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## Ratify key human rights ordinances

13 global orgs urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen international human rights organisations have urged the government to urgently pass the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Ordinance and the Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance in parliament to prevent them from expiring.

In a joint statement issued last night, the organisations, including ARTICLE 19, Human Rights Watch, and CIVICUS, expressed deep concern over a reported government move to let the ordinances lapse and introduce fresh bills in parliament at a later stage.

"Such action would effectively eliminate the revitalised NHRC, with five newly appointed commissioners, which now has strengthened authority and independence to investigate abuses and guard against impunity.

"Rather than allowing the ordinances to lapse, any amendments by the government should be made to

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Preparations for the Pahela Baishakh procession are in full swing at Dhaka University's Faculty of Fine Arts. Alongside students, actress Bipasha Hayat joined in painting and decoration activities yesterday.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

## Audit uncovers embezzlement of Tk 3,088 crore

Links ex-chairman HBM Iqbal, sons

MD MEHEDI HASAN

An audit has found that Tk 3,088 crore was misappropriated from Premier Bank between 2018 and September 2025 through inflated office rent, misuse of CSR allocations, manipulation of general ledger entries, abuse of procurement processes, and false renovation claims.

The findings emerged from an investigation into alleged fund embezzlement involving the bank's Head Office General Services Division, Financial Administration Division, and Banani branch.

The audit identified former chairman HBM Iqbal; his sons Moin Iqbal and Imran Iqbal, both former directors; several other former directors; and a number of former top officials, including managing directors, as directly or indirectly involved.

Conducted by MABS & J Partners, Chartered Accountants, the forensic audit was commissioned by an investigation committee approved by the current board following a Bangladesh Bank directive in August 2025.

The committee submitted its report in January 2026. Based on the findings, Premier Bank has recently filed multiple lawsuits seeking recovery of the allegedly

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## CEASEFIRE IN MIDDLE EAST Fuel supply relief likely weeks away

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

The two-week ceasefire in the US-Israel war on Iran may not have an immediate impact on Bangladesh's fuel supply situation.

Any noticeable improvement in supply could take several weeks, according to officials of the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation and the energy ministry.



Although the ceasefire may improve supply conditions slightly, the market will not return to normal in the short term, said M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser at the Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is exposed to several risks, including the likelihood of having to purchase fuel at higher prices, he said.

Contracts were in place in March to import a total of 440,000 tonnes of diesel, 200,000 tonnes of crude oil, 47,000 tonnes of jet fuel and 25,000 tonnes of furnace oil across 17 parcels, shows BPC data.

Of these, 10 parcels were delivered, bringing in 253,000

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## ABU SAYED KILLING Tribunal to deliver verdict today



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 is set to deliver its verdict today in the crimes against humanity case over the killing of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) student Abu Sayed during the July 2024 uprising.

The three-member tribunal, led by Justice Md Nozrul Islam Chowdhury, fixed the date on March 5 after the prosecution and the defence concluded their arguments in the case on January 28.

Thirty people, including former BRUR vice chancellor Hasibur Rashid and former Rangpur Metropolitan Police (RMP) commissioner Md Moniruzzaman, stand accused in the case. They

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## NOMINATIONS FOR WOMEN'S JS SEATS BNP still sorting, Jamaat all set

SAJJAD HOSSAIN and MAMUNUR RASHID

BNP is still struggling to finalise its nominees for the Jatiya Sangsad seats reserved for women, as a large number of leaders are seeking nominations, whereas Jamaat-e-Islami has completed its preparations and is ready to name its candidates for the 13th parliament.

The Election Commission yesterday announced the election schedule for the 50 seats, with voting slated for May 12.

Several thousand applicants from BNP have submitted their documents, describing their roles in past movements, loyalty to the party, and organisational work, and the party is verifying the papers.

To pick the nominees, the party is considering two methods, reviewing nomination forms and conducting interviews before the high command finalises the names and selecting candidates from the list directly.

Jamaat's women central committee, meanwhile, has finalised its list prioritising those who can play an effective role in parliament and meet public

expectations.

Jamaat is giving preference to nominees from areas where the party lost so that those places can have representation in parliament. It will not nominate family members of its lawmakers.

Several BNP leaders suggested that the nominees might include a mix of senior and young leaders, but leaning mostly towards the young.



The EC said BNP and its alliance will have 36 seats, Jamaat and its partners 13, and six independent candidates, who forged an alliance, will get one seat.

Stating that those who made sacrifices on the streets will get priority, Jatiya Sangsad Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni said, "The constitution allows the prime minister to select any woman as a member of parliament.

"The leader of the House

will surely make decisions by considering those who have experience in politics and who can play a role in parliament," the BNP lawmaker told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair, Jamaat's assistant secretary general, said, "We have already finalised the candidates. We will also accommodate qualified candidates from key regions like Chattogram, Khulna, Barishal, and Sylhet."

Talking to reporters, seven BNP aspirants said they have been in regular contact with senior party leaders over the last two months, highlighting their roles during the anti-government movement and ability to contribute in the House.

Many of the leaders are also hopeful that the party will evaluate their contributions fairly and consider their experience, loyalty, and grassroots work while deciding the nominations.

Speaking to this newspaper, BNP Assistant Secretary Nilufar Chowdhury Moni said, "I tried to

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## BSF shoots Bangladeshi man dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Bangladeshi man was shot dead, allegedly by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF), along the Dhabolguri border in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Ali Hossain, 41, from Dhabolguri Purbo Paniartari village in Patgram upazila. His body is currently at a hospital in India.

The incident took place near sub-pillar no. 5 of main border pillar no. 874 at Dhabolguri border, about 500 yards inside the Indian territory, around 3:00am.

BGB 61 Teesta Battalion Commanding Officer Lt Col Syed Fazle Munim confirmed the aforementioned details.

Quoting phone conversations with the BSF, the BGB official said that seven to eight

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## MEASLES VACCINATION Govt fast-tracks nationwide drive

Move comes as cases surge across the country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has advanced the launch of a special measles and rubella vaccination drive to April 20 from May 3 as measles cases continue to surge.

Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Hossain announced the decision in parliament yesterday.

Earlier, on April 5, while inaugurating the emergency measles and rubella vaccination drive for 30 highly affected upazilas, he said the special campaign in four city corporations would begin on April 12, followed by a nationwide campaign from May 3.

The special drive in four city corporations – Dhaka North, Dhaka South, Mymensingh, and Barishal – will begin as announced earlier, Shahriar Sajjad, deputy director of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation, said.

He said a meeting with the health minister and top officials yesterday morning considered all aspects, particularly the sharp rise in measles cases, and decided to bring forward the nationwide campaign to April 20.

Sajjad added that, according to earlier estimates, 1.99 crore children aged six months to under five years were supposed to be covered by the nationwide drive.

"However, as the emergency drive in 30 upazilas has already begun, and the drives in the four city corporations are set to begin on April 12, the children covered under those drives will be deducted from the nationwide campaign."

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Ten-month-old Jafrin (in the foreground) was admitted to a hospital in Ramganj, Noakhali, on March 26 with a cold and fever. As her condition worsened, she was referred to Dhaka. After failing to find a bed at Dhaka Shishu Hospital and Dhaka Medical College Hospital, she was finally admitted to the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Mohakhali on April 2. Doctors there confirmed she had measles. Yesterday, her twin brother, Jarif (in the background), was also diagnosed with the disease.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

## Police recover bodies of 13 slaughtered horses

One rescued alive; probe underway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Police recovered the bodies of 13 slaughtered horses and rescued one alive from an abandoned house in Anarpura village of Munshiganj's Gazaria upazila yesterday.

According to police, locals had been noticing suspicious movement near the house, located close to Anarpura bus station, for around six months.

Villager Tofazzal Miaji said, "A group of us went to the house this morning [yesterday] to see what was going on... Sensing our presence, those who were inside the house fled, leaving the horses' bodies behind. We then informed the police."

Police rushed to the spot and recovered the 13 bodies and rescued one horse alive. "We believe it [the living horse] was also kept

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