



PHOTOS: COURTESY



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.

'A whole civilisation will die tonight'

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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 Pezeshkian 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.

The Israeli military yesterday told Iranians to avoid taking trains until 1730 GMT, and train travel to and from Iran's second city of Mashhad was cancelled until further notice.

In the Gulf, the King Fahd Bridge, a major artery connecting Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, was temporarily closed as a precaution amid fears of retaliatory strikes by Iran.

SC Secretariat vital for judicial independence

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Contacted, Attorney General Md Ruhul Qaddus 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 Jaied 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.

NSC dissolves Bulbul-led BCB body

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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

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.

Tarique seeks UN chief's support

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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 effort, 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.