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'A whole civilisation will die tonight'

Warns Trump ahead of his deadline; Tehran remains defiant as strikes hit its bridges, key highway, railways and Kharg Island

Iran warns US against 'crossing red lines'

UN says attacks on civilian infrastructure 'a war crime'

Russia, China veto UNSC resolution on Hormuz

Iranians form human chains around key installations

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump yesterday warned that "a whole civilisation will die" in Iran if the country does not heed his midnight deadline to open the Strait of Hormuz, as Tehran showed no sign of budging and reported that US-Israeli attacks on its infrastructure were already underway.

Speaking in Budapest, Vice President JD Vance said the United States has "tools in our toolkit that we so far haven't decided to use" against Iran, without explaining further.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned they would deprive the US and its allies of oil and gas if Washington crossed Tehran's "red lines".

As the clock ticked down on Trump's deadline, strikes on Iran intensified throughout the day, hitting railway and road bridges, an airport and a petrochemical plant. US forces also attacked targets on Kharg Island, home to Iran's main oil export terminal, which Trump has openly mused about seizing.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed attacks on railways and bridges, saying they were "used by the Revolutionary Guards". The Israeli military said it had already completed a broad wave of strikes targeting "infrastructure sites" across Iran.

Trump had initially vowed to carry out the "complete demolition" of Iran's critical infrastructure, particularly bridges and power plants, only if a deal was not reached by 8:00pm in Washington.

Writing on Truth Social, Trump elevated his ultimatum for Iran.

"A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will,"

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"More than 14 million proud Iranians have so far registered to sacrifice their lives to defend Iran. I, too, have been, am, and will remain ready to give my life for Iran,"

MASOUD PEZEHSKIAN
Iran president

TRUMP BRANDED 'CRAZY' OVER IRAN THREATS - PAGE 5

Smoke rises following strikes on Tehran. New strikes rocked Tehran yesterday with Iran showing no sign of backing down as a US deadline loomed for it to reopen the Strait of Hormuz or have its civilian infrastructure "decimated", according to the US president. PHOTO: AFP

LDC GRADUATION DELAY

Tarique seeks UN chief's support

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has sought the backing of UN Secretary-General António Guterres for a deferral of Bangladesh's graduation from the least-developed country (LDC) category, as the issue moves through the multilateral system.

"With full confidence, we kindly seek your personal support in ensuring that our request receives due consideration across the United Nations system," Tarique wrote in a letter to Guterres on April 5.

"Our aim is not to avert the coveted graduation, but to ensure that it is sustainable, resilient and truly irreversible," he added.

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No bail, no remand for Shirin Sharmin

Ex-speaker arrested in attempted murder case

TOUSIF KAIUM *and* EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Former Jatiya Sangsad speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury had arrived at her cousin's residence in Dhanmondi just hours before she was arrested early yesterday in an attempted murder case linked to the 2024 July uprising.

Confirming the matter to The Daily Star, Shirin's cousin Arif Masud Chowdhury said they had not been in

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Fuel queues stretch despite improved stock

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The long queues at filling stations across the country do not seem to be abating, with the lines getting longer in some places, even though the fuel stock became slightly healthier compared with last week's.

As of yesterday, the total stock of octane and petrol stood at 10,500 tonnes and 16,000 tonnes respectively, enough to meet the demand for 9-11 days, according to the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.

Besides, a ship containing 25,000 tonnes of octane is due today and another ship containing the same volume of the fuel is scheduled in the second half of this month, data shows.

With the upcoming ships and local condensate production, officials are hopeful of ensuring a supply of octane and petrol of up to 60 days.

And yet, in the capital yesterday, queues in petrol pumps in Tejgaon, Mohakhali and Gulshan link road areas started from one filling station and extended up to the next.

Besides, most of the stations in Moghbazar, Malibagh, Banasree, Hazipara, Ramna and Paribagh were facing huge pressure, both from cars and motorcycles over the days.

The waiting vehicles took up the entire first lane of the roads, disrupting traffic flow in those areas.

People are queuing up since the morning, even before the fuel reaches the pumps from

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

This handout picture released by Nasa yesterday shows Earth as it dips beyond the lunar horizon as seen from the Orion spacecraft. Images like this, often called "Earthrise", became powerful symbols during the Apollo missions, inspiring environmental awareness and the idea of planetary stewardship. Story on page 12. PHOTO: AFP

NSC dissolves Bulbul-led BCB body

Tamim made adhoc committee president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Sports Council yesterday dissolved the board led by president Aminul Islam Bulbul and appointed former Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal as president of an 11-member adhoc committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

NSC Sports Director Aminul Ahesan announced the decision at a press conference at the council's meeting room, presenting findings of an investigation into last year's BCB elections held on October 6. The polls saw 23 directors elected from three categories alongside two NSC-nominated members.

According to the NSC, a five-member probe committee, led by retired Supreme Court justice AKM Asaduzzaman, found irregularities across all categories of the election. Based on the findings, the council dissolved the board under

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

SC Secretariat vital for judicial independence

HC observes in full verdict

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court has observed that the establishment of an independent and separate secretariat under the Supreme Court is necessary to ensure the judiciary's autonomy and integrity.

The observation came in the full text of a verdict released yesterday amid a move in parliament to repeal three ordinances related to judicial independence, appointment of judges, and budgetary authority entrusted to the Supreme Court Secretariat.

In the full verdict, the court also directed the government to establish the secretariat within three months and ruled that the Supreme Court, not the president, will have the authority over the transfer, posting, and discipline of lower court judges.

"We believe that the proposed secretariat would enhance transparency in judicial policymaking, ensure proper budget allocation and infrastructure development, and bring clarity to the transfer and promotion of judges," the High Court bench of Justice Ahmed Sohel and Justice Debashish Roy Chowdhury said in the 185-page full judgment.

During the hearing of a writ petition on the matter, the then attorney general Md Asaduzzaman, who is now the law, justice and parliamentary affairs minister, "has fairly submitted [before this court] that the state has no objection to the establishment of such a secretariat", the High Court said.

"In our view that true judicial independence requires abolition of the dual governance system i.e. the joint authority of the Supreme Court and the ministry of law must be dismantled to facilitate a separate secretariat under the Supreme Court of Bangladesh," the judges said.

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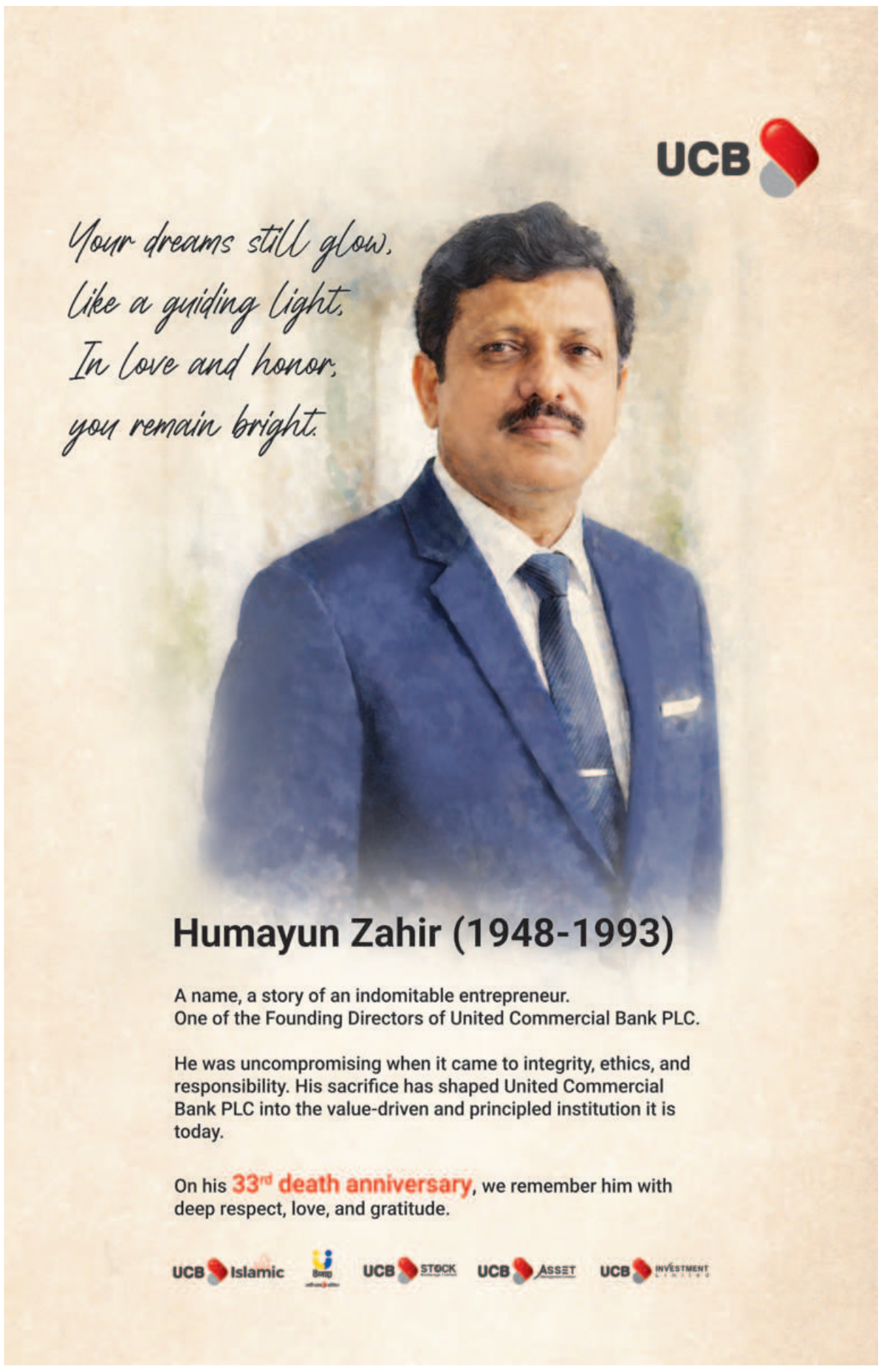

PHOTOS: COURTESY

MY DHAKA

Aquarium Park: Where the city meets the wild

MINHAZUR RAHMAN ALVEE

At the centre of the capital, a new kind of park is quietly emerging. Nestled in Agargaon, adjacent to the Bangladesh Air Force Museum and the Agargaon Metro Station gate, it features a glass tunnel aquarium, a bird aviary, a koi pond, and a waterfall.

"The park was built with the purpose of doing better for our animals," said the park's CEO Ashraf Shiddike Rizve, one of the minds behind curating the place from scratch.

The Aquarium Park is a section of the Bangladesh Air Force Museum.

This microcosm of wildlife, with its fish, birds, and natural elements, offers a perfect escape from the bustle of Dhaka, leaving you in a state of quiet cognitive dissonance -- wondering whether you are still in a metro city or have wandered into a jungle.

As you stroll through, you will come across a landscaped hill rising in the middle of the city. However, do not be too amazed just yet! Wait until you walk past the 36-foot waterfall, where the splash of downhill-flowing water chills your soul as you pass through the tunnel beneath it.

An aviary housing over 300 birds across several species -- budgerigars, cockatiels, conures, macaws, Amazon parrots, and African grey parrots -- creates the feeling of walking through a forest.

The birds here are tame and trained, allowing visitors to feed them as they gently peck from their

hands. They are naturally interactive and appear to enjoy human company. Conures, for example, are known to perch on visitors' hands, while Amazon parrots are among the most vocal and responsive birds, capable of mimicking words and engaging in simple exchanges.

The glass tunnel aquarium is set to become a point of curiosity not just for locals but also for international visitors. Plans are underway to introduce species such as sharks and octopuses.

The koi pond, with crystal-clear water, is still a work in progress, with plans to develop it into another serene highlight of the park.

"We will keep adding new exhibits every month so visitors keep returning," said Rizve.

A significant portion of the park's maintenance budget goes into animal care. The staff's gentle attention to each species is both a soothing sight and an instructive lesson for children on treating animals with kindness.

Instructors also conduct brief workshops on how to care for fish in home aquariums. Both children and adults can attend these sessions every month without any additional fees.

"We want to prioritise proper living conditions, environment, filtration, and lighting so the animals do not feel distressed," said Rizve.

This park is a haven not only for birds and rare species but also for children. Upon entry, children are given interactive quizzes, turning the visit into a small scavenger hunt, with badges and stickers as rewards at the end. With guided tours on offer, children are likely to leave having learned something meaningful. The entire park is designed for interaction, whether between species or among visitors.

Amid the glare of city life, we sometimes forget that nature is where we belong. We keep nature's wilder beings and elements at arm's length. This park is a small attempt to bridge that distance, stripping away the invisible barrier we often place between ourselves and nature.

The ticket costs Tk 100 per person, while entry is free for toddlers up to two years of age. The next time you are planning a weekend outing and craving a quiet, bucolic escape, consider bringing your loved ones here.

Jet fuel price for domestic flights now Tk 227/litre

It's $1.48 for international flights

BSS, *Dhaka*

The Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) yesterday raised the price of aviation fuel (Jet A1) for domestic and international flights amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

In a notification, BERC said the price of jet fuel for domestic flights has been fixed at Tk 227.08 per litre, inclusive of duty and VAT.

And for international flights operated by both domestic and foreign airlines, the price has been set at $1.48 per litre, excluding duty and VAT.

The new rates came into effect at 12:00am.

Earlier, on March 24, BERC had set the jet fuel price for domestic flights at Tk 202.29 per litre, including duty and VAT.

For international flights by domestic and foreign airlines, the price had been set at $1.32 per litre, excluding duty and VAT.

Over 180 dead or missing in Mediterranean since March 28: UN

AFP, *Geneva*

More than 180 people are feared dead or missing in Mediterranean shipwrecks over the past 10 days, the United Nations said Tuesday, with nearly 1,000 deaths counted since the start of 2026.

The UN's International Organization for Migration said that so far this year, around 765 people had died in the Central Mediterranean -- over 460 more than during the same period in 2025.

And "across the Mediterranean as a whole, at least 990 deaths have been recorded in 2026", IOM said, adding that it was "one of the deadliest starts to a year since 2014", when it began collecting this data.

The agency said that just since March 28, at least 181 people had died or gone missing in five separate shipwrecks.

In the latest incident on Sunday, the agency said more than 80 migrants had gone missing when their boat capsized in the Central Mediterranean after departing from Tajoura Libya, with around 120 people onboard.

"The vessel took on water in rough weather before overturning," IOM said.

'A whole civilisation will die tonight'

FROM PAGE 1

Trump wrote, a statement directed at a nation that takes pride in being one of the earliest centres of civilisation, dating back thousands of years into antiquity.

"However, now that we have Complete and Total Regime Change, where different, smarter, and less radicalized minds prevail, maybe something revolutionarily wonderful can happen, WHO KNOWS? We will find out tonight, one of the most important moments in the long and complex history of the World."

It was not initially clear exactly what he meant or by what means he intended to carry out the threat.

Brian Finucane, a former US State Department legal advisor now with the International Crisis Group, said Trump's remarks "could plausibly be interpreted as a threat to commit genocide" under US and international law.

With only hours left before the deadline, a senior Iranian source said Tehran was maintaining its refusal to reopen the strait without US concessions that so far were not forthcoming.

Pakistan, which has been the main go-between, was still relaying messages, but Washington had not changed its tone, the source said. If the US carried out Trump's threat to hit Iran's power grid, Tehran would plunge Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, into darkness, the source added, a threat that had been conveyed to Washington via Qatar.

Earlier, another senior Iranian source told Reuters that Tehran had rejected a proposal conveyed by intermediaries for a temporary ceasefire.

Meanwhile, the UN rights chief Volker Turk decried the "incendiary rhetoric", warning that deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure were "a war crime".

"Under international law, deliberately attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure is a war crime. Anyone responsible for international crimes must be held to account by a competent court," Volker Turk said in a statement, without naming the United States, Israel, or Iran.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, when asked by AFP if Trump was mulling using nuclear weapons, said only the US president knows what he will do in Iran.

Earlier, the White House denied that remarks by Vice President JD Vance about military operations in Iran had contained any suggestion of a US nuclear strike against the Islamic republic.

The statement was in response to one from an account associated with former vice president Kamala Harris that said Vance implied Trump "might use nuclear weapons."

Hours before the deadline, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said more than 14 million Iranians are ready to give their lives to defend the country in the war against the United States and Israel.

"More than 14 million proud Iranians have so far registered to sacrifice their lives to defend Iran. I too have been, am, and will remain ready to give my life for Iran," President Masoud Pezehskian wrote on X.

According to images published by state media, Iranians formed human chains to protect power plants and other civil infrastructures.

After a campaign online and through SMS texts to sign up for the human chains nationwide, officials claimed that more than 14 million people had joined. Images showed dozens gathered at each location.

Meanwhile, Russia and China yesterday vetoed a UN Security Council resolution on reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a text already diluted from the green light Gulf states had sought to use force to protect the key shipping lane.

The draft resolution prepared by Bahrain and supported by the US received 11 votes in favour, 2 against, and 2 abstentions.

Infrastructure attacks reported by Iranian authorities included a US-Israeli strike on a bridge outside the city of Qom and another on a rail bridge in central Iran that killed two people.

Regional authorities also said a US-Israeli strike shut down a key highway in northern Iran connecting the city of Tabriz with Tehran. The Mizan news agency additionally reported a strike on railway tracks in Karaj, outside Tehran.

University student Metanat, whose classmate was killed two weeks ago in an attack, told AFP that she was "terrified and so should everyone else in the country be".

The 27-year-old said as far as Trump's ultimatums were concerned, "some people think they are a joke", but "death is not a joke".

Alireza Rahimi, Secretary of the Supreme Council of Youth and Adolescents of Iran, called on young people to form human chains around power plants across the country.

Iranian media reported that people were gathering around key civil infrastructure sites with national flags.

Overnight, attacks on Saudi Arabia hit a petrochemical complex in a sprawling industrial area in the eastern city of Jubail, a witness who requested anonymity told AFP, hours after similar installations in Iran were struck.

NSC dissolves Bulbul-led BCB body

FROM PAGE 1

Section 21 of its 2018 policy, which allows action against any sports body under its jurisdiction, if irregularities are proven.

The adhoc committee, headed by Tamim, has been given a three-month mandate to organise fresh elections while overseeing regular cricket operations in the interim.

"The investigation committee has identified multiple irregularities, which have been detailed in its report. As the board did not function properly and irregularities and corruption were found in its formation, the NSC has decided to dissolve the committee," NSC Sports Director Aminul said.

He added that the decision has been communicated to the International Cricket Council (ICC) through email, expressing confidence that there is no risk of sanctions over alleged government interference.

In response, Bulbul termed the move a "constitutional coup" and denied any irregularities in the October 2025 elections. In a press release issued later on Tuesday, he rejected the probe report as "defective, whimsical and legally untenable", claiming the election was conducted transparently and that the NSC lacks jurisdiction over a concluded electoral process.

He also described the adhoc committee as illegal and in violation of ICC rules, called for ICC intervention, and maintained that he remains the "legitimate BCB president until the High Court rules otherwise."

The investigation report cited a range of issues. In Category 1, it flagged deadline manipulation, interference by government and the NSC, questions over the validity of adhoc committees, lack of transparency in voter lists, and the role of a former sports adviser. In Category 2, it identified coercion and threats, e-voting manipulation, and preferential treatment, while Category 3 included allegations of abuse of presidential powers and constitutional violations.

The committee also recommended reforms such as separation of powers, independent governance, and improved technical integrity.

The other 10 members of the adhoc committee are Rashna Imam, Mirza Yasir Abbas, Syed Ibrahim Ahmed, Israfil Khosru, Minhajul Abedin, Athar Ali Khan, Tanjil Chowdhury, Salman Ispahani, Rafiqul Islam Babu and Fahim Sinha.

Minhajul Abedin and Athar Ali Khan are the two other former national cricketers alongside Tamim in the adhoc committee.

Four members are linked to the leaders of the ruling party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), either as spouses or sons. Barrister Rashna Imam is the wife of BNP lawmaker Bobby Hajjaj, while Mirza Yasir Abbas, Syed Ibrahim Ahmed and Israfil Khosru are sons of senior political figures Mirza Abbas, Salahuddin Ahmed and Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, respectively.

The panel also includes several former BCB directors -- Tanjil Chowdhury, Salman Ispahani, Rafiqul Islam and Fahim Sinha -- with backgrounds in banking, business and sports administration.

Among the 11 adhoc committee members, six were present physically while five others joined virtually for a meeting held at the BCB in Mirpur yesterday, with Tamim urging those interested from among the committee members to participate in the next BCB elections.

"We will definitely take part in the elections. I will request those who are interested to contest," Tamim said at a press conference at the BCB headquarters later in the night, addressing the media for the first time since being appointed the head of adhoc committee.

Tamim, who retired from international cricket in January last year, last played domestic cricket on March 24 last year before suffering a heart attack during a match at the BKSP. Although he recovered, he has not returned to competitive cricket. He had initially planned to contest the previous BCB elections but withdrew at the last moment, citing concerns over irregularities and external influence.

Meanwhile, Bulbul had taken charge on May 30, replacing former board president Faruque Ahmed following a no-confidence motion by directors and the NSC's withdrawal of his nomination. His tenure was marked by controversies – most notably Bangladesh's absence from the 2026 ICC T20 World Cup under the previous interim government's directive. The other controversies include strained relations with clubs and uncertainty surrounding domestic competitions.

In recent weeks, the board also saw a wave of resignations, with seven directors stepping down. While most cited personal reasons, several anonymously said that frustrations over limited influence, lack of consultation, and political dynamics played a role.

SC Secretariat vital for judicial independence

FROM PAGE 1

Contacted, Attorney General Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal told The Daily Star that his office will move an appeal challenging the High Court verdict on behalf of the state before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

He said the High Court, in its verdict, issued a certificate allowing an appeal under Article 103(2)(a) of the constitution, as the case raises a substantial question of constitutional interpretation.

The attorney general also said the High Court verdict will not be effective until the Appellate Division disposes of the planned appeal.

The High Court bench delivered a short verdict on September 2 last year following a writ petition, scrapping Article 116 of the constitution, which had vested the powers of control and discipline of lower court judges in the president.

The verdict also scrapped provisions of the fourth and 15th amendments that upheld presidential control.

The writ petition was filed on August 25, 2024, by Supreme Court lawyers Mohammad Saddam Hossen, Md Zahirul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Abdullah Sadiq, Md Mizanul Hoque, Aminul Islam Shakil, and Jaiad Bin Amjad.

They also asked the High Court to direct the government to establish a separate secretariat for the judiciary and to restore the original provision of article 116 of the charter of 1972.

During the hearing of the petition, the then attorney general Asaduzzaman and intervener Ahsanul Karim argued that article 116 maintains checks and balances among state organs, noting that the law ministry cannot transfer or post any judge without the Supreme Court's approval.

By contrast, amicus curiae (friend of the court) Sharif Bhuiyan, along with petitioners' counsel Mohammad Shishir Manir and intervener Dr Mahiuddin, contended that article 116 undermines judicial independence and the constitutional principle of separation of powers.

In the full text of the judgment, the High Court restored the original 1972 provision of article 116, which empowers the Supreme Court to oversee the posting, promotions and leaves of judges in the lower judiciary, and declared the Bangladesh Judicial Service (Disciplinary) Rules, 2017, unconstitutional.

Article 116 says, "The control (including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising judicial functions shall vest in the President and shall be exercised by him in consultation with the Supreme Court."

On November 29 last year, the interim government promulgated the Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025, for the establishment of the SC Secretariat to ensure the judiciary's full independence.

The Supreme Court Secretariat started functioning after the then chief justice Syed Refaat Ahmed inaugurated its offices on the Supreme Court premises on December 11 last year.

However, on April 2, a special parliamentary committee to scrutinise interim government ordinances recommended that 20 of the ordinances be allowed to expire, including those aimed at judicial independence.

The four ordinances that were proposed to be repealed straightaway are Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat (Interim Special Provisions) Ordinance, 2024; Supreme Court Judges Appointment Ordinance, 2025; Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025; and Supreme Court Secretariat (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026.

Tarique seeks UN chief's support

FROM PAGE 1

Contacted by The Daily Star, Shahriar Kader Siddiky, secretary of the Economic Relations Division, confirmed the letter, saying it was intended to ensure the UN secretary-general understood "the importance of the deferment" and would speak in Bangladesh's favour as the case advances toward the General Assembly.

The letter argued that Bangladesh is not ready for a sustainable graduation as overlapping crises, such as the Covid-19 aftereffects, the 2024 floods, global price volatility, capital flight and banking sector instability, have severely constrained fiscal space and institutional capacity, according to another official who has seen the letter.

It also points to the ongoing burden of hosting the Rohingya population amid declining international support.

It blames the Awami League regime for squandering most of the five-year preparatory period without adequate efforts. A Smooth Transition Strategy was only adopted in February 2025, leaving little time for implementation.

Bangladesh is currently scheduled to graduate on November 24. In February, the new government submitted a deferral request to the UN Committee for Development Policy, which assesses eligibility for LDC status and graduation, framing the push as a crisis-response measure.

The decision to push for the deferral builds on a recommendation from the previous interim administration, which had urged coordination with fellow graduating countries Nepal and Lao PDR to seek a joint delay, but stopped short of acting, leaving the final call to the elected government.

Business chambers, trade bodies and several economists have also pressed for an extension, citing concerns over the loss of preferential trade access and concessional financing that would follow graduation.

The move signals Dhaka's intent to push its case at the highest diplomatic level, instead of relying solely on the technical review process.

While LDC graduation is a recognised milestone, Bangladesh could lose more than $17.5 billion in annual exports after graduation, according to the UNCTAD.

A separate UN assessment has warned that Bangladesh's readiness has been weakened by overlapping domestic and global shocks, with the US-Israel war on Iran adding a fresh layer of uncertainty.

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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

'Enforced disappearance ordinance unnecessary'

Says ICT chief prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Crimes Tribunal Chief Prosecutor Md Aminul Islam yesterday termed the ordinance on enforced disappearance as "unnecessary", saying the offence was already more effectively covered under the tribunal's existing law.

His remarks came in response to a journalist's query after the parliament passed the International Crimes (Tribunals) (Amendment) Bill earlier yesterday, paving the way for trying enforced disappearance cases at the ICT.

"It seems to me that the Enforced Disappearance Ordinance was an unnecessary law. The offence it addresses had already been codified in our [ICT's] laws," he told a media briefing on the tribunal premises.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A mobile public toilet, specifically for people queuing to purchase fuel at filling stations, stands near the Prime Minister's Office in the capital's Tejgaon area yesterday. The Dhaka City Corporation's initiative to ease long waits for fuel is likely to gain traction in the coming days.

13TH PARLIAMENT

'New Bangladesh' vision fading amid old practices

Rumeen Farhana tells JS

Women are needed at the front of marches; they stand as shields against police tear gas and batons, and they help in times of turmoil. Yet, once everything is settled, women get ridiculed and are treated as objects.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brahmanbaria-2 MP Rumeen Farhana yesterday strongly criticised the government for appointing party-linked figures to key positions, including the governor of Bangladesh Bank and vice chancellors of several public universities.

Speaking during the thanksgiving motion on the president's address in parliament, she also noted that women had played a leading role in the recent mass uprising to topple the autocratic regime. Yet, she lamented, their presence seems to have faded away.

Speaking about the appointments made by the government, the independent MP said, "In

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1972 Constitution not to blame for authoritarian rule

Says Shahdeen Malik, points to its misuse by those in power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Constitution of 1972 was not responsible for authoritarian rule, lack of accountability, or arbitrariness in past years; rather, it was repeatedly misused by those in power, said constitutional expert Dr Shahdeen Malik yesterday.

He made the remarks at a memorial lecture titled "Liberation War and the Constitution of 1972", held at the Liberation War Museum in Agargaon, marking the museum's 30th founding anniversary.

"The authoritarian rule, unaccountable social order, and arbitrariness of the past regime were not the fault of the 1972 Constitution," he said.

He noted that the constitution was drafted through extensive year-long discussion, debate, and exchange of views among elected representatives, who later resigned and called fresh elections -- an example he described as rare globally. "This is the core strength of

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

ACC sets records in probes, convictions in 2025

Experts warn numbers alone don't reflect independence, effectiveness

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) set new benchmarks for inquiries, case filings, and convictions in 2025, though experts warn that numerical growth alone does not guarantee institutional effectiveness.

ACC data shows that 13,877 complaints were lodged between January 1 and December 31, 2025.

The commission initiated investigations into 2,536 of these -- around 18 percent -- marking the highest annual inquiry volume since its inception in 2004. Historically, the ACC investigated only 4 to 5 percent of complaints each year.

In 2024, the commission investigated 1,894 of 15,842 complaints, or 11.95 percent, which was considered a milestone at the time.

Case filings also increased significantly. The ACC filed 594 cases in 2025, the highest in a decade, naming nearly 3,000 individuals. In comparison, it filed 451 cases in 2024, 348 in 2023, 347 in 2022, 406 in 2021, and 404 in 2020.

Last year, the ACC submitted charge sheets in 413 cases and filed final reports in 89. It also disposed of 47 complaints and ordered 432 individuals to submit wealth statements.

The conviction rate in disposed cases rose to 52 percent, up from 48 percent in 2024.

The commission also stepped up efforts to seize illegal assets. Based on 370 applications, courts ordered the attachment of assets worth about Tk 29,310 crore, including Tk 6,137 crore in immovable property and Tk 23,172 crore in movable assets.

Despite these figures, experts remain cautious.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said assessing the ACC's success solely on the number of inquiries is not appropriate.

"The past year was exceptional in many respects, particularly in terms

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

ACC data shows that 13,877 complaints were lodged between January 1 and December 31, 2025. The commission initiated investigations into 2,536 of these -- around 18 percent -- marking the highest annual inquiry volume since its inception in 2004.

'BNP holds legacy of 1971, '90, '24'

State minister tells JS; opposition demands the 'false claims' be expunged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief adviser of the immediate past interim government, Prof Muhammad Yunus had travelled to London to hand over the "trophy" of the 2024 July–August movement to Tarique Rahman and return with an election date, State Minister for LGRD Mir Shahe Alam said yesterday.

He made the remarks while participating in the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech in the Jatiya Sangsad.

The state minister claimed that the "trophies" of three major political movements in the country -- the 1971 Liberation War, the 1990 mass uprising and the July uprising -- belong to the BNP.

"All three trophies are in our house. Only BNP can showcase such trophies. Awami League can claim 1971 and 1990, but not July–August. The opposition can claim July–August, but not 1971 and 1990," he said.

His remarks drew protests from opposition MPs.

Shahe Alam continued, "Opposition MPs may shout. They can talk about 1990. But in 1986, they

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'We brought blood for him, but it was too late'

Mother recounts son's death while testifying at ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"My brother had just brought three bags of blood for my son, but doctors then told us blood was no longer needed. My son had died."

Saying this, Hasi Akter, mother of July uprising victim Rakib Hossain, broke down in tears while testifying as a prosecution witness in a crimes against humanity case filed over the killing of 28 people in Rampura on July 18–19, 2024, during the uprising.

Hasi, an office assistant at Aftabnagar Power Grid office, said her only son, Rakib Hossain, worked there as a cleaner.

Rakib, who had been participating in the July uprising from the beginning, was shot in the abdomen near the slope of Rampura Bridge, in front of the Aftabnagar gate, during a protest with friends on July 19, and later succumbed to the injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Hasi and her son-in-law rushed by rickshaw to Aftabnagar Nagarik Hospital, where they learned he had been shot in the abdomen nearby. He was later transferred to DMCH on doctors' advice.

According to Hasi's testimony, around 9:30am on that day, Rakib's sister Rupa went to his room with breakfast but found him missing. While searching nearby, Hasi learned from her son-in-law

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

A woman is busy crafting decorative clay items, including plates, pottery, elephants, horses and other figures, ahead of Pahela Baishakh celebrations across the country. She sends finished products to a showroom just outside her family home to maintain a continuous display. The photo was taken at Dumuri village in Rajshahi yesterday.

'Implement referendum verdict'

Demands 11-party alliance, announces 7-day programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jamaat-e-Islami-led 11-party alliance has announced weeklong programmes demanding the government convene a session of the Constitutional Reform Council for implementing the referendum verdict and preventing "the return of fascism".

The programme, which includes protests, leaflet distribution, and seminars in Dhaka and other metropolitan cities and districts, was announced by Maulana Mamunul Haque, ameer of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, at a press conference at Al-Falah Auditorium yesterday noon.

The announcement came following a meeting of the alliance's top leaders held at Jamaat's central office in Moghbazar earlier in the morning.

According to the announced schedule, leaders and activists of the alliance will carry out leaflet distribution and public outreach programmes nationwide on April 9-15.

In addition, protest programmes will be observed in all metropolitan cities on April 11, and in all districts on April 12.

A national seminar will be held

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Kamal Uddin Shabuj chief editor of BSS

BSS, *Dhaka*

The government yesterday appointed journalist Kamal Uddin Shabuj as the managing director and chief editor of state-run news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).

The public administration ministry issued a gazette notification announcing his appointment under the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha Act, 2018 on a contractual basis for a period of one year from the date of his joining.

Kamal Uddin Shabuj previously served BSS for 32 years and retired from the national news agency as the news editor in 2023.

After the retirement, he joined the Dainik Desh Rupantor as its editor, and until his new appointment, he was serving the daily as chief editor.

During his service in BSS, he also served in the reporting team with various assignments, including the task of covering former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia for some 10 years.

Shabuj was elected twice as the president and general secretary of the Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Members of low-income families wait for hours from early morning to buy rice and flour at subsidised prices under the government's OMS programme. The photo was taken at Boyra Mohila College Boundary Road in Khulna yesterday.

RAPE OF JU STUDENT

Victim alleges threats to withdraw case

Accused still absconding

JU CORRESPONDENT

A man accused of abducting, torturing and raping a student of Jahangirnagar University has allegedly been threatening her and her family to withdraw the case filed against him.

The accused, Tarikul Islam, a graduate of JU's Institute of Information Technology from the 44th batch, remains at large despite the case being filed on February 25, a day after the alleged incident.

On March 7, the investigation was transferred from Ashulia Police Station to the Detective Branch (DB).

"He has been pressuring me to withdraw the case and is now even proposing marriage," the woman told The Daily Star.

According to her, Tarikul has continued to harass her and her family, issuing threats and posting on social media in an attempt to justify his actions.

She alleged that the accused posted a document online in an attempt to defame her, including a Google Drive link containing 289 compromising and doctored images.

She also said police did not accept her complaint when she recently tried to file a case over cyberbullying and blackmail.

Rubel Howlader, OC of Ashulia Police Station, said the allegation did not warrant filing a case but was suitable for a general diary (GD).

"A GD was subsequently lodged, and the matter is now being investigated by the detectives ," he said.

'New Bangladesh' vision fading amid

FROM PAGE 3

every country, the central bank is the regulatory authority for financial institutions and acts as the government's bank. Looking at other South Asian countries, one sees highly qualified individuals with PhDs from institutions like Princeton, appointed to central banks. In contrast, after the formation of the new government in Bangladesh, the person appointed (as Bangladesh Bank governor) was a member of BNP's election committee and managing director of a sweater factory."

"The same pattern is evident in the appointments of vice chancellors at universities, where party-affiliated VCs and pro-VCs have been installed. Being politically active is not condemnable, but if one cannot be appointed without party affiliation, that is unfortunate," she added.

Rumeen said the July uprising was driven by the dream of building a new Bangladesh, a new kind of politics, and a country for all, where no one would be excluded on the basis of religion, ethnicity, or gender identity.

"Women were at the forefront of this movement. We saw a wave of young, new faces. Yet within a year, those women seem to have disappeared. Why?" she asked.

"Women are needed at the front of marches; they stand as shields against police tear gas and batons, and they help in times of turmoil. Yet, once everything is settled, women are treated as objects -- ridiculed for their clothes, their faces, their words, their laughter," she said.

She also said the balance of power between the president and the prime minister had long been a subject of debate for both the ruling party and the opposition, before and after the 2024 uprising. In its Vision 2030 and 31-point programme, the BNP had put forward specific proposals on the issue.

"That is why we had expected the president, this time, to deliver a speech of his own rather than merely reading out a cabinet-approved text. But once again, we saw the president compelled to deliver a speech cleared by the cabinet. If we cannot allow the president even this small measure of independence, then what kind of balance are we talking about?" asked Rumeen.

'BNP holds legacy of 1971, '90, '24'

FROM PAGE 3

joined the Awami League's election with fanfare, not us."

As protests intensified, Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad intervened, asking members not to obstruct proceedings and to present their arguments in due course.

Resuming his speech, the state minister said, "In the July uprising, we were all with the students and people. We did not take the trophy from anyone. But who was the captain? That is known to Dr Muhammad Yunus. That is why he went to London, handed the trophy to our captain, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, and came back with the election date."

"This proves which party and which leader played the leading role in the movement. There can be many participants, but only one captain," he added.

Addressing Speaker Hafiz, Shahe Alam further said, "Seeing you here, some may be pleased; some may not. But you represent 1971. That credit goes to BNP, because independence was declared by President Ziaur Rahman."

The state minister pointed to the presence of freedom fighters on the treasury benches and claimed none were on the opposition side, prompting renewed protests.

The speaker responded by noting that freedom fighters were also present on the opposition benches, citing Gazi Nazrul Islam as an example.

Mir Shahe Alam also referred to Khaleda Zia, saying that during her 2001 government she had honoured opposition MPs by providing them cars with flags and indemnity.

He stressed that the current parliament was the outcome of collective political struggles.

He also said that in the 2018 election, under the banner of Jatiya Oikya Front, the current opposition leader Shafiqur Rahman and Jamaat leaders had contested using the BNP's sheaf of paddy symbol.

Following his speech, Shafiqur took the floor, saying, "We pledged from day one that this opposition will not be conventional. We will cooperate in all just causes and will uncompromisingly oppose all unjust, anti-people measures. But today, while thanking the president, the honourable member has overwhelmed us with countless falsehoods."

"Some of these you yourself corrected. We demand that no false information be presented in parliament. We demand expunging of false information," he added, addressing the speaker.

In response, the speaker said, "I will examine the speech. If there is any unparliamentary or false information, it will be expunged."

Enforced disappearance ordinance

FROM PAGE 3

He added that since the tribunal already had jurisdiction to try such allegations, there had been no need for a separate law or tribunal.

"With the ordinance now merged with the Tribunal Act, I think it is a good decision," he added.

Earlier, during parliamentary discussions, the law minister said incorporating the ordinance's provisions into the tribunal's law reflects the government's commitment to ensuring justice in enforced disappearance cases.

Replying to a query on the tribunal's capacity, Aminul Islam acknowledged constraints in manpower, logistics and the number of tribunals.

"Our jurisdiction covers the whole country. If all complaints are brought here, there may be several thousand cases. Naturally, our current manpower and setup are already under considerable pressure," he said.

The chief prosecutor also said capital punishment could be awarded if the charges are proven in a crimes against humanity case over the killing of Begum Rokeya University student Abu Sayed during the July 2024 uprising.

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 is set to deliver its verdict in the case tomorrow (April 9).

"Our investigation has found undeniable and irrefutable evidence. We believe the charges against the accused will be proven," he said.

"Since we believe we have been able to prove the case, we hope to receive the expected verdict," he added.

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

TENDER NOTICE

Tender No. NSU/25-26-T08

North South University is inviting sealed offers from bona fide/reputed organisations/distributors/business partners/agents for supplying desktop computer for North South University as described in the tender schedule.

Detail of the items mentioned below:

Lot: 1- Core i5 desktop computer
Lot: 2- Core i7 clone desktop computer
Lot: 3- Clone desktop computer

Interested bidders may collect schedule of tender from **Southeast Bank Ltd., Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka-1229** within the banking hour on all working days till **April 22, 2026** by paying non-refundable amount of taka 1,000.00 (one thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of **"North South University"** along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **April 23, 2026 by 2:15 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Internal Affairs
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229
Phone: +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204, Fax: +88-02-55668202
Email: procurement@northsouth.edu. Web: www.northsouth.edu

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Inspector General
Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

Corrigendum of International Tender Notice

Memo No-44.01.0000.058.07.019.25/344 Date: 07/04/2026.

Invitation for International Tender Notice Published in different national dailies as per Invitation tender ref No-44.01.0000.058.07.019.25/05(2025-2026) Date: 02/02/2026 for procurement of **7.62x51 mm Cartridge** in FY 2025-2026 is hereby amended as follows:

Particular Information	Published	Revised
Tender last selling date	15 April 2026	26 April 2026
Tender closing date and time	16 April 2026 at 12.00 hrs	27 April 2026 at 12.00 hrs
Tender opening date and time (Technical offer only)	16 April 2026 at 12.30 hrs	27 April 2026 at 12.30 hrs

7/4/26

(Md. Moniruzzaman, BPM-Sheba)
BP No-7806119738
Assistant Inspector General (Arms & Ammunition)
For Inspector General, Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
Phone: 02-47120270
E-mail: aigarmsbd@gmail.com & aiga_a@police.gov.bd

GD-751

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Director
Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, Bogura
Email: szrmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

Memo No: 1473 Date: 7/4/26

e-Tender Notice (NCT)

e-Tender is in the e-GP System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procuring of following goods.

Tender ID	Name of Tender	Invitation Reference No	Last Selling Date	Closing & Opening Date	Remarks
1254091	Supply of Medicine (MSR Group: A -Lot-4) (Code No. 3252105) at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, Bogura during the FY: 2025-26	SZMCH/ Tender/25-26/23	22/04/2026	23/04/2026	OTM
1254092	Supply of MSR Group-E: Chemical Re-agent, X-ray films etc (Lot-2) (Code No. 3252105) at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, Bogura during the FY: 2025-26	SZMCH/ Tender/25-26/24	22/04/2026	23/04/2026	OTM
1254093	Supply of MSR Group-B: Surgical Instrument-Lot-4 (Code No. 3252105) at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, Bogura during the FY: 2025-26	SZMCH/ Tender/25-26/25	22/04/2026	23/04/2026	OTM

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and any offline/hard copies will not be accepted.

01. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
02. Detail about the Tender have shown in e-Tender notice and e-Tender document. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Brig. General Md. Mohsin
Director
Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital
Bogura.

GD-752

The rubble of a destroyed building is pictured following overnight Israeli bombardment on the village of Maarake in southern Lebanon yesterday. The Israeli military said that it had completed the deployment of ground troops along a "defence line" in southern Lebanon, where it is fighting Iran-backed Hezbollah. PHOTO: AFP

WEST BENGAL SIR

Nearly 9.1 m names likely to be deleted from electoral rolls

THE STATESMAN

With the judicial adjudication process for voters in West Bengal concluded on Monday midnight, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has estimated that the total number of deleted voters in West Bengal has risen to approximately 91 lakh.

However, the number might increase nominally after the process is completed.

As per the figures provided by the office of the chief electoral officer, West Bengal, of 60,06,675 cases referred for judicial adjudication, the process has been finalised for 59,84,512 cases. Again, out of the figure, the number of voters who have been deemed "excludable" and hence "deleted" by the judicial officers stands at 27,16,393.

Before the notification of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) was issued for West Bengal in November last year, the total number of voters in the state stood at 7,66,37,529. In the final voters' list published on February 28, the deletion figure rose to 63,66,952.

"Now, with 27,16,393 cases found excludable by the judicial officers, the total number of deleted voters in West Bengal in the entire SIR exercise has increased to 90,83,345," explained an officer from the CEO's office.

Murshidabad has the highest number of deleted names, with 4,55,137, followed by North 24 Parganas with 3,25,666, and another minority-dominated district, Malda, with 2,39,375.

The two-phase Assembly polls in West Bengal will be held on April 23 and April 29. In the first phase, voting will be held for 152 Assembly constituencies, and in the second phase, the remaining 142 seats will have polling. The results will be declared on May 4.

Iran war jeopardises US global leadership

Says Italy minister

REUTERS, *Rome*

The Iran war has put US global leadership on the line, Italy's Defence Minister Guido Crosetto said, expressing fear about the "madness" of nuclear escalation.

Like some other Nato allies reluctant to join US President Donald Trump's attacks on Iran, Italy last week denied permission for US military aircraft to land at the Sigonella air base in Sicily en route to the Middle East.

"This war is also putting the United States at risk in its global leadership," Crosetto told Italian daily Corriere della Sera in an interview published yesterday.

Crosetto, a close ally of Italian PM Giorgia Meloni who has a good ties with Trump, said he worried the conflict could take an even worse turn and cited the 1945 US nuclear bombings of Japan in World War Two.

"Just think: it was human beings like us who decided that even Hiroshima and Nagasaki were acceptable means of ending a conflict. Unfortunately, we still possess nuclear weapons, and those who do not have them are seeking to acquire them. We have learnt nothing," he said.

"The risk is madness, and what we are experiencing is a conflict in which every action triggers a reaction at a higher level".

'This is evil, madness'

Trump branded 'crazy' over apocalyptic Iran threats

AFP, *Washington*

Donald Trump is no stranger to provocative language. But his threat to wipe out Iranian civilisation and other recent menacing comments have prompted critics to question the US president's mental health.

The oldest elected president in American history has ramped up his apocalyptic rhetoric as his frustration grows with Tehran's refusal to make a deal to end the Middle East war.

Even some former allies have called for the 79-year-old Republican's removal from office after a series of outlandish and sometimes expletive-riddled social media posts.

The world is now guessing whether Trump will follow through when his Tuesday evening deadline for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz expires -- or back down as the former businessman has often done before.

"A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will," Trump posted on his Truth Social network 12 hours before the deadline falls.

As global alarm grew, the White House was forced to dismiss speculation that his statement -- and comments by Vice President JD Vance about "tools in our toolkit that we so far haven't decided to use" -- meant Trump was ready to use nuclear weapons.

In the past, the former New York property magnate has often trumpeted a negotiating style that relies on maximalist positions in order to extract more from a deal.

"He does seem a bit more unhinged than in the past," Peter Loge, director of George Washington University's School of Media, told AFP. But he added that "this feels to me like a broader pattern of Trump bluster.

"My guess is as we approach one more deadline in a long series of deadlines, the president will declare victory, say I drove Iran to the bargaining table, I'll give them two more weeks.

"Then we'll see this movie again in a couple of weeks."

Even by Trump's own outspoken standards, he has in recent days used distinctly unpresidential language.

"Open the Fuckin' Strait, you crazy bastards, or you'll be living in Hell," Trump said on Truth Social, on the morning of Easter Sunday.

Trump was barely more measured in a series of interactions with the media in the incongruous setting of an Easter Egg Roll at the White House on Monday.

Surrounded by hundreds of kids and alongside a giant Easter Bunny and First Lady Melania Trump, the president denied that targeting Iranian power plants and civil infrastructure would be a war crime.

His extreme language has prompted a slew of critics -- including some one-time allies -- to question Trump's sanity.

"We cannot kill an entire civilization. This is evil and madness," hard-right ex-congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, who split with Trump last year, said on X.

Former loyalists including Greene have also joined Democrats calling for Trump's cabinet to invoke the 25th amendment, which provides for a transfer of power if a president is unable to govern, particularly in the event of illness.

Right-wing TV host Tucker Carlson called Trump's Easter Sunday comments the "first step toward nuclear war," ex-White House press secretary Anthony Scaramucci called him a "crazy person" and sought Trump's removal from office, and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones asked on his INFO WARS show: "How do we 25th Amendment his ass?"

Former Democratic vice-presidential candidate Tim Walz meanwhile said "the President has lost his mind."

But Trump himself brushed off questions about his mental health, when asked by an AFP journalist at a briefing at the White House on Monday.

"I haven't heard that," Trump said in response to a question about critics saying his mental state should be examined following his "crazy bastards" comment.

Israeli airstrike kills at least 10 near Gaza school

REUTERS, *Cairo/Gaza*

An Israeli airstrike killed at least 10 people and wounded several others outside a school housing displaced Palestinians on Monday, health officials said, the latest violence to overshadow the fragile US-backed Gaza ceasefire deal.

Before the strikes, some Palestinians had clashed with members of an Israeli-backed militia, who they said attacked the school in an attempt to abduct some people, medics and residents said.

In the midst of the clashes, east of the Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, Israeli drones fired two missiles into the area, killing at least 10 people and wounding several others, they added.

It was not immediately clear how many civilians had been killed in the strikes, which hit in a closely packed neighbourhood of mostly displaced Palestinians.

Earlier on Monday, an Israeli airstrike killed one Palestinian and wounded a child as they travelled on a motorbike in Gaza City, medics said.

Medics said that Israeli forces killed another Palestinian when they opened fire on a vehicle in central Gaza, taking Monday's death toll to at least 12.

The Israeli military said they fired at the "unmarked vehicle", which continued to accelerate toward troops despite "warning shots".

The World Health Organization's chief, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said a contractor in Gaza was killed during a security incident, prompting the organization to suspend medical evacuations from Gaza via Rafah to Egypt until further notice.

The Israeli military said two local employees of WHO were injured and that the incident was under review. WHO said that two of its staff members were present but were not injured in the incident.

12 killed in fresh Ukraine, Russia strikes

AFP, *Kyiv*

Russian artillery and aerial attacks killed nine people in Ukraine -- including a child -- in strikes across the country yesterday, officials said.

Those strikes came as Moscow, which invaded Ukraine more than four years ago, said a Ukrainian drone had hit a house in Russia, killing a child and his parents.

Russia's invasion has cost hundreds of thousands of lives and forced millions of people from their homes in the bloodiest conflict in Europe since World War II.

The two sides have stepped up deadly long-range drone and missile attacks in recent months, mainly targeting energy infrastructure, with Moscow aiming to dent Ukrainian resolve and Kyiv targeting Russian energy revenues.

Russian shelling in the southern city of Kherson -- captured by Russia and then liberated in 2022 -- killed four people and wounded several others, a regional official said.

The official, Oleksandr Prokudin, likened the Russian shelling on Kherson to "hell" and posted video showing bodies strewn on the street and bloodied victims.

The attack in Kherson came just hours after a Russian drone attack on a passenger bus in the frontline city of Nikopol killed four people, President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

RUPANTARITA PRAKRITIK GAS COMPANY LIMITED
(A company of Petrobangla)
Plot#27, Nikunja-2, Airport Road, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh.

Corrigendum Notice

Ref. No. 28.19.0000.701.40.11.26/594 Date: 07-04-2026

Subject: Invitation for the Enlistment (IFE) as a Potential LNG Supplier for Supplying LNG on Spot Basis.

This is to notify all concerned that the following amendment has been made for **Ref. No. 28.19.0000.701.40.11.26/589 dated 19-03-2026** regarding the Invitation for the Enlistment (IFE) as a potential LNG supplier to supply LNG on Spot basis: Description

Description	Amendment Particulars
Application Closing Date, Time	The application closing date has been extended to **23 April 2026 at 12.30 pm (BST)** instead of **09 April 2026 at 12.30 pm**.

All other terms and conditions of the original notice/documents shall remain **unchanged**. This corrigendum shall be treated as an integral part of the original IFE documents.

This notice is available on websites: **www.rpgcl.org.bd; www.petrobangla.org.bd; https://emrd.gov.bd** and **www.bppa.gov.bd**.

RPGCL/PR-276

Engr. Md. Anwarul Islam
Managing Director
Tel: +8802-41040229
Email: md.lng@rpgcl.org.bd
Website: www.rpgcl.org.bd

GD-753

AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN

Storms, floods kill at least 188 people

AFP, *Kabul*

Heavy rain, storms and floods have battered Asian neighbours Afghanistan and Pakistan for more than two weeks, killing at least 188 people, disaster officials in both countries said yesterday.

In Afghanistan, which already faces a severe humanitarian crisis, rain, floods, landslides and lightning strikes killed 123 people since March 26, a spokesman of the national disaster management authority said. Between Sunday and Tuesday alone, 46 people died across several provinces, he added.

In northern Pakistan, the death toll has risen in recent days, reaching 47 people including 27 children since March 25, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial disaster management agency told AFP.

And in southwestern Balochistan, at least 18 people have died since March 20, according to the latest figures from local authorities.

The severe weather has also caused widespread damage and blocked major roads.

Sonali Bank PLC
Information Technology Division
(IT Procurement & Maintenance)
Head Office, Dhaka

Memo No.: HO/ITD (IT P&M)/purchase/ Date: 02/04/2026

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

SL No.	Tender ID No.	Name of Tender	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date& Time
1.	1251307	Procurement of Radmin Software for Sonali Bank PLC.	19-Apr-2026 15:00 PM	19-Apr-2026 15.30 PM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no office/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to respective time schedule.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd/-
Deputy General Manager

GD-756

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

End cronyism in the banking sector

Habitual defaulters, their enablers must no longer be afforded leniency

The finance minister's submission to parliament of the list of top loan defaulters is another stark reminder of how political cronyism has, over the years, enabled a select few to manipulate the system, pushing the banking sector to the brink of collapse. The facts presented reveal both the scale and the depth of the problem. They also underscore how formidable the challenge will be for the BNP government in recovering these vast sums and holding those responsible for this debacle to account.

Among the most striking revelations is the dominance of the S Alam Group, already implicated in some of the most serious financial crimes imaginable. The group exercises direct and indirect control over 11 companies listed among the top 20 defaulters. These companies alone account for at least Tk 22,881 crore in defaulted loans—approximately 65 percent of the total owed by the top 20 defaulters. For context, this figure exceeds half of the current fiscal year's health sector allocation of Tk 41,908 crore. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has already filed multiple cases against the group, alleging embezzlement and money laundering worth billions of dollars. The fate of these cases may now hinge on international arbitration, as the group has reportedly moved to the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

Beyond S Alam Group, the list of top defaulters also includes two entities of the Beximco Group, owned by Salman F Rahman, a powerful adviser to the deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina. He is reportedly facing multiple allegations, including financial crimes and other serious charges linked to his political role under the previous regime. The list further reflects the extent of political patronage in banking decisions, with several top-defaulter companies linked to former members of parliament.

Expanding beyond the top 20, the finance minister also disclosed that loans involving current members of parliament and their associated entities amount to Tk 11,117 crore, although the exact number of such individuals was not specified. Notably, this figure excludes individuals who obtained stay orders from the High Court, suggesting that the true scale may be even larger. While borrowing is not inherently problematic, these revelations offer little assurance that the entrenched nexus between political power and banking will dissipate any time soon. They also highlight a troubling reality: recent electoral reforms have not gone far enough to prevent defaulters from contesting for public offices.

Finally, the staggering volume of non-performing loans reached at the end of last year—amounting to Tk 5.45 lakh crore—underscores the severity of the crisis in banking governance. As noted in a report in this paper, this sum could have financed up to four nuclear power plants comparable to Rooppur, despite concerns that the Rooppur project itself is among the most expensive of its kind globally. Bangladesh can ill afford the persistence of such systemic failures. The new government must urgently initiate a robust recovery drive to safeguard depositors' savings. Habitual defaulters, along with their enablers, must no longer be afforded leniency.

An investigation long overdue

Tonu's rapists and murderers must not go unpunished

It is deeply disturbing that 10 years after the rape and murder of Sohagi Jahan Tonu, a student of Cumilla Victoria College and a theatre activist, justice remains elusive, with no arrests, no trial, and little visible progress in the case. According to recent reports, a Cumilla court has now ordered the cross-matching of DNA profiles of three retired army personnel in connection with the case. While this is a positive development and may suggest renewed momentum, it also underscores how painfully slow and inconclusive the pursuit of justice has been.

On March 20, 2016, Tonu was found dead inside Cumilla Cantonment after going out to tutor a student. Subsequent findings confirmed she had been raped before being murdered, with DNA evidence indicating multiple perpetrators. However, despite two autopsies—the first of which drew objections and led to exhumation of her body for a second autopsy—and forensic evidence, investigators have still failed to determine the exact circumstances of her death and identify the perpetrators.

Since her death, Tonu's family has endured unimaginable anguish and pain. According to her mother, she has had no contact with investigators for two years and is unaware of who is handling the case. Yet, her father, despite his illness, continues to hope for justice within his lifetime.

Over the past decade, the case has seen 79 hearings and been handled by six investigation officers across four agencies. This raises several questions: how can a case with such grave allegations and forensic evidence fail to reach trial after ten years? Are certain quarters above the law? What message does this send to victims and families who rely on the state for justice? If a case that once sparked nationwide protests can languish like this, what hope remains for the countless other victims whose stories never make headlines?

The latest court order for DNA cross-matching must therefore mark a genuine turning point, not just another procedural step that leads nowhere. Authorities must ensure that this process is carried out promptly, transparently, and with the highest degree of professionalism. More importantly, there must be a clear timeline for completing the investigation and initiating the trial. With the new government in power, there is renewed hope among Tonu's family that the case will finally move towards resolution. We stand with them in their long and painful wait for justice and urge that the judicial process must not be obstructed or influenced from any quarter. The state must ensure justice is delivered without further delay, and those responsible for Tonu's brutal murder are punished according to law.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

The Venus de Milo is found
On this day in 1820, the Venus de Milo, one of the most famous ancient statues in the world, was found in pieces on the Aegean island of Melos.

We must adapt as AI reshapes diplomacy and state power

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Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

MOHAMMAD KHORSHED A. KHASTAGIR

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a distant technological frontier. It is already shaping how governments make decisions, information circulates, borders are managed, and how citizens interact with the state. For Bangladesh, this transformation is increasingly visible in everyday realities—from visa applications to labour markets, from digital services to global narratives about who we are. Despite that, the national conversation on AI remains largely confined to innovation, startups, and automation.

What is less discussed, but far more consequential, is that AI is becoming a new domain of diplomacy and sovereignty. If Bangladesh does not recognise and respond to this shift, it risks entering a future where decisions affecting its citizens are increasingly made or mediated by systems it neither designs, governs, nor adequately controls.

For decades, diplomacy has operated within a familiar framework. States negotiated with states, sovereignty was territorial, and rules were defined through treaties such as the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Today, that landscape is changing in a transformative way. A small number of global technology actors—companies controlling cloud infrastructure, data systems, and AI platforms—now influence how information flows, how risks are assessed, and how decisions are made. These systems underpin everything from financial transactions to migration screening. In practical terms, power is increasingly exercised not only through institutions but through algorithms and digital infrastructures.

For countries like Bangladesh, this creates a new challenge. Engagement is no longer limited to governments. There is also a growing, often indirect, interaction with systems designed elsewhere, trained on foreign data, and aligned with external institutional assumptions. This asymmetry is not merely technical; it is structural, with implications for how sovereignty is exercised in a digital age.

A clear example of this transformation can be seen in visa processing. Across many developed countries, AI-powered tools are now used to assess visa applications. These systems analyse risk patterns, flag anomalies, and support decision-making processes. While presented as efficient and objective, they often operate through opaque models trained on historical data. For Bangladeshi applicants, this can translate into a difficult reality: decisions that are increasingly automated, less transparent, and harder to challenge. When a rejection is issued, it is often unclear whether it reflects a human judgement or an algorithmic risk profile shaped by past data biases.

VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

Beyond formal documentation, there is also a growing perception that applicants' digital footprints, including social media activity such as Facebook profiles, may be informally scrutinised to assess attitudes, affiliations, or perceived behavioural risks. Whether systematic or discretionary, such practices introduce an additional layer of opacity, where personal expression in digital spaces may indirectly influence mobility outcomes.

Compounding this challenge are emerging concerns regarding identity credibility. Perceptions, particularly in some destination countries, that individuals from forcibly displaced Rohingya populations may have obtained Bangladeshi passports through systemic leakages, have begun to cast a shadow over the integrity of Bangladesh's otherwise advanced e-passport system. Even if limited in scale, such narratives can disproportionately affect trust in documentation, reinforcing risk perceptions within algorithmic systems that rely heavily on identity assurance.

This evolving reality is not merely a consular issue. It reflects a broader shift in how borders are governed—through what may be described as algorithmic border regimes. If states do not understand how such systems operate, they cannot effectively engage, negotiate, or contest outcomes. In this sense, visa challenges are an early indicator of a deeper transformation in global governance.

At the same time, another structural shift is underway. AI is no longer confined to industrial automation; it is increasingly capable of performing white-collar tasks such as drafting documents, analysing data, translating content, and supporting legal or financial decisions. This raises important questions for Bangladesh's economic model, particularly in relation to overseas employment and remittance flows. If global demand for certain categories of labour shifts due to AI-driven efficiencies, the implications will extend beyond economics into diplomacy, affecting labour agreements, migration pathways, and the protection of workers abroad.

An often overlooked dimension of this transformation is language. Large AI systems do not simply process languages; they reason through them. When a language is underrepresented, the system struggles to interpret its legal concepts, institutional frameworks, and social nuances. Bangla, despite being spoken by nearly 300 million people, remains underrepresented in many global AI architectures. This creates a subtle but significant distortion: national realities are filtered through external linguistic and conceptual frameworks. In this context, language becomes not just a cultural asset but an infrastructure of sovereignty.

These developments point to a necessary conclusion: diplomacy must evolve. AI can no longer be treated as a purely technical domain managed by ICT agencies. It must be recognised as a strategic field requiring diplomatic engagement, policy coordination, and institutional capacity. This includes understanding how AI systems influence migration and visa decisions, engaging in global AI governance discussions, ensuring representation of Bangla in AI ecosystems, and preparing for labour market transformations driven by technological change.

One practical step forward would be to strengthen institutional capacity within the foreign policy apparatus. This could involve creating a dedicated focus on AI and digital sovereignty within existing structures, enabling more systematic monitoring of global developments, more effective international engagement, and more informed policy responses. This approach aligns with emerging efforts to modernise diplomatic frameworks for the digital era, including proposals to extend traditional diplomatic protections into cyberspace and AI-mediated environments.

The urgency of this shift cannot be overstated. Global investments in AI infrastructure are accelerating, governance frameworks are being shaped in international forums, and standards are being set, often without meaningful participation from developing countries. If Bangladesh remains passive, it will have to adapt to systems designed by others. If it acts strategically, it can help shape those systems, ensuring that they reflect its realities, its language, and its national interests.

Evidently, the future of sovereignty will not be determined solely by borders, treaties, or military capabilities. It will increasingly depend on who understands, shapes, and governs the digital systems through which power is exercised. Artificial intelligence is not replacing diplomacy; it is redefining it. For Bangladesh, recognising this shift is the first step. Acting on it is the real test.

Lifting ban on vaping is not the reform we need

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MOHAMMAD IHTESHAM HASSAN

Bangladesh had the opportunity to set a good example by banning the production and sale of e-cigarettes through the Smoking and Tobacco Products Use (Control) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025. But the government's plan to possibly amend the anti-tobacco ordinance, withdrawing the ban on the production and sale of e-cigarettes, raises serious public health concerns.

To understand why this matters, one must first consider the policy landscape that existed before the ordinance. E-cigarettes operate in a legal grey zone. Stores and online marketplaces selling vapes functioned with little oversight, and enforcement agencies had no clear mandate to intervene. Over the past decade, use of these products has been increasing, particularly among teenagers and young adults. Currently, e-cigarettes are easily available on online pages and marketplaces, which is alarming to begin with. So, there is a chance that legitimising sales will only increase the number of sellers and encourage more people to use tobacco products. Vaping is still socially taboo in Bangladesh, which will likely erode if the government lifts the ban and legitimises the buying and selling of e-cigarettes.

Lifting the ban would also signal a troubling inconsistency in Bangladesh's broader public health commitments. Bangladesh was one of the first countries to sign the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) during the previous tenure of the current government. Even in the BNP's election manifesto, tobacco control was explicitly pledged as a health priority to prevent non-communicable diseases arising from tobacco consumption. Therefore, it is expected that, with its renewed vision and outlook, the party would take a stronger stance against all forms of tobacco consumption and protect children and youth who are particularly susceptible to the profit motives of tobacco firms.

Proponents of lifting the ban tend to rely on a familiar and recycled set of arguments. They claim that prohibition will fuel illicit trade, that e-cigarettes are a safer alternative to traditional tobacco, and that the industry contributes to employment and revenue generation. However, how substantiated are these claims, really?

The argument that banning e-cigarettes will significantly expand illicit trade is not strongly supported by evidence. A similar narrative has been deployed by tobacco lobbies for decades, most often to resist tax hikes on conventional cigarettes. There is limited empirical evidence, either globally or in Bangladesh, to suggest that bans on tobacco products lead to a sustained increase in illicit trade. Rather, this claim both overstates the risks of illicit trade and underestimates the capacity of regulatory institutions to respond effectively.

The claim that e-cigarettes are safer is even more contentious. E-cigarettes are often portrayed as "safer" than conventional tobacco and, therefore, the lesser evil. This framing is deliberately misleading; safer than something harmful is not the same as safe. These products are relatively new, invented in the early 2000s, and long-term evidence remains limited. However, emerging research is increasingly raising concerns. Researchers from the University of New South Wales, in a March 2026 study, analysed evidence from animal studies, human case reports, and laboratory research published between 2017 and 2025. Their findings pointed to credible risks of lung and oral cancers associated with nicotine e-cigarettes.

The employment argument is equally unconvincing. Framing tobacco-linked industries as drivers of job creation overlooks the substantial economic burden they impose. Bangladesh does not need to depend on harmful industries to generate employment. With the right investment climate and targeted industrial policy, the private sector is more than capable of generating employment without the country becoming dependent on an industry whose core product causes harm.

Bangladesh's public health system has historically leaned more towards reacting to crises than preventing them. The consequences of this approach are already visible. A 2024 study by Economics for Health at Johns Hopkins University and the Institute of Health Economics at the University of Dhaka estimates that the total economic burden of tobacco use in Bangladesh stands at Tk 87,544 crore, equivalent to 1.58 percent of GDP. Tobacco use was responsible for nearly 126,000 deaths in 2018, a figure that has since risen to approximately 161,000 annually, according to the National Heart Foundation.

Lifting the ban is not a neutral administrative act. It sends a signal to young people, to the market, and to the public that vaping is acceptable and even carries tacit government endorsement. This signal will do more to normalise e-cigarette use among the youth than any advertising campaign. The government is supposed to be the guardian of its citizens' well-being, particularly for those too young or not informed to fully understand the risks involved. Sending the opposite message, in exchange for tax revenue and industry goodwill, is not a trade worth making.

We are already paying the price for decades of insufficient tobacco regulation. Choosing to repeat that mistake with a new product category, before the damage is fully visible, would be a profound failure of governance. Maintaining and enforcing the ban on e-cigarettes would be a clear affirmation of the country's commitment to protecting its citizens, particularly its youth. The alternative is a gamble Bangladesh cannot afford.

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Will the Iran war create a new world order?

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SYED RAIYAN AMIR

Operation Epic Fury launched on February 28, 2026, and struck at a moment when the post-Cold War international order was already trembling, leading the world to sense that something irreversible had begun. What we are witnessing today is not merely a regional conflict; it may well be the stress test that exposes which ideas, alliances, and institutions built over 70 years can still hold and which collapse under their own contradictions.

Let us be honest, what the Iran crisis has done is accelerate a transformation already underway, compressing decades of gradual shift into months of raw consequence.

For most of the post-World War II era, deterrence was a relatively tidy concept: two superpowers, two arsenals, and a shared understanding that destruction was too costly to contemplate. Kenneth Waltz, in *Theory of International Politics*, described the stability of bipolarity in terms that made strategic sense in 1979. But the world of 2026 is structurally different—multipolar, technologically complex, and populated by actors who have learned that asymmetric strategies can embarrass conventional power.

Iran's deterrence calculus was never purely nuclear. For years, Tehran wielded influence through proxies—Hezbollah, the Houthis, allied militias across Iraq and Syria—as a distributed deterrent architecture. That architecture did not prevent the February strikes, and its existence now raises the question of whether deterrence in a multipolar world must be reconceptualised entirely. Nuclear deterrence worked because both parties had something to lose symmetrically. What happens when one party disperses its deterrent into non-state networks, ideology, and geography?

The Maduro case sharpens this anxiety. When US forces captured Venezuela's president under a domestic criminal indictment, bypassing the International Criminal Court (ICC) framework, it sent a message that power, when sufficiently concentrated, can rewrite the rules of legal jurisdiction in real time. The ICC, already under sanctions pressure from Washington, found itself caught in a Catch-22: would prosecuting Maduro legitimise what may have been an unlawful capture? This is not merely a legal puzzle. It is a signal that the normative infrastructure of international law is being stress-tested not just by rogue actors but also by the very states that once championed it.

Henry Kissinger once argued that international order requires both legitimacy and power, and that legitimacy depends on shared frameworks among sovereign states. What the Iran war has exposed is that those frameworks are now contested at their very foundation. The US and Israel coordinated military action in a way that bypassed conventional multilateral consultation. Nato was not formally invoked. The UN Security Council remained paralysed. Regional bodies issued statements that satisfied no one.

On the other side, Russia and China, while not intervening militarily, have moved with unusual directness in the form of warnings. This shift from strategic ambiguity to deterrence through clarity matters. It means the emerging bloc architecture is not based on formal treaties or elaborate security guarantees, but on shared scepticism of US-led order and increasingly on credible threat-making. This aligns with Mearsheimer's view that states are perpetual security competitors and that liberal internationalism was always an illusion maintained by American hegemony. The emerging configuration—US-Israel-Gulf on one side, China-Russia-Iran on the other, with everyone else navigating anxiously in between—resembles a system of spheres of influence more than a rules-based order.

International law has never been perfect, but it carried weight because even states that violated it felt compelled to justify themselves within its language. The Maduro capture, the Iran strikes conducted without UN authorisation, Venezuela's move to withdraw from the Rome Statute of the ICC, are not isolated anomalies. They form a pattern suggesting that states are not abandoning international law openly but are selectively citing it when convenient and bypassing it when not. This is more dangerous than simple non-compliance, as it means instrumentalising legality.

Hugo Grotius wrote in *The Rights of War and Peace* (1625) that even war had rules deriving from natural reason shared across humanity. Today, the dispute is not over principles, but over who gets to interpret and enforce them. When the ICC drops an investigation into US sanctions against Venezuela under political pressure, and simultaneously prepares potential warrants for Maduro, the institution's neutrality becomes difficult to defend. This asymmetry, real or perceived, is precisely what pushes states towards the exit.

My own reading is this: international law is not dying, but it is entering a period of profound renegotiation. The rules that emerge from this transition may be more regional, more conditional, and more explicitly adjusted by power than the post-1945 frameworks. That may not be catastrophic; it may simply be more honest.

Also, something is revealing in the fact that the ceasefire following the June 2025 Israel-Iran conflict was announced on social media by the US president, not through a formal communiqué or the UN. This reflects a structural shift in how diplomacy is being conducted and legitimised. The traditional grammar of diplomacy—careful ambiguity, deniability, third-party mediation—is being replaced by something rawer and more immediate. China and Russia's rejection of Trump's "Peace Board" initiative was similarly conducted through public declarations. The language of deterrence is bleeding into the language of diplomacy.

The Gulf states offer perhaps the most interesting case study. Their response to the Iran war has been strategically ambiguous—neither enthusiastically aligned with Washington nor openly sympathetic to Tehran. This calculated silence is itself a diplomatic posture, which we will see more of. Middle powers are learning that in a contested multipolar system, strategic ambiguity is not weakness. It is leverage.

Chatham House analysts noted early in 2026 that even a prolonged Iran war would have "limited consequences for global GDP" but warned that some emerging economies remain acutely vulnerable to persistent high energy prices. That is a carefully calibrated assessment that perhaps understates a longer-term transformation. The Iran war has accelerated de-dollarisation trends already visible for years. Local currency settlements, alternative payment infrastructures, and gold-linked mechanisms have been gathering momentum since Russia's 2022 exclusion from SWIFT. The Iran conflict adds urgency to those trends, as states watching the weaponisation of financial systems quietly diversify their exposure. And interestingly, the usage of blockchain for financial transactions is getting bigger.

Bangladesh, like most developing nations, sits at the intersection of these pressures—energy import dependence, currency vulnerability, and supply chain exposure to Middle East conflict. The economic status quo is not collapsing; it is reconfiguring. The dollar will remain dominant for years. But the *unconditional* dominance of the dollar—the uncontested centrality of Western financial architecture—is being negotiated downwards.

This is also, and I say this with genuine conviction, a transitional moment for academia. The theoretical frameworks we have relied upon—Waltzian neorealism, Nye's liberalism, Wendt's constructivism, even Mearsheimer's offensive realism—were built to explain a world with cleaner categories: states, alliances, institutions, norms. The world of 2026 scrambles those categories. Non-state actors shape deterrence. Social media replaces communiqués. A domestic criminal indictment bypasses international arrest warrant procedures. A ceasefire is declared unilaterally on a social media platform.

Alexander Wendt, in *Social Theory of International Politics*, argued that "anarchy is what states make of it." Scholars today need to ask: what happens when states are no longer the only relevant architects of that anarchy? When proxy networks, technology companies, and domestic legal instruments all become tools of international power? The discipline of international relations is not broken, but it is overdue for a serious revision, not just an addendum.

What this moment demands, from governments, institutions, and scholars alike, is intellectual honesty about what has changed and what still holds. The world is not witnessing the end of order. It is watching one order negotiate its succession with another. That negotiation will be messy, sometimes violent, and deeply consequential, and the choices made in the coming months will define its terms for a generation.

An Iranian flag lies amidst the rubble of a building of the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran, which was damaged in a strike, amid the US-Israeli conflict with Iran on April 7, 2026. PHOTO: REUTERS

Repeal of Supreme Court ordinances clouds judicial independence

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SHAMIM A. ZAHEDY

When reflecting on broken promises, people sometimes refer to Sunil Gangopadhyay's poem "*Keu Katha Rakheni*" (Nobody kept their promise), whose protagonist received numerous assurances and pledges over his 33 years of life but none were apparently kept. In a way, the essence of this poem is aptly reflected in the long-standing discourse surrounding the separation of the judiciary from executive control in Bangladesh. Years have passed, and much has been said about the importance of this issue, but no government has delivered on the promise of judicial autonomy yet.

It has been 27 years since the Supreme Court passed the landmark 1999 verdict in the *Secretary, Ministry of Finance vs Masdar Hossain case*, outlining a 12-point directive to ensure the genuine independence of the judiciary. The case originated from a petition filed by Masdar Hossain, then general secretary of the BCS (Judicial) Association, in 1995. The issue has returned to public discourse again after a special parliamentary committee, tasked with scrutinising 133 ordinances promulgated during the Professor Yunus-led interim government, recommended the "repeal and preservation" of four ordinances—the Supreme Court Judges Appointment Ordinance, 2025; the Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025; the Supreme Court Secretariat (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026; and the National Parliament Secretariat (Interim Special Provisions) Ordinance, 2024.

The chairman of the parliamentary committee, Zainul Abedin, MP, explained that repeal of these ordinances would mean no new actions would be taken under them for now, while preservation would ensure that actions already taken under these ordinances would remain valid and would not be cancelled. Abedin also noted that the ordinances were recommended for repeal and preservation as they were inconsistent with the constitution and that necessary laws could be enacted in the future.

He further clarified that under the current constitution, the president appoints Supreme Court judges in consultation with the chief justice, and the main qualification for appointment is at least 10 years' experience in the legal profession. However, the new ordinance stipulates that a judge must be at least 45 years of age for appointment. He also said that there are notes of dissent regarding the formation and functioning of the Supreme Court Secretariat, which requires further discussion.

Of the total 133 ordinances, the committee adopted 98 as they were; 15 were recommended for passage with amendments, 16 ordinances would be allowed to lapse and later reintroduced in parliament as bills by the relevant ministries, and the remaining four ordinances were recommended for outright repeal.

However, several BNP lawmakers said that new bills would be introduced in due course to ensure the judiciary's full independence. If that happens, members of parliament, including opposition MPs, will have the opportunity to propose amendments and take part in discussions. But then, all decisions hinge on the ruling party, BNP, as it holds the majority required to pass any law and also pass constitutional amendments.

Article 95 of the constitution states that the president appoints judges in consultation with the chief justice. However, Article 48(3) stipulates that, except for the appointment of the prime minister and the chief justice, the president shall act upon the advice of the prime minister in all other matters. In practice, this constitutional arrangement has long raised questions about the extent of executive influence over the judiciary.

While allegations of politicisation of the judiciary have surfaced at different times, no government has enacted a specific law governing judicial appointments. In this context, the interim government promulgated an ordinance in 2025 regarding the appointment of Supreme Court judges to select suitable candidates for appointment to both the Appellate Division and the High Court Division. Such a legal framework could increase the scope for appointing more competent and impartial judges. Besides, two ordinances were introduced to establish an independent Supreme Court Secretariat to ensure effective implementation of judicial independence, including supervision, control, and discipline of subordinate courts.

Since the BNP government is not approving the ordinances, there is a risk that the process of judicial appointments may revert to the previous framework until a new law is enacted.

The BNP's 2026 election manifesto, however, states that effective independence of the judiciary will be ensured in accordance with the constitution and the Masdar Hossain case verdict. It also pledges to enact a law regarding judicial appointments, establish a judicial commission, allow the Supreme Court to control subordinate courts, and strengthen a separate judiciary secretariat. The party's 31-point reform proposals unveiled in July 2023 also state similar visions about judicial independence. So, the question that comes to mind is, where does the contradiction lie? There is little substantive difference between the BNP's promises and the ordinances. Although the three above-mentioned judiciary-related ordinances offer more detailed provisions than the party's broad commitments, BNP's reluctance to retain them in their current form casts doubt on the execution of genuine judicial separation.

This fear of broken promises is not unfounded, given our past experiences, even though Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman has said the government will further scrutinise the ordinances, make necessary corrections, and reintroduce them as bills in parliament to ensure judicial independence. Scepticism looms large because promises of judicial independence are not new in Bangladesh. Even Masdar Hossain, in a 2022 newspaper article, pointed out that the discussion on the separation of the judiciary in Bangladesh is not recent. It dates back to the colonial period. One of the earliest initiatives came in 1900, when the then secretary to the government of Bengal, CW Bolton, presented a plan for segregation, but no action was taken to implement it.

Later, in 1908, Sir Harvey Adamson, who was the home member of the government of India then, prepared a draft to introduce the plan on an experimental basis in some districts. In 1921, the Legislative Council of Bengal also passed a unanimous resolution for the separation of the judiciary, but again, no action was taken. Again in 1947, some experimental steps were taken regarding segregation in West Pakistan, but no such initiative was taken in East Pakistan.

It remains to be seen whether BNP keeps its promises concerning this issue. It must be noted that the three judiciary-related ordinances and other ordinances relating to key reform measures on human rights, enforced disappearances, anti-corruption, and revenue administration—which have been put on hold for further review—were not drafted in ordinary times. They emerged from the July uprising, which had pledged to dismantle fascism and establish the rule of law and good governance. The real question now is whether those visions of the uprising and subsequent commitments made by political parties will be carried forward or quietly set aside.

8 DHAKA WEDNESDAY APRIL 8, 2026
CHAITRA 25, 1432 BS
The Daily Star

Dhaka to push for stronger ties

FROM PAGE 12

Adviser Ajit Doval following a dinner. Meetings with the other Indian ministers will be held today.

Mahbubul said the foreign minister is also scheduled to hold courtesy meetings with Indian Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar, and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri.

Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, in a post on X last evening, welcomed Khalilur, writing, "India and Bangladesh share warm and historic ties anchored in strong people-to-people relations. The visit will further bolster the India-Bangladesh partnership."

The Indian external affairs ministry, in a schedule published on its website yesterday, termed the visit "official".

It said Khalilur will also meet with Indian Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal.

This is the first ministerial visit to India since the formation of the BNP government.

Both countries have moved to mend bilateral ties that were strained following the political changeover after the July 2024 uprising.

Key issues likely to be discussed include the resumption of visa services for Bangladeshi citizens, enhancing energy cooperation, strengthening border management, resolving pending river water-sharing matters, and boosting trade facilitation.

Diplomatic sources said Bangladesh will reiterate its request for the extradition of deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and those accused of the murder of Inquilab Moncho convener Sharif Osman Bin Hadi.

Dhaka will also urge a more positive approach from India regarding the full resumption of visa services.

On border management, it will emphasise that it does not want to see any loss of life along the border.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already invited Prime Minister Tarique, his wife Dr Zubaida Rahman, and their daughter Barrister Zaima Rahman to visit India at a convenient time.

"The visit of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman may also come up during the foreign minister's meeting with his Indian counterpart," said a foreign ministry official.

Asked whether Tarique would consider India for his first bilateral visit, the source said Bangladesh would take a "creative" decision on the matter.

Astronauts head back home after lunar flyby

FROM PAGE 12

"I can't say enough how much science we've already learned," Kelsey Young, lead scientist for the Artemis II mission, told the astronauts.

"You really brought the Moon closer for us today, and we cannot say thank you enough."

But even after becoming the furthest humans ever to travel from Earth, their day was not over: the bleary-eyed astronauts remained in good spirits as they took a late-night call from US President Donald Trump.

Unlike the Artemis astronauts and Nasa administrator Jared Isaacman, Trump at age 79 is old enough to remember the Apollo programme.

"You've really inspired the entire world," Trump said, calling them "modern-day pioneers" who have "a lot of courage doing what you're doing."

The journey wrapped up late Monday and had plenty of milestones, including when the Artemis II team broke the distance record set by the 1970 Apollo 13 mission, which they surpassed by more than 6,000 kilometres when they reached the journey's furthest distance from Earth 406,771 kilometres.

Astronaut Jeremy Hansen said the moment should "challenge this generation and the next, to make sure this record is not long-lived."

The Orion capsule will now travel back to Earth in a so-called "free-return trajectory," a trip that will take about four days.

No bail, no remand for Shirin Sharmin

FROM PAGE 1

contact for a while until she suddenly called him a day before and said she would come over for a visit.

"In the evening [Monday], she [Shirin] arrived with her husband and a small piece of luggage. I was happy, thinking she would stay with us for a couple of days. We had dinner and were chatting afterwards," he said.

Around midnight, members of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrived at Arif's apartment on Road 8/A.

From the ground floor, they contacted him through the intercom, identified themselves, and said they had information that the former speaker was at his residence and that they wanted to conduct a search.

"I did not lie. I informed my cousin [Shirin] about the matter and allowed the law enforcers to enter the apartment. They told her that they had been ordered to take her with them. She complied," Arif said.

Arif further said that when Shirin called to say she was coming over, he assumed the cases against her had been resolved, since the government had earlier stated she was in custody.

After the 2024 July uprising, many Awami League leaders took refuge in the cantonment. On May 22 last year, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) released a list of those who had sought shelter, which included Shirin's name.

Shirin resigned from her post of Jatiya Sangsad speaker on September 2, 2024 -- 27 days after Sheikh Hasina's government fell.

Since then, the 60-year-old former Jatiya Sangsad speaker had been in hiding at various locations, a DB source told Prothom Alo.

Following the 2008 election, Abdul Hamid was elected speaker when the Awami League came to power. After he became president, Shirin was elected speaker on April 30, 2013, and had held the post since then.

NO BAIL, NO REMAND

Around 1:50pm yesterday, a white microbus carrying the ex-speaker arrived at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court in Dhaka. She was then kept inside the CMM Court lockup for about 75 minutes.

At 3:13pm, Shirin was brought to the packed courtroom, and she proceeded to stand in a corner of the dock.

Minutes later, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Jewel Rana took his seat.

After the court allowed the case investigating officer DB inspector Mohsin Uddin to speak, he began his submission in the case filed over the shooting of one Mohammad Ashraful in Dhaka's Lalbagh area during the quota reform protests on July 18, 2024.

On May 25 last year, the victim, Ashraful, filed a case with the court accusing deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 129 others. The officer-in-charge of Lalbagh Police Station later recorded it as a First Information Report (FIR) on July 17 the same year following a court directive.

Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Omar Faruq Faruqi argued in favour of granting investigators remand to interrogate the accused, describing Shirin as an "associate of the fascist government".

At 3:22pm, defence lawyer Abul Hasanat Imrul Qausar opposed the prosecution's submissions and explained why she should not be placed on remand.

"My client was only the person who resigned. No specific evidence has been found against her," he told the court.

He asked, "Did she shoot the victim? She was a neutral person."

The defence also mentioned Shirin's illness. "She has been very sick. As she remained in hiding for a long time, she fell ill," Hasanat said.

During the hearing, the former speaker remained mostly silent inside the dock.

After hearing both sides, the magistrate sent her to jail, rejecting both the two-day remand prayer and the bail petition.

Around 3:35pm, she was taken back to the court's lockup amid a chaotic situation inside the courtroom. During the rush and commotion, she fell on a staircase of the court building, and female police officers helped her up.

Meanwhile, a group of defence lawyers chanted "Joy Bangla" slogan on the court premises, prompting a scuffle to break out when pro-BNP lawyers tried to stop them.

Families must be told within 12 hours

FROM PAGE 12

clarified before presenting the bill.

Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad reminded members to keep remarks confined to parliamentary discussions and external commentary should not influence proceedings.

In Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain's absence, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed introduced three bills: the Smoking and Tobacco Products Use (Control) (Amendment) Bill, the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (Amendment) Bill, and the Sheikh Hasina Medical University (Amendment) Bill.

While introducing the second bill, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed quipped, "It's unfortunate that after speaking so much, I now have to say [the name of] Sheikh Hasina again."

Later, Health Minister Sakhawat joined the session and placed the Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Medical University, Sylhet (Amendment) Bill.

The bills confirmed the renaming of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University to Bangladesh Medical University, Sheikh Hasina Medical University to Khulna Medical University, and Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Medical University to Sylhet Medical University.

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury placed the Appropriation Supplementary (2024-25) Bill, the Appropriation (2025-26) Bill, and the Commercial Court Bill, 2026.

Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Iqbal Hasan Mahmud moved the Speedy Supply of Power and Energy (Special Provisions) (Repeal) Bill.

State Minister for Local Government Mir Shahe Alam placed the Academy for Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development (Amendment) Bill and the Sheikh Russel Rural Development Academy, Rangpur (Amendment) Bill.

Besides the provision on informing families, the CrPC amendment bill stated that arresting officers must carry and show visible ID cards and arrestees must be allowed to consult a lawyer or meet relatives, preferably within 12 hours.

Arrest details must be recorded in the official register, noting the reason, complainant's information, the relative or friend informed, and the officer having custody of the arrestee.

All arrests must be recorded immediately in the local police station's general diary. If the arresting officer is not from the station, a copy of the arrest memorandum must be sent to the officer-in-charge of the local station who will then ensure an entry in the general diary.

Each arrest must be attested by at least one witness, either a family member or a respected local resident. If no witness is available, reasons must be recorded in the memorandum.

Out of 133 ordinances issued during the interim government, the special committee recommended that 98 be approved unchanged and 15 with amendments. Of the remaining 20, the committee suggested repealing four and reintroducing 16 later as new, stronger bills.

Cox's Bazar hills going by truckloads

FROM PAGE 12

An excavator and a dump truck used in the illegal operation were seized and handed over to Ramu Police Station. A case has been filed against 23 people, including 12 unnamed individuals, over their alleged involvement.

Ramu Upazila Nirbahi Officer Fazle Rabbani Chowdhury said drives remain ongoing, but many culprits evade legal action during mobile court drives. "Under mobile court rules, punishment cannot be imposed without catching offenders red-handed," he noted.

Advocate Mujibul Haque, chairman of Youth Environment Society, said, "The scale of hill cutting in Kauarkhop and South Mithachhari during the Eid holidays has surpassed all previous records."

Recently, the Cox's Bazar South Forest Division also seized a dump truck and filed a case against four people over hill cutting in South Mithachhari union.

Meanwhile, there have also been reports of indiscriminate hill razing in Chaillatoli along the Cox's Bazar–Teknaf highway.

On March 10, the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) sent a legal notice to 12 senior government officials demanding action against those responsible.

The notice referred to a High Court directive issued on March 19, 2012, banning hill cutting in five districts of Chattogram division. The directive stated that any housing project or brick kiln built by cutting hills must be demolished.

In Pekua upazila's Toitong union, nearly one-third of a hill known as "Asmaner Khuti" has already been flattened. Locals said the 2.5-acre hill was levelled day and night using excavators.

Barbakia Range Officer Md Khalequzzaman said the hill is not part of a reserved forest, limiting the forest department's authority. "However, the local administration and the Department of Environment have taken legal steps."

Local sources said the hill belongs to expatriate Aman Ullah, who sold the soil to influential individuals.

By law, hills cannot be cut even if privately owned. The Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995 (amended 2010) provides for up to two years' imprisonment, a fine of Tk 2 lakh, or both for illegal hill cutting.

Khalequzzaman added that similar incidents occurred in Shilkhali under Pekua upazila, but action could not be taken as the land is privately privately recorded.

Abdus Salam, senior chemist at the Cox's Bazar DoE, said no hill -- government or private -- can be razed. He added that approval has been sought from higher authorities in Chattogram to file separate cases over hill cutting incidents in Toitong and Shilkhali.

In Ukhiya upazila, allegations surfaced of hills being flattened after purchasing forest land in Thoaiyngakata to build houses. A large hill has also been razed in Sadirkata under Dariardighi beat of the forest department. Locals alleged hills are being destroyed one after another in Rajarkul and Ukhiya ranges.

Assistant Conservator of Forests Md Ovizzaman said a dump truck was seized in Bhanga Kata but later released, with no case filed.

He added that he visited Sadirkata on April 4 and found evidence of hill cutting but could not take action as the land is privately owned. He said the matter would be informed to the upazila administration.

Environmental activist Dipak Sharma Dipu said most hill cutting is driven by soil trading.

"During the monsoon, the situation may worsen as more hills are cut. If this continues, Cox's Bazar will lose its hills entirely. Hill razing destroys biodiversity, destabilises slopes, increases landslide risks, worsens flooding, and erodes agricultural land. It also threatens water sources and accelerates climate vulnerability for local communities," he warned.

He alleged negligence and inaction by authorities, including the forest department, DoE and local administration, have enabled the destruction.

He added that involving the army alongside the forest department may be necessary to protect hills and forests.

Every year, scores of people living on the foothills of the Chittagong Hill Tracts lose their lives to landslides.

Parents keep vigil thru' restless nights

FROM PAGE 12

hospital in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area, 14 of whom were in the ICU.

Sonia's daughter, Tasnia, is among them. Speaking to this correspondent at the dedicated measles ward, Sonia, who came from Nabinagar Upazila of Brahmanbaria, said her elder daughter Sumaiya developed a fever during Eid.

The 11-year-old girl underwent treatment at two local hospitals. During the treatment, she developed pneumonia, and, after a few days, contracted measles.

"At one stage, the local hospital advised us to take her to Dhaka as her condition deteriorated. We tried to admit her to government hospitals but failed, so we were forced to admit her to a private hospital," she said.

Last week, her younger daughter, Tasnia, also contracted measles. This time, they were able to admit her to Shishu Hospital on Saturday.

"I can't explain what a difficult time we are going through -- only God knows," Sonia said.

A bed away, Sania Akhter was helping her mother care for her nine-month-old son, Mahmudullah, from Muksudpur Upazila in Gopalganj.

Mahmudullah was admitted to the same hospital on March 22 with pneumonia and was discharged after recovery.

"He was in good health for only three days after we returned home. This time, he developed a fever again and later contracted measles," Sania said.

A cannula could not be set in his hands, so it was installed in his upper forehead. "He had to be on oxygen for a day. His condition has improved a little now," she added.

Measles patients often develop pneumonia and diarrhoea as their immunity declines, said Mirza Md Ziaul Islam, head of the hospital's paediatrics department.

Hospital-acquired infections also contributed to their condition.

Since January, a total of 209 suspected measles patients have been admitted to their hospital, and alarmingly, 63 of them are under six months old, he said.

The hospital has prepared an 18-bed ICU for measles patients and will expand it if necessary.

"We are providing our best services to save the children," he told this correspondent.

The hospital recorded four suspected measles deaths so far.

Nazma Begum came out of the Child Ward of the DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital and walked down the corridor to calm her two-year-old son, Ibrahim, who was crying loudly.

Ibrahim developed symptoms of measles on Friday, and they brought him from Meghna Upazila in Cumilla to Dhaka on Sunday night. After failing to get him admitted to two government hospitals, he was finally admitted here.

"Doctors advised some tests, and we are waiting for the results," Nazma told this correspondent.

The large Child Ward on the hospital's first floor was full of children infected with measles, with several doctors and nurses attending to them.

Asif Haider, the hospital's administrative officer, said they have prepared 300-bed isolation wards for measles patients, including 56 ICU beds.

A total of 290 measles patients were in the hospital yesterday, with 48 of them in the ICU, he said.

Many children are arriving late, already suffering from pneumonia, diarrhoea and encephalitis, which makes treatment difficult.

Most of the children with measles symptoms were unvaccinated, and many are under six months old, Haider said.

The hospital recorded four suspected measles deaths so far.

The 100-bed Infectious Diseases Hospital began struggling with the growing number of measles patients at the beginning of last month and pressure has come down a little lately as other government hospitals were admitting measles patients.

A total of 745 patients received treatment at the hospital since January, with 18 new patients admitted in the last 24 hours, said FA Asma Khan, the newly appointed superintendent of the hospital.

The facility recorded 29 suspected measles deaths, while 15 were confirmed, she said.

In the 24 hours to 8:00am yesterday, ten more died of suspected measles, taking the total number of suspected measles deaths to 128 since March 15, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the 10 new deaths, eight were reported from the Dhaka division, while one each was recorded from the Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions.

Besides, 1,236 new suspected cases were recorded during this period, taking the tally to 9,883 since March 15.

The DGHS, however, said it has confirmed a total of 21 deaths as measles-related, along with 1,398 confirmed cases so far.

Samples from suspected measles patients are tested at reference laboratories in Dhaka, a process that takes considerable time.

Meanwhile, suspected cases are included in the list and confirmed cases are updated later, creating a discrepancy between the two figures.

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

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

Fuel queues stretch despite improved stock

FROM PAGE 1

depots. The queues are mostly for octane, with some motorcycles lining up for petrol.

Most of the pumps continued to fix an amount per vehicle: up to Tk 500-600 for motorcycle and up to Tk 1,500-2000 for cars.

One such desperate motorcyclist is Rashidul Islam, who needed to refill his fuel tank with octane yesterday or stop using his bike entirely.

"For the last couple of days, I checked out all pumps but due to the long queues, it was not possible for me to refill my tank," he told The Daily Star as he queued up outside Keeco Filling Station near Banasree for an hour.

The pump faced multiple queues of hundreds of bikes before the dispenser started pumping fuel for the day at around 1:00pm.

Monir Hossain Chowdhury, joint secretary (operations) of energy and mineral resources division, told The Daily Star that they have arrangements for octane supply over the country for the next three months.

The shortage at the pumps is mostly due to panic buying as the supply did not drop until now.

"We are supplying fuel at the same level that we were supplying at this time last year. But due to the huge rush in pumps, the supply is lasting for shorter periods."

Asked about whether the supply would be increased once the octane shipments arrive, he said: "We can assure that the supply will be stable and aligned with the previous year's demand."

Meanwhile, Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku, the minister for power, energy and mineral resources, yesterday indicated that the government may consider increasing the fuel prices from next month if needed.

Responding to a notice of urgent public importance raised by MP Shawkatul Islam in the Jatiya Sangsad, he said the fuel prices are adjusted monthly in line with the existing law.

"There is a law regarding fuel price adjustments. According to that law, we review prices every month. Last month, we did not increase the prices. We are currently working on pricing for next month. If, after review, it appears that a price increase is necessary, the matter will be discussed and placed before the cabinet for consideration."

The ongoing Middle East crisis has strained fuel supply across South Asia.

Pakistan has raised prices by around 50 percent, Sri Lanka has introduced rationing and reduced working hours, while India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, the Maldives and Nepal have already increased the fuel prices.

Bangladesh, however, has kept prices unchanged despite global volatility, considering industrial activity and the livelihoods of ordinary people.

"The government has explored all possible sources to maintain a steady supply of fuel in the country."

The country has 1,64,644 tonnes of diesel in stock, with another 1,38,000 tonnes expected by April 30. Besides, a total of 71,543 tonnes of octane is due by the end of the month and 36,000 tonnes of petrol are due.

"Bangladesh currently holds sufficient fuel reserves."

Between March 3 and April 4, the authorities conducted 342 drives against illegal fuel hoarding, filing 2,456 cases. As many as 31 individuals were jailed, fines amounting to Tk 1.25 crore were imposed and 404,456 litres of fuel were recovered, Tuku said.

Of the seized fuel, 333,157 litres were diesel, 36,405 litres octane, and 78,894 litres petrol, he added, noting that such drives will continue.

Meanwhile, in a briefing at the secretariat yesterday, Zahed Ur Rahman, the prime minister's adviser for information and broadcasting, shared a comparative analysis of fuel supply during March last year and this year. The analysis showed lower diesel and petrol supply but higher octane supply in comparison to last year.

Earlier in the parliament, while providing data between March 1 and 23, Tuku said the supply increased.

Last month, the government supplied 3.63 lakh tonnes of diesel, which was 3.96 lakh last year. Petrol supply was 39,918 tonnes, in contrast to 46,371 tonnes last year, data shows.

The octane supply was increased by 457 tonnes in March this year from 37,439 tonnes last year.

BNP, Jamaat in 'back-channel dialogue'

FROM PAGE 12

announced a series of protest programmes outside, reiterating the same demands.

According to the schedule, leaders and activists will carry out leaflet distribution and public outreach programmes nationwide from April 9 to April 15.

A BNP Standing Committee member said the party has not changed its position on the Constitution Reform Council, arguing that its members are not required to take an oath and that the proposed structure may conflict with the existing constitution, raising legal and procedural concerns.

Ruling party leaders have also indicated in parliament that they wish to amend the Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance.

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman said the International Crimes Tribunal Act already includes enforced disappearance as a crime against humanity and sets out trial and investigation procedures.

"At the same time, in the Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance, we are proposing a separate investigation process. Under the ICT Act, the maximum punishment is either death or life imprisonment, but in the ordinance, the maximum sentence has been limited to 10 years," he said in parliament on Sunday, while responding to Jamaat MP Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem, who criticised a parliamentary committee's refusal to ratify the ordinance as a law.

Quasem said that if the government wants changes, it should first approve the ordinance, turn it into law, and then amend it later. He warned that if no action is taken, the law will expire on April 11, leaving no legal definition of enforced disappearance from the following day.

According to constitutional obligation, the House must convert ordinances into laws within 30 days of the commencement of parliament, or they become defunct. To this end, a special committee was formed, comprising 13 lawmakers and chaired by BNP leader Zainul Abedin.

The committee said the anti-enforced disappearance ordinance should be tabled as a bill only after further scrutiny.

Meanwhile, parliament on Tuesday passed the amended International Crimes Tribunal Bill.

Khulna division sees surge in measles cases

STAR REPORT

The number of children hospitalised with measles symptoms is rising sharply across the Khulna division, putting pressure on already strained health facilities.

At least 56 children were admitted between 8:00am Monday and 8:00am yesterday, according to the divisional health office.

A total of 351 children were undergoing treatment across the division till Monday afternoon, said Mujibur Rahman, deputy director of the divisional health office.

Kushtia is the worst-affected district in the division, with 101 children currently hospitalised.

"All health facilities have been alerted, but there are not enough beds at the upazila level. We have been asked to make arrangements as best as possible," said Dr Mosammat Mahfuza Khatun, civil surgeon of Khulna.

She said health workers are going door to door to raise awareness and identify unvaccinated children, adding that there is no shortage of measles vaccines.

So far, seven children have died in the division after showing measles symptoms.

Meanwhile, in Mymensingh, a nine-month-old child from Nakla upazila in Sherpur died in the last 24 hours from post-measles pneumonia with respiratory failure, said Dr Mohammad Mainuddin Khan, assistant director of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

A total of seven children have died with similar symptoms at the hospital in the past 20 days, he said.

During this time, 276 suspected measles patients were admitted, of whom 87 remain under treatment as of yesterday afternoon.

However, the hospital has no paediatric ICU. A six-bed unit has been prepared but is not yet operational, and patients needing ICU support are being referred to Dhaka.

Dr Faisal Ahmed, acting civil surgeon in Mymensingh, said three dedicated beds have been arranged in each of the district's 11 upazila health complexes, and a fever clinic has been launched at the hospital's outpatient department.

In Rajshahi, a six-month-old girl from Gomostapur upazila in Chapainawabganj died in the last 24 hours with measles-like symptoms, said Dr Shankar K Biswas, spokesperson for Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

With this, 43 children have died with similar symptoms this year, he said, adding that 123 patients are currently undergoing treatment there.

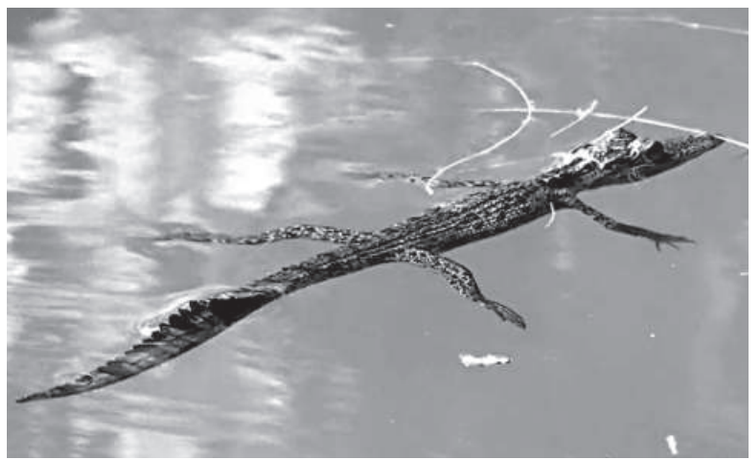
In Gazipur, eight children were admitted with measles symptoms at Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital in the past 24 hours. A total of 34 children are undergoing treatment there, said on-duty doctor Mohammad Hanif.

[Our correspondents from Khulna, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and Gazipur contributed to the report.]

BARGUNA CROCODILE BREEDING CENTRE

Not a single hatchling survived in 13yrs

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*



At the Tengragiri Crocodile Breeding Centre in Taltali upazila of Barguna, not a single hatchling survived in the past 13 years of breeding efforts, with each dying soon after being hatched under unclear circumstances.

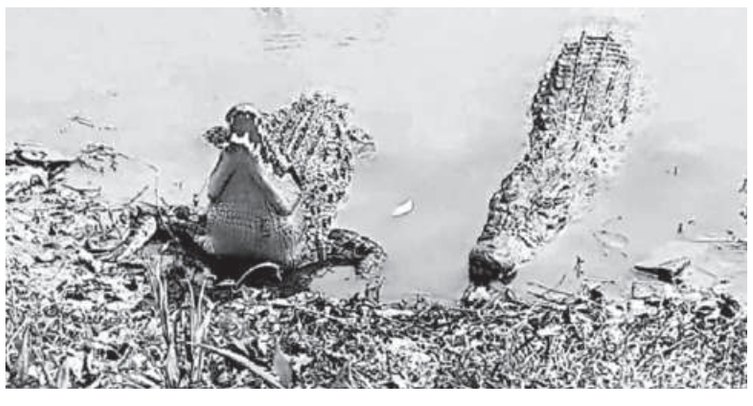
The centre was established in the 2011-12 fiscal year inside the Tengragiri Eco Park to conserve freshwater crocodiles, with a pair of adult crocodiles named "Tengra" and "Sakhina".

According to the centre's data, the female crocodile has been laying an average of 8-10 eggs every year. Although the eggs hatch and offspring are born, none can be successfully raised to maturity.

Raju, a resident of the Sonakata area, alleged that forest officials concerned do not properly care for the hatchlings, leading to their deaths.

Similar allegations were made by KM Riazul Islam from the Sakhina area, who claimed that even the adult crocodiles are not fed adequately. "They are given only two broiler chickens every three to four days, which is highly insufficient," he said.

"Keeping them confined without proper feeding is inhumane. If proper care cannot be ensured, the crocodiles should be released into the Sundarbans," he added.



Locals also recalled a tragic incident on March 25, 2017, when Asaduzzaman Rony, 29, of Sabujnagar village in Mathbaria upazila of Pirojpur, was killed at the centre after being dragged into water by one of the crocodiles as he approached the breeding pond with friends.

Arif Rahman, president of Barguna Tourist Management Association, said there is no manpower to raise the hatchlings at the centre. As a result, the hatchlings die prematurely. Successful breeding could turn the centre into a tourist attraction, he added.

"The male crocodile often eats the hatchlings. We do not have trained personnel to separate the hatchlings from the adults and nurse them properly," said Sakhina Beat Officer Rahimul Islam, adding that a request for skilled staffers will be sent to higher authorities soon.

He refuted allegations of irregular feeding, saying that the crocodiles are fed regularly. "If they were not fed properly, they would not have survived this long," he added.

Taltali Range Officer Matiur Rahman said hatchlings must be kept in a separate, safe environment to prevent adult crocodiles from preying on them.

"A proposal has already been sent to higher authorities to bring in an expert from the Karamjal Crocodile Breeding Centre in the Sundarbans to assess the situation. Further steps will be taken based on expert recommendations to ensure successful breeding of freshwater crocodiles at the facility," he added.

Passion fruit farming gains ground in Jhenaidah

OMAR ALI SHOHAG, *Jhenaidah*

Commercial cultivation of passion fruit, native to South America, has begun in Maheshpur upazila in Jhenaidah, with a local entrepreneur expanding production and attracting interest from other farmers.

Mahmudul Hasan Stalin, an agricultural entrepreneur from Pantapara village, started cultivating the fruit on an experimental basis after learning about it on YouTube.

He initially collected a small number of saplings from India. Encouraged by early results, he expanded cultivation to 3.5 bighas this year.

The initiative is prompting a gradual shift among local farmers, with around 35 growers already collecting saplings from Stalin for commercial cultivation, while others have taken them out of curiosity or as a hobby, he added.

Stalin has been cultivating various foreign fruits for the past seven years.

Passion fruit is cultivated in Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. Known locally by different names, including "Anarkoli" and "Tang", the fruit is valued for its taste and nutritional properties. Stalin said he is cultivating the yellow variety.

The crop is grown on scaffolds, similar to other creeper fruits and vegetables. According to Stalin, cultivation costs range between Tk 70,000 and Tk 80,000 per bigha.

"From my experimental cultivation, I found it to be a profitable crop," Stalin said. "It requires relatively low inputs. Organic fertiliser is sufficient, and no significant irrigation or pesticide use is needed."

He said passion fruit plants bear fruit twice a year, and each bigha can yield around 1,00,000 fruits. The produce is currently selling at Tk 15-30 per piece in wholesale markets, with the highest price reaching Tk 78-80 per fruit, he said.

The fruit is harvested during Ashar and Shrabon (June-August), which he identified as the most suitable period for cultivation.

Stalin also said that traders from Chattogram are purchasing the fruit directly from the fields.

Maheshpur Upazila Agriculture Officer Yasmin Sultana said officials are assessing the suitability of local soil and management requirements for the crop. "We are gathering information about this fruit and will visit the project. Once we have a clearer understanding, we will be able to guide farmers," she said.

ACC sets records in probes

FROM PAGE 3

of the working environment and the institutional context of the ACC," he said.

"Following the fall of an authoritarian kleptocratic regime, the reconstituted ACC during the interim period moved quickly to investigate corruption allegations involving individuals linked to the former regime, including several high-profile figures."

However, he raised concerns about cases involving individuals aligned with the current power structure. Allegations suggest that some cases were disposed of quickly, raising questions about the commission's independence.

"There is no credible evidence to suggest that all such allegations were politically motivated or intended as harassment," he added.

He also questioned the ACC's response to corruption allegations involving individuals linked to the government, particularly where higher-level influence may be involved.

"It would not be unreasonable to say that even in the post-authoritarian period, the ACC appears to have continued a long-standing practice -- showing greater activism in cases involving those outside the ruling circle, while maintaining distance in cases involving those in or close to power," he said.

Former ACC director general (legal) Moyeedul Islam said, "Filing cases, submitting charge sheets, and increasing conviction rates indicate that the ACC is functioning. The most important issue is ensuring that those whose crimes are proven are brought to justice properly."

1972 Constitution

FROM PAGE 3

our constitution," he said.

Shahdeen said he remained astonished by the context in which the constitution was framed.

"In 1972, the country was war-ravaged, with no bridges, one crore refugees returning, and almost no economic activity. Even then, the constitution was drafted through careful debate, not haste," he said.

"Nothing is flawless. The Constitution of 1972 is not flawless either. But the authoritarian rule and the arbitrariness of the past several years are not the fault of the 1972 Constitution. Previous rulers repeatedly misused it," he said.

"The absence of the rule of law is not the fault of the law itself but of those who apply it," he added.

Shahdeen also said 16 to 17 amendments had been made over the years and that deviation from its original spirit began within seven months through the first amendment, with a major shift occurring under the fourth amendment in 1975, which introduced the one-party Baksal system.

Referring to later changes under military rulers, Shahdeen said those who had framed the 1972 Constitution were, to a large extent, also responsible for its later deviation.

He described the July uprising as an outburst of pent-up anger built up through years of deprivation of rights, misrule, oppression, and lack of accountability.

"When our backs are against the wall, standing up in resistance is part of our national tradition," he said, adding that the ousted Awami League regime lacked moral and legal legitimacy.

Shahdeen called the movement's outcome the inevitable fate of autocrats.

He also criticised the lack of substantive debate in the current parliament, questioning its role if it merely approves the ordinances issued by the interim government without scrutiny.

He emphasised that the core principle of the 1972 Constitution is that all power belongs to the people and that it seeks to ensure rights by limiting institutional authority.

Shahdeen also said that when he reads the constitution, he thinks about how its framers worked at a time when there was no internet or search engine, yet they incorporated the best elements from the constitutions of different countries based on their life experiences. Even then, there was extensive debate over it, he added.

He also referred to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Six-Point movement as the first "charter of liberation" or a "first draft constitution".

He stressed that history must be preserved carefully to avoid distortion.

Liberation War Museum Trustee Dr Sarwar Ali delivered the opening remarks at the event, while Member Secretary Mofidul Hoque presented the museum's annual report.

The programme also featured a dance recital by artists from Nrityam Nrityashilon Kendra and a musical performance by Warda Ashraf.

We brought blood for him

FROM PAGE 3

Nur-e-Alam that Rakib had been shot. The news was later confirmed by phone.

He was first taken to Aftabnagar Nagarik Hospital and later admitted to the DMCH's emergency unit before being shifted to the intensive care unit (ICU).

"When I tried to enter the ICU to see him, I was stopped," she said. "I went inside anyway and saw Rakib lying unconscious. I kissed his forehead and told him nothing would happen to him."

And yet, the doctors later broke the news his mother desperately hoped not to hear -- that Rakib was no more.

Two of the accused who are in custody -- former BGB officers Lt Col Mohammad Redowanul Islam and Maj Rafat Bin Alam Moon -- were present in the dock during the testimony.

Two other accused former police officers -- then Additional Deputy Commissioner of Khilgaon Md Rashedul Islam and then Rampura Police Station OC Moshiur Rahman -- are absconding.

In a separate crimes against humanity case linked to the July uprising, a prosecution witness, Mohammad Ali, yesterday testified before the ICT-2 against humanity case against Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader and six other party leaders and affiliates.

Furthermore, ICT-2 yesterday took cognisance of formal charges against 22 accused, including former ministers Hasan Mahmud and Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel, former lawmaker Fazle Karim Chowdhury, and 19 others in a related case in Chattogram.

The tribunal issued arrest warrants for Hasan Mahmud, Nowfel, and 16 absconding accused and directed authorities to produce them before it on April 19. Four other accused, including Fazle Karim, are already in jail in other cases.

Implement

FROM PAGE 3

on April 13 at the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, in Dhaka.

Mamunul Haque alleged that the government is showing clear disregard for the people's mandate by using various tactics instead of implementing the referendum verdict.

He said the opposition cannot remain silent from a responsible position and vowed to resist what he termed the return of fascism.

'জাতীয় কবি'র চেতনায় নতুন বাংলাদেশ'
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
জাতীয় কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম ইনস্টিটিউট
সংস্কৃতি বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়

নং- ৪৩.২৪.০০০০.০০০.০০৫.০৪.০০০১.২৬.১০ তারিখ : ০৭.০৪.২০২৬

নজরুল-পুরস্কারের মনোনয়ন সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নজরুল-সঙ্গীত, সাহিত্য ও অন্যান্য ক্ষেত্রে অনন্যসাধারণ অবদানের স্বীকৃতি প্রদানের নিমিত্ত কবি নজরুল ইনস্টিটিউট 'নজরুল-পুরস্কার' প্রবর্তন করেছে। প্রতি বছরের ন্যায় এ বছরও 'নজরুল-পুরস্কার ২০২৫' প্রদানের জন্য মনোনয়ন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। মনোনয়ন ফরম (ব্যক্তি ও প্রতিষ্ঠান) ও নীতিমালা জাতীয় কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম ইনস্টিটিউট ওয়েব সাইট (www.nazrulinstitute.gov.bd) থেকে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে। আগামী ৩০ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে আবেদনপত্র নির্বাহী পরিচালক, জাতীয় কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম ইনস্টিটিউট বরাবর দাখিল করতে হবে। প্রতিটি বিষয়ের পুরস্কারের মূল্যমান হবে দুই লক্ষ টাকা। পুরস্কার প্রাপ্ত ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে পদক, সম্মানির চেক এবং সম্মাননাপত্র প্রদান করা হবে। নজরুল-জন্মবার্ষিকীতে এ পুরস্কার প্রদান করা হবে। যোগ্যতা : (ক) দেশি-বিদেশি নাগরিক এই পুরস্কারের যোগ্য বলে বিবেচিত হবেন। (খ) বাংলাদেশের মুক্তিযুদ্ধ, স্বাধীনতার চেতনা, সার্বভৌমত্ব, প্রচলিত আইন ও শুদ্ধাচার পরিপন্থী কোনো কার্যক্রম গ্রহণকারী গবেষক বা শিল্পী এই পুরস্কার পাওয়ার যোগ্য বলে বিবেচিত হবেন না। (গ) এই পুরস্কার কেবল ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে প্রদান করা হবে। (ঘ) সকল মন্ত্রণালয়, জেলা প্রশাসক (সকল), সংস্কৃতি বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের আওতাধীন অধিদপ্তর/দপ্তর/পাবলিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এবং ইতঃপূর্বে নজরুল পুরস্কারপ্রাপ্ত ব্যক্তি উপযুক্তদের নামের প্রস্তাব বা মনোনয়ন দিতে পারবেন। (ঙ) পুরস্কার প্রাপ্তির জন্য ইনস্টিটিউট কর্তৃক আবেদন আহ্বান না করা পর্যন্ত কোনো ব্যক্তিগত আবেদনপত্র বিবেচনা করা হবে না। (চ) পুরস্কার প্রাপ্ত কোনো ব্যক্তি / প্রতিষ্ঠান দ্বিতীয়বার এ পুরস্কার প্রাপ্তির যোগ্য মর্মে বিবেচিত হবেন না। (ছ) জাতীয় কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম ইনস্টিটিউট ট্রাস্টি বোর্ডের সভাপতি, সদস্যবৃন্দ এবং 'নজরুল পুরস্কার' কমিটির কোনো সদস্য স্বীয় পদে বহাল থাকা অবস্থায় এই পুরস্কারের জন্য বিবেচিত হবেন না।

মোঃ লতিফুল ইসলাম শিবলী
নির্বাহী পরিচালক (গ্রেড-১)
জাতীয় কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা

GD-754

Engineering Office
University of Chittagong
Chittagong-4331, Bangladesh
Phone: PABX-02334460788 (extn-4231), E-mail: ce.engroff@cu.ac.bd

Ref No: LTM-11/CUCE-40/2025-26

LTM Notice

This is an online tender (e-GP), where Only LTM Enlisted Contractors/Tenderers at the University of Chittagong are eligible and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

SL No	Tender ID & Package No.	Package Description
1	ID-1254281, CE-e-GP(LTM)-178/ CUCE-2775/ AID/2025-26	LTM-178/CUCE-2775/AID/2025-26 Construction for R.C.C Road work of Forhad Hossen Hall end point to Atish Dipankar Srigyan Hall at the University of Chittagong.

Without submitted the copy of CU LTM Enlisted License Book (Up-to-date), the bidder would be Non-Responsive. More information and guidance is available at the National e-GP Portal System and the e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

07.04.26
Engr. Abdul Ahad
Chief Engineer (i/c)
University of Chittagong
Chittagong, Bangladesh.

GD-757

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
ভাওয়াল বদরে আলম সরকারি কলেজ
গাজীপুর

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নিম্নলিখিত কাজের জন্য অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী/ঠিকাদারের নিকট থেকে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।
কাজের নাম: প্রতিষ্ঠানের ২০২৬ খ্রিষ্টাব্দের বার্ষিক ম্যাগাজিন তৈরি ও সরবরাহকরণ।

১. **দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও স্থান:** কাজের সিডিউল ০৮/০৪/২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখ থেকে ১৯/০৪/২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখ বেলা ০২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠানের হিসাব শাখায় পাওয়া যাবে। ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকার ট্রেজারি চালানের মাধ্যমে সিডিউল ক্রয় করতে হবে।
২. **দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ:** ২০/০৪/২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখ দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৩. দরপত্র পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০২৫ অনুযায়ী হবে এবং অনলাইনে জানিয়ে দেওয়া হবে।
৪. বিস্তারিত তথ্য দরপত্রের সিডিউলে উল্লেখ করা আছে।

(স্বাক্ষরিত)
প্রফেসর ছানোয়ারা সুলতানা
আইডি নম্বর-৯৬৯২
অধ্যক্ষ
ভাওয়াল বদরে আলম সরকারি কলেজ
গাজীপুর

GD-750

PRAYER TIMING
APRIL 8

	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

The rise of D2C in Bangladesh

From scrappy Instagram brands to global contenders

NOMROTA SARKER

Walk through any university campus, scroll through Instagram shops, or browse local marketplaces, and one pattern becomes clear: Bangladesh is not just seeing more startups, it is seeing the birth of its first generation of direct-to-consumer brands. What began as Facebook sellers during the pandemic has evolved into digitally native brands building identity-first products, bypassing traditional distribution, and rewriting how consumer companies are built in the country. This is not a trend. It is a structural shift.

A MARKET TOO LARGE TO IGNORE

Bangladesh is projected to become the 9th largest consumer market globally by 2030, powered by rising incomes, dense urbanisation, and a population exceeding 170 million. D2C brands tend to emerge where three conditions collide: fragmented retail, young consumers, and fast digital adoption. Bangladesh now has all three - at scale. In markets like this, brands are not inherited. They are still up for grabs.

The new wave of Bangladeshi D2C brands

Unlike legacy FMCG players built on distribution muscle, today's D2C brands are built on narrative, niche, and speed. Across categories, a pattern is emerging.

Food & beverage: Small-batch condiment, dessert, and snack brands are building cult followings online. Some began with hand-filled bottles sold through Instagram DMs and evolved into rapidly iterated SKU stacks shaped directly by customer feedback loops.

Fashion and modest wear: Instagram-first labels are building loyalty through identity - modest wear, campus streetwear, and occasionwear - shaped more by culture than seasonal calendars.

Beauty and personal care: Indie skincare founders are turning education into distribution. Content is the funnel; trust is the conversion layer.

Hyper-niche verticals: From pet treats to journaling kits, founders are building in categories that were historically too small or too fragmented for incumbents to care about.

What stands out is not just diversity, it's compression. The time from idea to revenue has collapsed from years to weeks.

FOUNDER ENERGY AS INFRASTRUCTURE

Bangladesh's D2C ecosystem is still founder-powered infrastructure. In the early stages, building a consumer brand here often means doing everything yourself: formulation, packaging, customer support, logistics, and content. The founder is not just the CEO. The founder is the stack.

Across conversations with operators, the pattern repeats: products tested in kitchens, packaging decided over late-night WhatsApp threads, launches validated through campus pop-ups and comment sections. This scrappiness is not a weakness. It is a training ground. In the absence of deep venture infrastructure, founders themselves are becoming the ecosystem: equal parts marketer, manufacturer, and community builder.

THE CORE ECONOMICS OF D2C

At its core, D2C is not a branding strategy. It is a margin strategy. Traditional FMCG value chains are layered, going from manufacturer, to distributor, to wholesaler, to retailer, and finally, to customer. D2C compresses this: from manufacturer, to brand, and immediately to customer. That compression creates three structural advantages.

ILLUSTRATION: MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

The first is margin retention, where fewer intermediaries mean more gross margin and more room to reinvest into packaging, product quality, and brand building. The second is data ownership, in which D2C brands own the relationship, not just the transaction. That unlocks faster product loops, retention-led growth, and tighter cohort intelligence. The third advantage entails that distribution used to be the moat, but now, the community is. The strongest D2C brands are not just selling products. They are accumulating attention and trust, assets that compound.

WHY BANGLADESH IS UNIQUELY SUITED FOR D2C

Several structural factors make Bangladesh an unusually fertile ground for D2C growth.

Social commerce maturity: Bangladesh leapfrogged traditional e-commerce into Facebook, WhatsApp, and creator-led commerce. Customer acquisition here is conversational, not algorithmic.

Founder relatability: Consumers often know the founder's face, voice, and story. In trust-sensitive categories like food and skincare, intimacy is a competitive advantage.

Trust gaps in legacy brands: Younger consumers increasingly gravitate toward transparent indie brands over opaque incumbents, especially where ingredients or freshness matter.

Manufacturing depth: Bangladesh has deep capabilities in textiles, food processing, and light manufacturing, lowering the activation energy required to launch product companies. Increasingly, founders are pairing local manufacturing with global storytelling, building brands that are export-aware from day one.

THE INDIA FLYWHEEL

Bangladesh's D2C moment resembles where India stood roughly five to seven years ago, before its explosion of venture-backed consumer brands. India's D2C boom created playbooks, supply chains, and capital familiarity. For Bangladesh, that creates proximity advantages. Shared tastes, logistics corridors, and diaspora overlap make India the most natural expansion layer for Bangladeshi consumer brands. In many ways, India is not a competition. It is a rehearsal.

THE EU OPPORTUNITY

If India represents scale, Europe represents premiumisation. European consumers increasingly reward brands that can deliver clean labels, traceable sourcing, and authentic origin stories, areas where founder-led brands outperform industrial incumbents. Bangladesh enters this conversation with three quiet advantages: export familiarity, compliance experience, and manufacturing credibility. What garments did for factories, D2C could do for brands: add narrative on top of capability.

THE RISKS AHEAD

The D2C tailwind is real, but so are the traps. The first is ad dependency. Globally, many D2C brands died not from lack of demand, but from paid acquisition addiction. There's also commoditisation, where low barriers would invite copycats. Without brand depth, differentiation evaporates quickly. You would also have to consider working capital pressure, in which inventory cycles would quietly kill more consumer brands than competition ever does. Distribution gravity would also be a concern, as, ironically, most successful D2C brands eventually move offline. Digital builds brands; physical builds scale. The winners will treat D2C not as an identity, but as an entry strategy.

WHAT COMES NEXT

From where I stand, Bangladesh's next decade will likely produce three categories of D2C winners. The first is category owners dominating local verticals. The second is regional challengers expanding into India and Southeast Asia. And finally, global niche exporters would be seen selling culture-led products abroad.

If even a fraction succeeds, Bangladesh could evolve from a manufacturing powerhouse into a consumer brand exporter. And that would mark a real shift in how the country shows up globally. Because for the first time, Bangladesh wouldn't just make the world's products. It would sell its own stories, told by the founders who built them.

__Nomrota Sarker__ is a consumer brand founder and operator building in Bangladesh's emerging D2C ecosystem. Her work focuses on unit economics, cross-border scalability, and culture-led brand building across South Asia.

Views expressed in this article are of the author's own and may not reflect the editorial stance of The Daily Star.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Eskayef Pharmaceuticals Ltd.
- *Executive, Marketing Division*
Deadline: April 12
Eligibility:
MBBS from a reputed medical college and hospital.
Minimum experience: N/A

BRAC Bank
- *Manager, Data Analytics & Business Intelligence*
Deadline: April 15
Eligibility:
Post-graduation/graduation preferably in Data Science, Computer Science, Statistics, Business Administration, Finance, or a related discipline from a reputed university with a satisfactory academic record.
Minimum experience: 5-7 years

United International University (UIU)
- *Web Developer, Centre for Information Technology Services (CITS)*
Deadline: April 15
Eligibility:
BSc in CSE/EEE from a recognised university, with programming skills in PHP, C#, .NET, etc.
Minimum experience: N/A

North South University
- *Program Officer, Department of Public Health*
Deadline: April 29
Eligibility:
Master's degree from a recognised university with a good academic record.
Minimum experience: 5 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.

How we learn from work and what we often miss

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

In most workplaces, outcomes travel faster than understanding. A project concludes, results are noted, and the organisation moves on. Success is celebrated, failure is reviewed, and both are quickly absorbed into the next cycle of execution. The underlying assumption is rarely questioned: that outcomes, by themselves, contain lessons. Recent research discussed in MIT Sloan Management Review suggests otherwise. The idea of "learning from execution" challenges the tendency to treat results as self-explanatory and argues that without deliberate analysis, both success and failure can mislead. At the centre of this argument is a deceptively simple distinction. Achieving a goal is not the same as understanding why it was achieved. Falling short is not the same as understanding what went wrong. Yet in practice, these two are often conflated.

Consider how success is typically handled. A campaign performs well, a client approves a proposal, and a target is exceeded. The immediate response is to scale. More resources are allocated, similar strategies are replicated, and the approach is institutionalised. The logic appears sound: something worked, so it should be repeated. What is often missing, however, is clarity on causation. A campaign might succeed because it coincided with favourable timing. A proposal might be accepted because it aligned with a decision already in motion. A target might be met due to external conditions rather than internal execution. When these variables are not examined, success becomes difficult to reproduce. What appears to be a reliable strategy may in fact be an isolated outcome.

Failure follows a different, but equally problematic, trajectory. When an initiative does not deliver, the response is usually corrective. Reviews are conducted, accountability is assigned, and attention shifts toward preventing repetition. While this process is necessary, it often stops short of identifying what remains useful within the failure. An unsuccessful project can still contain elements worth preserving. An idea may be sound but poorly framed. A strategy may be viable but mistimed. A process may reveal insights about constraints or audience behaviour. When failure is treated as a closed case rather than a source of information, these elements are lost.

The framework emerging from the Sloan discussion attempts to bring discipline to this ambiguity. It suggests that outcomes fall into four broad categories. Some are true "hits" – successful and clearly understood. Others are "lucky" – successful, but without clarity on causation. Some are "learning" outcomes – unsuccessful, but rich in insight. And finally, there are "defeats", where neither success nor understanding is achieved. This distinction matters because it introduces discipline into what is often an instinctive process. Instead of reacting to outcomes, it requires organisations to pause and examine them. A true hit can be scaled with confidence. A lucky outcome calls for restraint, not enthusiasm. A learning outcome deserves deeper attention, not dismissal. A defeat signals the need to rethink more fundamentally.

What follows from this is not just interpretation, but action. The research

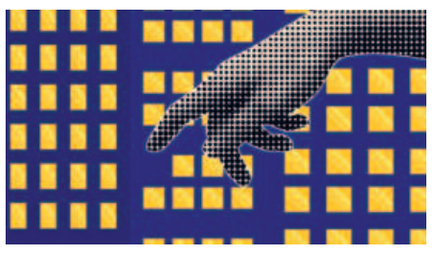


ILLUSTRATION: MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

outlines a structured approach called DIRS: Decompose, Interpret, Reward, Scale. Decomposition requires breaking work into its components, rather than treating it as a single outcome. Interpretation focuses on identifying which of those components actually drove results. Rewarding shifts attention away from outcomes alone and toward behaviours that generate insight. Scaling, crucially, comes last, once there is confidence in what is being repeated. This sequence challenges a common instinct in workplaces, where scaling often happens immediately after success. By placing it at the end, the framework introduces a pause between outcome and replication. That pause is where clarity is built.

For individuals, particularly those in the early stages of their careers, this has practical consequences. Much of professional growth is assumed to come from exposure. The more one does, the more one learns. Yet exposure without interpretation has limits. Take a common scenario. A presentation is well received. The presenter may conclude that their approach was effective. But without analysing the structure of the argument, the sequencing of information, or the specific moments that engaged the audience, the success remains difficult to replicate. The next presentation may follow a similar format without achieving the same result. Conversely, when a presentation fails to resonate, the instinct may be to attribute it to nerves or insufficient preparation. While these factors may play a role, they do not fully explain the outcome. A closer examination might reveal that the central argument lacked clarity, or that the supporting data did not align with the audience's expectations. Without identifying these factors, the lesson remains incomplete.

The distinction between outcome and understanding becomes particularly important over time. Professionals who rely on outcomes alone may improve their efficiency, but not necessarily their judgment. They complete tasks faster, yet continue to encounter similar challenges. Patterns remain unrecognised, and improvement becomes incremental.

This process does not require elaborate systems. It begins with asking more precise questions. After completing a task, instead of settling for a general assessment, it is more useful to identify specific drivers. What element had the greatest impact on the result? At what point did the direction of the work shift? Which assumption proved inaccurate? Such questions shift attention from results to reasoning. They transform experience into something that can be applied, rather than simply recalled. Documentation further strengthens this process. In environments where tasks move quickly, insights can fade just as quickly. Without personal reflection, feedback addresses only part of the picture. When combined with self-analysis, however, it becomes more precise and actionable. As such, growth depends on how experience is processed.

In many organisations, learning is described as a priority. Yet it often exists as an abstract goal rather than a structured practice. The idea of learning from execution suggests that learning must be embedded into the way work is reviewed. It must be treated as a process, not an assumption. For young professionals, this offers a clearer path to development. The value of work lies not only in its completion, but in the insight it generates. Two individuals may share similar experiences, but the one who examines those experiences more closely will progress further. Work, in this sense, is no longer a sequence of tasks. It is a series of opportunities to understand how decisions shape outcomes. Without that understanding, experience accumulates without direction. With it, experience becomes a source of deliberate growth.

Microsoft to invest $10 billion in Japan for AI infrastructure and training

NEXT STEP DESK

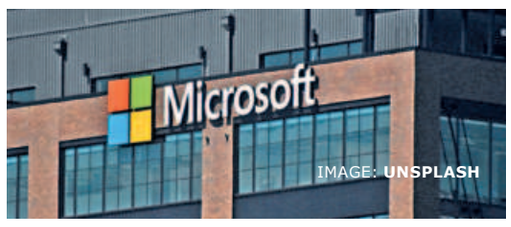


IMAGE: UNSPLASH

Microsoft has announced a $10 billion investment in Japan from 2026 through 2029, focusing on artificial intelligence infrastructure, cybersecurity partnerships, and workforce development, according to an official blog post by the tech giant.

The company will collaborate with Sakura Internet and SoftBank to offer GPU-based AI computing services through Azure, with customer data remaining in Japan, states the official announcement. On cybersecurity, Microsoft said it will deepen threat intelligence sharing with Japan's National Cybersecurity Office and strengthen collaboration with the National Police Agency through its Digital Crime Unit. The announcement says Microsoft will also launch a $1 million research grant programme and a fellowship to support Japanese researchers using AI.

For workforce training, Microsoft said it will commit to training one million engineers and developers by 2030 in partnership with Fujitsu, Hitachi, NEC, NTT Data, and SoftBank. It will provide AI-skilling opportunities to approximately 580,000 workers through the Japanese Electrical Electronic and Information Union. The company said it is also expanding its CyberSmart AI Programme through the Kyushu Semiconductor Human Resource Development Consortium.

AI becomes top reason for US job cuts, report finds

NEXT STEP DESK

Artificial intelligence (AI) became the leading cause of job cuts in the United States last month, according to a monthly analysis by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, an outplacement and executive coaching firm. US-based employers announced 60,620 job cuts in March, a 25% increase from February but a 78% drop compared with the same month last year, the report said. In March, 15,341 cuts, or one in four, were directly attributed to artificial intelligence. Other major reasons included office closings, restructuring, and market or economic conditions.

In the first quarter of 2026, AI has been linked to 27,645 job cuts, representing roughly 13% of all year-to-date layoffs. Since 2023, AI has been cited in nearly 100,000 job cut announcements, stated the report. The technology sector recorded the highest number of layoffs in the US in the first quarter, with 52,050 cuts, up 40% from the same period last year.

AI is used as a scapegoat for job cuts, says Salesforce CEO

NEXT STEP DESK

Marc Benioff, CEO of US-based cloud software company Salesforce, has said that many companies are wrongly blaming artificial intelligence for layoffs, arguing that the current wave of job cuts is being misunderstood.

In a recent interview with tech company Forward Future, Benioff said that when companies cut jobs, the reasons vary. Some are reducing headcount because costs have become too high. Others are trimming staff because they have made financial commitments, particularly to data centres, that they need to pay for. There are also those cutting to rebalance their workforce in response to changes brought by AI.

IMAGE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

He warned against lumping all these cases together, adding, "I don't think most people still really understand what is really going on, and it's too easy to make AI the scapegoat. I think for some CEOs it's the lazy way out."

Benioff argued that leaders should be more specific about the real reasons behind their decisions, even if they face criticism. "You're going to take bullets no matter what because that is your role as CEO," he said. "You have to look forward and put everything back together."

Star SPORT
DHAKA WEDNESDAY APRIL 8, 2026, CHAITRA 25, 1432 BS

What to WATCH

T Sports
PSL
Hyderabad vs Peshawar
Live from 8:00 pm

Star Sports 1, 2
IPL
Delhi vs Gujarat
Live from 8:00 pm

Sony Sports 1, 2
Champions League
PSG vs Liverpool
Live from 1:00 am (Thursday)

Barcelona vs Atletico
Live from 1:00 am (Thursday)

2025 BCB election irregularities

STAR SPORTS DESK

Based on the investigation report by a five-member committee, the National Sports Council (NSC) dissolved the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) elected body on Tuesday due to systemic irregularities, power abuses, and lack of transparency during the 2025 election.

The key findings and points from the report are as follows:

1. Unethical influence and intervention
Government interference: The committee found that the former Sports Advisor (Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain) and his Private Secretary (Saiful Islam) exerted undue pressure on District and Divisional Presidents to nominate specific individuals as councilors.

Manipulation of adhoc committees: The NSC and the Sports Advisor's office allegedly altered the structure of local adhoc committees (increasing member numbers beyond the constitutional limit of seven) to include preferred individuals who would then vote for specific candidates.

Targeted nominations:
Specific influence was used to ensure Aminul Islam Bulbul and Nazmul Abedeen Fahim were included in the Dhaka Division and District adhoc committees to secure their councilorship and eventual director positions.

2. Election process irregularities
Deadline manipulation: The deadline for submitting councilor names was extended multiple times without valid reasons, allegedly to allow for the replacement of previously nominated councilors with "preferred" candidates.

Voter list discrepancies: The final voter list was not published on time, and multiple versions were released. Voters from five districts were added to a revised list just days before the election, raising transparency concerns.

Illegal benefits for candidates: The report notes that Faruque Ahmed received illegal benefits, such as his nomination being accepted after the deadline, which compromised the integrity of the election.

3. Misuse of e-voting system
Lack of secrecy: The e-voting process was criticised for lacking privacy. Many voters were gathered at a specific location (Hotel Sheraton, Banani) to cast their electronic votes under the supervision of government officials, which the committee deemed a form of vote rigging.

System design: The committee found that the e-voting system appeared pre-planned and designed to control the election results rather than ensure a fair process.

4. Constitutional violations by the BCB president

Abuse of power: Former BCB President Aminul Islam Bulbul was found to have unilaterally nominated 10 former cricketers as councilors.

Constitutional breach: Under Article 93.3 of the BCB Constitution, the president does not have the power to nominate these councilors single-handedly. The committee concluded this was a clear abuse of power intended to influence the election outcome.

5. Lack of cooperation and transparency
Withholding evidence: The BCB CEO and other officials failed to provide audio/video recordings of board meetings despite repeated requests, leading the committee to believe the board was intentionally uncooperative.

Recommended reforms
To prevent future occurrences, the report suggests:

Constitutional reform: Clearly separating executive and electoral functions and forming an independent Governance and Ethics Committee.

Independent Election Commission: Establishing a permanent commission led by retired judges.

E-voting audits: Making third-party security audits mandatory for all electronic voting systems.

Whistleblower protection: Implementing a mechanism to report corruption and rigging safely.

***** Visit The Daily Star's website to read the detailed report on the irregularities found in the last BCB elections***

Tamim prioritises Bangladesh cricket's reputation rebuild

SPORTS REPORTER

Newly appointed Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) adhoc committee president Tamim Iqbal said restoring the reputation of Bangladesh cricket will be the top priority of his 11-member committee.

The former national captain chaired his first board meeting at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday, shortly after the National Sports Council dissolved the Aminul Islam Bulbul-led elected board and appointed him as head of the adhoc committee.

"We strongly feel that our first task is to restore the reputation of Bangladesh cricket. The damage done over the past one to one-and-a-half years makes this our most important priority," Tamim said at a press conference following the meeting.

He added that the committee has been tasked with ensuring a free and fair election within three months.

"We will carry out this responsibility as honestly and as quickly as possible," he said.

When asked whether members of the adhoc committee would contest the upcoming election, Tamim confirmed their participation.

"Yes, of course, we will take part in the election," he said.

64 DAYS TO GO

Sweet and sour

The late Nils Liedholm remains the oldest player to ever score in a World Cup final. Captaining Sweden on home soil in 1958 at 35 years and 264 days, Liedholm gave his side an early spark by finding the net against Brazil. Yet, despite his historic strike, Sweden could not contain the legendary duo of Pele and Vava, who powered Brazil to a 5-2 comeback and their first-ever World Cup title.

*****Visit The Daily Star website to also read "When rivalry turned ugly: Remembering the Rijkaard–Völler flashpoint."***

PSG's title defence faces LIVERPOOL TEST

STAR SPORTS DESK

PSG coach Luis Enrique has downplayed his side's favourites tag ahead of Wednesday's mouthwatering Champions League quarterfinal first leg against Liverpool, insisting form will carry little weight in such a high-stakes clash.

PSG, Ligue 1 leaders and defending European champions, host an inconsistent Liverpool side who sit fifth in the Premier League and have suffered 15 defeats in all competitions this season -- their highest since 2014-15.

"Everyone is trying to work out who the favourites are, but in this sort of match that means nothing," Enrique said. "It will be tough for both teams."

The tie revives last season's round of 16 meeting when PSG progressed on penalties despite Liverpool being widely tipped to advance. The head-to-head record remains even, with three wins apiece from six European encounters.

PSG come into the match in dominant form, having thrashed Chelsea 8-2 on aggregate in the last 16, while Liverpool overturned a first-leg deficit to beat Galatasaray 4-1 overall.

The French giants have also excelled against English opposition recently, going unbeaten in their last six Champions League games against Premier League clubs (W5 D1) and progressing from all four knockout ties against them since last season.

Both teams promise attacking intent, with PSG (90) and Liverpool (85) registering the most shots on target in this season's competition so far. However, the odds are up against PSG as the holders have been eliminated in four of the last five quarterfinals, with Real Madrid in 2022-23 the exception in that run.

Elsewhere, Barcelona face Atletico Madrid in another quarterfinal clash just days after their La Liga meeting.

Hansi Flick's side won that encounter 2-1, extending their unbeaten run to nine matches and maintaining a seven-point league lead.

Barcelona beat Newcastle United 8-3 on aggregate in the last 16, scoring 73 Champions League goals since Flick's arrival -- more than any other side. However, they have not kept a clean sheet in their last 13 matches in the competition.

Wednesday's tie will be the fifth European meeting between Barcelona and Atletico – all in the quarter-finals – while Atletico have never won an away Champions League match against Spanish opposition (D1 L4).

U-20s bow out with three straight defeats

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ended their maiden AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup campaign with three consecutive defeats, following a 1-0 loss to Vietnam in their final group match at Nonthaburi Stadium in Thailand on Tuesday.

Despite the disappointing finish, Bangladesh came close to pushing for a quarterfinal berth in their debut appearance, needing a win -- or potentially even a draw, depending on other results -- to progress as one of the best third-placed teams. The decisive moment came early in the second half when goalkeeper Mile Akter misjudged a long free-kick, allowing Vietnam's Nguyen Thi Thuy Linh to tap in the winner in the 49th minute.

Bangladesh, who had shown promise against continental heavyweights like China, Vietnam and Thailand, were left to rue missed opportunities and costly errors. They had earlier squandered a two-goal lead in a 3-2 defeat to Thailand before losing 2-0 to China.

Coach Peter Butler opted for a compact approach, relying on counter-attacks led by forward Mosammat Sagorika, who had an early chance but failed to beat the advancing Vietnamese goalkeeper.

Vietnam continued to apply pressure, though Bangladesh's defence held firm for much of the first half. After the break, Butler introduced fresh legs in midfield, but the goalkeeping error proved decisive. Bangladesh showed improved urgency in the second half, with Umehla Marma coming close to equalising, but they ultimately lacked the cutting edge to break down Vietnam's defence.

Kings, Police stay alive in Fed Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings and Bangladesh Police kept their hopes of reaching the Federation Cup knockout stage alive after securing crucial wins at separate venues on Tuesday.

Defending champions Kings thrashed Arambagh 5-0 at Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla, while Police staged a comeback to beat Fortis 2-1 at the Bashundhara Kings Arena.

The results saw Police climb to the top of the five-team Group B with six points from three matches, one point ahead of Kings, Mohammedan and Fortis, with the former two having a game in hand.

The race for the knockout stage remains wide open, with Bangladesh Police, Kings and Mohammedan all in contention. Police need only a draw against Kings in their final match, while Kings must secure a win -- especially if Mohammedan defeat winless Arambagh.

At the Kings Arena, Fortis had the opportunity to seal qualification but suffered late heartbreak. Nigerian forward Onyekachi Okafor put Fortis ahead in the 37th minute with a spectacular bicycle kick. However, Police responded strongly after the break.

Ugandan striker Shafiq Kagimu equalised in the 66th minute with a clever backheel before teenager Rabby Hossain Rahul sealed the win three minutes later with a fine strike, combining with Brazilian Paulo Santos De Azevedo.

In Cumilla, Kings dominated throughout against Arambagh. Brazilian forward Dorielton opened the scoring with a header in the 16th minute before Faisal Hossain Fahim doubled the lead.

After the break, Emmanuel Sunday made it 3-0 before Dorielton grabbed his second. Sohel Rana Jr completed the rout in the 67th minute, handing Kings their first win in three matches and keeping their knockout hopes firmly alive.

Bangladesh to play against San Marino

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday announced a landmark FIFA international friendly between Bangladesh and San Marino, scheduled to take place on June 5, 2026 in San Marino.

The fixture will mark a historic first for Bangladesh football, as it will be the team's maiden international match against a European opponent and their first-ever match played on European soil, according to a press release from the BFF. For San Marino, the encounter will also be unique, as they are set to face an Asian national side for the first time in their history.

According to the latest FIFA rankings, Bangladesh are currently placed around 181st in the world, while San Marino sit at the bottom of the rankings, at 211th. Despite their low ranking, San Marino have shown signs of improvement in recent years, particularly in competitive fixtures within UEFA competitions, including a historic 1-0 win over Liechtenstein in the UEFA Nations League-- only their second competitive victory in history.

Olympic gold medallist gymnast Margarita Mamun (C) poses for a photograph with young Bangladeshi gymnasts at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Dhaka yesterday during a visit to Dhaka. The Russian gymnast, whose father hailed from Bangladesh, won the all-around gold during the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics. She is currently in Bangladesh on a personal visit. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

MEASLES OUTBREAK

Parents keep vigil thru restless nights

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

In the 24 hours to 8:00am yesterday, 10 more children died of suspected measles, taking the total number of suspected measles deaths to 128 since March 15, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Sonia Akhter was trying to cool down her nine-month-old daughter, Tasnia, who seemed restless with measles and fever at the dedicated measles ward of Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute in the capital.

With a cannula in her hand, Tasnia lay as a doctor inquired about her condition.

While Sonia, in her late 30s, was taking care of Tasnia, she was also worrying about her other daughter, who remains admitted to a private hospital in the capital with measles and pneumonia. Her brother-in-law and his wife are looking after her 11-year-old daughter, Sumaiya, at the hospital.

"I heard that her [Sumaiya's] condition has improved slightly, but I cannot see her," Sonia told this correspondent yesterday.

Like Sonia, many parents and relatives are going through difficult times with their children at Shishu Hospital and other medical facilities, as the country is witnessing a growing number of measles cases.

Apart from Shishu Hospital, this correspondent visited DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital and Infectious Diseases Hospital in the capital's Mohakhali area and found a similar scenario.

Children with measles and related complications -- such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and infections affecting the brain and respiratory system -- were fighting for their lives.

Many were in intensive care units, while others were on oxygen support. Many of them have been staying in hospitals for many days.

A total of 61 measles patients were admitted to the specialised

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Six-month-old Risa's body being carried home by her mother from Bangladesh Shishu Hospital in the capital yesterday. Admitted with measles symptoms last Wednesday, Risa's condition became critical a few days ago, after which she was put on life support. However, doctors could not save her and declared her dead yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Families must be told within 12 hours of arrest

JS amends CrPC, passes 13 other bills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday passed 14 bills, including the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which makes it mandatory to inform the family within 12 hours of arresting a person.

The bills converted ordinances issued during the interim government into law. With no amendment proposals placed, they were passed directly through voice vote without discussion.

Two other bills were also tabled with changes from the ordinances. They are the National Freedom Fighters' Council (Amendment) Bill and the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Bill.

The opposition had submitted dissent notes on these in the special committee that scrutinised the ordinances. The two bills will be discussed later.

Among the bills passed, the Haor and Wetlands Conservation Bill was introduced by Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee.

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman separately placed the CrPC amendment, the Civil Courts (Amendment) Bill, the International Crimes (Tribunals) (Amendment) Bill, and the Registration (Amendment) Bill.

While moving the International Crimes Tribunal bill, Asaduzzaman said it now includes enforced disappearance within the definition of crimes against humanity.

He also said those who claim that the current administration does not intend to criminalise enforced disappearances should read the bill carefully, as it reflects the government's determination to prosecute such cases.

After the bill was passed, Opposition Leader Shafiqur Rahman raised a point of order, saying the minister's remarks were unnecessary and should have been avoided. He added that the opposition would speak on the matter at the appropriate time.

In reply, Asaduzzaman said questions had been raised outside parliament about the government's sincerity about prosecuting those accused in cases of enforced disappearances, which was why he

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Astronauts head back home after lunar flyby

AFP, *Houston*

The Artemis II astronauts wrapped up their lunar flyby as they continued their journey back to Earth yesterday, bringing with them rich celestial observations, including little-known lunar craters, a solar eclipse and meteor strikes that scientists hope will open doors to new understandings.

Their eyes glued to the spacecraft windows for nearly seven hours, the team of four who spent their day breaking records and making history were treated

PHOTO: NASA

Partial far side of the moon.

to a view of the Moon unlike any other.

"Humans probably have not evolved to see what we're seeing," said Victor Glover. "It is truly hard to describe. It is amazing."

The crew reported in vivid detail features of the lunar surface and later witnessed a solar eclipse, when the Moon passed in front of the Sun.

They also described flashes of light -- meteor strikes -- on the Moon's surface.

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REFORM STALEMATE

BNP, Jamaat in 'back-channel dialogue'

BAHARAM KHAN AND SAJJAD HOSSAIN

While treasury and opposition lawmakers clash on the parliament floor over the July charter implementation order, the two sides are also holding back-channel talks outside the assembly hall to end the stalemate.

Several insiders said government and opposition representatives have met privately to seek an understanding on key contentious issues, including the ordinance to prevent enforced disappearances.

The July National Charter (Constitutional Reform) Implementation Order, 2025, issued by the president on November 13, 2025, outlines a framework for adopting reforms proposed in the July charter.

During the talks, the opposition warned it will step up street protests if the government fails to show visible progress or take practical steps within a reasonable timeframe, the insiders said.

The sources added that the BNP leadership is taking these signals seriously and monitoring the situation closely, but has not yet made any final decision on how to proceed. The government is, however, willing to ease its stance on the Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance.

According to top BNP leaders, the timing of the standoff is critical, as the government is already grappling with several national and international challenges, including the energy crisis and the measles outbreak. They said an opposition movement at this juncture could create instability and further strain the state's capacity.

They added that opposition parties may also use the issue during the upcoming local polls, accusing the ruling party of betraying the "spirit" of the July uprising, which could affect the BNP's public support and influence election results.

Meanwhile, sources within the opposition said putting pressure on the BNP is part of a broader political strategy aimed at ensuring their demands are met.

While the main opposition Jamaat-e-Islami held talks with the ruling party inside parliament yesterday, its 11-party alliance

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Dhaka to push for stronger ties with Delhi

Foreign ministry DG outlines focus of Khalilur's visit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will emphasise stability and continuous development of bilateral relations based on dignity, mutual trust, and shared interests during Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman's visit to India, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

"It is hoped that this visit will lay an important foundation for elevating cooperation between Bangladesh and India to a more fruitful and sustainable level," Mahbubul Alam, director general of the foreign ministry's Public Diplomacy Wing, told reporters at the ministry yesterday.

Khalilur Rahman reached New Delhi yesterday on a "goodwill visit" to participate in the Indian Ocean Conference scheduled for April 10-12, 2026.

He is accompanied by Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir, highlighting the importance Dhaka attaches to the visit.

Last night, a diplomatic source said Khalilur met with National Security

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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

A long line of cargo trucks and trailers clogging a busy intersection at the Naya Bazar Biswa Road area in Chattogram city yesterday. Due to the ongoing fuel crisis, the vehicles have to spend hours in queues, causing delays in goods transport and widespread suffering.

Cox's Bazar hills going by truckloads

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, *Cox's Bazar*

In blatant disregard of a High Court directive, the hills of Cox's Bazar continue to be stripped bare and the soil sold off by the truckload to brick kilns and construction sites.

Under cover of night and amid lax monitoring by authorities concerned, excavators roar across Ramu, Pekua, Ukhiya and Sadar upazilas, flattening landscapes that have stood for centuries

If unchecked, environmentalists warn that the district's hilly terrain may vanish altogether, leaving fragile ecosystems destroyed and those who live beneath these slopes increasingly vulnerable to landslides and floods.

During the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, a 200-foot hill spanning around 10 acres was flattened in the Ghonarpara area of Purba Lamapara under Kauarkhop union, about 10 kilometres from Ramu upazila town.

Local sources report that hill grabbers operated excavators daily from 7:00pm to 6:00am, stripping soil and selling it to brick kilns and supplying development projects through unregistered dump trucks.

They further said at least eight hills have already been razed in Kauarkhop and South Mithachhari unions under the Ramu upazila. Rampant hill cutting has also been reported in the Lama Para and Ukhiyarghona areas.

According to Musaib Ibne Rahman, inspector at the Cox's Bazar Department of Environment (DoE), a drive was conducted on March 30 in Lama Para, Ghonar Para

PHOTO: COLLECTED

"Asmaner Khuti" in Pekua, Cox's Bazar.

and School Para under Kauarkhop union of Ramu by the upazila administration and the local DoE.

Officials found evidence of hill cutting at eight to nine locations without government approval, with around 90,000 cubic feet of soil already extracted and sold.

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