

'PHOTOSEUM: LIFE OF POETREE': Nasir Ali Mamun's rhythmic lens on display



PHOTOS: ABRAR FAIYAZ NILOY

their lives and works. Despite the challenges posed by the poets' ideological differences, Mamun worked with them individually, creating a tribute that bridges their separation.

Emphasising the importance of preserving visual history, Mamun called for greater recognition of photographers, even after their passing. He urged the younger generation to take part in a cultural movement that protects photography and honours those behind the lens, saying, "The GenZ youths who made the uprising possible are capable of working toward safeguarding the photo museum."

What makes the exhibition particularly compelling is its ability to transcend biography. These are not merely portraits of two literary giants, but studies of presence, memory, and influence. The interplay of light and shadow, combined with minimal compositions, strips away distraction, leaving behind something deeply human.

As speakers reflected on Mamun's lifelong contribution to documenting Bangladesh's intellectual and artistic heritage, the evening came to a close with a full house feeling more connected to the lives and legacies of these remarkable poets.

Running until April 16, *Photoseum: Life of Poetree* is as much about photography as it is about connection—between art forms, between artists, and ultimately, between the viewer and the language of the human spirit.

Multiplexes suspend evening shows amid new govt directives

Amid a global energy crisis linked to ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the government enforced new fuel-saving measures, including reduced office hours and a directive to close shops and malls by 7:00pm.

In response, Blockbuster Cinemas at Jamuna Future Park announced on April 4, that all evening screenings were suspended from April 5 until further notice. Authorities confirmed that customers with advance bookings for affected shows would receive full refunds.

The cinema chain expressed regret over the inconvenience and sought public cooperation. Meanwhile, Star Cineplex also suspended shows, adding that further updates would be shared through their website.



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NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

The evening of April 3 marked the opening of the 66th solo exhibition of acclaimed photographer Nasir Ali Mamun, titled *Photoseum: Life of Poetree*, at La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka.

The exhibition brings together two of Bangladesh's most profound poetic voices—Shamsur Rahman and Al Mahmud—through a deeply visual dialogue. More than a photographic display, it invites viewers into an intimate encounter with literature, where poetry is not read but felt.

The inauguration ceremony, held at 6:00pm, was attended by a distinguished gathering of cultural figures and dignitaries, including Motiur Rahman, editor and publisher of Prothom Alo; Jean-Marc Séré-Charlet, Ambassador of France to Bangladesh; and eminent artist Monirul Islam.

Mamun, often described as the "poet of the camera", has spent decades capturing the essence of



cultural icons. In this exhibition, his lens turns toward the inner worlds of Rahman and Mahmud—not merely documenting their likeness, but revealing the emotional and philosophical landscapes that shaped their words.

Opening the ceremony, Mamun shared his personal experiences with both poets, recalling moments from his life, including his time in prison. He talked about the distant and complex relationship between Rahman and

Mahmud. Even though they rarely shared the same space, Mamun said that his work connects them through photography and experience. He described the photographs as a "museum of memories." He recognised the families of both poets and hoped that the exhibition honors their legacy.

He also shared how his friendship with the poets shaped the project, and mentioned the enthusiasm of Motiur Rahman in publishing stories surrounding

NEWS

Factory was sealed

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owner Md Akram Ullah Akram, 64; his son Ahnaf Akram, 34; Iman Ullah; and around seven unidentified individuals.

During a visit to the site yesterday afternoon, firefighters were seen continuing rescue operations. Several factory workers and anxious relatives were still gathered at the scene in search of their missing loved ones.

Shipon Mal was looking for his nephew, Nirob Dhali, 17, who joined the factory just a day before the fire. He has been missing since the incident.

"We searched everywhere possible after the fire but could not find him. We also spoke to the authorities, but they were unable to provide any information about his whereabouts."

Alo Rani Dey, a worker who survived the fire, said the factory once caught fire in 2024 but resumed operations shortly afterwards.

Of the six bodies recovered, three have been handed over to their families, according to sources at Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue.

One of the victims has been identified as Mim Akter, 16.

Two other bodies were handed over based on information provided by family members. DNA samples have also been collected to confirm their identities.

Sabbir, who received the body of his mother Manju Begum, said, "My mother had the keys to our house in her hand, and part of the clothing on her back was not burned. I recognised her from these."

He added that the hospital authorities handed over the body based on his statement, but asked them to provide DNA samples for confirmation.

According to the case statement, the factory had been operating illegally in a densely populated area for the past eight to 10 years, employing around 50 to 60 workers, including women and children.

Law enforcement agencies conducted multiple drives in the past and shut down the factory. However, the accused resumed operations later.

Investigators also found that no fire safety measures were in place despite the use of highly flammable materials, the case statement added.

Rafiqul Islam, investigation officer of the case, told this newspaper that efforts were underway to arrest the other accused.

Special drive in four cities

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be rolled out simultaneously across the rest of the country, he said.

He blamed mismanagement by previous governments for the measles outbreak.

Meanwhile, MA Muhit, state minister for health, inaugurated the vaccination programme at Bhawal Mirzapur Union Council in Gazipur.

UNICEF is deeply concerned about the sharp rise in measles cases across Bangladesh, putting thousands of children, especially the youngest and most vulnerable, at serious risk, said Rana Flowers, its representative in Bangladesh.

"This resurgence highlights critical immunity gaps, particularly among zero-dose and under-vaccinated children, while infections among infants under nine months, who are not yet eligible for routine vaccination, are especially alarming," she said, according to a UNICEF press release.

With coordinated action, this resurgence can be contained, she said, adding that UNICEF is working closely with the government and partners to reach every child, close immunity gaps and protect children from this preventable disease.

By targeting children aged 6 to 59 months in high-risk areas, followed by nationwide scale-up, this campaign will help prevent further tragic loss of young lives and close the immunity gaps driving the outbreak, said

Bangladesh not bound

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Khalilur and the PM's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Humayun Kabir were present at the meeting.

The foreign minister said claims that Bangladesh "needs permission" from the US to import oil under any agreement are "completely false".

He added that sanctions on Russian oil apply globally, and any required approvals stem from those sanctions, not from any trade agreement between Bangladesh and the US.

On energy cooperation, Khalilur said some aspects could not be disclosed due to confidentiality, but added that the US assured support to help ensure Bangladesh's energy security.

Replying to a question about whether the US could assist Bangladesh in tackling the current energy situation, he said the

Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed, World Health Organisation representative in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, 10 more suspected measles deaths have been recorded in the 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday. In addition, five previously unrecorded deaths were added to the tally, taking the total number of suspected deaths to 113, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

DGHS, however, said a total of 17 deaths have so far been confirmed as measles-related.

Asked about the reasons behind the large gap between suspected and confirmed measles deaths, a DGHS official said that samples from suspected measles patients are tested at the reference laboratories in Dhaka, which take a significant amount of time.

In the meantime, the number of suspected cases is included in the list, while confirmed cases are updated later, resulting in a discrepancy between the two figures.

Besides, rash and fever, the main symptoms of measles, are common to several other diseases, he said.

Therefore, not all suspected measles cases are ultimately confirmed, which contributes to the difference between suspected and confirmed deaths, he added.

A total of 974 new suspected cases were recorded in the last 24 hours, taking the tally to 7,610.

House ratifies ordinances on govt job age

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The special committee has submitted a report on 133 ordinances, some of which have been allowed to lapse. These ordinances are significant and connected to the spirit of July. He said they wanted to discuss the matter in the House.

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman responded by saying that every ordinance would be brought before parliament and there would be opportunities for discussion. He added that the two bills introduced had been unanimously recommended by the special committee for unconditional passage.

AGE LIMIT

In the statement of objectives and reasons for the bill, Bari said the ordinance was issued in response to demands to raise the age limit for entry into government service and in recognition of its necessity. It increased the age limit for direct recruitment by two years, setting it at 32.

However, in some recruitment rules, the age limit for entry into

government service was set at 33-45, which created complications. To resolve these complexities, the ordinance was further amended in 2025.

The state minister explained that as a constitutional body, Bangladesh Public Service Commission has already issued circulars keeping the maximum age limit for direct recruitment in the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) at 32 years, and recruitment is ongoing accordingly. Therefore, it is necessary to turn the ordinance into law.

Under this law, the maximum age limit for entry into all BCS cadres and all non cadre government jobs will be 32 years. In addition, for direct recruitment to posts in autonomous bodies, statutory authorities, public non-financial corporations, and self-governed institutions, the age limit will also be 32 years.

Government Service Act

In 2025, the interim government amended the Government Service Act and issued an ordinance. Later,

another amendment was made through a second ordinance. Keeping those amendments intact, State Minister Bari placed the Government Service (Amendment) Bill-2026 in Parliament.

The bill introduced special provisions regarding the conduct and penalties of government employees. It states that disobeying lawful orders of superiors, failing to comply with government orders, circulars, or directives without legal cause, obstructing their implementation, or inciting other government employees to do so will be considered misconduct.

Collective absence from duty or refusal to work without leave or reasonable cause will also be treated as disruptive misconduct. Preventing any government employee from attending work or performing duties will likewise be deemed misconduct.

For such misconduct, the law provides for demotion to a lower post or pay grade, compulsory retirement, or dismissal from service.

Ordinance flawed, there will be

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If the government wants to make changes, it should first approve the ordinance, turn it into law and amend it later, he said.

"But if that is not done, then once the law expires on April 11, there will be no legal definition of enforced disappearance from April 12," he said.

In reply, Asaduzzaman said the way the ordinances of the Human Rights Commission and Enforced Disappearance Prevention have been framed would be unjust to victims of enforced disappearance.

The ICT Act already included the definition of enforced disappearance under crimes against humanity. The law did provide for trials and investigations of the crime.

"At the same time, in the enforced disappearance ordinance, we are proposing a separate investigation process. Under the ICT Act, the maximum punishment for perpetrators of enforced disappearance is either the death penalty or life imprisonment. But in the ordinance on enforced disappearance, the maximum sentence has been limited to 10 years."

If the Human Rights Commission ordinance is kept in its current form,

victims of human rights violations will face additional harassment and further violations in the name of investigation because of the time frame stipulated in the law, said Asaduzzaman, who was previously the Human Rights Affairs secretary of the BNP central executive committee.

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed, also a victim of enforced disappearance, recounted his days awaiting death, and spoke about how he was then dumped in a neighbouring country where he faced trial, and eventually returned to Bangladesh.

"There is no reason to think that those responsible for enforced disappearance will be able to slip through the cracks of the law. That is why we have said: the punishments prescribed in the enforced disappearance ordinance, the investigation procedures mentioned there and the provisions in the ICT Act regarding crimes against humanity must not conflict with one another. For this reason, these laws need careful scrutiny," he added.

Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad said the matter raised by the Jamaat MP Ahmad was "very important". "The law minister has assured

us that a stronger law to prevent enforced disappearance will be introduced later."

Many prominent individuals and innocent political activists have been victims of enforced disappearance, he said.

"We hope that the government, ruling party members and opposition members together will enact such a strong law that no citizen will ever again fall victim to enforced disappearance. Please be patient. This parliament will surely pass such a law."

Global oil shock

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Countries have begun releasing a historic amount of oil from emergency stockpiles to offset the war's impact. But much of the broadening supply crunch stems from a shortage of naphtha, a petroleum by-product and critical feedstock for synthetic materials, of which producers have far fewer reserves and no substitute.

Some petrochemical companies in Asia, which gets more than half its naphtha from the Middle East, have cut output or declared force majeure in recent weeks due to limited raw materials.