker.

His family said they agreed to pay Tk 12 lakh on assurances of a safe journey. Instead, he reportedly left Libya on March 21 in a small boat lacking basic navigation tools and supplies. After drifting for six days, he died of dehydration, and fellow passengers later disposed of his body at sea.

"I trusted the broker because of his influence in the village. He assured me my son would travel safely," said Sajidur's father, Abdul Gani.

Locals alleged that the accused are part of a wider network sending migrants to Europe via Libya. Several suspects have gone into hiding following the deaths.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

AJMRIGANJ OF HABIGANJ

## Bridge lies incomplete as deadline expires

MINTU DESHWARA

The approach roads on both ends of a newly constructed bridge in Ajmiriganj upazila of Habiganj remain incomplete even as the project's deadline has expired.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) initiated the Tk 5.18 crore project to construct the 83-metre bridge over the Kata Ganga river to connect Noagarh village in Ajmiriganj with Adarshabazar in neighbouring Baniachong upazila.

The construction work was awarded to Hasan Enterprise of Brahmanbaria under the Small Scale Rural Infrastructure Development Project (SDRIP). Work began in July 2022, with an initial deadline of June 18, 2025.

However, after the deadline expired with work remaining incomplete, the contractor was granted an additional nine months extension till March 18 this year. Even as the extended deadline expired, key components of the bridge, including approach



roads on both ends, remain unfinished.

As such, local residents have long been facing hassles with their daily commute on the route.

Anamul Haque Milad, a local journalist, said, "The bridge has been a longstanding demand of the local residents. As the project began, we hoped it would mitigate our sufferings during daily commute. However, that has not been the case." "The construction work dragged on for much longer than anticipated and remains incomplete, thereby

mounting our sufferings further," said Junab Ali, a local union parishad member.

On site, the bridge's main structure was seen largely complete, but without the connecting roads, it lies effectively unusable.

Residents alleged that the construction work progressed sluggishly since the beginning due to poor planning and lack of oversight, before remaining halted for more than a year following the political changeover in 2024.

They also alleged that a sub-contractor from Baniachong has been overseeing the work, even

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

KILLING OF TWO BNP MEN

## ICT-2 accepts charges against Hasanat, 3 cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday pressed formal charges against former Awami League lawmaker and chief whip Abul Hasanat Abdullah and three police personnel before International Crimes Tribunal-2, alleging crimes against humanity over the 2015 killing of two activists of pro-BNP organisations in Barishal.

The tribunal took the charges into cognisance and fixed April 15 for the next hearing.

The other accused are AKMEhsanullah, former Barishal superintendent of police, and former assistant sub-inspectors Mahabul Islam and Jasim Uddin of Uzirpur Police Station.

Speaking to reporters after the court proceedings, Chief Prosecutor Aminul Islam said four people, including Abdullah, have been accused in what he described as a "grave crime".

He said the victims – Tipu Hawlader, a Chhatra Dal leader, and Kabir Mollah, a JASAS organiser – had political disputes with Abdullah, who allegedly planned to have them killed in a staged crossfire and instructed the then SP to carry it out.

The victims were first arrested in Dhaka in a fabricated arson case and taken to Barishal where instructions were allegedly given to Agailjhara police to execute them. Some officers initially refused, but others later complied.

They were eventually taken to a location in Agailjhara around 2:00am and "brutally killed", after which police staged a crossfire narrative, he said.

Police themselves later recorded general diary entries on the incident and conducted post-mortems, which confirmed death by gunshot, the prosecutor added.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## 33 waterlogging

FROM PAGE 3

to clean all four culverts within one month, although the full project may take up to five months. We have also procured portable pumps for emergency drainage and repaired existing outlets for immediate use."

As part of canal restoration efforts, projects are ongoing to restore flow and improve the environment of Jirani, Shyampur, Kalunagar, and Manda canals, he added.

Stressing public awareness, Salam said that maintaining a clean city and reducing waterlogging is an equally shared responsibility among the residents and the city corporation.

He urged residents not to dispose of waste in drains or canals and to avoid the use of polythene bags and keep their surroundings clean – especially before monsoon – and to dispel stagnant water to prevent

mosquito breeding and thereby reduce the risks of diseases such as dengue and chikungunya.

Salam further added that once the approximately 2.85-km-long culvert – stretching from Shilpakala Academy to the TT Para pump station – is cleaned, around 10 lakh residents of Segunbagicha, the Secretariat area, Paltan, Motijheel, Nayapaltan, and nearby areas will directly be benefited.

The administrator mentioned that six new portable pumps have been kept ready to quickly remove accumulated water after heavy rainfall. Additionally, two permanent pump stations under the DSCC have been made fully operational.

A consulting firm has been appointed to modernise the drainage master plan received from Dhaka WASA, and long-term work will be carried out based on their recommendations, he added.

## March marked by rise

FROM PAGE 3

injured in road, rail, and waterway accidents during the Eid travel rush between March 17 and 28, underscoring what it termed a "systemic failure" to ensure safe mobility – a fundamental rights issue.

The report also cited data from the Road Safety Foundation showing 274 deaths in 342 road crashes in just 10 days, highlighting the scale of the crisis.

MSF blamed reckless driving, unchecked overtaking, overloading, and weak law enforcement on highways, noting that the continued presence of slow-moving vehicles on major roads has created "a chaotic and dangerous transport environment".

MSF prepared the report through monitoring media reports published in major national dailies, as well as field-level data.

Besides, pointing to a sharp escalation in political violence following the 13th parliamentary election, the

report said 14 people were killed and 390 injured in 56 incidents of violence in March, mostly stemming from internal conflicts and turf battles, particularly within the BNP, as well as some involving the Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Following the election, MSF noted that "the nature of violence has shifted rather than disappeared", continuing to fuel public anxiety.

According to the report, the worsening violence against women and children is the most alarming trend.

It said 48 rape cases were reported in March, up from 33 in February, while attempted rape doubled to 24. Incidents of sexual harassment, murders and suicides involving women and children also increased.

"Almost every indicator shows a rising trend, pointing to a deepening crisis regarding safety," the report noted.

Moreover, two people died in law enforcement custody during the month, while 11 deaths were reported in prison custody, raising concerns over accountability.

Meanwhile, mob violence remained widespread, with 36 incidents leaving 19 dead and 31 injured. Victims were often attacked over allegations of theft, robbery, or personal disputes.

MSF warned that the persistence of mob justice reflects "eroding public trust in formal legal systems".

Attacks on religious minorities also increased, including 10 incidents of idol vandalism or theft and a spike in arson and property destruction, said the report.

Also, the use of the Cyber Security Ordinance continued to grow, with three new cases filed and multiple arrests. At least 30 journalists faced attacks, threats, or legal harassment in March.

MSF cautioned that such legal actions risk curbing freedom of expression.

While no deaths were reported along the Indian

border, fear prevails along the Myanmar border, with 20 Bangladeshi fishermen reportedly detained by the Arakan Army.

The rights group concluded that March saw a clear overall decline in human rights conditions and urged the authorities to take immediate and effective measures to curb political violence, launch a national initiative for the protection of women and children, and strengthen the security of religious and ethnic minorities.

Furthermore, MSF stressed ensuring the accountability of law enforcement agencies and refining digital laws to prevent their misuse against freedom of expression.

## ICT-1 orders to send ex-DIG

FROM PAGE 3

"We expect to complete the investigation very soon and submit formal charges before the tribunal," he added.

The chief prosecutor declined to provide a detailed list of the accused, citing the ongoing investigation. However, he indicated that many individuals would be named in the case, including deposed premier Sheikh Hasina and former police chief Benazir Ahmed.

"No one will be spared, regardless of position, if evidence is found," he added.

Another prosecutor said the tribunal has issued and arrest warrant against 21 people so far in connection with the incident.

The prosecution has already identified a preliminary list of an

estimated 15-20 victims, Aminul said, adding that efforts are on to verify if more individuals were affected.

On May 5-6, 2013, an overnight operation, allegedly through the use of excessive force and unlawful killings, was carried out by law enforcers to disperse Hefazat-e-Islam activists who had gathered at Shapla Chattar in Motijheel, demanding a set of religion-based demands.

Meanwhile, counsels for former Awami League minister Qamrul Islam filed a petition before the tribunal seeking an order to allow him to

avail better treatment in Evercare Hospital as he has developed gastric cancer.

The tribunal fixed today for hearing on the petition and to issue an order.

Chief Prosecutor Aminul said if an accused genuinely requires medical treatment, it should be provided on humanitarian grounds. He, however, noted that during the AL government's tenure, repeated appeals made for the treatment of former premier Khaleda Zia were not granted.

"We do not want to repeat such inhumane practices," he added.

**STATUTORY NOTICE**  
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
Company Matter No. 278 of 2026  
IN THE MATTER OF:  
An application under section 81(2), 81(3) and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.  
AND  
IN THE MATTER OF: Md. Khorshad Alam, Share Holder and Managing Director of A. K. FILAMENTS (BD) LIMITED., having office at Baimail (Near Megher Saha Resort), Konabari, Gazipur. -----Petitioner.  
-Versus-  
The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, 1, Kawran Bazar, TCB Bhaban, Dhaka. -----Respondent.  
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 81(2) read with Section 85(3) and Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for condonation of the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of A. K. FILAMENTS (BD) LIMITED. for the calendar years 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026. The said petition was accepted on 12 March, 2026 by the Honorable Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque of the High Court Division, and following the publication of this notice, the deadline for submitting compliance has been set on or before 23 April 2026. If any person is interested in the said application, he/she may appear on the date of hearing either himself or through his/her Advocate. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed fees.  
Ripon Chandra Bhowmik, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Gloriana, Room No 123 (1st Floor), 16, Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000. Mob: 01747-570627

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**Deep Condolence**  
15 March, 1943-30 March, 2026

With profound grief and deep sorrow, we announce the passing of our Founding Managing Director & CEO **Md. Solaiman Khan Mojlish**, on 30 March, 2026 due to old age complications. Mr. Mojlish joined Jamuna Bank PLC. on 16 January, 2001 as its Founding Managing Director & CEO. Through his visionary leadership, dedication and integrity, the Bank was established on a strong foundation and achieved remarkable growth and stability.

Jamuna Bank family mourns this irreparable loss and extends heartfelt sympathy to his bereaved family, well-wishers and colleagues. We pray to Almighty Allah to grant eternal peace to his departed soul and give strength to his family to bear this profound loss.

**Jamuna Bank**

**PRAYER TIMING**  
APRIL 1  
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-45 6-21 7-45  
JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 5-00 6-24 8-15  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## MIDDLE EAST OPERATIONS

## Italy refuses US aircraft use of Sicily base: source

REUTERS, Rome

Italy last week denied permission for US military aircraft to land at the Sigonella air base in Sicily before heading to the Middle East, sources said yesterday, because Washington had not sought prior authorisation from the government in Rome.

According to the Corriere della Sera daily, which first reported the news, "some US bombers" had been due to land at the base in eastern Sicily before flying on to the Middle East, where the United States is at war with Israel against Iran.

The report did not specify when the aircraft were due to land but said permission was denied because the US had not requested clearance and Italy's military leadership had not been consulted, as required under treaties governing the use of US military installations in the country.

The source confirmed the report to Reuters but did not specify how many aircraft were involved. A second source told Reuters that Italy refused permission on March 27.

"With reference to media reports regarding the use of military bases, the government reiterates that Italy acts in full compliance with existing international agreements and with the policy guidelines set out by the government to parliament," a government statement said.



Drone view shows people gathering at a damaged residential area in Bnei Brak, central Israel, after Iranian missile barrages yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Myanmar junta chief elected vice-president

AFP, Naypyidaw

Myanmar's junta chief Min Aung Hlaing was elected a vice-president by the lower house yesterday, parliament officials said, with the coup leader edging closer to becoming president and maintaining his rule.

"The lower house of elected MPs announces Senior General Min Aung Hlaing as a vice-president," lower house speaker Khin Yi said.

According to a live broadcast, he received 247 of 260 votes. Three vice-presidents are expected to be chosen this week, one of whom will be elected president in a parliament-wide vote.

Min Aung Hlaing has ruled Myanmar since 2021, when he directed a coup that toppled the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi and triggered civil war.

After five years of headline rule, he oversaw heavily restricted elections that criminalised protest or criticism of the vote and returned a walkover win for pro-military parties in late January.

Democracy watchdogs have long warned that the new government will be a proxy of the military, which has ruled Myanmar for the vast majority of its post-independence history.

## How US could try to seize Kharg Island

Analysts say Iran's stance casts doubt on success of Trump's plan

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump has indicated that he may send troops to seize control of Iran's key oil export terminal at Kharg Island in the northern Gulf. So what's behind this, how would it work and what are the risks?

Kharg Island has long been Iran's chief outlet for its oil exports. The island sits offshore with waters deep enough to load product onto tankers known as Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), which can hold around two million barrels. Around 90 percent of Iran's oil exports pass through Kharg.

If the US does decide to invade Kharg Island then it would most likely be a temporary measure intended to put pressure on Iran by cutting off its fuel exports until it relinquished its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz and conceded to



Washington's demands.

Given the resilience and defiance of the Iranian regime it is highly questionable whether this would work. The speaker of Iran's parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, has warned that his country's forces would "rain down fire" on any invading US forces. Iran is believed to have reinforced its defences on the island, including with surface-to-air missile batteries.

Iran has also accused the US of duplicity by proposing peace talks

at the same time as dispatching troops to the region. These forces are made up of nearly 5,000 US Marines and around 2,000 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division.

In theory, the paratroopers could make an airborne assault to seize key positions on this small island. Thousands of soldiers from the US Army's elite 82nd Airborne Division have started arriving in the Middle East, two US officials told Reuters.

Such is the awesome fighting power of these Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) that the US force would almost certainly prevail, but it could come at the expense of a severe number of casualties, say analysts.

The US then has the problem of holding the ground, for an indeterminate period, while subject to bombardment from the Iranian mainland, reports BBC.

## Noab seeks tax relief on newsprint

FROM PAGE 1

With transportation and ancillary costs, the landed cost rises to 130-132 percent.

The association said the cost structure, alongside rising global paper prices and Bangladesh's heavy reliance on imports, has placed the sector under severe financial stress.

"The industry is going through a critical phase. Without immediate fiscal relief, sustaining operations will become increasingly difficult," said Noab President Matiuur Rahman Chowdhury, calling for a full withdrawal of import duty on newsprint.

The association also highlighted the burden of advance and withholding taxes. Under the Income Tax Act 2023, a 5 percent tax deducted at source (TDS) on advertisement revenue and a 5 percent AIT on raw material imports create a combined 10 percent upfront tax burden, even though profit margins are often lower.

As a result, a large portion of these taxes remains unadjusted, locking up funds and creating liquidity pressure for media houses.

"Reducing TDS on advertisement

income and AIT on imports is crucial to ease cash flow pressure," Matiuur said.

Newspaper owners also sought a lower corporate tax rate, arguing that newspapers are taxed like conventional businesses despite serving as a public good. While priority sectors enjoy rates between 10 and 12 percent, newspapers receive no such benefit.

"A reduced corporate tax rate of 10 percent would be justified and timely policy support."

Noab also pointed out inconsistencies in employee income tax rules. While the Income Tax Act 2023 places the burden on individuals, the Newspaper Wage Board requires organisations to bear it. Publishers called for alignment of the two frameworks.

In response, the NBR Chair Abdur Rahman said proposals on AIT, TDS, and VAT would be considered and placed before the finance minister, adding that the government would not increase corporate tax rates.

On the issue of organisations bearing employees' taxes, he said, "We will propose in the next Wage Board to consider the matter." He

noted that such a move could trigger demands for salary hikes.

At the meeting, Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiuur Rahman said, "For the past 15 to 16 years, newspapers have been subjected to repression and have operated under very difficult conditions. Even in the last one and a half to two years, things have not improved. Two newspaper offices were set on fire.

"Speaking for our own paper, it costs a total of 28 taka to produce a single copy. But readership is declining, advertising is falling, and revenue is shrinking. Like all industries, we also seek support and cooperation from the government."

He added, "The ready-made garment industry pays 10 to 12 percent corporate tax, whereas we pay 27.5 percent. It is a reasonable ask to reduce this rate."

Dewan Hanif Mahmud, editor and publisher of the daily Bonik Barta, said that those already within the tax net are being subjected to additional pressure to pay more taxes.

He also urged a review of whether the tax-to-GDP ratio calculations are accurate.



## নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ক) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়: বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় ভাতাদিসহ টাকা-২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আইসিটি (তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি) সেল-এর শূন্য ০২ (দুই)টি সহকারী নেটওয়ার্ক ইঞ্জিনিয়ার পদ পূরণের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকার বিনিময়ে রেজিস্ট্রারের অফিসে প্রাপ্ত্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই এস.এস.সি. ও এইচ.এস.সি./সমমানের পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ/জিপিএ-৫ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০ এবং সিজিপিএ-৪ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.০০ সহ যেকোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স অ্যান্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/তথ্য প্রযুক্তি বিষয়ে ৪ (চার) বছরের স্নাতক ডিগ্রিধারী হতে হবে। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা ও অন্যান্য যোগ্যতার (যদি থাকে) সন্দসমূহ আবেদনের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। প্রার্থীর বয়স সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ (বত্রিশ) বছর হতে হবে। অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে যে কোনো একটি শর্ত শিথিলযোগ্য।

## Key Responsibilities:

1. Assist in managing physical and virtual servers (VMware, Proxmox, KVM). 2. Support Linux/Unix and windows server environments. 3. Configure and troubleshoot routers, switches, firewalls, and wireless access points. 4. Manage IP addressing (IPv4/IPv6), DHCP, DNS and VLAN configurations. 5. Maintain campus-wide Wi-Fi infrastructure and wireless authentication (RADIUS, 802.1X). 6. Support IP-based CCTV systems including cameras, NVRs, and VMS. 7. Monitor network and system performance using monitoring tools. 8. assist with private cloud infrastructure (Open Stack) and containerization. 9. Support automation tools (Ansible, Terraform) and CI/CD pipelines. 10. Implement backup solutions and disaster recovery procedures. 11. Maintain documentation and provide technical support. 12. Follow security best practices and university IT policies.

## Technical Skills:

1. Network protocols (OSPF, BGP, DHCP, DNS, STP). 2. Network hardware (routers, switches, firewalls, access points). 3. Wireless technologies (802.11 standards). 4. Linux/Unix and windows administration. 5. Virtualization and cloud computing fundamentals. 6. Basic scripting (Bash, Python, Powershell). 7. Containerization concepts. 8. cybersecurity principles and common threats. 9. Firewall, VPN, encryption, IDS/OPS and access control. 10. IP camera systems and VMS. 11. Network monitoring and troubleshooting tools.

## Desirable Certifications (Not mandatory):

1. CCNA, CompTIA Network+/Security+/A+/Linux+, RHCSA. 2. AWS/Azure/Google Cloud fundamentals. 3. VMware, Docker/Kubernetes.

খ) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়: বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় ভাতাদিসহ টাকা-২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আইসিটি (তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি) সেল-এর শূন্য ০১ (এক) টি সাইবার সিকিউরিটি অ্যানালিস্ট পদ পূরণের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকার বিনিময়ে রেজিস্ট্রারের অফিসে প্রাপ্ত্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই এস.এস.সি. ও এইচ.এস.সি./সমমানের পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ/জিপিএ-৫ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০ এবং সিজিপিএ-৪ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.০০ সহ যেকোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স অ্যান্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/সফটওয়্যার ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/তথ্য প্রযুক্তি/সাইবার সিকিউরিটি বিষয়ে ৪ (চার) বছরের স্নাতক ডিগ্রিধারী হতে হবে। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা ও অন্যান্য যোগ্যতার (যদি থাকে) সন্দসমূহ আবেদনের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। প্রার্থীর বয়স সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ (বত্রিশ) বছর হতে হবে। অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে যে কোনো একটি শর্ত শিথিলযোগ্য।

## Key Responsibilities:

1. Monitor and analyze security threats, vulnerabilities and incidents. 2. Implement and manage security tools (SIEM, IDS/IPS, firewalls, antivirus). 3. Conduct security assessments and vulnerability scanning. 4. Respond to security incidents and perform forensic analysis. 5. Monitor network traffic for suspicious activities and anomalies. 6. Implement security policies, procedures and best practices. 7. Configure and manage endpoint protection and access control systems. 8. conduct security awareness training for university staff and students. 9. Perform log analysis and security event correlation. 10. Assist with compliance requirements (ISO 27001, HIPAA, PCI-DSS, etc). 11. Manage user access controls and identity management systems. 12. Document security incidents and maintain security reports.

## Technical Skills:

1. Security fundamentals (CIA triad, threat modeling, risk assessment). 2. Cryptography fundamentals and encryption technologies. 3. Log analysis and forensic investigation techniques. 4. Understanding of compliance and regulatory requirements. 5. Network security (firewalls, VPNs, IDS/IPS, NAC). 6. Security tools (SIEM Platforms, vulnerability scanners, penetration testing tools). 7. Malware analysis and incident response procedures. 8. Security protocols (SSL/TLS, IPsec, SSH, HTTPS). 9. Operating systems security (Windows, Linux hardening). 10. Web application security (OWASP Top 10). 11. Security frameworks (NIST, ISO 27001, CIS Controls). 12. Scripting for Security automation (Python, Bash, PowerShell). 13. Cloud security concepts (AWS, Azure, GCP etc).

## Desirable Certifications (Not mandatory):

1. CompTIA Security+ Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH). 2. Offensive Security Certified Professional (OSCP). 3. AWS/Azure/Google Cloud Security certifications.

রেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং সকল সার্টিফিকেট ও প্রশংসাপত্রের সত্যায়িত প্রতিলিপিসহ ৮ (আট) প্রস্থ দরখাস্ত আগামী ১৯-০৪-২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রারের (২০৩ নং কক্ষে) নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে। চাকরীর প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে দরখাস্ত করতে হবে।

GD-682



## নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়: বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় অন্যান্য ভাতাদিসহ টাঃ- ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- বেতন স্কেলে (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের টেলিভিশন, চলচ্চিত্র ও ফটোগ্রাফি বিভাগে ০১টি শূন্য ডেমনস্ট্রেটর পদ পূরণের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকার বিনিময়ে রেজিস্ট্রারের দপ্তরে প্রাপ্ত্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। প্রার্থীকে এস.এস.সি. ও এইচ.এস.সি./সমমানের ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ/জিপিএ-৫ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০ এবং সিজিপিএ-৪ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.০০ সহ যে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে ব্রডকাস্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/টেলিকমিউনিকেশন/ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং (ইইই)/ইলেকট্রনিক্স অ্যান্ড কমিউনিকেশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ইলেকট্রনিক্স অ্যান্ড টেলিকমিউনিকেশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রিধারী হতে হবে। যেকোন একটি স্বনামধন্য টেলিভিশন চ্যানেলে সম্প্রচার প্রকৌশল বা স্টুডিও ব্যবস্থাপনায় অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া যেতে পারে। একইসাথে অডিওভিজুয়াল প্রোডাকশন নির্মানে প্রশিক্ষণ, দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা অতিরিক্ত যোগ্যতা হিসেবে বিবেচিত হতে পারে। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, প্রশিক্ষণ, অভিজ্ঞতা ও অন্যান্য যোগ্যতার (যদি থাকে) সন্দসমূহ আবেদনের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীর গোপনীয় প্রতিবেদন সম্ভাষণজনক সাপেক্ষে চাকরির অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া যেতে পারে। চাকরির প্রার্থীকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। প্রার্থীর বয়স অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ (বত্রিশ) বছর হতে হবে। অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে যে কোনো একটি শর্ত শিথিলযোগ্য।

রেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং সকল পরীক্ষা পাসের সার্টিফিকেট ও প্রশংসাপত্রের সত্যায়িত প্রতিলিপিসহ ৮ (আট) প্রস্থ দরখাস্ত আগামী ২৩-০৪-২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রারের (২০৩ নং কক্ষে) নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে।

GD-680

## In the crossfire of a distant war

### Economic recovery package must for affected low-income countries

As the US-Israel war with Iran drags into its fifth week, economic hardship for ordinary people across the globe continues to intensify. Despite President Donald Trump's claims of success in "engineering" regime change in Tehran, the United States continues to strike Iranian targets while mobilising additional troops in the region, raising the prospect of a ground invasion and further escalation. In retaliation, Iran has sustained missile and drone attacks on Israel and on US military assets in neighbouring Gulf states. Pro-Iran forces in the region—Hezbollah in Lebanon, several militia groups in Iraq, and the Houthis in Yemen—have also entered the conflict. What began as a war of choice against Iran has now engulfed much of the Middle East.

The disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has driven oil prices sharply upwards over the weeks, with knock-on effects already visible in fuel, fertiliser, and global supply chains. Meanwhile, threats to shipping are now emerging at another critical chokepoint, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea.

The economic consequences of this war are comparable to the oil shock of the 1970s. In October 1973, Arab oil producers imposed an embargo on countries led by the United States over their support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War, causing oil prices to nearly quadruple within months. While current prices have not yet reached that level today, market analysts warn that the scale of global supply disruption is significantly greater. The 1973 embargo reduced global supply by an estimated 5-7 percent, whereas the current crisis is affecting as much as 20 percent of the world's oil flows. Its ripple effects are already being felt across fuel markets, fertiliser production, and supply chains worldwide. Although global dependence on Arab oil has diversified since the 1970s, the region remains a critical source of natural gas, fertilisers, and key petrochemical products.

In Bangladesh, the effects of the ongoing war are already evident in the agricultural sector, where shortages of diesel are disrupting irrigation, and rising costs of fertiliser and transport are squeezing farmers. Export-oriented industries are being forced to scale back production as inventories accumulate. Factory owners are increasingly concerned about potential power shortages, particularly as summer demand rises and gas supply remains constrained. Meanwhile, millions of expatriate workers in Gulf countries face an uncertain future, as a prolonged conflict could trigger widespread lay-offs.

Across Asia, long queues at petrol stations reflect the strain on fuel supplies, with governments struggling to manage the widening gap between supply and demand through rationing and anti-hoarding measures. While no country is immune to the economic fallout of this conflict, the burden falls disproportionately on developing nations and low-income populations.

World leaders, therefore, must urgently recognise the scale of this suffering and act decisively to alleviate it. Ending the war immediately is paramount. Equally important is the formulation of a comprehensive economic recovery package to support countries affected through no fault of their own. The government of Bangladesh, too, should raise its voice in calling for an end to this unjustified war and seek international support to mitigate the severe challenges now confronting its people.

## Rein in political violence now

### Chatradal's alleged attack on film directors must be investigated

We strongly condemn the attack on film directors, allegedly by members of Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Chatradal (JCD), at the Department of Films and Publications' (DFP) office in the capital's Circuit House area on Monday evening. According to a report in the *Prothom Alo*, the directors had gathered at the DFP director general's office to collect their payment for making films and documentaries related to the July uprising. The interim government had approved grants for these, but the funds were not disbursed as promised before the 13th parliamentary election. As the grant cheques were finally being given out on Monday, a DFP official allegedly demanded a "percentage." When the directors refused, the official called in some 40-50 people, along with several JCD members from Habibullah Bahar College, who assaulted the directors in front of the DFP director general. At least seven film directors were injured in the incident, and the DFP officer in question was temporarily suspended.

The incident raises questions not only about the persistent "bribe" culture in accessing government grants, but also about how easily an officer could allegedly call ruling party activists to intimidate and extort. Given past allegations against BNP's grassroots activists, as well as infighting among factions, many anticipated that the situation would only worsen once the party came to power. The BNP leadership apparently pledged to rein in its party activists, but allegations of violence by BNP-linked groups or individuals still surface. The BNP must nip the situation in the bud before its student wing and grassroots activists acquire a tendency to exert their political muscle for undue benefits. This is particularly urgent as the country prepares for local government and city corporation elections which, historically, have seen more violence than national polls. It is crucial that all political parties contain their activists and warn them against wielding political muscle.

We urge the government to investigate the DFP incident and ensure that the attackers are arrested and tried without political influence. In such instances, disciplinary actions from the party are not enough; the police must be empowered to act without facing political reprisal and the legal system should be able to operate without partisan influence. No political activists, whether from the ruling or opposition party, should feel that they are above the law.

# Preserve Supreme Court ordinances for judicial autonomy



Barrister Khan Khalid Adnan is advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, fellow at the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and head of the chamber at Khan Sajjur Rahman and Associates in Dhaka.

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

The parliament's ongoing review of the interim government's 133 ordinances is perhaps the first real test of whether the July uprising has changed only the occupants of power, or the logic of power itself. The special committee reviewing the ordinances will reportedly place its report in parliament on April 2, with any ordinances not enacted within the remainder of the 30-day deadline lapsing automatically. Among the 133 ordinances, there are two that I think should be treated as non-negotiable democratic safeguards: the Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025 and the Supreme Court Judges' Appointment Ordinance, 2025. If the House lets either of these lapse or be compromised, it would not be preserving parliamentary supremacy—it would be restoring executive supremacy over the judiciary. That would be a grave mistake.

This decision cannot be made in a vacuum. The February 12 election came after a mass uprising that, according to the UN Human Rights Office, may have cost as many as 1,400 lives. The uprising was not a revolt against one ruler. It was a revolt against a system that had turned elections into rituals and institutions into extensions of the executive. As we now know, the destruction of the caretaker framework in 2011 did not produce constitutional normalcy, but rather three increasingly disputed elections while collapsing public faith. That is why judicial independence is not some elite legal preoccupation; it sits at the heart of why the old order fell.

The review judgment on the 13th Amendment should have ended any attempt to treat this as ordinary politics. In the full judgment released on March 12, 2026, the Appellate Division used language that should unsettle every MP. It referred to the abolition of the caretaker system as the "judicial murder of democracy." It then went further. At pages 59 and 60, the court accepted the challenge over the discrepancy between the 2011 short order and the later full judgment, and observed that the 15th Amendment, enacted in the gap between the two, effectively signalled, even dictated, the fate of the caretaker system to the judiciary. More damningly, the court said the judiciary appeared to have buckled under legislative pressure. When a Supreme Court says an earlier constitutional judgment may have been bent by politics, the parliament

cannot honestly say that proper judicial reform is not crucial.

Bangladesh has already paid the price of a judiciary seen as vulnerable to power. Former Chief Justice SK Sinha resigned amid intense government backlash over the 16th Amendment verdict and later sought political asylum abroad. In August

an autonomous secretariat, talk of independence remains theatrical. A judge may write a brave order, but if decisions on postings, promotions, discipline, staffing, and budget still remain on executive hands, the system stays compromised. Administrative dependence is political dependence in slower form.

The same logic applies to the Supreme Court Judges' Appointment Ordinance. Bangladesh has spent years pretending that constitutional consultation was enough to ensure fair appointments, while everyone knew informal political filtering remained decisive. The 2025 ordinance at least creates a statutory framework and a council-based process for choosing judges, and appointments have already

ordinance in any form would mean returning to opacity, patronage, and whispered vetting by the executive. That would be reform in reverse.

The argument that the parliament should refuse these ordinances because they were promulgated by an unelected interim government misses the point. The question is not who issued them, but whether the ordinances cure a documented constitutional illness. On that score, both ordinances do. One gives the judiciary an administrative spine; the other begins to shield appointments from naked political capture. Neither is perfect, but both are necessary. BNP now governs with a large mandate earned in the first genuinely competitive election in years. That



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

2024, Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan and five other Appellate Division judges resigned amid protests, leaving only one appellate judge in place. One may disagree with how those exits happened. But no honest observer can deny what they revealed: public confidence in judicial neutrality had been shattered. A judiciary feared by citizens and managed by the government cannot anchor a democracy.

That is why the High Court's landmark ruling on judicial autonomy and the later issuance of the Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance in 2025 matter so much. The court addressed a structural defect that has poisoned judicial independence for decades by restoring Supreme Court authority over the posting, promotion, and disciplining of lower court judges, and by directing the creation of a separate judicial secretariat. Without

been made under it. This is not merely a theoretical reform. Its necessity has already received judicial endorsement. In Writ Petition No. 3936 of 2025, the High Court Division acknowledged defects in how the constitutional appointment scheme has worked in practice, noting concerns about non-merit based appointments and the resulting damage to the judiciary's image. It recognised that the ordinance was introduced to address these shortcomings by limiting political influence, and described it as desirable for the "great interest of the nation," while leaving room for parliamentary refinement (pp. 10-12).

Yes, the law can be improved. The parliament can debate stronger transparency rules, clearer criteria, public disclosure standards, and conflict of interest safeguards. It can question particular design choices. But scrapping or diluting the

gives it authority, but it also imposes restraint.

If the government wants to prove it is not merely the latest beneficiary of Bangladesh's winner-takes-all state, it should pass these two ordinances, improve them if needed, and entrench them as part of a broader constitutional settlement. If it lets them lapse or be compromised, the message will be unmistakable: reform was useful as a slogan in opposition, but inconvenient when in office. Bangladesh knows what happens when courts are bent, intimidated, bypassed, or packed. It knows what follows when electoral legitimacy collapses and judges are treated as instruments, obstacles, or targets. The parliament should therefore preserve these two ordinances—if nothing else, as a debt to the July martyrs, to the voters who reclaimed their franchise, and to the future of constitutional rule.

# Amid an energy crisis, it's time to dim wasteful commercial lighting

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SAMIRA TASNIM, RAFAD ASGAR

The heat is returning to Bangladesh with more intensity. Daytime temperatures are already becoming difficult to tolerate, and for many, fans are no longer enough. As summer approaches, air conditioners will gradually shift from being a luxury to a necessity. In the coming months resemble the extreme summer of 2023, surviving peak hours without cooling—at least for those who can afford additional cooling—may become nearly impossible. But this year, the heat is arriving alongside another growing concern: a deepening global energy crisis, worsened by the US-Israel war on Iran, resulting in soaring fuel prices following Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a key chokepoint handling one-fifth of global oil trade.

Amid rising oil prices and geopolitical tensions, Bangladesh is already feeling the strain. The government is now weighing austerity measures such as extending weekends,

introducing work-from-home, adjusting office hours, and shifting some classes online to reduce energy consumption. A three-month energy-saving plan is reportedly being drafted, with mid- and long-term strategies also under consideration if global uncertainties continue. Alongside this, efforts are underway to protect foreign currency reserves as rising energy import bills threaten to place additional pressure on the economy.

These are necessary and timely measures. Yet amid these plans, one glaring issue remains largely ignored: the surge of excessive electricity uses in commercial spaces for decorative purposes. In recent years, a new design trend has taken hold, which many proudly call the "Pinterest-style" restaurant or cafe. Multiple themed corners, sky-view lighting installations, illuminated walls, neon slogans, and vibrant digital displays create a carefully curated atmosphere meant to attract a photo-loving generation. Creativity in design is welcome. But the energy cost of this visual spectacle is rarely discussed. If Bangladesh is preparing for austerity, why are we still allowing unnecessary energy consumption to flourish in plain sight?

Much of this lighting serves no functional purpose. It does not improve food quality, hygiene, or customer comfort. Its primary role is visual enhancement, an energy-intensive effort to stand out in crowded

commercial spaces. The same pattern is seen in showrooms. Clothing and accessory stores often keep powerful lighting systems running throughout the day and late into the night. Bright exterior displays and oversized illuminated signage compete for attention along already crowded city streets. Reducing this excess alone will not solve Bangladesh's electricity challenges entirely. But ignoring it means overlooking one of the simplest opportunities for demand management.

A more thoughtful balance is needed, and this is where policy can play an important role. Bangladesh could introduce commercial lighting efficiency guidelines for restaurants, shopping malls, and showrooms. These guidelines would not ban decorative lighting but could set reasonable limits on brightness levels, operating hours, and energy consumption during peak summer months. Time-based restrictions on non-essential exterior lighting during peak demand hours could also be considered. At the same time, businesses could be encouraged through tax incentives or recognition programmes to adopt energy-efficient technologies such as smart LED systems, automated timers, and sensor-based controls. An energy-responsible business certification could further recognise commercial spaces that adopt efficient designs and reduce unnecessary lighting during peak periods.

These measures are not anti-business. On the contrary, they encourage a smarter and more sustainable model of commercial design. Customers do not choose a restaurant solely because it is dazzlingly bright. They return because the food is good, the environment is comfortable, and the experience feels welcoming. A calm, cozy atmosphere created through thoughtful interior design and soft lighting often leaves a deeper impression than overwhelming brightness.

Similarly, a brand's value is not dependent on its storefront glowing brightly at night. It is dependent on product quality, customer trust, and a sustainable long-term vision. This conversation should also extend beyond lighting to the way commercial buildings are designed. Many restaurants, cafes, and showrooms rely heavily on artificial lighting even during the day. Yet, thoughtful architectural planning can significantly reduce this dependence. Large windows, skylights, open ventilation, and layouts that allow sunlight to penetrate deeper into interior spaces can reduce electricity use during daylight hours.

Sometimes, responsibility begins with small choices. In a season of increasing heat but decreasing energy supply amid supply chain disruptions, perhaps the brightest idea is not adding more lights but knowing when to turn some of them off.

# When wars far away hit home: Bangladesh must act now



**Barrister Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem (Arman)** is a Member of Parliament for Dhaka 14 and Adviser on Foreign Affairs to the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Shafiqur Rahman.

MIR AHMAD BIN QUASEM

There is a dangerous tendency in Dhaka's policy circles to treat conflicts in distant theatres as someone else's problem. The war involving Iran is the latest test of that complacency—and Bangladesh cannot afford to fail it.

The Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway separating Iran from the Arabian Peninsula, is one of the most consequential chokepoints in the world. Roughly 20 to 30 percent of the world's fertiliser exports pass through it. A significant share of global energy supplies do, too. When conflict threatens that corridor, the consequences do not stay in the Gulf. They travel—through supply chains, shipping lanes, and remittance flows—directly to countries like ours.

Bangladesh's agricultural backbone relies on nitrogen-based fertilisers, most of which are derived from natural gas and traded through Gulf supply routes. When the Russia-Ukraine war disrupted global fertiliser markets in 2022, Bangladeshi farmers felt it acutely, in higher input costs, reduced yields, and a squeeze on rural incomes. A disruption in the Strait of Hormuz would trigger a similar shock, potentially worse. Fertiliser prices are already climbing. If shipping lanes remain under threat, the next planting season could become a crisis.

Meanwhile, higher oil prices do not merely affect fuel pumps. They raise the cost of running irrigation systems, operating cold

storages, and transporting produce from farm to market. Every link in Bangladesh's food supply chain becomes more expensive. The result is predictable: inflation hits the plate of ordinary families the hardest, while the government faces mounting pressure on its subsidy bill at a time of already strained fiscal resources.

Perhaps the most immediate vulnerability is human. Over three million Bangladeshis work across Gulf states, sending home remittance that acts as a lifeline for millions of families and a critical pillar for our foreign exchange reserve. Prolonged instability in the region threatens workers' safety and the economic viability of the communities that depend on them. History shows that when Gulf economies contract, Bangladeshi workers are among the first to bear the burden through reduced wages, job losses, and forced returns.

Bangladesh does not have the luxury to adopt a wait-and-see approach. Our foreign policy establishment must immediately assess exposure across three fronts: fertiliser import dependence and alternative sourcing options; energy import diversification; and diplomatic engagement to protect the interests of our workers abroad.

Here, history offers both inspiration and obligation. Late President Ziaur Rahman was a pioneer in building Bangladesh's diplomatic bridges with the Middle East, cultivating relationships of trust and mutual respect that

opened doors for our workers and traders for decades to follow. That legacy is not merely a matter of pride; it is a living diplomatic asset. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, as his son and political heir, carries both the name and the moral authority that commands genuine warmth across Gulf capitals. A proactive diplomatic initiative from Dhaka at this moment—to signal solidarity with affected partners, safeguard Bangladeshi workers,

and secure supply chain continuity—would be received not as the intervention of a small nation seeking favours, but as the principled engagement of a trusted friend. That is a valuable form of leverage, and it should be used.

This is, however, not a call for Bangladesh to take sides in a geopolitical conflict that is not ours to resolve. It is a call for proactive statecraft—the kind that small and medium

**Over three million Bangladeshis work across Gulf states, sending home remittance that acts as a lifeline for millions of families and a critical pillar for our foreign exchange reserve. Prolonged instability in the region threatens workers' safety and the economic viability of the communities that depend on them. History shows that when Gulf economies contract, Bangladeshi workers are among the first to bear the burden through reduced wages, job losses, and forced returns.**



A map showing the Strait of Hormuz is seen in this illustration taken on March 23, 2026.

VISUAL: REUTERS

economies must practise to shield their citizens from storms they did not create. And in that endeavour, our foreign ministry, commerce ministry, and the Bangladesh Bank all must be working in coordination, not in silos.

The Iranian conflict is a reminder that in a deeply interconnected world, no country is truly insulated from the consequences of war. Food security, energy stability, and the welfare of our diaspora workers are not secondary concerns—they are at the core of national interest. Bangladesh has navigated global shocks before. But this time, navigation requires a firm hand on the wheel. This is the moment for our policymakers to demonstrate that they are watching, thinking, and acting, before the crisis further affects our fields, markets, and migrant households.

The cost of inaction is one we cannot afford.

# Proper budget utilisation is key to reforming the health sector



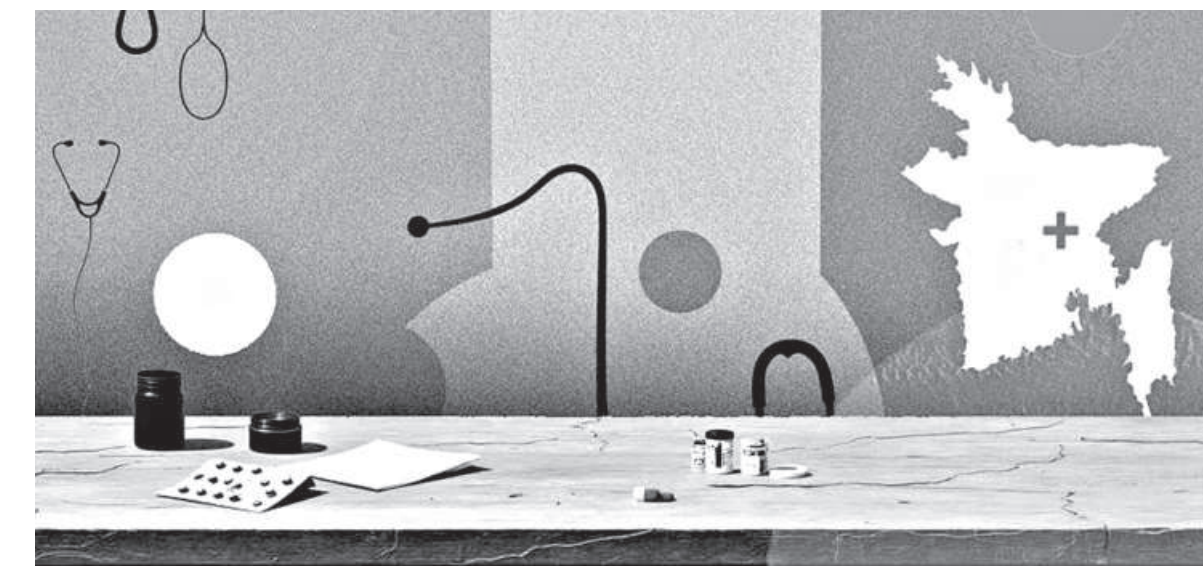
**Dr Syed Abdul Hamid** is professor of health economics at Dhaka University, convener of Wellbeing First Initiative Bangladesh (WFIB), and chief adviser of Universal Research Care Ltd.

SYED ABDUL HAMID

When it comes to our healthcare sector, the BNP government faces the dual challenge of meeting the high public expectations set by its election manifesto while ensuring that the existing system delivers tangible benefits immediately. Quick, practical improvements in service delivery can build trust and create space for deeper, structural reforms, but long-term change requires careful planning. Striking the right balance between urgent action and sustainable transformation is therefore essential.

One of the most serious structural challenges facing the health sector today is the persistent inability to utilise or spend the allocated budget efficiently. The current resource allocation for the health sector is only one-third of what is ideally required for an effective system. This initial shortfall is further compounded by a fragmented budgetary process; during mid-year reviews, approximately one-third of this already inadequate allocation is typically slashed due to a lack of implementation progress. Of the remaining funds, another third often goes unspent, and of the portion that is finally utilised, nearly one-third is lost to systemic waste. Consequently, only about one-third of the total proposed health sector budget is effectively utilised for public service delivery. At every stage, resources are lost in an invisible web of inefficiencies. To break this cycle and justify a larger budget, the government must demonstrate a vastly improved capacity to spend effectively and create clear, productive areas for expenditure.

The root causes of this poor budget utilisation are well known. The management of the health sector remains highly centralised, and government health services operate under general civil service rules. Recruitment, posting, transfer, procurement, and maintenance are all governed by bureaucratic procedures that are ill-suited to the dynamic and time-sensitive nature of hospital operations. Hospitals



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

require rapid decision-making daily, yet they are constrained by rigid rules that slow down or prevent timely action. As a result, due to the shortage of necessary manpower and equipment, hospitals are often forced to provide services with half or even less preparation.

Hospital services also depend heavily on several other government agencies, including the Essential Drugs Company Limited, the Directorate of Health Engineering, the Public Works Department, the Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD), the National Electro-Medical Equipment Maintenance Workshop and Training Center, and the Transport and Equipment Maintenance Organisation (TEMO). The inefficiencies, delays, and limitations of these institutions affect the entire health sector. Moreover, the existing Public Procurement Act (PPA) and its rules are not tailored to the specialised requirements of healthcare. Without a clear understanding of this complex ecosystem and targeted reforms, simply increasing the health budget will not resolve the underlying crisis.

To make the healthcare system more effective in the short term,

the government must urgently enhance its capacity to utilise allocated funds. As pledged in the election manifesto, the process of raising health sector allocation to five percent of GDP should begin immediately. Five percent of GDP currently equates to approximately Tk 300,000 crore—more than 40 percent of the national budget for

operational flexibility.

The fragile state of the national economy, compounded by global uncertainties—particularly the ongoing conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States—poses serious challenges. Any prolongation or escalation of the conflict could severely damage the economy. With government revenue under pressure

and expenditure demands rising, securing additional resources for health will not be easy. In this context, the Ministry of Health must prioritise the maximum and most effective utilisation of whatever is allocated.

While comprehensive administrative reforms and decentralisation are ultimately necessary, several practical short-term measures can deliver quick improvements. One such step is the urgent establishment of a dedicated help desk within the Directorate General of Health Services, staffed with procurement specialists to provide expert advice and technical assistance to hospital procurement committees, thereby speeding up processes and reducing wastage.

Equally important is the need to strengthen the capacity of supporting institutions. To enhance transparency and accelerate their performance, a specialised monitoring cell should be established under an additional secretary of the health ministry.

Furthermore, to translate the commitments of the election manifesto and the recommendations of the Health Reform Commission into reality, a high-level implementation

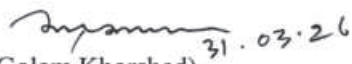
cell should be formed under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). This cell, comprising relevant experts, can drive key initiatives including the launch of integrated primary healthcare services, the establishment of a national health commission, and a national health fund. It can also move to relax or exempt the health sector from rigid Public Financial Management rules, initiate the development of an integrated digital platform for unique health IDs, electronic medical records, and Shareable Health Records (SHR), and introduce a ceiling-based Family Health Card to cover outpatient, inpatient, critical illness, and emergency accident-related care.

Major reforms of this scale cannot be effectively led by the health ministry alone. Strong leadership and coordination from the PMO will therefore be indispensable. The time has come for the government to pursue a balanced strategy that gives equal importance to immediate, visible improvements and sustainable, long-term transformation. If it can advance steadily on both fronts, the health sector can achieve an effective and lasting change that truly serves the people of Bangladesh.

**Trading Corporation Of Bangladesh.**  
TCB Bhaban, 1 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.  
[www.tcb.gov.bd](http://www.tcb.gov.bd)

**Notice**  
**Tender preparation including registration in e-GP system**

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) is conducting local/international procurement following the government procurement rules to sell essential commodities (edible oil, sugar, lentils, dates, chickpeas, potatoes and onions) among 10 million low-income TCB Card holders according to the direction of the Ministry of Commerce. Presently, the procurement process is being conducted through manual system. According to Public Procurement Rules, 2025 all government procurements have to be completed through e-GP system. Therefore, TCB will conduct local and international procurement activities through e-GP system from July 2026. In that context, all local and international business stakeholders/traders/suppliers who are interested to supply goods to TCB are requested to register in e-GP system ([www.bppa.gov.bd](http://www.bppa.gov.bd)) and prepare for future tenders (from financial year 2026-2027).

  
(Md. Golam Khorshed) 31.03.26  
Deputy secretary  
Additional Director (Commercial)  
Phone- 55014272  
E-mail- [tcbimp@tcb.gov.bd](mailto:tcbimp@tcb.gov.bd)

GD-679

# Open to any medium, any challenge: Rizvi

SHARMIN JOYA

Born in Dhaka's Mirpur and raised in Kushtia—the land of Lalon Shah—actor Rizvi Rizu's journey into the spotlight is anything but conventional. Long before stepping in front of the camera, he quietly nurtured a passion for music, a chapter of his life that remains largely unknown to many.

Currently, the actor is drawing fresh attention for his striking performance as Tonmoy in Raihan Rafi's *Pressure Cooker*, once again proving his ability to leave a lasting impression on audiences. Earlier, he won hearts for his performance in *Hawa, Feu, Dui Shaw*, and *Priyo Maloti*.

Beginning with *Pressure Cooker*, he said, "This is one character that feels like a blessing to me, and I am grateful to Rafi for giving me this role," Rizvi said, reflecting with quiet gratitude. The response to his latest performance has been overwhelming—something he deeply values. For him, this role holds a special place, one that will remain close to his heart for many reasons.

"Even after I completed the role, parts of the character stayed with me—the calmness, the silence, the emotional depth, and the void



PHOTO: ZIAUDDIN SHIPLU

demands. People often don't recognise me in person. When I go to theatres, I see audiences surrounding my co-artists for selfies or conversations, while I go unnoticed," he said with a smile. "Only a few people recognise me and come forward with appreciation. But to be honest, that doesn't matter much. What truly matters is when audiences connect with my performance—when they believe in the character I've brought to life. That, to me, is the greatest achievement."

He took him back to where it all began—not as an actor, but as a musician.

"It was around 2011. I was part of a band as the lead vocalist. Arafat Mohsin Nidhi was on drums, Shovon-Mejbaur Rahman Sumon's brother—played guitar, and Pritu was our bassist," he recalled. Those early days, however, were far from easy. Financial struggles often made it difficult to arrange money even for practice sessions.

At one point, he returned to Kushtia—a place he still associates with a deep sense of peace. "I went back for a while. Kushtia has always given me a kind of calm I can't explain," he said.

He later returned to Dhaka and joined a production house, a move that would quietly reshape his path. Through that, he was introduced to Mejbaur Rahman Sumon. "He

gave me my first break as Parkes in *Hawa*—a role that stayed with me for a long time," he added.

Reflecting on his journey, Rizvi emphasised how unplanned it all was. "I was never formally trained in music, nor did I come from theatre or have any acting background. I consider it a God-gifted ability," he said. "My parents used to sing, though not professionally, and two of my uncles were trained in Nazrul Sangeet. So perhaps it was always there—I just nurtured it over time. And of course, my environment played a big role."

Pulled by his love for art, Rizvi made a difficult but defining choice—he left behind a stable corporate job to follow his passion. "I knew it wouldn't be easy to survive just by acting, but I still took that risk," he said. "I don't think I've reached a place where people recognise me instantly, but that's okay—I want to keep doing my craft with honesty."

What keeps him going is the work itself. He isn't chasing fame as much as he is searching for meaningful roles—ones that challenge him and allow him to immerse fully.

"I'm open to any medium, as long as the character excites me and gives me space to explore," he shared. "Because for me, it's never just about acting—it's about becoming the character and living it."



## Xefar-Pritom's first on-screen pairing to release on Binge

Shihab Shaheen's romantic web film *Tumi Ami Shudhu*, starring singer turned actors Xefar Rahman and Pritom Hasan, finally has a release date. The web film will premiere on Binge this Pohela Boishakh.

The project was announced last year and created strong curiosity. Its release was delayed due to technical issues on the platform.

The director describes *Tumi Ami Shudhu* as a contemporary love story with a fresh narrative approach. He expressed confidence in the lead actors, citing their previous performances in his works.

Pritom called the collaboration exciting, while Xefar described it as a long-awaited opportunity. Both said the film offers freshness and emotional depth for audiences.

### WHAT'S THE HAPS?



## 'Photo Adda with Sharif Sarker'

An evening of images and insight unfolds as photographer Sharif Sarker reflects on three decades behind the lens, from aviation to street narratives. Hosted by Abir Abdullah, the *adda* invites audiences into a thoughtful exchange on craft, perspective, and the evolving language of photography.

Date: Saturday | April 4, 2026  
Time: 6 pm–8 pm

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi

**"I'm open to any medium, as long as the character excites me and gives me space to explore. Because for me, it's never just about acting—it's about becoming the character and living it."**

evoked by his story. Tonmoy made me wonder if I could be like him. But over time, I realised how much of him already exists in me. I found myself connecting with him in many ways," he shared.

Speaking about the audience's reaction, Rizvi revealed an interesting contrast between on-screen recognition and real-life anonymity. Despite the buzz on social media and praise from senior and acclaimed artistes, he remains grounded.

"Interestingly, after most of my releases, I change my look back to normal, as many of my appearances are quite different and, at times, unconventional—depending on the character's

# NEWS

## Bangladesh trapped

FROM PAGE 12  
the CAB's 13-point demand, calling for full ownership of natural resources, a ban on exports, rapid development of renewable energy, and accountability for "energy crimes".

He suggested installing solar panels in cantonments and wind projects along the coast. He also urged the authorities to dismantle the "VIP culture", citing excessive consumption by influential groups as a key problem.

Drawing parallels between the ongoing global oil crisis and the fallout from the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, he said the new government faces a severe energy challenge a month into its tenure.

Some advisers and special assistants of the interim government acted as corporate lobbyists to secure deals for foreign firms, Anu

Muhammad said, adding that in the contracts that are signed, people from the same side sit on both sides of the table.

He went on to accuse the former US ambassador Peter Haas of lobbying for American firms to secure offshore oil and gas blocks under production-sharing contracts favouring foreign companies.

After taking an early retirement from the US State Department, he became the strategic adviser for the Texas-based oil and natural gas company Excelerate Energy.

Narsingdi-5 lawmaker Md Ashraf Uddin; Farida Akhter, former fisheries and livestock adviser; Ruhin Hossain Prince, former secretary general of the Communist Party of Bangladesh; and Saiful Huq, general secretary of Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh, spoke among others.

## Four more children die

FROM PAGE 12  
Her samples have been sent to the laboratory of the Institute of Public Health in Dhaka to determine if she indeed died from measles, Alam said.

Earlier, six children died at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute and five at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH), with four of the victims hailing from Chapainawabganj.

Although the Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute reported six suspected measles deaths this year, the authorities could confirm three deaths, said Reaz Mubarak, the institute's acting director.

A total of 2,100 patients with suspected measles cases were admitted to the hospital this year as of Sunday, according to officials at the Directorate General of Health Services.

Of them, 676 tested positive, an official said, wishing not to be named. Among the measles patients, 70.9 percent did not receive any vaccination for the infection; around 17 percent took the first dose and 11.2 percent both the doses, he said.

In Shariatpur, 25 samples were collected from different parts of the district after symptoms were identified over the past two weeks and sent to Dhaka for testing.

Of them, 15 were confirmed positive, said Shariatpur Civil Surgeon Rehan Uddin.

Three children have died at the IDH in Dhaka, he said. Those deaths were supposed to be included among the 25 deaths at IDH.

In Patuakhali, 45 patients have been hospitalised in the district in the past month. No deaths have been reported so far, according to the Office of Civil Surgeon Khaledul Rahman.

In Sylhet, a dedicated isolation unit has been opened at Shaheed Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital to manage the influx of patients.

As of yesterday, 16 patients were receiving treatment at the facility, with two in critical condition, said Resident Medical Officer Mizanur Rahman.

In Chandpur, an isolation unit at Chandpur General Hospital has also been opened to handle the growing number of patients.

As of yesterday, 28 children had been admitted for treatment, said Civil Surgeon Nure Alam Din.

In Gazipur, measles cases have also risen, with 15 new infections reported in the district, said Civil Surgeon Mamunur Rahman.

(Our district correspondents from Shariatpur, Sylhet, Gazipur and Patuakhali also contributed to the report)

## US trade deal

FROM PAGE 12  
flexibility during the crisis," Debapriya said.

The eminent economist made the remark in a paper presented at a media briefing organised to share thoughts on the first budget of the new government at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in the capital.

It is now a matter of concern for the government whether economic engagement with economies such as China and Russia will be impeded, he added.

"Now, foreign policy has become linked with the economy. So, we have a geopolitical limitation in front of us."

Debapriya, a distinguished fellow of CPD, said Bangladesh faces three macroeconomic challenges—rising power subsidies, higher energy import bills, and increased dollar requirements to pay foreign suppliers.

Surging prices are projected to cause a \$4.8 billion rise in annual energy costs, which is 1.1 percent of gross domestic product, widening deficits in the country's external accounts, he said.

"Increased dollar demand for fuel will further devalue the taka, while regional instability puts pressure on the primary stabiliser of the balance of payments," he said, adding that the war has put remittance inflows at risk as Gulf countries account for about half of total remittances.

He said the full pass-through of increased energy import costs risks fuelling high inflation, especially food inflation, which will raise poverty, and disparity.

CPD Additional Research Director Towfiqul Islam Khan also spoke at the event.

## Israel passes

FROM PAGE 12  
The measure was promoted by Itamar Ben-Gvir, the far-right national security minister who wore noose-shaped lapel pins in the run-up to the vote.

"This is a day of justice for the murdered, a day of deterrence for enemies," Ben-Gvir said in parliament. "Whoever chooses terror chooses death."

Israel's leading rights groups decried the law as "an act of institutionalized discrimination and racist violence against Palestinians." The Association for Civil Rights in Israel said it filed an appeal against the law with Israel's Supreme Court.

The law is the latest action by Netanyahu's nationalist-religious coalition to raise concern among Israel's Western allies, who have also been critical of settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.

## ICT may probe 1/11 crimes, 'crossfires'

FROM PAGE 12  
"Law enforcement agencies were used, victims were taken to different locations, and staged 'arms recovery' incidents were carried out before they were killed in so-called crossfires. The same narrative was repeatedly presented in each case."

The prosecution has already instructed its investigation agency to compile a nationwide list of such incidents, he added.

He added that once a comprehensive list is prepared, the tribunal would determine which cases warrant adjudication under its mandate.

The chief prosecutor also raised concerns over overlapping investigations and multiple cases

## Govt weighs online classes

FROM PAGE 12  
of the long Eid-ul-Fitr holidays and various movements across the country.

To make up for those losses, the government was also planning to run schools six days a week instead of five for the time being, Ehsanul said.

According to the minister, the prime minister has already given directions on the matter, and the ministry is working accordingly.

Tarique also discussed with Ehsanul ways to reduce traffic congestion in the capital when children go to or leave school, and directed the ministry to explore practical alternatives, the Prime Minister's Additional Press Secretary Atikur Rahman Ruman said.

Atikur said that in some cases a large number of private cars gather in front of schools during opening and closing hours, worsening congestion on nearby streets.

He cited an example in the capital where around 100 cars reportedly crowd in front of a school with just around 150 students, creating severe traffic jams and causing difficulties for students trying to reach the institution.

After the minister's briefing, the education ministry held a meeting with teachers from various schools and colleges in Dhaka, alongside officials from the education boards and the ministry.

filed regarding the atrocities during the 2024 student movement against discrimination. Since August 5, numerous cases have been lodged nationwide—both with police stations and with courts—often naming hundreds of accused in a single case.

"In many cases, 400 to 500 people have been named. We don't believe all of them are guilty. There are both perpetrators and innocent individuals," he said, warning of "pick-and-choose" practices.

Aminul alleged that inconsistencies have been found, including submitting final reports for some, and, in some cases, allowing actual perpetrators to evade justice while innocent people remain in jail.

week, with in-person lessons on the remaining three days.

Under the plan, online classes may be scheduled on alternate days, meaning if a school holds online classes on Saturday, in-person lessons will be given on Sunday.

Sources said teachers would remain present at their institutions while conducting online lessons. Practical classes would continue in person.

They added that the proposal is still at the ministry level. A final decision will be made only after consultation with the prime minister and discussion at the cabinet.

Meanwhile, Cultural Affairs Minister Nitai Roy Chowdhury said yesterday that the government has decided to introduce music education alongside regular academic studies from the primary to secondary levels.

He explained that the initiative would be carried out by the cultural affairs ministry through a cluster-based model, under which music instructors would travel across upazilas to teach at multiple institutions.

Speaking to reporters after attending a programme organised by the US Embassy at Dhaka University, the minister added that the government had already resolved to expand cultural activities in schools across every district and upazila.

Nitai further noted that music competitions, similar to those arranged by the youth and sports ministry, were already being held in educational institutions to encourage cultural engagement among students.

To address the issue, the prosecution has sought details of all cases filed across the country after August 5, 2024. "We have already received copies of around 500 to 700 cases. We expect to have all cases from across the country within a couple of days," he said.

A dedicated team will review the cases to ensure that no offender escapes justice and no innocent suffers, he added.

The chief prosecutor also warned against the misuse of cases for harassment or financial gain. "If we find that anyone has filed false cases to harass others, we will recommend action against them under existing laws," he said, referring to allegations of "case trading".

## 'Iran will be at World Cup'

FROM PAGE 12  
New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15. They are then scheduled to play Belgium in Los Angeles on June 21 and Egypt in Seattle on June 27.

Iran's participation had been thrown into doubt by the war with the US and Israel that broke out on February 28.

The Iranian football federation said earlier this month it was "negotiating" with FIFA to relocate the country's World Cup matches from the United States to Mexico.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum also said that her country is prepared to host Iran's first-round matches if needed.

Infantino initially said that US President Donald Trump had given assurances that the Iranian team would still be welcome.

But Trump then stated that Iran's team should not travel to the tournament "for their own life and safety".

Iran hit back at Trump's comments, saying that "no one can exclude Iran's national team from the World Cup".

On March 19, Infantino said FIFA was committed to making sure the World Cup goes ahead "as scheduled" with "all teams" taking part.

Iran also played a friendly against Nigeria in Turkish town Belek last Friday.

Iran's players wore black armbands and posed with school rucksacks as the national anthem played to remember the victims of a strike on a primary school in Iran on the first day of the Middle East war.

## Bridge lies

FROM PAGE 4  
though Hasan Enterprise was officially tasked with the project.

An LGED source said the contractor has already been paid Tk 4.40 crore — around 84 percent of the total project cost.

Meanwhile, concerns have also been raised over sand extraction near the bridge's site for construction of approach roads. Locals fear this could weaken the structure's stability.

Contacted, Ujjal Ahmed, who is supervising the work, said delays were caused by a shortage of soil. "We are working to complete the remaining work soon," he added.

Attempts to reach the representative of Hasan Enterprise over the phone were unsuccessful.

Md Imam Hossain, upazila LGED engineer in Ajmiriganj, said they have been pressing the contractor to expedite the work, adding that they would look into allegations of sand extraction near the bridge.

## People suffer as wooden bridge over Teka river collapses

MOHSIN MILON, Benapole

Residents of some 25 villages have been suffering immensely with their daily commute since the dilapidated wooden bridge over the Teka river in Jashore collapsed last year.

The bridge is a vital link for communication between Abhaynagar and Monirampur upazilas in Jashore.

Due to prolonged lack of maintenance, the bridge had long been in a vulnerable condition, before it eventually collapsed following persistent rainfall last year.

At present, vehicular movement remains suspended while pedestrians have to cross the bridge at much risk.

Students, elderly people, patients, and traders have been the most affected.

Locals said with the bridge largely unusable now, people are forced to travel an additional 10-12 kilometres using alternative routes.

"People from 25-30 neighbouring villages, as well as those from Keshabpur upazila in Jashore, Dumuria and Paikgachha in Khulna, and parts of Satkhira have been using the Nawapara-Monirampur road via the Teka bridge as the route is comparatively shorter," said Nazrul Islam, a local resident.

Over a hundred female students of Tekarghat Secondary Girls' School in



Monirampur currently risk their lives while crossing the broken structure during their commute, he also said, adding that transporting emergency patients to hospitals and agricultural produce to nearby markets has become extremely difficult.

Construction of a concrete bridge over the Teka river had begun on September 13, 2021, with a budget of Tk 7.57 crore, but legal complications prompted suspension of the project after around 80 percent work was completed.

Shariful Islam of Payra village said the wooden

bridge was vital for around 25,000 to 30,000 local people, and called for its urgent repair.

Joydeb Kumar from Pachakori village in Monirampur said he had to travel nearly 20km to take his ailing wife to the hospital, facing significant delays and hassles.

Md Firoz Ahmed, former chairman of Payra Union Parishad, said the bridge's collapse has disrupted daily life.

Abhaynagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Salauddin Dipu said Tk 3 lakh has been allocated from a development project to repair the wooden bridge and work will begin soon.

## Murder case filed against 261 over Nasirnagar clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A murder case was filed on Monday night in connection with the deaths of three people in a clash over an election dispute and local dominance in Nasirnagar upazila of Brahmanbaria.

Confirming the development, Nasirnagar Police Station Officer in-Charge Md Shahinul Islam said the opposing group is also preparing a counter-case.

The case was lodged around 10:30pm on Monday by Tisha Akter, wife of slain Habibur Rahman, against 261 named and 400-500 unidentified suspects, OC Shahinul said.

Jabed Mia, 22, is the prime accused, while Rahim Talukdar, a local BNP supporter and follower of newly elected MP MA Hanman of Brahmanbaria-1, is among the accused.

According to police and locals, tensions had long persisted between Rahim Talukdar and Kashem Mia, a former ward-level BNP leader, over local dominance in Goalnagar union. The dispute intensified during the recent election.

On March 24, clashes left three dead and at least 100 injured. The deceased were identified as Habibur Rahman, 40, imam of Shimerkandi Jame Mosque; Mahfuzul Mia, 54, of Shimerkandi village; and labourer Akhtar Hossain of Goalnagar.

Locals said Habibur and Mahfuzul were supporters of Kashem Mia, while Akhtar Hossain was aligned with Rahim Talukdar.

## Public sufferings worsen

FROM PAGE 3

In Chuadanga, a trader, Bakhtiar, 50, died after falling ill while waiting in a queue to collect a fuel card in Alamdanga yesterday.

The duty doctor at a nearby clinic declared him having died from a stroke, said Alamdanga UNO Panna Akhter.

In Rangamati, speedboat services on Kaptai Lake remained suspended yesterday due to

fuel shortage.

Md Siddique, a speedboat driver at the town's Fishery Ghat, said a speedboat requires about 35 litres of petrol to cover the 70km journey from Rangamati to Langadu.

"However, the pump provides only 10 litres... So, we have been forced to suspend operation," he said.

In Gazipur, a mobile court led by UNO Tamanna Tasnim fined a

filling station Tk 10,000 for a discrepancy of approximately 2,000 litres in fuel stock at Amraid in Kapasia yesterday.

In Jashore, two Jubo Dal leaders were suspended from the organisation over the allegation of forcibly taking fuel from a filling station and selling it at higher prices.

[Our respective district correspondents contributed to the report.]

## Nine traffickers

FROM PAGE 4

In another case, families accused Saleh Ahmed, an Italy-based migrant from Jagdal village in Derai, of facilitating irregular migration through local contacts.

One victim, Sohanur Rahman, reportedly travelled to Libya without informing his family and later died en route to Greece.

"I last spoke to my son on March 22. Since then, he has gone missing," said his father, Saliqur Rahman.

Another parent, Anwar Hossain, alleged that brokers took up to Tk 13 lakh promising safe passage but failed to deliver.

Superintendent of Police ABM Zakir Hossain said police are trying to arrest the accused and are coordinating with the Criminal Investigation Department's human trafficking unit.

## 1 lakh fake

FROM PAGE 3

fighters had long been deprived, and the ministry aimed to address those injustices.

Jamaat MP GM Nazrul Islam claimed that his name had been dropped from the list after 2006, despite fighting in Sector 9 during the 1971 Liberation War, depriving him of benefits.

The minister said the ministry would review such cases and take necessary action if proper documents are submitted, adding that opposition activists had often faced harassment in the past.

Responding to BNP MP Zainul Abidin Faruk, the minister said that under fascist rule, many freedom fighters had their allowances suspended and certificates withheld, while non-freedom fighters illegally enjoyed benefits. He promised swift action to present accurate figures to the nation.

Answering a question from Noakhali-6 MP Abdul Hannan Masud, the Liberation War affairs minister said that although a July uprising directorate has been established under the ministry, there are no plans to rename the ministry to include it.

## People's Republic of Bangladesh

Metropolitan Senior Special Judge Court, Dhaka.

Present: Mr. Md. Sabbir Faiz  
(Metro Sessions Judge)

Metropolitan Senior Special Judge, Dhaka.

Permission Petition No.194/2026

Order No.- 01, Date: 09-03-2026

Investigation officer Mr. Sumon Kumar Saha, BP no.8717521903, Additional Special Superintendent of Police, Cyber Investigation and Operation Cyber Police Center (CPC), CID, Dhaka submitted a petition under Source Memo-BFIU memo no. BFIU (Analysis)/Intel/2025/0111, date 09.12.2025; Memo no. CI/CPC/search/Orga. Crime/02-2026/464, date 24.02.2026 to freeze assets of accused namely S.M Junayedul Haque and others and 445 Bank accounts information and also related to his interests under section 14(1) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

The petition is taken up for hearing,

Heard learned Additional Public Prosecutor and gone through the petition as well as the records. It is found that an enquiry is undergoing against the aforesaid alleged accused S.M Junayedul Haque and others and 445 Bank accounts and also related to his interests under section 14(1) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

It appears from the record that the alleged offender has acquired huge amount of illegal wealth beyond their known source of income by adopting illegal means and froze those accounts will be laundered or transferred and those can not be possible to be forfeited after trial which will frustrate this case. Hence those accounts need to be frozen.

Considering the facts and circumstances, I am convinced to allow the petition submitted by Investigation officer Mr. Sumon Kumar Saha, BP no.8717521903, Additional Special Superintendent of Police, Cyber Investigation and Operation Cyber Police Center (CPC), CID, Dhaka and accordingly the accounts as mentioned in the petition are hereby frozen until further order as per section 14(1) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

It is hereby further ordered that the copy of this order be issued to the Director, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Motijheel, Dhaka to the effect that while the freezing order is in effect regarding the said accounts, the account holders will not be allowed to withdraw any money. But they will be at liberty to deposit only.

Let this order be published in the Government Official Gazette along with widely circulated one daily Bengali and one daily English newspaper under section 14(3) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012 for information of the citizens at large.

Let this order along with the photocopy of the application be sent to Investigation officer Mr. Sumon Kumar Saha, BP no.8717521903, Additional Special Superintendent of Police, Cyber Investigation and Operation Cyber Police Center (CPC), CID, Dhaka and Publication department, Tejgaon, Dhaka; Director, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Motijheel, Dhaka, and other concerned authorities for necessary action.

Inform all concerned Authorities at once.

Directed & Corrected by me.

(Md. Sabbir Faiz)  
Metro. Senior Spl Judge, Dhaka.  
Memo Number: ৩২২৩(৪)/২৬

(Md. Sabbir Faiz)  
Metro. Senior Special Judge, Dhaka.  
Date: ০৯/৩/২০২৬

## ICT-2 accepts charges

FROM PAGE 4

"The evidence shows the victims were in police custody and were killed there. This places full responsibility on the law enforcers," he said, adding that those responsible must explain the deaths before the tribunal.

He said investigators found sufficient documentary and forensic evidence, including GD

entries and post-mortem reports, indicating custodial killing.

According to the formal charge, Abul Hasnat Abdullah, 82, who was a five-time MP for Barishal-1 and district Awami League president, and co-accused AKM Ehsanullah, then superintendent of police in Barishal, abused state power to target political

opponents.

They allegedly orchestrated the unlawful detention, torture and killing of two unarmed civilians — Tipu and Kabir — who were shot by subordinate police personnel on their instructions, it added.

Two accused are now in custody while two others including Hasnat are on the run.

**পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি**  
**POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC**  
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212 Web: www.powergrid.gov.bd  
সারক নং- ২৭.২১.৬১৫২.৬৪৩.৪৪.৩৩৭.২৬.২০৫ তারিখঃ ৩০/০৩/২০২৬খ্রিঃ

**e-Auction বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের জিএমডি, ময়মনসিংহ দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নবর্ণিত নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি ওয়েব লিংক <https://auction.powergrid.gov.bd>-এ পাওয়া যাবে।

আইডি	কাজের নাম	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	পে-অর্ডার জমা প্রদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
৩১৬	পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি এর গ্রিড সংরক্ষণ বিভাগ ময়মনসিংহ দপ্তরের আওতাধীন কিশোরগঞ্জ ১৩২/৩৩ কেভি গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্রে বিদ্যমান খালি/ অব্যবহৃত/ পরিত্যক্ত/ অকেজো/ ব্যবহার অনুপযোগী মালামাল/আবাসিক ভবনমূহ যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে নিলামে বিক্রয়।	২১/০৪/২০২৬ দুপুর ১২:৩০টা	২১/০৪/২০২৬ বিকাল ০৪:৩০টা	২৩/০৪/২০২৬ দুপুর ১২:০০টা

আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে <https://auction.powergrid.gov.bd> সাইটের মাধ্যমে নিলামে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মাসুদুল হক  
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, জিএমডি, ময়মনসিংহ

**নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়: বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় অন্যান্য ভাতাদিসহ টাঃ- ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র-নির্দেশনা ও পরামর্শদান দফতরের ১টি শূন্য কাউন্সিলর (সেকশন অফিসার সমমান) পদ পূরণের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকার বিনিময়ে রেজিস্ট্রারের দপ্তরে প্রাপ্ত্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। প্রার্থীদের এস.এস.সি ও এইচ.এস.সি/সমমানের পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/ জিপিএ ৫ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫ এবং সিজিপিএ ৪ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.০০ সহ এডুকেশনাল সাইকোলজি / কাউন্সেলিং সাইকোলজি/ ক্রিনিক্যাল সাইকোলজি বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী থাকতে হবে। তবে উল্লেখিত বিষয়ে এম.ফিল/ পি.এইচ.ডি ডিগ্রিধারীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া যেতে পারে। শিক্ষা জীবনে কোনো পরীক্ষায় তৃতীয় বিভাগ/ শ্রেণি/ জিপিএ/ সিজিপিএ গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়। প্রার্থীকে কাউন্সিলিং সেবা প্রদান, মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য বিষয়ক কর্মশালা পরিচালনায় ও গবেষণা সংক্রান্ত কাজে অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া যেতে পারে। প্রার্থীদের সরকারী বা সরকার অনুমোদিত প্রতিষ্ঠান থেকে কমপক্ষে ছয় মাসের কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণসহ কম্পিউটার পরিচালনায় দক্ষ হতে হবে। প্রার্থীর বয়স অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ (বত্রিশ) বছর হতে হবে। অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীকে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা এবং অভিজ্ঞতার ভিত্তিতে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া যেতে পারে। অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে যে কোনো একটি শর্ত শিথিলযোগ্য। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।

রেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা, কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণ ও অন্যান্য যোগ্যতার (যদি থাকে) সকল সার্টিফিকেট ও প্রশংসাপত্রের সত্যায়িত প্রতিলিপিসহ ৮ (আট) প্রহু দরখাস্ত আগামী ১৬-০৪-২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রারের (২০৩ নং কক্ষে) নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে।

GD-681

LAW REVIEW

# A review of the Commercial Court Ordinance 2026

**The main advantage of this ordinance, in my opinion, is the specialisation it offers. Since judges are to be preferred based on their training and proficiency in commercial law and dispute resolution, it will ensure well-reasoned and consistent rulings, contributing to building investors' trust in the long term.**

KANAK KANTI KARMAKAR

The Commercial Court Ordinance 2026 (the Ordinance) marked a significant milestone in the commercial justice system of Bangladesh. It established a specialised process for settling business disputes, which was previously adjudicated upon by the regular civil courts under ordinary processes. Although the pre-existing legal frameworks provided channels for resolving disputes, they proved insufficient to handle the growing complexity, urgency, and technological elements of modern business disputes.

In an attempt to bridge this institutional gap, the Ordinance, under section 3, prescribes the establishment of specialised courts throughout the country to deal with commercial disputes throughout the country. These courts' territorial jurisdiction shall be determined by competent authorities through consultation with the Supreme Court. The judges are required to be chosen from the District Judges and Additional District Judges, preferably those having advanced commercial law degrees or expertise and training in business dispute. Furthermore, under section 3(4), the Chief Justice of Bangladesh shall establish one or more Commercial Appellate Benches in the High Court Division to hear appeals and revisions against decisions made by Commercial Courts.

Again, the Ordinance defines, and thereby enables, the resolution of more than 23 types of business conflicts under section 2(g)ha. It includes disputes involving transactions by banks and financial institutions,



subscription and investment contracts, joint venture agreements, insurance matters, intellectual property rights, agreements for the use of minerals, gas or natural resources (such as electromagnetic spectrum). Thus, it operates as a measured response to the traditional civil courts that are often burdened with land-centric disputes, family matters, and other ordinary civil litigation.

In the past, the lengthy litigation timeframe for business disputes often discouraged both foreign direct

investment (FDI) and high-value domestic investments. Consequently, investors opted for arbitration despite it being a costly and challenging alternative for small or domestic businesses. The Ordinance accelerates this lengthy procedure by requiring the Commercial Courts to conclude the trial of a dispute within 90 days from the date set for the final hearing. It also addresses the structural shortcomings of the traditional litigation process by creating time-bound procedures, limited adjournments of maximum

three times, mandatory pre-suit mediation, strict deadlines for submitting pleadings, and case management hearings to expedite the settlement of commercial disputes. In sum, by providing a unique avenue for business litigation outside of the larger civil court system, the Ordinance, which was long overdue in Bangladesh's legal system, distinguishes commercial justice from traditional civil justice.

The main advantage of this ordinance, in my opinion, is the

specialisation it offers. Since judges are to be preferred based on their training and proficiency in commercial law and dispute resolution, it will ensure well-reasoned and consistent rulings, contributing to building investors' trust in the long term. Moreover, the guarantee of quicker dispute settlement under the Ordinance, active case management, and hard deadlines for statements make commercial justice achievable, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises.

However, it needs to be said that the success of commercial courts in Bangladesh will ultimately depend on the judges' skills, training, and institutional resources, for which adequate preparation is required. Issues with accessibility and uniformity may also arise, especially in places with inadequate court infrastructure. Again, collaboration between commercial courts and existing civil courts during the transition period may present practical challenges if not managed properly, especially with regard to the transfer of pending cases.

A trustworthy and efficient mechanism for resolving commercial disputes is seen as a vital component sought by foreign investors and development partners. In fact, Bangladesh's goal for Least Developed Country graduation is also facilitated by the Ordinance, if implemented properly. If it is well executed, it could increase investors' confidence and aid Bangladesh's shift to a competitive post-LDC economy.

The writer is lecturer in Law at North East University, Bangladesh.

RIGHTS WATCH

## Joli No'udim Hittei? - "Why shouldn't I resist?"

Unfinished constitutional promise to the hills

SATIRTHA CHAKMA

Even after half a century since the birth of Bangladesh, the state has yet to ensure and sustainably implement the rights of the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in Bangladesh. The pattern is, unfortunately, way too familiar and repetitive. Almost every year, we see violence escalating in the hills, leaving a deep and long-lasting scar and trauma.

The 2024 Bangladesh Quota Reform Movement initially sparked hope to the indigenous communities against longstanding injustices. However, many developments since then has been rather disappointing. According to a report by the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti, in 2025 alone, 268 incidents of human rights violations were recorded, affecting 606 Jamma individuals. The report further indicates that security forces, police, Bangalee settlers, and extremist groups were found responsible



**Historically, little interest has been shown by the successive governments in addressing the political and structural crisis in the CHT, as Mark Twain observed, history doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes.**

for these violations. It also recorded eight extrajudicial killings, 117 arbitrary arrests, 193 village search operations, and 26 incidents of violence against women and children.

Historically, little interest has been shown by the successive governments in addressing the political and structural crisis in the CHT, as Mark Twain observed, history doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes. Human rights concerns affecting the Bawm community also reflect the broader pattern of vulnerability, insecurity, and protection gaps faced by the IPs in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Beyond the so-called political unrest lies a deeper constitutional and legal dilemma: who qualifies as "Indigenous" in Bangladesh? The state has consistently avoided providing a concise and exclusive legal definition. Article 23A of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh acknowledges the duty of protection and development of the unique local culture and tradition of the "tribes, minor races, ethnic sects and communities," yet it fails to guarantee Indigenous identity as a distinct

constitutional category. Furthermore, constitutional frameworks and judicial interpretations have also failed to fully recognise the right to self-determination for indigenous communities.

In addition, many of our statutes, e.g., the CHT Accord 1997, the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950, the CHT Regulation 1900, and the CHT Regional Council Act 1998, use fragmented terminology such as 'tribes', 'aboriginals', and 'indigenous hillman', avoiding a dignified identity for the IPs.

Moreover, from the perspective of constitutionality as well, the CHT Accord and the Regional Council Act were challenged in *Md. Badiuzzaman v Bangladesh* (writ petition no: 2669/2000) and *Md. Tazul Islam v Bangladesh* (writ petition no: 6451/2007). In April 2010, a High Court Division bench declared the Regional Council Act 1998 unconstitutional stating that it affected the unitary character of the Constitution. However, the Appellate Division later stayed the High Court verdict. While this preserved the formal validity of the Accord, implementation remains sluggish and incomplete. In my opinion, lands stand at the centre of all conflict in the CHT, pulling every social and political grievance into its depths. The land is the repository of indigenous life, holding within it the communities' past, their cultural soul, and future viability. However, these very lands form crux of conflicts too. For instance, the Kaptai Dam submerged around 250 sq. km. of ancestral land, displacing approximately 100,000 IPs. Furthermore, Bangladesh ratified International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 107 but abstained from ratifying ILO

Convention 169, which provides for stronger land and consultation rights. Again, it refrained from voting on the non-binding United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Such selective engagement narrows binding obligations regarding the acknowledgement of indigenous autonomy and land rights, limiting international accountability mechanisms.

Unfortunately, and perhaps most importantly, the quest for constitutional inclusivity is yet to be acknowledged. Article 6(2) of the existing Constitution defines every person as 'Bangalees', which radically ignores the indigenous peoples' identity. Manabendra Narayan Larma, a former member of the Bangladesh Parliament opposed the drafted Constitution due to the imposition of Bengali hegemony on the non-Bangalee ethnic groups and tribal communities living in Bangladesh. He argued, "Under no definition or logic can a Chakma be a Bengali or a Bengali be a Chakma. A Bengali living in Pakistan cannot become or be called a Punjabi, Pathan, or Sindhi; any of them living in Bangladesh cannot be called a Bengali. As citizens of Bangladesh, we are all Bangladeshis, but we also have a separate ethnic identity...."

In sum, the CHT represents Bangladesh's unresolved constitutional challenge of pluralism, justice, and land security. It is a stress test of Bangladesh's constitutional maturity. How the state resolves it will define whether legal pluralism is symbolic or substantive.

The writer is official contributor to the law desk, the Daily Star.

LAW AND ECONOMICS

## On Competition Law and price-fixing

GAZEE MUZEERU

Outside the commonly understood media connotation of the term, a 'cartel' in economics refers to market participants that conspire together to establish market dominance, often by creating a monopoly or oligopoly. One familiar way to do this is through price-fixing agreements, in which market actors agree not to sell or buy certain products at prices below or above a determined level.

When a group of sellers agrees to fix the sale price of goods, it becomes a case of 'horizontal' price-fixing. Horizontal, because it is an agreement among participants on the same market level, such as competing sellers, as opposed to 'vertical' price-fixing, which denotes a relationship between different market levels, such as manufacturers and retailers.

Agreements that can have the effect of horizontal price-fixing are banned across jurisdictions for their competition-killing nature. When left unregulated, price-fixing by sellers can create price of products that bear no correlation to production costs, even for essential goods. Regardless of the apparent reasonableness of the fixed price, and even taking into account that the majority of sellers are willing participants in this, common law precedents such as *Trenton Potteries* have held that all agreements among sellers to fix and maintain uniform prices are violations of competition law. The European Union also prohibits horizontal price-fixing in language similar to that used in Bangladesh's own Competition Act 2012, section 15(2)(a)(i).

A noteworthy difference in Bangladesh's price-fixing prohibition is that the law introduces a unique qualifier, 'abnormal', before price-fixing activities are deemed illegal. But addressing that requires an acknowledgement of a wording discrepancy in section 15(2)(a)(i) between the Bengali and the authentic English text.

In what may be an unmissable curiosity at the very least, a straightforward translation from the Bengali text of the subsection reads that a practice shall be deemed anti-competition and prohibited if it 'abnormally determines the purchase or sale price of any goods or services'; whereas the authentic English text published in 2017 prescribes that an agreement shall only be deemed adverse to market competition and illegal when it 'determines abnormal purchase or sale prices'. Quite clearly, 'abnormally determining price' and 'determining abnormal price' have significantly different legal interpretations and implications. Moreover, while section 45(2) of the Competition Act 2012 does declare the primacy of the Bengali text, the authentic English text with its 'abnormal price' has already made its way into policy discussions, peer reviews, and broader academic discourse.

Going by the precedent set in *Trenton Potteries* mentioned earlier, the Competition Commission or any body adjudicating competition matters would be poorly positioned to determine what constitutes an 'abnormal price.' It would be

an arrangement tediously volatile and sector-specific. Indeed, the normal price fixed today may become the abnormal price of tomorrow.

It makes more sense to take the process-based approach of 'abnormally determining price', as in the Bengali text, which is still uncomfortably far from normative practices. But what would be considered an abnormal determination? Rationally, competitors should not be able to fix prices at all, whether in a normal manner or an abnormal one. Once a sale price is set by competitors, there remains no value in offering something better to purchasers. It becomes a race to the bottom: the lower the production cost, the higher the profit at a fixed sale price. As a result, quality is often among the first things sacrificed, followed by innovation.

Even in developing countries with similar economic output as Bangladesh, such as section 14(a)(1) of Philippine's law or Article 11(1) of the Vietnamese competition law, the abnormality qualifier is wholly absent. Attempts to horizontally fix prices are generally banned *per se* (illegal without needing analysis), including under the Sherman Act in the US, leaving market actors without 'normality' or any other justification for price-fixing among competitors. There is no real necessity in Bangladesh to deviate from this general practice of prohibiting all horizontal price-fixing without a normality qualification.

On the other end of this spectrum, there may be a concern that in a market where prices are not fixed, one competitor can set a product's price too low, incurring losses to poach buyers with a lucrative deal and drive competitors out by absorbing the market. While it sounds plausible on paper and remains prohibited under section 16(2)(a) of the Competition Act 2012 if the price is set below the production cost of a product or service, this is an exceedingly rare maneuver unlikely to succeed in any real market with any form of consistency. For a seller engaging in predatory pricing to recoup their losses, they would have to raise their prices at some point after monopolising. At which time the market would become open to new competitors who can now undercut the desperate-to-recover seller, in a sense regulating this anti-competitive behaviour through market mechanisms.

In terms of consumer harm, horizontal price-fixing poses a greater threat to market competition than the rare occurrences of predatory pricing. One mechanism that has time and again helped uproot price-fixing cartels is a leniency programme often found in competition legislation, where the first person or association to come forward with information about the cartel is granted amnesty in exchange for cooperation. Unfortunately, the Competition Act 2012 does not provide such whistleblower protection, and its incorporation may be one of many steps that Bangladeshi antitrust regulation can take to strengthen fair trade practices.

The writer is student of Law, University of Dhaka.



## U-20 women set for Asian Cup debut

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are all set to mark their debut in the AFC Women's U-20 Asian Cup when they take on Thailand in Group A opener at the Thammasat Stadium in Bangkok today. The match will kick off at 7:00pm Bangladesh time.

Having already created history by reaching the finals of the U-20 Asian Cup, the women in red and green will now aim to make a further impact in Asia's premier youth women's competition. However, coach Peter Butler is focusing on positive performances rather than results in the three group stage matches.

Bangladesh have been drawn in a tough group alongside strong opponents China, Vietnam and Thailand. Despite the challenge, Butler's charges will be hoping to keep their knockout hopes alive by finishing among the two best third-placed teams across the three groups.

One of Bangladesh's key strengths lies in their experience. Several players – including Afeida Khandokar, Sopna Rani, Umehla Marma and Mile Akter – were part of the senior team in the recently concluded AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia.

While the senior side faced tough outings against stronger teams such as China and North Korea, the youth team will look to put up a better fight against their age-level counterparts. The opening match against 2004 semifinalists Thailand could prove crucial in their bid to reach the knockout stage.

"What I did is take 10 to 12 of those Under-20 players to the senior Asian Cup because they've been in and around



Singapore forward Ikhsan Fandi skips past Bangladesh midfielder Hamza Choudhury during their AFC Asian Cup qualifying fixture at the National Stadium in Singapore yesterday. Bangladesh suffered a narrow 1-0 defeat, a result that meant the men in red and green finished their qualifying campaign with five points from six matches in Group C, registering one win, two draws, and two defeats.

PHOTO: BFF

## SAFF U-20 C'SHIP Bangladesh ready for Nepal challenge

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are bracing for any challenge – even a penalty shootout – but remain confident of reaching the final, head coach Mark Cox said ahead of their SAFF U-20 Championship semifinal against Nepal in Maldives on Wednesday.

"Whoever we play, it will be a fight, but we will play our way and focus on ourselves," Cox said in a video interview shared by the Bangladesh Football Federation on Tuesday.

"Hopefully we'll win it within 90 minutes. There's no extra time and it goes straight to penalties. We're ready for any eventuality," he added.

Bangladesh began their campaign with a 2-0 win over Pakistan before holding India to a 1-1 draw, finishing second in the group to set up the semifinal clash against Nepal – a side they defeated on their way to lifting the title in 2024, the only time Bangladesh have won this age-group tournament.

Despite Ronan Declan's lively performances and goals, Bangladesh have looked somewhat inconsistent so far, and Cox has faced criticism over his team selection and playing style. However, the coach remained tight-lipped ahead of the crucial encounter.

"Of the 22 players we have here, I trust every single one as the best. We'll consider all options depending on how the game goes," Cox said.

The match will kick off at 4:45pm Bangladesh time, before India take on Bhutan in the second semifinal later in the day.

### BANGLADESH'S FIXTURES

Match	Date	Venue
Bangladesh vs Thailand	April 1	Bangkok
Bangladesh vs China	April 4	Bangkok
Bangladesh vs Vietnam	April 7	Bangkok



the national team programme. We suffered a few defeats, but we gained some important learning outcomes," Butler said at a pre-match press conference in Bangkok on Tuesday.

The English coach stopped short of setting specific targets but expressed hope that his players would take valuable lessons from the tournament.

"We've arrived with a lot of young players gaining their first experience. They've done remarkably well to get here, and I hope this will be a wonderful learning opportunity for the girls," Butler said. "I believe the performances they gave at the senior tournament will stand us in good stead, and hopefully we can look forward to some positive displays irrespective of the results."

Thailand coach Nuengrutai Srathongvian is also confident of a strong start, banking on home advantage.

"We have had a lot of training camps, we have home ground advantage, and we have selected the best players. We are ready for the competition and at our best," said Srathongvian, who has been in charge for eight years.

## Sombre sign off for goal-shy Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh concluded their 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifying campaign on a sombre note yesterday, falling 1-0 to hosts Singapore at the National Stadium in Kallang.

Harhys Stewart delivered the decisive moment on the half-hour mark, guiding Singapore to a result that underlined their authority in Group C. The home side finished with 14 points and had already secured qualification before kick-off, but the win ensured they closed the campaign in control, repeating their 2-1 victory over Bangladesh in Dhaka last July.

Despite the defeat, Bangladesh ended third in the four-team group with five points, finishing ahead of neighbouring India but behind second-placed Hong Kong.

The campaign had begun with a sense of renewed ambition. The inclusion of Hamza Choudhury, alongside a growing pool of overseas-based players such as Shamit Shome, Fahamedul Islam and Zayyan Ahmed, had raised hopes of a push for qualification. While that objective ultimately slipped away, the campaign was not without its defining moment.

That came in the form of a long-awaited victory over India after 22 years – also their first win in Asian Cup qualifying in 27 years. The last time Bangladesh had tasted victory at this stage was in 1999, when they defeated Sri Lanka 3-1 in the 2000 Asian Cup Qualifiers. Since then, campaigns had been marked by

near-misses, narrow defeats and prolonged stagnation.

Head coach Javier Cabrera, whose contract expires in the latter half of April, had spoken of his desire to end the campaign on a high against opponents Bangladesh have never beaten, but a familiar lack of cutting

15th minute, while Sheikh Morsalin came close before the break, his effort blocked inside the area. Yet clear openings remained scarce.

After the restart, there was greater structure and intent. Bangladesh enjoyed improved possession and pushed higher up the pitch, particularly after the



**We haven't been worse than any team. I think we have been better than many of our rivals in all the games, but we just finished with five points. That is the reality. There is no doubt that Singapore deserve to be in the Asian Cup, but there is also no doubt that Bangladesh were superior today.**

JAVIER CABRERA  
Bangladesh head coach

edge proved decisive. The visitors struggled to establish control in midfield in the opening half, their play marked by loose passing and a lack of composure in key moments.

The only goal arrived in the 30th minute, born of pressure and a lapse in concentration. Goalkeeper Mitul Marma did well to parry a powerful effort from Glenn Kweh, but the rebound fell invitingly for Stewart, who made no mistake with a composed, low finish.

Bangladesh had shown early promise, with Shome heading wide from a Saad Uddin delivery in the

introduction of Mirajul Islam. The closing stages offered glimpses of what might have been – Hamza narrowly missing the far post in the 75th minute, before Mirajul saw his flick from a Hamza curler strike the woodwork four minutes later.

But despite a late surge and sustained pressure in the Singapore half, with Cabrera making three more changes, the equaliser never came. Singapore held firm, managing the final moments with assurance to preserve their slender lead and bring Bangladesh's campaign to a subdued end.



### World Cup final GOAL RUSH



A total of 71 goals have been scored during regulation time across the 22 World Cup finals held to date, with an additional nine goals coming in extra time. Notably, the 1950 edition did not feature an official final match in the traditional knockout format, though the decisive final group game saw three goals scored.

\*\*Visit The Daily Star website to also read "16 yellows, 4 reds: The chaos of the iconic 'Battle of Nuremberg'".



Germany forward Deniz Undav came off the bench to score an 88th-minute goal that secured a 2-1 victory over Ghana in a friendly on Monday, boosting his chances of making the World Cup squad. The VfB Stuttgart striker, who is second on the Bundesliga scorers' list with 18 goals, made the most of a second-half appearance in front of a home crowd, bagging the winner with a flick over the Ghana keeper. Soon after the game, Ghana head coach Otto Addo was sacked following a poor run of results -- his team were also thrashed 5-1 by Austria in a friendly last week.

PHOTO: DFB

## বরপা শাখা স্থানান্তর

স্বাচ্ছন্দ্যময় ও আধুনিক ব্যাংকিং সেবার প্রতিশ্রুতি নিয়ে  
**রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি'র বরপা শাখা, নারায়নগঞ্জ ০৯ এপ্রিল ২০২৬, বুধবার**  
 থেকে নতুন ঠিকানায় স্থানান্তরিত হয়ে ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রম শুরু করছে।

পূর্বের ঠিকানা

হাজী ইয়াদ আলী শপিং কমপ্লেক্স  
 (২য় তলা) হোল্ডিং নং- ১৪৪  
 ঢাকা - সিলেট মহাসড়ক  
 তারাব পৌরসভা  
 রূপগঞ্জ, নারায়নগঞ্জ

➔

বর্তমান ঠিকানা

সাইদ টাওয়ার (২য় তলা)  
 হোল্ডিং নং- ৬৩  
 ঢাকা - সিলেট মহাসড়ক  
 তারাব পৌরসভা, রূপগঞ্জ  
 নারায়নগঞ্জ

সম্মানিত গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের  
 নতুন ঠিকানায় ব্যাংকিং সেবা গ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হল

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## US trade deal limiting Bangladesh's energy options

### Says Debapriya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The reciprocal trade agreement signed with the US may severely limit Bangladesh's energy options, Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, said yesterday.

The agreement, inked in February, includes clauses that curb Bangladesh's scope to trade with countries sanctioned by the US.

It also mentions "non-market" economies, referring to countries that do not follow free-market principles.

"These legal ambiguities make a formal US waiver a prerequisite for cheaper Russian oil, directly constraining multilateral trade



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As fuel is no longer sold in jerrycans, people are bringing generators and irrigation machines to collect diesel from the pumps in Rajshahi. Most pumps remain closed, while queues stretch 1.5km to 2km long at four to five that are open. Some people complained that they did not get fuel even after lining up from 3:00am. This photo was taken at Gul Gafur Petrol Pump in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

## Govt weighs online classes in city schools

### Decides to introduce music lessons at pry, secondary levels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is discussing a proposal to introduce a mix of online and in-person classes for schools, especially in metropolitan areas, as part of efforts to tackle the ongoing global energy crisis.

Besides the international crisis over the US-Israel war on Iran, traffic congestion during the opening and closing hours of the schools in Dhaka is another factor that made the government think about the option.

The ministry would place the proposal before the cabinet for a decision after the end of the discussion, Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon told reporters at the Secretariat after a meeting with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday.

"We are discussing promoting online education," Ehsanul said, adding that the discussions covered both Bangla medium and English-medium institutions.

He stressed that the government was not considering a fully online system.

A survey had already been conducted and around 55 percent of users wanted some form of online education, according to the minister.

He also linked the proposal to lost class hours because

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## ICT may probe 1/11 crimes, 'crossfires'

### Says its chief prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Prosecutor Md Aminul Islam yesterday said the prosecution may bring alleged crimes against humanity committed during the 2007-08, as well as "crossfire" killings, under the jurisdiction of the International Crimes Tribunal if they fall within its legal mandate.

Speaking to reporters at his office, he said incidents linked to the military-backed caretaker government period, widely known as 1/11, and the July uprising could be scrutinised.

"Crossfire incidents from 2007, and crimes against humanity during the 1/11 period, if they fall within our tribunal's jurisdiction, we will bring them before the tribunal," he said.

Aminul made it clear that the prosecution's actions would not depend on whether suspects have already been arrested. "...if we find their involvement in crimes against humanity, the tribunal will investigate those matters," he said, adding that proceedings would be driven strictly by evidence.

"If sufficient evidence is found to bring charges and proceed to trial, those responsible will be made to face justice before the tribunal," he added, noting that the ICT could also initiate investigations suo motu.

Responding to a question on whether hundreds of alleged crossfire incidents could be probed, the chief prosecutor said the pattern of such killings suggests a coordinated policy.

He alleged that many incidents followed a "common design" across the country and could qualify as widespread or systematic attacks under laws governing crimes against humanity. According to him, victims were often targeted due to dissenting views or disputes with local political leaders.



Md Aminul Islam

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## 'Iran will be at World Cup' and play in US

### Says FIFA chief

AFP, Antalya

FIFA president Gianni Infantino told AFP on Tuesday that Iran "will be at the World Cup" and will play their group matches in the United States as scheduled, despite the Middle East war.

"Iran will be at the World Cup," Infantino said at half-time of Iran's friendly against Costa Rica in Turkey.

"That's why we're here. We're delighted because they're a very, very strong team, I'm very happy."

"I've seen the team, I've spoken to the players and the coach, so everything is fine," added

Infantino, whose attendance at Tuesday's game was unannounced.

Infantino went on to stress that Iran's "matches will be played where they are supposed to be, according to the draw".

The World Cup, being hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada, starts on June 11.

Iran are set to play their first Group G game against



SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## Israel passes by default death penalty law for Palestinians

### US says it respects Israel's 'right' to legislate

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel's parliament passed a law on Monday evening making death by hanging a default sentence for Palestinians convicted in military courts of deadly attacks, fulfilling a pledge by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right allies.

The law would only apply to Israelis convicted of murder whose attacks aimed at "ending Israel's existence", meaning it would mete out the death penalty for Palestinians but not for Jewish Israelis who committed similar crimes, critics say.

"The United States respects Israel's sovereign right to determine its own laws and penalties for individuals convicted of terrorism," a US State Department spokesperson said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned the legislation as a breach of international law and a doomed bid meant to intimidate Palestinians.

"Such laws and measures will not break the will of the Palestinian people or undermine their steadfastness," Abbas' office said in a statement.

Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad called on Palestinians to launch attacks in revenge for the law.

The legislation has drawn international criticism of Israel,

which is already under scrutiny for increasing violence by Jewish settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and its war in Gaza.

The measure includes provisions requiring an execution by hanging within 90 days of sentencing, with

Critics say it targets Palestinians tried in military courts

Hamas, Islamic Jihad call for revenge attacks

Palestinian President Abbas condemns the legislation

some allowance for a delay but no right to clemency. It provides the option of imposing a life imprisonment sentence instead of capital punishment, but only in unspecified "special circumstances".

Military courts in the West Bank can already sentence Palestinian convicts to death but have not done so.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

## Four more children die from measles

### Death toll now 44 this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least four more children have died from suspected measles and related complications in the last 24 hours, bringing the death toll to 44 so far this year.

Two children died in suspected measles cases at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in the last 24 hours, taking the hospital's tally of fatalities from the highly contagious infection so far this year to three, said its spokesman Shankar K Biswas.

As of yesterday, 98 suspected measles patients are admitted to the hospital, he added.

However, several media outlets, including Prothom Alo, reported that 12 measles patients died at RMCH until Sunday. At that time, RMCH admitted one death only.

If this number is taken into consideration, the total number of deaths from measles would be 55.

One child died at Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) in the capital's Mohakhali in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll from suspected measles cases at this medical facility to 25, said its superintendent Tanzina Jahan.

A total of 617 suspected measles patients have been treated at the hospital since January.

A five-and-a-half-month-old infant, admitted with symptoms of measles, died while undergoing treatment at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) yesterday.

The victim, identified as Aisha Siddika from Jhilong in Cox's Bazar, was brought to the CMCH late Monday night. Due to her critical condition, she was shifted to the intensive care unit, where she passed away yesterday morning.

Chattogram Civil Surgeon Mohammed Jahangir Alam confirmed the death, stating that although the child exhibited classic symptoms of measles, the cause of death is yet to be "officially confirmed".

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## Bangladesh to join Eurovision

AGENCIES

Bangladesh will take the stage alongside other nations in this year's Eurovision Song Contest as the world-famous TV pop spectacle makes its debut in Asia.



The grand finale of the regional edition will be hosted in Bangkok, Thailand, on November 14.

South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam are confirmed alongside Malaysia, Cambodia and Laos, as well as Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, with more countries expected to join as the competition expands.

The contest aims to showcase Asia's diversity and creativity while building on Eurovision's 70-year legacy of uniting audiences through music.

Eurovision, which started in 1956, is a famously eccentric festival in which artists from dozens of countries battle for the annual musical crown. It has long been centred in Europe, although in recent years it has begun to welcome participants outside the continent.



After potatoes were destroyed by stagnant rainwater, farmers of Shibganj upazila in Bogura and neighbouring Kalai upazila in Joypurhat faced a double whammy. They planted paddy over the unharvested potatoes, but the new crop has also failed. This photo was taken in Shibganj yesterday.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

## Bangladesh trapped in energy dependency

### Says economist Anu Muhammad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The power and energy ministry has long been dominated by multinational firms, and as a result, Bangladesh has spent a huge amount of resources and is constantly trapped in a cycle of dependency, said economist Anu Muhammad yesterday.

He criticised the country's import-reliant power structure at a roundtable styled 'Energy Sector Reform and CAB's 13-point demand' organised by the Consumers Association of Bangladesh at the CIRDAP auditorium.

Anu Muhammad backed

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