

Massive numbers of completely empty oil tankers ... are heading to the US to load up with the best and "sweetest" oil (and gas!)... We are waiting for you.

Donald Trump

The Daily Star

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

SECOND EDITION



DHAKA SUNDAY APRIL 12, 2026

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXVI No. 83

CHAITRA 29, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SHAWWAL 23, 1447 HJRI

16 PAGES: Tk 15.00

US, Iran hold direct peace negotiations

Sources say 'serious disagreement' over Hormuz remains; dialogue in Islamabad may continue today

US denies report that it agreed to unfreeze Iran assets

Talks mark highest-level US-Iran contact since 1979

Israel says Hezbollah ceasefire won't be on the talks' agenda

AGENCIES

The face-to-face talks between the American and Iranian delegations in Pakistan continued till early today, the most significant engagement since the 1979 Islamic revolution, to end a war that plunged the Middle East into violence and rocked the world economy.

The trilateral talks, with host Pakistan acting as mediator, were ongoing in Islamabad, a senior White House official said -- a departure from past practice in which the two sides negotiated indirectly from separate rooms.

However, no side made any official statement about the talks' progress. According to Iranian state television, two rounds of talks have been held between the two sides in Pakistan, with a third expected later yesterday or today.

Al Jazeera also reported that Pakistan was pushing to extend the talks by at least another day.

Iranian Fars News Agency said the US was making "excessive demands" over the Strait of Hormuz during the talks.

"The US is making excessive demands regarding the strait... the US has also made unacceptable demands on several other issues".

Iranian news agency Tasnim reported that the issue of the strategic strait was "one of the topics that faces serious disagreement" among the negotiators.

Meanwhile, the White House said high-level in-person trilateral talks with Iran and Pakistan were "ongoing" in Islamabad, without saying if they will continue today.

"There were mood swings from the two sides and the temperature went up and down during the meeting," a Pakistani source said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi looks at photos and schoolbags of children killed in a school in Minab while aboard a plane on his way to Pakistan for talks with the United States yesterday. A reported US strike killed at least 168 people, mostly students, when it hit the school in southern Iran on February 28.

PHOTO: AFP

BANK RESOLUTION ACT, 2026 Doors open for ex-owners to reclaim banks

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The newly enacted Bank Resolution Act, 2026, paves the way for former owners to regain control of merging banks under relatively easy terms, a move seen as a reversal of the interim government's banking reform.

Under the act, former directors or owners of banks, merging or listed for mergers, can pay 7.5 percent upfront of the amount injected by the government or the Bangladesh Bank to reclaim the banks. The remaining 92.5 percent is to be repaid within two years at 10 percent simple interest.

As part of its reform drive, in May 2025,

"The law appears to reward those responsible for the crisis rather than holding them accountable."

Zahid Hussain,
former lead economist, WB, Dhaka office

the interim administration had approved the Bank Resolution Ordinance, 2025, to merge five troubled Shariah-based private banks into a state-run entity titled Sommilito Islami Bank.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

First tankers exit Gulf thru Hormuz since ceasefire

Reports say US warships cross strait; Trump says mines being cleared

AGENCIES

Three supertankers passed through the Strait of Hormuz yesterday, shipping data showed, marking what appeared to be the first vessels to exit the Gulf since the US-Iran ceasefire deal.

The Wall Street Journal reported that US Navy guided-missile destroyers also passed through the strait without incidents. The operation was not coordinated with authorities in Tehran, US media outlet Axios said.

A senior Iranian military official, however, denied the reports.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Mob hacks pir to death in Kushtia

STAR REPORT

A pir was beaten and hacked to death by a mob at his darbar in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia yesterday over allegations of hurting religious sentiments.

Abdur Rahman, alias Shamim al-Jahangir, was about 52. His darbar in Philipnagar of the upazila was vandalised and torched during the attack around 2:30pm, Kushtia Additional Superintendent of Police Faisal Mahmud told The Daily Star.

The slain man bore injury marks from sharp and blunt weapons, said Dr Touhidul Hasan Tuhin, health and family planning officer of Daulatpur Upazila Health Complex.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



United Medical College Hospital



United City
Madani Avenue, Satarkul, Dhaka

New Destination for Your Trusted Name
Excellence in Healthcare, Beyond the Same



Prof. Dr. A. Q. M. Mohsen
Director
Department of Gastroenterology & Liver Transplant



Prof. Dr. Rafiques Salehin
Head of the Department & Chief Consultant
Department of Surgery



Prof. Dr. Samsad Jahan (Shelly)
Head of the Department & Chief Consultant
Department of Obs & Gynae



Prof. Dr. Hashim Rabbi
Head of the Department & Chief Consultant
Department of Hepatobiliary, Pancreatic Surgery & Liver Transplant



Prof. Dr. Mohsin Ahmed
Head of the Department & Chief Consultant
Department of Cardiology



Prof. Dr. Nazma Begum
Head of the Department
Department of Paediatrics



Prof. Dr. Md. Nowshad Ail
Professor & Senior Consultant
Department of Paediatric Surgery



Prof. Dr. Ashraf Sayeed
Head of the Department
Department of Ophthalmology



Prof. Dr. A.S.M. Areef Ahsan
Chief Consultant
Critical Care



Prof. Dr. Sharif Uddin Khan
Professor & Senior Consultant
Department of Interventional Neurology



Prof. Dr. A.K.M. Shaheen Ahmed
Professor & Senior Consultant
Department of Internal Medicine

Scan for Location



10688

+ 35 Specialized Departments, 80 Doctors
Experienced in Bangladesh & Abroad

MEASLES VACCINES Drive begins in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Barishal cities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government launches a special measles-rubella vaccination drive in Dhaka North, Dhaka South, Mymensingh, and Barishal city corporations today amid a surge in measles cases and deaths.

Around 12.20 lakh children aged six months to under five years are expected to be vaccinated under this initiative, according to Shahriar Sajjad, deputy director of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation.

Dhaka North has the largest target group, with 6,47,208 children expected to be covered. In Dhaka South, 4,65,098 children are targeted, while 62,336 children in Mymensingh and 45,319 in Barishal will also be brought under the campaign.

The special drive will be expanded nationwide from April 20 as deadly measles cases continue to rise. Earlier, the government had rolled out an emergency vaccination programme in 30 upazilas across 18 districts where infections were relatively high.

Amid the outbreak, the Directorate

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2



A farmer cuts paddy in waist-deep water in Badaura Haor in Sylhet's South Surma upazila yesterday, as most croplands in Moglabazar union remain submerged. Farmers say the lack of planned sluice gates and proper drainage systems leaves them struggling to salvage their crops and facing losses every year.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

US, Iran hold direct peace negotiations

FROM PAGE 1

The US delegation is being led by Vice President JD Vance, special envoy Steve Witkoff, and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, the official said, making it the highest-level American contact since the Islamic Republic was established.

The Iranian delegation, composed of more than 70 members, was being led by parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, joined by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

They had earlier decided to begin talks with their US counterparts after meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, according to Iranian media reports.

"Commending the commitment of both delegations to engage

Earlier, an unnamed "senior Iranian source" told Reuters that the US had agreed to unfreeze the assets and that the move was directly linked to ensuring safe passage in the Strait of Hormuz.

Despite progress, the warring parties made no attempt to hide their mutual suspicion.

"Our experience in negotiating with the Americans has always been met with failure and broken promises," Ghalibaf said, shortly after landing in Pakistan.

Before the talks, Araghchi told his German counterpart, Johann Wadephul, that Iran entered the negotiations with the US in "complete distrust".

Vance said before leaving the US

On Friday, Lebanon's presidency said that a meeting would be held with Israel in Washington next week, and a ceasefire with Hezbollah will not be discussed in the talks.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday said that any peace agreement reached with Lebanon must be one that "lasts for generations" and dismantles Hezbollah's weapons.

Netanyahu also said that the joint US-Israeli campaign against Iran had succeeded in "crushing" the Islamic republic's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. "They wanted to strangle us, and (now) we are strangling them. They threatened us with annihilation, and now they are fighting for survival."

Netanyahu also said the military campaign against Iran "is not over".

the Islamabad talks was to ensure the Islamic republic had "no nuclear weapon. That's 99 percent of it."

Meanwhile, UN agency chiefs yesterday demanded an end to impunity for widespread international law violations in the Middle East, as casualties pile up six weeks into the war unleashed by US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

In a joint statement, the heads of multiple United Nations agencies said they were "alarmed by the sustained violations of the rules of war and international humanitarian law" in the region.

"Even wars have rules, and these rules must be respected," the statement from the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee said.

Libya approves first unified state budget in 13 years

AFP, Tripoli

Libya's rival eastern and western legislative bodies have signed a US-mediated agreement to unify public spending across the divided country for the first time in over a decade, the central bank said yesterday.

The north African country has struggled to recover from the chaos that erupted following the 2011 Arab Spring uprising that toppled longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi.

It remains divided between a UN-recognised government led by Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah based in Tripoli and an eastern administration in Benghazi backed by military leader Khalifa Haftar.

"This step reflects real progress toward unifying fiscal policy and strengthening the good management of public spending," the central bank said of the new budget, calling the agreement "the first consensus on unified spending across Libya in over 13 years".

Mob hacks pir to death

FROM PAGE 1

"Three injured people were brought to the facility around 3:20pm. Shamim was declared dead on arrival, while the other two are undergoing treatment."

Additional police, along with Rab and BGB personnel, have been deployed in the area to maintain law and order.

At the scene, Kushtia Superintendent of Police Jasim Uddin told reporters that a case was filed against Shamim at Daulatpur Police Station in 2023 on charges including hurting religious sentiments. He was later arrested and sent to jail.

Talking to The Daily Star, he said, "An old video of the man was recently circulated on social media, containing objectionable remarks about Islam. Its renewed circulation culminated in the attack on the shrine."

Alongside the name listed on his NID card, Shamim used multiple aliases, he added. "At times, he introduced himself as 'Sree Jahangir, Sree Shamim Krishna' and other names."

Quoting locals, he said Shamim's vision was to promote a composite faith by blending elements from different religions.

"Police were present at the scene. We had information about the possibility of an untoward incident in the area. A human chain was also scheduled for the afternoon. We were in contact with the relevant parties, and they had assured us that nothing would happen."

"However, suddenly a group of 300 to 400 people entered the area and carried out the attack. Police tried to bring the situation under control and attempted to rescue him from

inside, but he was attacked with sharp weapons during that time."

Regarding the next course of action, SP Jasim said, "Some of those who orchestrated the attack and those who circulated the video have been identified. But we are not disclosing their names at this stage. We're also trying to determine if the attack was politically motivated."

Talking to the newspaper, Saidur Rahman, one of the followers, said Shamim completed his MA and later moved to Dhaka, where he worked for a private firm. He then became a devotee of Qalandar Baba Jahangir ba-iman al-Sureshwari of Keraniganj and took initiation (bai'at) under him.

Syed Tarik, a sufi and poet, told this newspaper last night, "Shamim later went on to become a pir himself after being granted khilafat."

In Sufism, khilafat means spiritual succession or authority to represent and continue a Sufi master's teachings.

According to Saidur, about five to six years ago, Shamim returned to his village. At first, he lived in a tin-shed house. Gradually, his following grew, and over the past six years he built a concrete building with the support of his followers.

The followers suspect that those aligned with a religion-based political party may have been involved in the attack.

On social media, a section of people had been campaigning against Shamim over the past couple of weeks.

Syed Tarik said, "Shamim's remarks in the viral video now under controversy were not an attack on Islam, but rather a criticism of what he described as inaccurate Tafsir, or interpretation, of the Quran."

First tankers exit

FROM PAGE 1

However, US Central Command said the two warships have transited Hormuz at the start of an operation to clear the strategic waterway of mines laid by Iran.

"Today, we began the process of establishing a new passage, and we will share this safe pathway with the maritime industry soon to encourage the free flow of commerce," said Centcom commander Admiral Brad Cooper.

The development came after US President Donald Trump claimed mine-clearing operations were ongoing in the strait.

Iran recently announced alternative shipping routes in the Strait of Hormuz due to the high risk of underwater mines in the main channel. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) issued a navigation plan to ensure maritime safety, requiring inbound vessels to pass north of Larak Island and outbound traffic to move south of it.

Various sources also said Iran was seeking to impose a toll on ships in cryptocurrency during the ceasefire.

Tehran's blockade of the strait -- a chokepoint for about 20 per cent of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments -- since the start of the war at the end of February has disrupted

global energy supplies and sent oil prices soaring.

The Liberia-flagged Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) Serifos and China-flagged VLCCs Cospearl Lake and He Rong Hai entered and exited the "Hormuz Passage trial anchorage", which bypasses Iran's Larak Island, yesterday, LSEG data showed. Each vessel is capable of carrying about 2 million barrels of oil.

Serifos, carrying crude loaded from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in early March, is expected to arrive at Malaysia's Malacca port on April 21, according to LSEG and analytics firm Kpler.

Cospearl Lake is laden with Iraqi oil, while He Rong Hai is carrying Saudi crude. Both vessels are chartered by Unipet, the trading arm of Chinese energy giant Sinopec, the data showed.

As talks got underway in Islamabad, Trump posted a series of messages on his Truth Social platform.

"We're now starting the process of clearing out the Strait of Hormuz," he wrote in one post, calling it "a favour" to countries such as China, Japan and France that "don't have the courage or will to do this work themselves".

US officials did not immediately respond to AFP requests for comment on the reports.



US Vice President JD Vance shakes hands with Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif during their meeting before US-Iran peace talks in Islamabad yesterday.

constructively, the Prime Minister expressed the hope that these talks would serve as a stepping stone toward durable peace in the region," Sharif's office said.

The talks came as Trump said the US had started "clearing out" the strategic Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has virtually blocked and through which one-fifth of the world's crude passes at peace time.

Iran has previously said that any agreement to end the war must include the unfreezing of sanctioned Iranian assets as well as an end to Israel's war against Hezbollah in Lebanon, which Vance has said will not be up for discussion in Islamabad.

Iranian state television's correspondent at the talks said he understood that progress had been made on these issues, giving Iran the confidence to proceed. A US official denied reports that Washington had agreed to unfreeze Iran assets held in Qatar.

that if the other side was "willing to negotiate in good faith, we're certainly willing to extend the open hand".

But he said the negotiating team would not be receptive "if they're going to try to play us", he added.

Experts, however, said Iran's delegation showed it was serious about leaving Pakistan with a deal.

"The size, seniority, and breadth of the Iranian delegation... signal both Tehran's sincerity in these negotiations and its expectations and confidence," said Trita Parsi, executive vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft.

The ceasefire is already under strain, notably from Israel's continued strikes in Lebanon. Iran and Pakistan insist Lebanon is covered under the current truce, a claim both the US and Israel deny.

The Israeli military yesterday said it had struck more than 200 Hezbollah targets in Lebanon within the last 24 hours, among them rocket launchers.



Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif shakes hands with Iran's Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf during their meeting in Islamabad yesterday.

Prime Minister Sharif, whose country's down-to-the-wire mediation got both sides to the negotiating table this week, said the talks in Islamabad would not be easy.

"An even more difficult stage lies ahead," he said, referring to efforts to permanently end fighting that began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28, sparking Iranian retaliation against Israel and across the Gulf.

"This is that stage which, in English, is called the equivalent of 'make or break'."

On the US side, Trump has demanded the opening of the Strait of Hormuz as a condition for the two-week ceasefire.

The strait, through which one-fifth of the world's crude passes, has not reopened to normal traffic, however, and Trump vowed on Friday to have it open soon "with or without" Iran's cooperation.

He added that his top priority at

banks' restructuring process, the act states that any losses incurred by individuals or institutions must be compensated.

The applicants must also agree to restrictions on share transfers and commit to strengthening corporate governance, risk management, and compliance structures.

Before approval, the Bangladesh Bank will have to conduct due diligence and seek the government's clearance. Even after approval, the central bank will closely monitor the merged entity for two years, with a special committee reviewing compliance.

Failure to meet conditions could lead to cancellation of approval and further regulatory action under existing laws.

Contacted for comments on the new law, Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, warned that the provision undermines past reform efforts.

"If, under this law, the previous owners return and reclaim their organisations, the integrity of the new structure created after the merger

depositors will be able to recover their money.

They also said that if a bank is returned to its previous owners, it cannot easily be taken back again.

"This raises doubts about whether they would be able to run the banks properly and ensure full legal and regulatory compliance," one official said, adding that the return of the previous owners could hinder the ongoing merger process.

The act empowers the Bangladesh Bank to permit previous owners or other eligible applicants to acquire a bank's shares, assets, and liabilities.

Under the new law, applicants, including former directors or investors, must commit to fully repaying all financial support previously extended by the government and the central bank.

They are required to inject fresh capital to address existing deficits and restore financial health, and settle outstanding claims of depositors, domestic and foreign creditors, and third parties.

About accountability during the

Doors open for ex-owners to reclaim banks

FROM PAGE 1

The banks are First Security Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Union Bank, Global Islami Bank, and Exim Bank.

The government and Bangladesh Bank injected Tk 35,000 crore as capital into the merging bank, while the central bank also provided the five banks with additional liquidity support.

Under the ordinance at the time, former owners were barred from involvement, as many were accused of financial scams and embezzlement.

The boards of four of the banks were dominated by the controversial S Alam Group, led by its Chairman Mohammed Saiful Alam, while Exim Bank was long controlled by Nassa Group Chairman Md Nazrul Islam Mazumder.

The BNP-led government has now amended the ordinance, passing it into law in parliament on Friday after Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury placed it before the House.

Bangladesh Bank officials told The Daily Star that concerns remain over how these banks will be managed if former owners return and whether

Pubali Home Loan just a click away

Apply online - instantly know your loan limit.
Your loan now at your fingertips.

• Flat • Office • Construction • Renovation

Scan QR code or <https://applyhomeloan.pubalibankbd.com>



পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
PUBALI BANK PLC.



ISO/IEC
27001:2022

Open your
Account
from anywhere

PI Banking-
a Pubali Bank apps



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

'Political syndicates behind fuel crisis'

Jamaat ameer calls for buffer stocks, transparent management



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader and Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday blamed "political syndicates" for the ongoing fuel supply crisis, along with the impact of the Middle East war centred on Iran.

He alleged that the ruling BNP has long been behind major syndicates in the country, including in the energy sector.

He made the remarks as the chief guest at a seminar titled "Impact of the global energy crisis on Bangladesh's agriculture: ways forward" at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh auditorium in the capital. The event was organised by the Agriculturist Forum of Bangladesh.

Describing the energy sector as being in "distress", Shafiqur Rahman said, "Every major syndicate has the backing of the ruling party. That has not changed."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



A father tenderly holds his child, who is receiving treatment for measles symptoms at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute in Dhaka yesterday. According to the DGHS, one more confirmed death and another suspected measles-related death in the last 24 hours until yesterday morning have brought the total to 24 confirmed measles deaths and 145 suspected deaths since March 15.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Dhaka seeks collective global efforts to tackle energy crisis

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman



has called for collective global action to tackle the ongoing energy crisis, warning that its impacts will persist beyond any short-term ceasefire and pose long-term risks to economies and multilateral cooperation.

He made the call while addressing the 9th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC 2026), under the theme "Collective Stewardship for Indian Ocean Governance," in Mauritius on Friday, according to a message received by the ministry yesterday.

"There might be a ceasefire, but the energy issue is not going to be

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

532 killed, 2,221 injured in 576 road crashes in March

Says Road Safety Foundation

SAITFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 532 people -- including 66 women and 98 children -- were killed, and 2,221 were injured in 576 road accidents across the country in March, said the monthly report of Road Safety Foundation (RSF) released yesterday.

Meanwhile, 14 waterway accidents left 12 people dead, 27 injured, and three missing. Besides, 48 railway accidents killed 67 people and injured 224.

The RSF prepared the report based on information published in nine national dailies, 17 national and regional online news portals, various electronic media outlets, and the RSF's own sources.

Most accidents occurred due to vehicles losing control at high speed, underscoring the need for technology-based monitoring to curb speeding, as well as motivational training for drivers, RSF officials say.

RSF analysis shows that most of the accidents occurred on motorcycles. A total of 204 motorcycle drivers or riders were killed in 219 accidents. Besides, 79 pedestrians were killed, while 66 drivers and assistants died in accidents.

Then 45 bus passengers, 28 riders of trucks, pickups, and tractors, and 46 passengers of private cars and minibuses were dead. At least 94 passengers were killed in three-wheelers, including easy bikes, and CNG-run

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



39 die in custody in first 3 months of 2026

Says HRSS report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 39 inmates died in prisons across the country in the first three months of this year, according to a quarterly human rights monitoring report by the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS).

Among the deceased were 16 convicts and 23 undertrial prisoners. Of them, 12 were leaders and activists of the Awami League and its associate bodies, while the remaining 27 were general inmates.

The HRSS prepared the January-March 2026 report based on its own findings and reports published in 16 national media outlets.

According to the report, Proloy Chaki, 60, Pabna district AL cultural affairs secretary and singer, died in custody on January 12, with his family alleging inadequate treatment.

Former water resources minister Ramesh Chandra Sen died on February 7 after falling ill in jail. He was later declared dead at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital. He had been in Dinajpur District Jail in three cases since his arrest on



AT A GLANCE

➤ 49 killed in 88 mob violence incidents

➤ 36 killed, over 4,000 injured in political violence

➤ 12 killed, 2,573 injured in election-related clashes

➤ 670 women, girls face violence; 147 raped

➤ 328 children face violence; 138 killed

➤ 183 jounos face harassment

August 16, 2024.

The report also highlighted mob violence, stating that at least 49

people were killed in 88 incidents during the three months.

It said one man was beaten to death in Magura on January 7 over suspected cattle theft, another in Pabna on January 13, two in Gaibandha on February 20 over alleged robbery, and two in Munshiganj on March 4 after being tied to a tree and beaten over alleged theft.

The HRSS said the January-March period was a time of concern in terms of political transition and the human rights situation in Bangladesh.

It noted that the February 12 parliamentary election under the interim government and the February 17 swearing in of the new government created an opportunity for political continuity, but violence before and after the polls contributed to insecurity.

According to the report, at least 36 people, including 28 BNP members, were killed and 4,078 injured in 610 incidents of political violence during the period. It said 94 percent of the incidents

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'650 extortionists listed nationwide'

Says Rab at press briefing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has prepared a list of around 650 individuals allegedly involved in extortion across the country, including 110 identified as top extortionists in Narayanganj alone.

Rab Director (media wing) MZM Entekhab Chowdhury shared the information at Rab's media centre in Karwan Bazar yesterday.

"The list of extortionists is yet to be finalised. The process is still ongoing to ensure it is credible and unbiased," he said.

Earlier, he briefed journalists on Rab's recent nationwide operations.

Detailing the drives, he said Rab arrested a key suspect, Md Sabuj, within 48 hours of a high-profile attack in Chatogram in which a young man's wrist was severed. "The arrest was made on April 9 during a joint drive by Rab-7 and Rab-9 in Kasba upazila of Brahmanbaria," he added.

In another drive in Sonargaon, Rab arrested Mahbubur Rahman, also known as "Kaila Roxy", who had long been accused of establishing dominance in the area through criminal activities, including drug trafficking.

Rab also arrested two members of a human trafficking ring -- Neyamat Ullah and Shah Alam -- from Teknaf in Cox's Bazar and rescued four abducted victims.

Between April 8 and April 10, Rab conducted 51 mobile court drives nationwide. During these drives, authorities fined offenders Tk 14.25 lakh for illegally stockpiling 4,68,439 litres of edible oil and seized more than 50,000 litres, said the official.



A woman and her daughter paint crafts, joining preparations for the upcoming Baishakhi Shobhajatra at Dhaka University's Faculty of Fine Arts yesterday. With Pahela Baishakh just a couple of days away, preparations -- including shopping and event arrangements -- are in full swing everywhere.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

A school born of hope

Lalmoni Bidyapith opens doors for out-of-school children in remote Lalmonirhat shoals

S DILIP ROY

Children living in the shoals (char) along the Teesta and Dharla rivers in Lalmonirhat are often deprived of quality education due to remoteness and poor communication with the mainland.

Witnessing this while working with various voluntary organisations, Nayem Rahman, an undergraduate student of Lalmonirhat Government College, decided to help facilitate education for these children. In 2022, he founded Lalmoni Bidyapith, a voluntary educational initiative, with support from his friends.

Since then, the initiative has been spreading the light of education through four learning centres -- in Dawkir Char and Gobordhan Char on the Teesta riverbed under Aditmari upazila,

and in Falimari Char and Khatamari Char on the Dharla riverbed under Sadar upazila. About 20 young volunteers are currently working with him.

With the slogan "Shoal children are not lagging behind

Initially, Nayem and his friends ran the initiative by raising funds among themselves, but they now receive support from donors and well-wishers.

Lalmoni Bidyapith also provides basic training in



in talent, but in opportunity", the initiative now teaches around 50 school dropouts and underprivileged children in each shoal while providing necessary educational materials free of cost.

technical skills and access to technology. It raises awareness among children and their parents -- covering around 800 families -- on issues such as child marriage, superstition, health practices, and nutrition.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

DU English
dept reunion
on April 18

CITY DESK

The annual reunion of the English Department Alumni Society (EDAS) of Dhaka University will take place on April 18 at Officers' Club Dhaka from 4:00pm to 8:00pm, said a press release.

Registration payment can be made in person at the department (weekdays 9:30am to 3:30pm) or online through bKash at 01983035459 or to AC No. 4405734038256, Sonali Bank PLC, Dhaka University Campus Corporate Branch.

The registration fee is Tk 1,500 for general members and Tk 1,500 for their spouses; for life members it is Tk 1,200 and Tk 1,200 for their spouses.

For online registration, sender has to add a processing fee of Tk 30 and pay through bKash number: 01983035459. Registration fees can also be transferred to Account Name: DEPTT OF ENGLISH (ALUMNI); Account Number: 4405734038256; Bank Name: Sonali Bank PLC; Dhaka University Campus Branch, Dhaka, Routing Number: 200271750.



Vendors and customers crowd a makeshift eatery illegally set up on a tiled section of a footpath in Dhaka's Gulistan area. These businesses obstruct pedestrians in an already busy location and pose health risks to customers due to unhygienic open-air food preparation. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Two girls raped
in two districts
Two accused arrested

STAR REPORT

Police have arrested two individuals in separate rape cases involving minor girls in Patuakhali and Kushtia.

In Patuakhali, Md Mainuddin was arrested around 8:00pm on Friday in a case filed over the rape of a 7-year-old girl in Dashmina upazila.

The incident took place at around 10:00am on the same day when the child was playing near an under construction girder bridge over Kalarani and Syed Jafar canals in Nijhawla village of Banshabaria union.

Mainuddin, a trolley helper at the bridge site, allegedly took the girl to a secluded spot beside the bridge and raped her.

The victim narrated the incident to her mother, who later filed a case with Dashmina Police Station.

"Further activities, including medical examination, are under process," said Dashmina Police Station Officer in Charge Abu Shahadat Md Hachanain Parvez.

In Kushtia, Hamidul Islam, office assistant of a local secondary school, was arrested after a sixth grader was rescued in an unconscious state from the cornice of the school's second floor on Thursday night around 9:00pm in Mirpur upazila.

She was taken to Mirpur Upazila Health Complex and later referred to Kushtia General Hospital.

Residential Medical Officer Dr Hossain Imam said that there were signs of rape on the girl's body.

The victim's mother filed a case on Friday night naming Hamidul as the sole accused.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

39 die in custody

FROM PAGE 3

stemmed from internal conflicts within the BNP and clashes with activists of other parties.

Regarding election-related violence, the report said at least 12 people were killed and 2,573 injured in 395 incidents surrounding the 13th parliamentary polls.

On press freedom, the report said 183 journalists faced harassment in 82 incidents. Cases were filed against eight journalists under the Cyber Security Ordinance 2025.

During the period, 34 people were accused in seven cases under the same ordinance, while four were arrested. Two people were detained over "objectionable" Facebook posts about Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

In incidents related to criticism of other political figures, one person was killed, one injured, one detained, and four cases were filed.

The report said 670 women and girls faced violence during the three months. Of them, 147 were raped, and 52 percent of the victims were children and adolescents. Nine victims were killed after rape.

It also reported that 328 children were subjected to violence, including 138 who were killed.

According to the HRSS, at least 31 people were injured in 27 attacks on minority communities. The report also noted vandalism of four temples, two idols, and 19 houses,

along with three incidents of land grabbing and 10 cases of property damage.

It further said at least 76 cases were filed during the period against leaders and activists of the Awami League, BNP, and Jamaat, including the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina. More than 21,000 people were accused in those cases.

Nearly 6,000 people were arrested in drives by joint forces, most of whom were leaders and activists of AL and the banned Chhatra League.

On the border situation, the report said one person was killed and 11 injured in attacks by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

It also said nine-year-old Huzaifa Afnan, who was injured in firing from across the Myanmar border, later died while undergoing treatment.

The HRSS expressed concern over the cancellation of several key ordinances issued during the interim government, including those related to a referendum, Supreme Court judge appointments, an independent secretariat, the ACC, the National Human Rights Commission, and the prevention of enforced disappearances.

It called for coordinated efforts to strengthen the rule of law and constitutional rights, warning that unless mob violence, political tension, and restrictions on freedom of expression are addressed, the human rights situation may worsen.

A school born of hope

FROM PAGE 3

Courtyard meetings with women are held at least twice a month in each shoal, focusing on preventing child marriage and improving maternal health and child nutrition.

Arrangements have also been made for sewing and handicraft training for women from impoverished families, enabling them to generate income from alternative sources.

Jim Akhtar Jui, 12, from Khatamari Char, said she had dropped out after studying up to third grade. She later resumed her studies when Lalmoni Bidyapith began operating in the area.

"We are taught three days a week from morning till noon. I work in the fields with my parents on other days. I feel thrilled to have the opportunity to study again. We are also given books, notebooks, pens, and clothes," she said.

Echoing her, Sakina Akhtar, 11, from Gobordhan Char, said they sometimes receive computing lessons as well.

Meherun Begum, a parent from Falimari Char, said her son and daughter had dropped out after fourth grade and used to help with household and farm work. They have now resumed their studies at the learning centre.

"They can now study alongside working with us. They receive all educational materials. The people of Lalmoni Bidyapith are also raising awareness

on different issues. Many women are taking sewing and handicraft training. I am also planning to join," she said.

Moslem Uddin, another parent from Dawkir Char, said locals are happy that the initiative is helping educate children from needy families.

Maysa Marzan, a volunteer and Nayem's friend, said, "We teach the children ourselves and contribute financially as much as we can. We do this work out of our own satisfaction."

Nayem said they aim to expand the initiative to 16 more shoals this year, but financial constraints remain a major challenge.

"Children in the shoals have talent, but without opportunities they cannot flourish. If given even a little opportunity, they can do much better," he said.

"My friends are helping, and many donors are now coming forward. If children from the shoals are educated, they will one day become assets to their community and the country. We also plan to take full responsibility for some children in the future," he added.

Dhaka seeks

FROM PAGE 3

resolved within two weeks," he said, cautioning that the crisis would have lasting repercussions.

The foreign minister said the erosion of trust and confidence in the global system remains a major concern.

"If we stay strong on our home front, it will be much easier for us to overcome the storms coming from outside," he said.

He noted that some analysts believe the current crisis could surpass the impact of the oil shocks of the 1970s. "So, if the effects of the current crisis are going to be larger than the shocks of the 1970s, we can imagine the type of risks we are facing," he said.

Dr Khalilur also highlighted growing challenges to multilateralism, pointing to increasing unilateral actions within global frameworks.

"They are no longer helping us effectively in dealing with these issues. So, we face a significant challenge... This is a time for collective action because individual countries will not be able to meet these challenges on their own," he urged.

Referring to the Indian Ocean region, he said it is undergoing a turbulent phase, with severe energy challenges threatening economies and societies.

"In these overwhelming times, our blue waters must unite, sustain, and inspire us far more than before," he added.

Indian External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, among others, also addressed the conference hosted by the India Foundation in association with the Government of Mauritius and India's Ministry of External Affairs.

**PRAYER
TIMING**
APRIL 12
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:45 6:24 7:45
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 5:00 6:28 8:15
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

APARTMENT SALE
Own 4450 sft south-facing luxury apartment in Gulshan North With infinity pool, movie room, BBQ, Gym facilities and marble floors.
Cont: 01970555542

NOTICE
The ownership of the scheduled property belongs to **Organicworld Food & Beverage Limited** (by way of Bainanama). **Schedule:** Mouza: Naojuri, Gazipur Sadar, Khatian: C.S; SA; RS: 219, 223; 339, 347; 126, 365. Plot Nos: C.S. & S.A.: 299, 300, 301, R.S. :388-14 dec; 389-325 dec; 390-121 dec.**Total Land: 460 decimals under 3 plots.** Anyone having any objection are requested to contact at **Ashiqur Rahman and Associates**, Suit-15, L-7, Kabbokas Super Market, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka. Mobile: 01794-876432, Telephone: 02-41010658.

মলিমুল্লাহ মুমলিম হল
এলামনাই এমিমেশন এর "পুনর্মিলনী ২০২৬"
মলিমুল্লাহ মুমলিম হল এলামনাই এমিমেশনের সকল সতীর্ঘদের তথ্যিত করা যাচ্ছে, আগামী ১৮ এপ্রিল শনিবার সকাল ৯:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে "শালবর গ্রীল রিসোর্ট" বিকে বারী রোড, রাজেন্দ্রপুর, গাজীপুর "এলামনাই এমিমেশনের পুনর্মিলনী ২০২৬" অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। এলামনাই এমিমেশনের সম্মানিত সদস্যদের আগামী ১৪ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ এর মধ্যে রূপায়ন টাওয়ার (৩য় তলা, লিফট ২) বাংলাদেশের, ঢাকা কার্যালয়ে রেজিস্ট্রেশন করার জন্য বিশেষজ্ঞের অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে। সম্মানিত সদস্য ছাড়াও প্রাক্তন ছাত্ররা যথাসময়ে রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন।
(যোগাযোগঃ ০২৭৫৯-৯৫৫৯২০, ০২৭১১-২৬০২৬৬)
*রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্ন করার ক্রম সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।

NATIONAL HEALTHCARE NETWORK (NHN)
(An Enterprise of the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh)
(27-28 Commercial Plot, Main Road-01, Section-06, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216
Tel: 48036348, 48035872, 48033455, 48035997
Email: nhndab@gmail.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
NHN provides Comprehensive Healthcare Services with modern diagnostic facilities & clinical services to both Diabetic and Non-Diabetic through 30 Hospitals / Centers located in different districts of Bangladesh.

As a part of its expansion program the **NHN is setting up Khairunnesa-Ibrahim General Hospital, a 100 bed Specialized Hospital in Cumilla.** Applications are invited from Bangladeshi nationals for appointment to the following positions:

Sl. No.	Name of Position	Minimum Qualifications Required
1	Consultant (Medicine / Gyne/ Surgery / Eye / Dental / ENT/ Cardiology)	1) (a) MBBS from a recognized institution or an equivalent academic qualification as recognized by the BMDC, and (b) registration with the BMDC.
		2) (a) 9 years professional experience in the relevant field, of which 6 years must be after obtaining any of the following postgraduate degrees or diplomas from a recognized institution or equivalent qualifications: PhD/ DSc/ DPhil/ FCPS/ MD / MS / FRCS / MRCP/ MRCOG / MRCPath/ FRCP/ FFA/ FFR/ MSc/ MPhil/ DMRD/ DMRT/ DPM OR (b) 11 years' professional experience in the relevant field, of which 7 years must be after obtaining any of the following postgraduate degrees or diplomas: DPath / DBact / DCP / DPH / MPH / DCH/ DD/ DDV/ DA/ DO / DLO / DGO / DEM/ DTCT / D.Cand.
2	Associate Consultant (Medicine / Gyne / Surgery / Eye / Dental / ENT / Cardiology)	1. (a) MBBS from a recognized institution or an equivalent academic qualification as recognized by the BMDC, and (b) registration with the BMDC.
		2. (a) 4 years' professional experience in the relevant field, of which 1 year must be after obtaining any of the following postgraduate qualifications: PhD / DSc / DPhil / FCPS / MD / MS / FRCS / MRCP/ MRCOG / MRCPath/ FRCP / FFA / FFR / MSc / MPhil / DMRD / DMRT / DPM. OR (b) 5 years' professional experience in the relevant field, of which 2 years must be after obtaining any of the following postgraduate diplomas: DPhil/ DBact / DCP / DPH / MPH / DCH/ DD / DDV / DA / DO / DLO / DGO / DEM / DTCT / D.Cand.
3	Senior Medical Officer (SMO) / Emergency Medical Officer (EMO) / Medical Officer (MO)	1. MBBS from a recognized institution or an equivalent academic qualification as recognized by the BMDC with BMDC registration 2. 12 years Professional experience as SMO / EMO / MO
4	Scientific Officer / Senior Scientific Officer (Laboratory Medicine)	1. BSc in Lab Medicine / Microbiology / Biochemistry or related subject 2. Around 5/6 years laboratory experience
5	Nutrition Officer	MSC in Food & Nutrition/ Home Economics.
6	Hospital Manager	1. Masters/MBA from any reputed Institute with 5 years working experience as a Manager in a Hospital, Diagnostic Centre or Clinic.
7	Biomedical Engineer	1. Bachelor/Honors Biomedical Engineering / Electrical & Electronic Engineering (EEE) / Applied Physics & Electronics. OR 2. Diploma with 5 years' experience in Hospital, Diagnostic Centre, Clinic, Industrial Machinery (Generator, Diesel Engine etc.)
8	OT Nurse / Emergency Nurse	1. Diploma in Nursing Science & Midwifery or BSc in Nursing Must be registered with Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC) 2/3 years' experience in Operation Theatre (OT) or Emergency Department.
9	Pharmacist	1. B.Pharm or Diploma in Pharmacy from a recognized institute with registration from the Pharmacy Council of Bangladesh (PCB).

Salary & Benefit:
Salary and Other service benefits will be provided as per NHN Service Regulations. Appointments will be made on a contractual basis for a period of **Two (02) years**, renewable based on performance.

Application Procedure:
Interested candidates are requested to submit their resume along with attested copies of academic certificates, experience certificate (if any), and two passport size photographs to the undersigned at the following address by **30 April, 2026.**

Address:
National Healthcare Network,
6th floor, 27-28 Commercial Plot
Main Road-01, Section-06
Mirpur, Dhaka-1216

Name of the position applied for must be clearly mentioned on top of the envelope.

Application forms will be available at:
(a) National Healthcare Network, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216
(b) Khairunnesa-Ibrahim General Hospital, Muncef Quarter, Bishnupur, Cumilla
From 11 April, 2026 on payment of Tk. 500/- (Five Hundred)
Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
National Healthcare Network
Diabetic Association of Bangladesh

রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
RUPALI BANK PLC
উত্তম সেবার নিশ্চয়তা

নাটোর কর্পোরেট শাখা, নাটোর শাখা স্থানান্তর

রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি'র নাটোর কর্পোরেট শাখা ১২ এপ্রিল ২০২৬, রবিবার থেকে নতুন ঠিকানায় স্থানান্তরিত হয়ে ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রম শুরু করছে

পুরাতন ঠিকানা

রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
নাটোর কর্পোরেট শাখা
মকব্বা পূজা
ঢাকা-নাটোর মহাসড়ক
নাটোর সদর, নাটোর।

বর্তমান ঠিকানা

রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
নাটোর কর্পোরেট শাখা
এ.কে.টাওয়ার,
হোল্ডিং নং-০৮৪৩-০০
ঢাকা-নাটোর মহাসড়ক
নাটোর সদর, নাটোর।

সম্মানিত গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক এবং শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের ব্যাংকিং সেবা গ্রহণের জন্য নতুন ঠিকানায় যোগাযোগের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

How Bangladesh can tackle the current energy crisis

As Bangladesh makes headlines for the energy crisis from the Iran war, Dr Ijaz Hossain, former Dean of BUET, speaks to Ramisa Rob of The Daily Star about the oil, gas crisis, and energy conservation and efficiency.

Most importantly, we must have strategic reserves, which are only touched in deep crises like these. Right now, if we had strategic reserves, we would have been able to contain the chaos arising from the octane, diesel and petrol crisis. If people knew that Bangladesh has 30 days of octane, diesel and petrol, then we would not be in the current precarious state.

What is a solution for Bangladesh's oil crisis and Eastern Refinery facing a production crisis?

Diesel is 100 percent imported, so the root of the problem is our import-dependency. We only have the Eastern Refinery, which refines about 1.3 million tonnes of oil a year. From that, we get more than half a million tonnes of diesel, but the rest of it is imported from Singapore, which is also very affected, with companies having declared force majeure. India has promised to supply diesel and is trying to give us more; the government has looked into Kazakhstan and so on. We are looking into any countries that have diesel to spare.

Building another refinery is a measure the government can take. But that does not decrease our dependence, per se, as we would still have to import crude oil. It would only improve our supply situation in the long-run and save money from buying expensive refined oil — bought at a premium price during times of global crisis periods. We are currently facing both price and supply shocks. Even at high prices, there is scarcity and of course, whether the ship would safely reach the shores, is another matter to consider.

Are there any viable solutions for the issues we are facing from disruptions to LNG?

Importing LNG and creating the current dependency was a disastrous decision as we are seeing now. We should not put all our eggs in one basket. India's industries do not run on gas, and there are other examples across the world.

We also don't have enough facilities, such as regasification plants. Our demand was already higher than what we are able to import and domestically produce per day.

Bangladesh had an energy crisis even before this war. We also need the dollars to buy imported gas, adding another layer to the current disruptions from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The "100 wells programme" was started by the Awami League government, due to a huge human

crisis from civilians. The same people who abandoned gas exploration began offshore bidding. The interim government gave a lot of lip service to continue this programme. Files were sitting there for funding in the planning division, they were not getting funds, but gas exploration didn't stop. Our one success story is in the Bhola region, and within a month's time, I believe we will be able to know how much gas was found. In the meantime, the government is also planning on floating the tenders for deep offshore, which is an unexplored area. A lot of us are hoping that we will find at least a bit of gas to alleviate some of the problems we are currently facing. Regarding challenges to acquiring

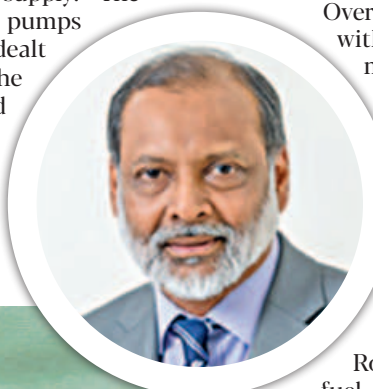


requisite funds for gas exploration, big companies are also very much affected. But they might still be interested in Bangladesh, as they might be able to get out of the dependency in the Middle East. Companies have been successful in the Philippines, Angola and other places. India has found gas, Myanmar has also found gas.

Is Bangladesh going to be the first country to run out of oil supply, as a British paper has reported?

We will certainly be amongst the countries categorised in that bracket.

Other import-dependent nations, such as the Philippines, for example, may run out before us. It appears that our customers who are panic-buying, especially those on motorbikes, will not easily be convinced with the government merely saying that we have enough oil supply. The crisis at the petrol pumps could have been dealt with earlier on. The government should look seriously into how they distribute petrol and octane. Again, petrol and octane are not the



have been digital methods such as QR Codes used, so Bangladesh needs to use the full extent of digitalisation for supply chain management. The government must study the whole crisis to design systems which we are seeing in our neighbouring countries to streamline the delivery of fuel.

Overall, I am not pleased with Bangladesh's austerity measures, such as the justification to save energy by reducing office hours and shopping hours, which will not yield in saving liquid fuel. Sri Lanka's measure to completely shut down work for one day, is more productive. Road transport, liquid fuel will be used everyday in Bangladesh, if we don't have an enforced holiday or work from home. On the other hand, all the aforementioned measures affect electricity, so they mainly affect furnace oil. If you shut down offices, and commercial establishments, the electricity savings will not be too significant. It is better to enforce load-shedding, in my opinion. Forced conservation is a guaranteed method of saving energy.

What are some policies and behavioural patterns that can lead to energy conservation?

Energy conservation and efficiency must be the cornerstone of our consumption policy. It's imperative to note the difference between the two. Conservation is what you do for yourself, and energy efficiency needs some investment, such as buying different fans, so energy efficiency always requires some sort of government sponsorship.

Industries can take their own austerity measures. Often we see lights on in offices and factories, and we're not sure if that's needed. AI-assisted automation would be able to handle

‘Bangladesh must build strong relations with Iran’

As the Iran-US-Israel war currently sits on an uncertain ceasefire, former Bangladesh Ambassador to Iran, Tariq Karim, speaks to Ramisa Rob of The Daily Star about the shifting geopolitical dynamics in the region and how Bangladesh should reassess its strategic relations.

Do you think this ceasefire will result in long-lasting de-escalation?

I would hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. Iran's interpretation of the ceasefire includes that all hostilities will be ceased by Israel anywhere. But Netanyahu has continued attacking Lebanon, which is included in the ceasefire. If the ceasefire doesn't last, the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed. I also read reports that while all these talks of peace are going on, US troops deployment has not stopped. The outcome of talks from Islamabad is very dicey. Geopolitical equations in the world have changed drastically. Iran will be fully prepared to hit out if any signs of good faith by interlocutors are not displayed. So it can blow up in our faces. People in the US, in Bangladesh and elsewhere will have their stock markets perform better with the word of peace and ceasefire. But these are just illusions.

How will the global balance of big powers shift in the aftermath of this war?

In my view, Iran is well-set to emerge as the next notable power in the international scene. Firstly, Iran has played their cards well, they've stood up to every coercion that Israel and the US have jointly tried to inflict on them and they've stood tall. Secondly, the trajectory of the war has also shown a clear alignment of geopolitical players — the big ones who matter, and how they line up is imperative. In that sense, it is very evident that Iran is being helped, covertly and overtly by China, Russia and North Korea. These geopolitical players were considered enemies of the West for the US, and they are now solidly with Iran.

The technology that Iran has, and dexterously used in this war, has been painstakingly acquired over the decades of relationships with the key geopolitical powers that Iran quietly nursed and nurtured. The alignment that has emerged, shifts the global balance of powers away from the West. Here, we must remember that Russia is a Eurasian power. Russia has discovered that it might very well end up being the big power in Europe, as the other European nations will have to readjust to Russia. But Russia also has more heft and gravitas with its current state of relations with Iran, China, and North Korea. So, those who have been characterised as the villains

are likely to emerge as the victors.

How should Bangladesh adjust to this changing scene?

As reported, a Bangladeshi ship was not granted passage through the Strait of Hormuz during the ceasefire. I have always, historically, advocated that we should always have relations with Iran. During the days of the Shah, Iran had tentatively offered to help us develop our own hydrocarbon resources and build our hydrocarbon industry. It was an offer that they renewed when I served as Bangladesh's

knees, crawling in dust, struggling to shake the miseries and tragedy of war behind us. We have actually emerged as a middle-sized economy to be reckoned with. And we blew that opportunity, is how I would describe it.

We should learn from Iran. They have been under sanctions for four decades. But what do they have in the end? They have a high literacy rate of both women and men. They can provide basic medical services, perhaps even some advanced services to their own population. Iran has managed on their own without being fully dependent

automatically have a brittle shell which will crack under pressure.

What concrete diplomatic steps should Bangladesh take to avoid being caught between larger powers?

We have neglected Iran, and it's time we reach out. I often see messages of solidarity being exchanged with the Arab Gulf countries which is of course, necessary too, as our people are employed there. But the Gulf

to go for a complete onslaught for every infrastructure in the Gulf states. Iran has already destroyed their tourism industry, and it will take a long time to regain that. The Gulf is acutely scarce of water, and if Iran touches the desalination plants, their population will starve and die from thirst.

The Gulf economies were diversifying and going into manufacturing and focusing on the development of science and technology to make inroads into medical science. That too, would be destroyed if the US had done what Trump said.

What would have emerged from that scenario is a battered, badly bruised Iran, but one that would still be standing. They will continue to rebuild with fervour with the new arrangements coming in place.

We used to send workers to Iran back in the day. Now, Iran will start reconstructing themselves as a modern power, they will start doing exactly what the Gulf states have done, and they will do it very fast. Bangladesh will then need to court them, and Iranians have long memories of their own civilisational history but also memories of who stood with them and who did not. So, we have to think more broadly about our long-term interests. I hope we have quietly reached out to Iran, but if not, I certainly think we should. This is not to say we should not keep our ties with the Gulf states. We should have an inclusionary approach. We cannot take sides with anyone against anyone else. We should position ourselves in a place where two countries fighting with each other becomes a different matter, and we have good relations with both. This way, we will be able to say, "You are fighting with each other but don't come fight in our drawing room."

The old world order is finished. A new world order has not yet emerged but we have to change ourselves internally to survive in a new emerging world order. Borders are changing across Europe and the Middle East, and it will come to our borders as well if we don't play our cards well. We have to indulge in anticipatory thinking.



An LPG tanker sits at anchor off Shinas, Oman, on March 11. Maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz has slowed significantly amid ongoing tensions between Iran, Israel, and the U.S.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Ambassador there. But Bangladesh did not consider it due to fear of reprisal from the US, sanctions and strong arming of most of the industries in the region by the US.

There is no such thing as "friendship" in international relations. To state it very crudely, the immediate concern of such friendship is, "what is in it for me?" Unfortunately, Bangladesh has made our national interests secondary to those of other nations. We are not a nation on our

own anyone for their domestic development and sustenance. That is what I call internal resilience.

I've always said that we, Bangladesh, are like a walnut in the pincers of two nutcrackers — a regional one between India and China, and a global one between the Indo-Pacific and BRI. The walnut must develop a thick shell, on its own, not from nutrients outside. If we do not nourish ourselves with nutrients from inside, we will

nations are likely to become less relevant in the very near future. If the present scenario that emerges in my thinking is consolidated, then it will be Iran that will take over the geopolitical weight of the Gulf. If the US President Trump's indescribable epithets of destroying "a civilisation" had materialised, Iran would not have buckled under that. If the Gulf countries, with which we pursue friendship, allow the US to use their bases to attack Iran, then it's fair game for Iran

Ordinances lapsed, reforms missed

Renewed politicisation of laws must be avoided

It is unfortunate that we must note the end of this government’s first month in parliament with much disappointment. As had been feared, many ordinances that had to do with major reforms for judicial independence, human rights, and anti-corruption were allowed to expire on April 10. The repealed ordinances included the National Parliament Secretariat (Interim Special Provisions) Ordinance, 2024; three concerning judicial independence; and three ordinances related to the notoriously ineffectual National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Among the lapsed ordinances are the Referendum Ordinance, two ordinances on the prevention and remedy of enforced disappearance, the Anti-Corruption Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, and the Right to Information (Amendment) Ordinance.

That so many of the expired ordinances could have created reforms, which the people of Bangladesh have been seeking for so many years, is disturbing. Whatever the BNP government’s future plans may be in terms of effecting laws which prioritise justice over politics, it has so far failed to take the pulse of the people. And while the opposition’s allegation that the government had gone back on prior understandings on key ordinances is concerning, we must also criticise its apparent lack of ineptitude in debating the ordinances in parliament. While all 133 ordinances had been presented promptly on March 12 (the first day of the 13th parliament’s first session) by the law minister, the opposition seemed more preoccupied with pushing its agenda for a reform council—deemed unconstitutional by the government—than deliberating on and debating the ordinances presented. This betrays a lack of preparation on the part of the opposition, most of whose members have never sat in parliament until now.

At this point, one cannot help theorising that the contents of the expired ordinances had not been to the liking of the BNP government and that it would like to reintroduce them in the future. Needless to say, it does not bode well if ordinances ensuring the depoliticisation of the judiciary, the independence of the NHRC, and justice for and prevention of enforced disappearances are not to the liking of this new government. We hope we will be proven wrong in our grim assessment of why such urgent ordinances were repealed and allowed to lapse. Each member of this parliament must be aware that their current position is solely due to the fatal sacrifices suffered by the people of Bangladesh in the July uprising. They owe it to the survivors of the movement to preserve the spirit of that uprising. And this must be reflected in the legislation this government passes—and soon.

Govt must take mob violence by the horns

Identify culprits and punish them

We strongly condemn the assault of at least four people by a crowd, rallying under the banner of “Azadi Andolon” near the National Museum gate in Dhaka’s Shahbagh area. This kind of moral policing, often weaponising religion to humiliate and attack people, has been going on for many months. Human rights organisations have recorded a horrifying number of mob attacks where victims have been killed or viciously attacked. In most of these cases, police have not taken prompt action; investigations have been too slow, with hardly any arrests, let alone punishment of the attackers.

One of the victims, *The Daily Star* reports, was having tea with friends at a roadside shop on Friday night, when a group of around 20 people brought out a procession in the area, chanting slogans. When the friends were about to leave, members of the group started sexually harassing them. When two of the victims tried to stop the attackers, they were all mercilessly beaten.

We would like to know how such an incident took place so close to the police station at Shahbag? What did the police do after they were aware of the incident?

The home minister has said in parliament that under the new BNP government, there will be no mob culture. But incidents of mob attacks persist. On April 11, a *pir* was brutally killed in Kushtia’s Daulatpur on allegation of religious distortion. Earlier, *Prothom Alo* reported on March 24, a mob of around 100 individuals vandalised a stage, musical instruments and chairs near a mazar in Sylhet’s Biswanath upazila where a traditional Baul festival was supposed to take place. Threats and attacks on Baul singers, shrines, members of religious minorities, women and other marginalised groups and individuals associated with the Awami League regime were frequent during the interim government’s tenure. The previous government’s failure to hold accountable those who instigated the mobs, even when perpetrators were clearly identified through videos and CCTV footage, emboldened these groups. This led to an uptick in mob violence, a malaise that hasn’t been eradicated even under the present government.

In January, 21 people were killed in mob beatings, up from 10 deaths recorded in December 2025, according to the Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation’s (MSF) monthly monitoring report. According to Ain O Salish Kendra, in the first two months of this year, 23 mob incidents took place in the country.

The BNP government has a responsibility to put an end to mob justice and moral policing, which has taken so many lives and continues to be a threat to society. The public loss of trust in the rule of law must be restored. The government must ensure that the police initiate an immediate and thorough investigation into Friday’s incident, identify the attackers and arrest them. This should be done for all other attacks with exemplary punishment to the culprits. With the upcoming Pahela Baishakh festivities, the government must take extra precautions to make sure public spaces are safe for everyone.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Launch of first space shuttle

On this day in 1981, NASA launched the first space shuttle, Columbia, which was designed to orbit Earth, transport people and cargo to and from orbiting spacecraft, and glide to a runway landing on its return to Earth.

A preventable outbreak in a system that did not act in time



A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb
is a columnist for The Daily Star.
Her X handle is @tasneem_tayeb.

TASNEEM TAYEB

In March alone, amid a sudden measles outbreak, some 229 patients died at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) awaiting ICU beds. Ninety-one of the deceased were children. Many died on waiting lists, never receiving the treatment they needed, and the numbers are still rising.

At RMCH, the consequences of the healthcare system’s failure are not abstract. With limited ICU capacity, hundreds of patients were placed on waiting lists over the course of a single month. Some could be admitted but many were not. Access to life-saving care became dependent on whether a bed became available in time. That distance between needing care and receiving it is where the system begins to fail in a way that is both visible and irreversible.

As of early April, Bangladesh recorded 9,883 suspected measles cases and 128 suspected deaths, with 81 percent of infections among children under five and cases reported across 56 districts. Paediatric wards in several public hospitals are operating beyond capacity, while critical care units are under sustained pressure. These are not isolated developments and they are putting pressure on a system that is already struggling. Routine immunisation coverage has slipped in recent years, leaving many children unprotected. According to Unicef and WHO, post-pandemic disruptions have created pockets of “zero-dose” and under-vaccinated children—those who have missed routine vaccines entirely or partially. Measles, which requires around 95 percent immunisation coverage to interrupt transmission, does not need large gaps to spread. Even small breaks in coverage can be risky, particularly in densely populated areas where transmission accelerates quickly once it begins.

Early cases were identified in Rohingya refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar in January. Within weeks, infections were rising in highly populated slum areas in Dhaka. These outbreak locations reflect where immunisation coverage is most fragile: where it is easier to look away. The fragile condition of the healthcare system is not a new reality for Bangladesh. Adequate investment and actions in healthcare infrastructure improvement have been emphasised enough in public discourse. Despite the repeated raising of flags, budgetary

allocations have been minimal, mobilisation even less so.

Public spending on health has not increased sufficiently over the years, rising from just over Tk 32,000 crore during the early pandemic period to nearly Tk 42,000 crore in the latest fiscal cycle. That might look like progress on paper, however in reality, the shift is more restricted. Health spending has remained close to five percent of the national budget,

complications will follow.

The emergencies differ—between Covid and measles outbreaks—but the problems do not. Facilities are present, but not all are running the way they should. Staffing falls short when the number of patients rises, the system begins to falter under stress, and expansion is discussed only after a crisis emerges.

Outside Dhaka city, these limitations are more exposed. Hospitals beyond the capital handle outbreaks without the required resources. They have fewer trained specialists, outdated or limited equipment, and little room to adjust when cases rise quickly. When cases mount, patients wait for longer, conditions worsen, and whether someone gets care in time often comes down to what is available at that moment. Then, questions arise about whether healthcare in marginal areas is prioritised, about delayed investment

coverage levels that significantly reduced transmission. The tools to prevent this chain from forming already exist within the system; however, what has weakened is continuity: between policy and implementation, between reported coverage and actual reach, and between early warning signals and timely response. These are governance gaps.

Declining follow-through in routine immunisation, missed cohorts of children, and uneven coverage have been visible for some years now. They were not addressed in time under the previous governments. The present response, while knee-jerk and piecemeal at best, has followed escalation rather than preventing it. What we are currently witnessing is not a sudden crisis, but a failure that was allowed to unfold without adequate containment.

The current failure is visible in the



‘As of early April, Bangladesh had recorded 9,883 suspected measles cases, with 81 percent of infections among children under five.’

FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

and as a share of GDP, it still accounts for less than one percent. Even within that bracket, utilisation has struggled to keep pace with allocation, with development spending frequently revised and at times shelved as projects stall in the procurement and implementation phases. The emergency vaccination campaign now underway, targeting more than a million children in high-risk districts, reflects a system that reacts to events. WHO and Unicef have warned that without rapid and sustained coverage, transmission will continue and further

in infrastructure upgradation and capability building, and about the absence of a consistent medical governance framework. Ultimately, it reflects negligence and a persistent apathy towards the periphery.

What makes this particularly difficult to accept is that measles remains one of the most preventable infectious diseases, yet also one of the most longstanding ones for Bangladesh. Vaccines are widely available, protocols are well-established, and the country has previously demonstrated strong immunisation performance, achieving

queues, in the waiting lists, and in the children who did not survive long enough to receive care. Nothing about this was unexpected. The risks were known. The sequence was clear. But it was not acted on. These deaths sit on our conscience, because the lessons were there—from past outbreaks, immunisation successes, healthcare system upgrade proposals—but the system was not reinforced to follow through or operate under pressure. We must demand urgent action to strengthen the system now to prevent further tragedy.

Fuel crisis is a chance to rethink our cities



Debra Efroymsen
is executive director of the Institute of Wellbeing, Bangladesh.

DEBRA EFROYMSON

While the fragile ceasefire and ongoing talks amid the Iran-US war offer some hope, the war has already driven up fuel costs and strained supply. For Bangladesh, this means rising prices, fiscal pressure, and a deepening energy crisis. Bangladesh is currently spending Tk 167 crore daily on fuel subsidies. Much as the subsidy is aimed to reduce the cost of living for everyone, it is safe to say that fuel is mostly used by the wealthiest in our contemporary society.

As there may be no straightforward way out of this war, there is also no quick way to bring fuel prices down or increase availability. Attacks on energy infrastructure in the Middle East will have lasting consequences—not just on the region, but the entire world. Ships carrying oil move slowly, so the backlog of ships carrying oil will not reach their destinations in time even after the Strait of Hormuz is fully operational again. Since enough oil isn’t being transported—exporters have largely stopped or slowed production—and restarting it fully is going to be a time-consuming task. Even when prices

ease and supply stabilises—weeks or months from now—we will still be left grappling with the consequences of a car-dominated city. Dhaka already suffers from one of the world’s worst air qualities, alongside staggering pollution and chronic congestion. Unplanned urban sprawl has only deepened these challenges, leading to wasted time and space, eroding independent mobility for children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, and imposing crushing costs on both individuals and the state to sustain car-centric infrastructure. Here, it’s important to realise that most people’s usage of automobile has less to do with their infatuation with cars and more to do with the planners’ patterns of making cities difficult and unsafe to navigate by other, more efficient means. Many of those who own a car have bought it with a loan because they have, or believe they have, no other viable options for going to work or taking their children to school or bringing groceries home.

Many countries around the world have increased their use of cheaper

and cleaner renewable energy by investing in rail, walking, and cycling infrastructure, and those investments continue to pay off. Everyone who is able to move about by foot, bicycle, and public transit currently might as well be largely spared the rising cost of fuel. They also know that their movements are not contributing as strongly to the city’s pollution. Better yet,

As there may be no straightforward way out of this war, there is also no quick way to bring fuel prices down or increase availability. Attacks on energy infrastructure in the Middle East will have lasting consequences—not just on the region, but the entire world.

active transport—including walking and cycling to destinations—means virtually cost-free transport while also delivering needed exercise and often contributing to the commuter’s socialisation and recreation. In some parts of Dhaka, it’s much faster to move about by bicycle than by car or even motorbike. Individuals can adopt those active means of transport by realising how many of their trips are short enough to be feasible by foot and bicycle. Governments, both local and national, should explore options where

movements of people and goods can be done with minimal use of vehicles. I have written repeatedly about how walking should not be a punishment and government must make sure pavements are safe for pedestrians. Similarly, cycling should not involve a potential death sentence. Those moving about lightly, burning no fuel and causing no danger to others, should have favourable conditions for doing so.

As individuals, we can also make our demands known to our policymakers and government officials. It makes no sense to rely so heavily on expensive, climate crisis-inducing fuel to move around our cities. A shift to prioritise the infrastructure and spending—for both walking and cycling—complemented by public transit, should be adopted. While high fuel prices might be the impetus at present, the benefits are multifold. Who would not like to see less traffic congestion, breathe in air that is less hazardous, spend less money on an unviable transport system, and enjoy more safety, freedom, and joy when roaming the city? All of these positive changes are possible and we should start by making demands.

War is unspeakably atrocious, but let us at least find some silver lining for our country in the insanity occurring elsewhere. Let’s declare our freedom from the enslavement of fossil fuels and the car-based life and work to create vastly better cities and stronger economies.

Clearing our roads of unfit vehicles can save energy dollars



Mahtab Uddin
is assistant professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, and research director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM). He can be reached at mahtab.ud@gmail.com.

MAHTAB UDDIN

The war in Iran has sent shockwaves through global oil markets and triggered a severe worldwide energy crisis, amid which Bangladesh’s vulnerabilities have been starkly exposed. One of the primary culprits exacerbating our acute local energy shortage is our fleets of archaic cars, buses, trucks, and other public transport.

We are still relying on vehicles from the 1990s and early 2000s. Decades-old unfit buses and CNG auto-rickshaws continue to dominate our roads. The fuel efficiency of these vehicles is disastrously poor. While these outdated petrol- or diesel-run (or CNG-converted) vehicles average 7-10 kilometres per litre, depending on road conditions and fuel type, modern electric vehicles (EVs) can travel 300 to 400 kilometres on a single charge. If we look at the energy equivalent, the mileage of a modern EV equals about 40 to 50 kilometres per litre of fuel.

If we could modernise these outdated vehicles, the energy demand in the transport sector would fall significantly. The fuel and foreign reserves saved could be redirected to secure our energy independence, allowing us to supply much needed gas to homes and industrial sectors rather than burning it in traffic.

Furthermore, the running and maintenance costs of these antiquated vehicles are exceptionally high, while safety standards are practically non-existent. Bangladesh has one of the highest road traffic fatality rates in the world, and the contribution of these dilapidated vehicles to this grim statistic is undeniable. Modern vehicles are equipped with safety features, such as automatic braking and lane assist, which reduce accidents and fatalities. Older vehicles are also environmental hazards, and their lack of modern features deprives consumers of standard services.

Yet, the prices for these outdated metal traps are astronomical because of three primary reasons. Firstly due to staggering import duties. When Bangladesh embraced the free-market economy in the 1990s and began slashing import duties on various



FILE PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

‘The dilapidated buses and trucks we see in Bangladesh are practically extinct in other developing nations.’

goods, vehicles were left out. Total import duties on cars in Bangladesh, based on engine capacity (CC), type, and age, range from 150 percent to 500 percent or more. This means if you buy a standard reconditioned car for \$5,000 (approximately Tk 6 lakh)

income stream. Vehicle imports are thus treated as a convenient cash cow.

Third is a lack of strategic vision. There is a glaring absence of strategic policymaking on the government’s part. What little awareness exists is limited to enacting laws, issuing

finances, or filing cases against unfit vehicles. Basic economics dictates that fines alone cannot solve systemic issues. A sustainable solution requires a balanced application of both the “carrot” (incentives) and the “stick” (penalties).

To buffer our economy against future external shocks like the Iran crisis, the government must reduce import duties on all modern electric or hybrid vehicles (under five

public safety will improve, and consumer satisfaction will rise. Most importantly, it will drive massive fuel savings. If a car operates for 15 years and burns an average of 1,500 litres of fuel annually, switching to a modern hybrid or EV reduces that demand to just 450-600 litres based on 30-40 percent fuel efficiency (or its electric equivalent) per year. Over 15 years, a single vehicle saves 13,000 to 15,000 litres of fuel, equivalent to about \$19,000 to \$22,000 as per the current average international gasoline price. Multiplied across hundreds of thousands of vehicles, this localised energy saving acts as a shield against global oil price spikes, significantly reducing our import dependency.

As for penalties, the BRTA must impose high renewal fees or surcharges on all vehicles over 15 years old, with the second-highest tier of fees applied to vehicles over 10 years old. However, timing is critical. This “stick” must only be enforced at least one year *after* the “carrot” (that is, reduced duties on new cars) is introduced. Otherwise, it will simply become an unjustifiable burden on the public. A one-year grace period allows citizens to prepare and transition accordingly.

However, it is crucial that the government prevents syndicates from monopolising car imports. The licensing process must be simplified and kept open so that anyone can participate in this business fairly.

If these measures are adopted, modern vehicles will rapidly replace the clunkers currently plying our roads. The dilapidated buses and trucks we see in Bangladesh are practically extinct in other developing nations. Countries like China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and even our neighbours Sri Lanka and India now boast public transport systems that are vastly more modern and efficient. Fifty percent of all cars in China are EVs, while in neighbouring Nepal, the number is 70 percent. EVs are helping many economies withstand gasoline price increases.

For many years, Bangladesh spent billions on roads, highways, and megaprojects. But we never spent or let the private sector spend on public transport. This needs to change. Bangladesh needs to revolutionise public transport. And for doing so, the high tax on modern vehicles needs to be rationalised as well. This transition is vital for the people, the economy, the environment, and for our future energy sufficiency. The upcoming budget would be a good opportunity for this to be taken into consideration.

Brain circulation, not brain drain: A new model for overseas PhD funding

Dr Mo Hoque
is senior lecturer in Hydrogeology and Environmental Geoscience at the University of Portsmouth, UK. He can be reached at mo.hoque@port.ac.uk.

Dr Ashraf Dewan
is research director at the School of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Curtin University, Australia. He can be reached at a.dewan@curtin.edu.au.

MO HOQUE and ASHRAF DEWAN

Bangladesh has long recognised the value of acquiring advanced training abroad. Over the years, public funds have supported postgraduate study and research through a number of government-backed schemes, including science fellowships and overseas scholarships for university teachers. These investments matter as they help develop skilled researchers, expose scholars to stronger research environments, and connect Bangladesh to global knowledge networks. But the design of these schemes remains partial.

In most cases, the public purse pays for tuition and maintenance, and the scholar goes abroad, studies, publishes research, and returns, or sometimes does not return, immediately. This makes the individual highly benefitted. The country may also benefit

in the long run if the scholars do return, apply their skills within an institutional setting, and contribute to sustained, locally rooted research ecosystems. However, the pathway between funding one person and strengthening the research capacity of Bangladesh remains too weak and too dependent on chance. That is where reform is needed.

Bangladesh should move from funding isolated overseas PhDs to funding structured doctoral partnerships that build institutional capacity at home while the student is still abroad. Put simply, the aim should no longer be to only produce a doctorate. It should be to produce a doctorate, a research link, a publication stream, and a stronger Bangladeshi institution at the same time.

Publicly funded overseas PhD scholars should not be academically detached from Bangladesh during the years of their doctoral training. Each scholar should be attached—before departure—to a host department, university, or recognised research institute in Bangladesh. Each should have a Bangladeshi co-supervisor alongside the overseas supervisory team, who would join supervisory meetings online regularly. The scholar should also maintain formal Bangladeshi institutional affiliation throughout their PhD, and that affiliation should appear in

their publications. Where the local supervisor makes a genuine intellectual contribution, this should be recognised through co-authorship of scholarly or creative works.

International higher education already makes use of joint supervision, sandwich doctoral models, and hybrid supervisory meetings. In many fields, especially those involving Bangladesh-based fieldwork, environmental monitoring, public health, education, or social development, there is no reason such arrangements cannot be built into public doctoral awards from the outset.

This would not require a dramatic increase in cost, either. The largest expense in overseas PhD support is tuition and student maintenance. In comparison, the additional elements needed are modest: light support for the Bangladeshi co-supervisor, coordination, and one or two short visits by the student to the Bangladeshi host institution during the degree. The visits could include seminars, field activities, mentoring of junior students, and work on joint publications. For research projects rooted in Bangladesh, this would be especially valuable.

Thus, one publicly funded PhD would no longer support only one student. It would also help train a local supervisor in international doctoral practice, strengthen a department or research centre, generate co-authored papers

with Bangladeshi affiliation, and create a living research link that can continue after the doctorate is earned. This is not simply about sending talent abroad, but also about turning that process into brain circulation rather than a narrow and uncertain form of brain gain.

This matters because Bangladesh has already invested substantially in research fellowships. The 2024-2025 national budget speech reported that 760 individuals had received support under the then Bangabandhu Science and Technology Fellowship Trust for study and research at home and abroad, with 515 having completed their awards and 245 continuing. This shows that Bangladesh has invested in advanced training. The question is whether that investment is extracting enough national value while scholars are still in training. The answer, at present, is no.

A revised national framework could change that. The University Grants Commission (UGC), together with the Ministry of Education and other relevant ministries and public bodies, should create a common set of minimum conditions for all government-funded overseas PhD schemes. These conditions should include a formal Bangladeshi host institution, a local co-supervisor, participation in scheduled online supervisory discussions, visible Bangladeshi

affiliation in scholarly outputs, and at least one structured engagement visit during the degree. Oversight does not need to be heavy. Publications, supervisor confirmation, and a brief annual update should be enough.

This proposal is not about forcing return, nor is it about adding bureaucracy for its own sake. It is about recognising a simple truth: national research capacity should begin to grow during the pursuit of a PhD, not just afterwards. If public money is being used to support higher study abroad, then public policy should ensure that Bangladeshi institutions are part of that knowledge journey from the beginning.

Bangladesh now has an opportunity to revisit how overseas doctoral support is designed. A new government often reviews inherited policies, funding priorities, and institutional arrangements. Now is therefore the right moment to move from a scholarship-focused mindset to a system-building mindset. The country does not need to spend significantly more, but make existing spending work harder. Funding PhDs in a way that also strengthens research supervision, publications, and institutions in Bangladesh would be far more valuable. Bangladesh should not fund only degrees abroad, but also fund national research capacity through them.

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Pay

7 Rugged rock

11 One-of-a-kind

12 Valiant person

13 Sense

14 Regarding

15 Movie-based toy

16 Toys with tails

17 Lowly worker

18 Target of modern mapping

19 Pull in

21 Relieve

22 Grotesque building features

25 Idler

26 Bible twin

27 Detaches, as a brooch

29 Arrests

33 Perfume setting

34 Asian capital

35 Sea dogs

36 Sarcastic

37 “Got it”

38 Up

39 High home

40 School break

DOWN

1 Legal actions

2 “Tomorrow” singer

3 Bottle size

4 Water source

5 Destroy

6 By now

7 Bike part

8 Do museum work

9 Hunting

10 Spurred on

16 Lake Turkana

18 Disgusting

20 Operative

22 Magazine holder

23 Current measure

24 Nut

25 Make a raid, perhaps

28 Miniature map

30 Biscotti flavor

31 McCoy’s nickname

32 Zodiac dozen

34 Take on

36 Butter unit

12-2

THURSDAY’S ANSWERS

N	I	T	R	O		C	R	A	M	S
O	C	H	E	R		R	U	P	E	E
R	E	E	S	E		E	M	O	T	E
M	A	C		S	E	A		C	A	N
A	G	O		T	A	M		A	L	T
L	E	T	T	E	R		A	L	S	O
		T	E	S	T	F	L	Y		
S	L	O	E		H	E	L	P	M	E
P	A	N			M	E	L		S	O
A	R	C		A	N	T		E	T	A
D	E	L	A	Y		S	O	N	I	C
E	D	U	C	E		A	F	O	O	T
S	O	B	E	R		D	A	W	N	S

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR
OPINION PIECES TO
dsopinion@gmail.com

Juboraj Shamim heads to Moscow Int'l Film Festival with new film

Filmmaker Juboraj Shamim is set to return to the Moscow International Film Festival with his latest feature film, *Atal*. According to a recent press release, the film has been selected for the "Apocalypse Now" section of the 48th edition of the festival.

Previously, Shamim's debut feature *Adim* was screened at the 44th Moscow International Film Festival, where it received both the Special Jury Award and the NETPAC Jury Award.

Although *Atal* has not been selected for the main competition this year, Shamim confirmed that the film will compete in the NETPAC Competition category.

The 48th Moscow International Film Festival will run from April 16 to 23. Shamim and Naeem Tushar are scheduled to leave for Moscow on April 16, with *Atal* set to be screened on April 19.



HORIZONS WITHOUT BORDERS Sabrina Islam's photography exhibition blends travel, memory and legacy



Sabrina Islam speaking amongst distinguished guests.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

From the golden glow of sunrise over Mount Fitz Roy to the quiet romance of cypress-lined roads stretching across Tuscany, the Edge Gallery at Bay's Edgewater Tower unfolded as a window to the world—each frame opening onto a different horizon on Friday, April 10.

Curated by entrepreneur and photographer Sabrina Islam, the exhibition *Horizons Without Borders* brought together a striking body of work captured across continents. Her lens travelled from the vast plains of Mongolia to the vibrant streets of Manila, weaving a visual narrative that balances grandeur with intimacy, distance with detail.

More than a photography showcase, the event carried a deeply personal resonance, coinciding with the launch of her father, Golam Ahmed Khan's book *The Tartar Pipe*, creating a rare dialogue between image, memory, and text.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Sarah Cooke, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Bangladesh. Inside the intimate gallery, anticipation lingered as art enthusiasts, family members, friends, and members of the media gathered

closely, eager to experience the stories behind each frame.

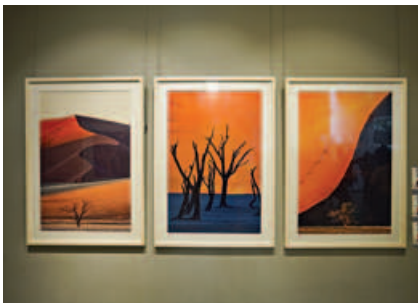
Speaking at the event, Cooke reflected on how the exhibition reaches beyond geography and aesthetics into shared human memory. Recalling her time in Tanzania, she said the images on display stirred personal recollections, noting that photography allows viewers to reconnect with places "through emotion as much as sight".



At the heart of the exhibition, Sabrina Islam offered a deeply personal reflection on her practice and emotional grounding. "This exhibition enunciates distance, light, and memory," she said, framing the showcase as both an artistic journey and an act of remembrance. She noted that its timing in April carries profound significance, marking both her father's birth anniversary and a moment of remembrance.



PHOTOS: ABRAR FAIYAZ NILOY



She spoke of her father's literary imagination, recalling how he wrote *The Tartar Pipe* in 1944 while studying at Dhaka University. Though he had not travelled beyond Calcutta at the time, she reflected, his writing revealed a mind that moved freely across geographies and ideas. "He had not travelled beyond Calcutta," she said, "but how he thought of all these names and places in the play is just amazing."

Her journeys have taken her from the immense skies of Mongolia to the glaciers of Mount Fitz Roy, and across distant deserts, shores, and mountain waters. Each landscape offers its own balance of scale and stillness—each horizon carrying its own light.

Beyond the photographs themselves, the exhibition extended into an immersive experience. Several works featured QR codes that allowed visitors to access short video moments from Sabrina Islam's travels.

NEWS

Dovish budget

FROM PAGE 12

cushion the economy from the oil price shock triggered by the US-Israel war on Iran.

The development budget would be in the neighbourhood of Tk 300,000 crore, up from Tk 200,000 crore this year, as the new democratically elected government looks to jumpstart the economy after two years of political uncertainty.

The revenue collection target has been set at an ambitious Tk 690,000 crore, of which Tk 620,000 crore would be borne by the National Board of Revenue.

The revised budget for this fiscal year had set the revenue target at Tk 588,000 crore, including Tk 503,000 crore from the National Board of Revenue — projections that officials acknowledge will fall short. The budget deficit has been set at around 5 percent.

This is expected to deliver a GDP growth of 6.5 percent and contain inflation within 7.5 percent in fiscal 2026-27.

The interim government had set a GDP growth target of 5 percent and an inflation target of 7 percent for this fiscal year.

Israeli strikes

FROM PAGE 12

The nearby Al-Awda hospital said it had received one fatality and two wounded.

The Israeli military said it had struck "an armed Hamas terrorist cell", adding that militants had approached what is known as the Yellow Line and "planned to execute a terror attack against IDF troops in the immediate timeframe".

The Yellow Line is the de facto boundary dividing Gaza into two zones: one under Israeli military control and one under Hamas control. The military did not specify how many people were killed in the incident.

Israel and Hamas regularly accuse each other of violating the ceasefire, which came into effect after two years of war.

At least 749 Palestinians have been killed since the truce began, according to Gaza's health ministry, which is considered reliable by the United Nations. The Israeli army has reported five soldiers killed in Gaza since the start of the truce.

Ties with India

FROM PAGE 12

confidence. That's why I told my Indian counterparts we prefer to move surely, slowly but steadily, to build confidence between our peoples. It might take time, but that way it will be durable. We must not repeat past mistakes and must keep dialogue open under all circumstances — good or bad."

Amid the fuel supply challenges arising from the war in the Middle East, Khalilur emphasised cooperation not only in energy but also in other areas of common interest. He expressed satisfaction with India's assurance of increasing energy supplies to Bangladesh.

The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with India expires in December, while the Teesta deal remains unsigned despite preparations in 2011 — issues that have raised concerns in Bangladesh.

Khalilur said the Ganges water is a matter of life and death, and Bangladesh seeks a new or revised treaty that meets essential needs.

"The risk of not sharing water appropriately means our livelihood and agriculture are affected, and climate vulnerability increases. An equitable, climate-proof arrangement will be one of the first tests of our reset," he said.

On climate challenges, Khalilur stressed long-term solutions: "People are people — whether in India or Bangladesh. They face the same crises. I see no option but to work together in good faith with eyes on the future."

He noted that Bangladesh resumed issuing all types of visas to Indians three days after the new government

took office and expects reciprocity. "People-to-people contact will sustain our relations. If they cannot reach us, you deny a vital source of trust and confidence."

Suspension of Indian visas had created humanitarian problems, he said, with Bangladeshis seeking medical treatment in Kunming, Bangkok, and Singapore. "I hope our Indian colleagues understand this and ease restrictions in the coming weeks."

The foreign minister also said Bangladesh faced propaganda from India after the fall of the Awami League and Sheikh Hasina's escape to India, which deeply concerned policymakers in Dhaka.

"The problem is that wrong narratives create perceptions stronger than reality. Let us ensure our narratives are not negative while we build confidence and trust."

Trump admin reveals plans for massive Washington arch

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump's administration on Friday revealed renderings for a colossal triumphal arch proposed for construction in Washington near some of the nation's most revered monuments.

At 250 feet (76.2 meters) it would pip Mexico City's Monument to the Revolution by 30 feet, making it the largest structure of its kind in the world, and knocking Pyongyang's Arch of Triumph to third place.

the total so far this year to 14,385. Confirmed cases stood at 2,489.

Health Secretary Md Quamruzzaman Chowdhury assured that the government has sufficient vaccine doses and logistics to carry out the planned drives.

"We have been working to contain the surge of measles," he told reporters after attending a programme marking World Parkinson's Day at the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital in Dhaka.

Artemis astronauts return

FROM PAGE 12

ship off the Pacific coast near San Diego, where they all proved capable of walking unassisted.

Nasa administrator Jared Isaacman called the voyage "a perfect mission."

"We're back in the business of sending astronauts to the Moon," he said, and "this is just the beginning."

As the astronauts returned to Earth, their spacecraft reached maximum speeds more than 30 times the speed of sound, and faced searing temperatures around half as hot as the surface of the Sun.

The Orion capsule will now be painstakingly examined to assess how it fared.

US President Donald Trump

praised the astronauts for their "spectacular" trip and said he "could not be more proud" — while wasting no time in looking ahead to the eventual goal of sending missions even further into space.

"Next step, Mars!" he wrote on social media.

Artemis II was the inaugural crewed mission of Nasa's program aiming to install a sustained presence on the Moon, including the eventual construction of a base that could be used for further exploration, including to Mars.

From liftoff to splashdown, the trip clocked in at nine days, one hour, 31 minutes and 35 seconds — though Nasa rounds up and calls it a

10-day mission.

The four astronauts became the humans to travel furthest away from the Earth, at 252,756 miles (406,771 kilometres).

Nasa is hoping it can put boots on the lunar surface as soon as 2028 — the final full year of Trump's second White House term.

Experts, however, have voiced skepticism that the lunar landers being developed by SpaceX and Blue Origin, companies owned by billionaires Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos respectively, will be ready in time.

China, meanwhile, is forging ahead with its own effort targeting 2030 to put astronauts on the Moon.

Tk 506cr new unit remains

FROM PAGE 12

furniture and medical equipment have already been supplied to the hospital, but only a few tests — CT scan, MRI and X-ray — are currently being conducted on basement level 2 of the building.

All other floors and equipment remain unused.

During a visit to the new 15-storey building (including three basement floors) yesterday, this correspondent found some chairs and other furniture gathering dust on the first and second floors.

All rooms were ready, with the necessary signs already installed for different units. The toilets also had a functioning water supply.

Since its inception in September 2012, NINS, the country's only government-run tertiary care neuroscience centre, has seen a steady and significant rise in the number of patients.

In the first nine months of last year, a total of 5.6 lakh patients received outpatient services, meaning around 2,050 people sought such care daily, according to hospital data.

Some 46,729 patients received emergency services in the first nine months, while 14,019 patients were admitted, the data shows.

The number of outpatients stood

at 6.01 lakh in 2024, compared with 3.6 lakh in 2023.

The hospital carried out a total of 3,047 major and 1,267 minor surgeries in the first nine months of last year, according to data. The numbers stood at 4,178 and 3,094 respectively in 2024, the data shows.

The hospital's bed occupancy rate has consistently remained at 100 percent.

"Patients come from across the country. In many cases, we cannot admit even urgent patients due to a shortage of beds. As a doctor, it is painful, but we have little option," an associate professor of the hospital told this correspondent yesterday.

In the last few months, they have raised demands in different forums for appointing doctors and other staff to make the new unit functional but to no avail, he said.

A medical technologist at the hospital said they have been carrying out a few tests in the new building (basement level-2) for the past three to four months so that the newly procured equipment does not become non-functional.

"No new manpower was appointed — we were recruited for the main unit and are now working here," he said, also requesting anonymity.

This correspondent visited the hospital on March 16 to speak with

its Director Kazi Gias Uddin Ahmed to know why the new unit could not be made functional.

His office referred this correspondent to Joint Director Badrul Alam Mondal, who declined to comment citing busyness.

When this correspondent went to their office yesterday, they were attending a discussion at the hospital marking World Parkinson's Day. They also did not respond to phone calls.

Health Secretary Md Quamruzzaman Chowdhury also took part in the programme, where several speakers, including Harun Al Rashid, president of Doctors Associations of Bangladesh (DAB), a pro-BNP doctors' organisation, demanded that the new unit of the hospital be made functional soon.

After the programme, the secretary, along with the top officials of the hospitals, inspected the new unit.

Contacted, Quamruzzaman said they were working to open the new unit within one month.

"Everything is ready — only the shortage is manpower. We have given administrative approval to hire staff under outsourcing, while we will also start posting doctors and other manpower soon," he told The Daily Star last night.



'Roid' set for Eid-ul-Azha release

Mejbaur Rahman Sumon is set to return with his new full-length feature film *Roid*, which has now secured its release window for Eid-ul-Azha.

The filmmaker confirmed that the film is fully prepared for release, with final planning and promotional activities currently underway. Production sources have also indicated that a full-scale promotional campaign will begin soon.

As part of the initial rollout, a song from the film—performed by Raju of the band Shohojia—is scheduled for release next week. The production company Bongo expects that the early promotional push will further build audience anticipation ahead of Eid.

Roid centres on an unconventional human relationship, exploring the life struggles of a mystic man and his mentally unstable wife. The lead roles are portrayed by Nazifa Tushi and Mostafizur Noor Imran, with Gazi Rakayet appearing in an important role.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Chaitra Sankranti and Bengali New Year 1433 celebration

A five-day cultural festival and fair marking Chaitra Sankranti and Bengali New Year 1433 will begin at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA), bringing together folk traditions, music, and performance under one programme.

DATE: MONDAY | APRIL 13, 2026- FRIDAY | APRIL 17, 2026

VENUE: BANGLADESH SHILPAKALA ACADEMY



Man killed as train hits him in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A former schoolteacher was killed after being hit by a train in Jashore yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Karunakanta Mondal, 80, of Monirampur upazila. He was a retired teacher of Panchbaria Government Primary School.

The incident occurred around 10:00am in the Sardar Mill area along the Jashore-Khulna railway line. Karunakanta was walking along the side of the railway track when the Jashore-bound Rupsha Express struck him, leaving him critically injured.

Locals rescued and took him to Abhaynagar Upazila Health Complex, where he later died while undergoing treatment.

The victim's son, Gaur Kanta Mondal, said his father had been missing. He identified the body at the hospital after being informed of the incident.

Dr Nasif Sayeed, an emergency department physician at the health complex, said the elderly man had suffered severe head injuries.

Nawabpur Railway Station Master Yaser Arafat confirmed the incident. Railway police recovered the body, and an investigation is underway.



PHOTO: STAR

Bura Gauranga riverbank being grabbed for ice plant

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

An ice plant is being constructed by illegally grabbing and filling the Bura Gauranga riverbank in Char Montaz union under Rangabali upazila in Patuakhali, local residents alleged.

The construction has been continuing over the past month on the east side of the launch ghat area, just south of Manta Colony.

Officials concerned described such activities as unlawful.

Workers at the site said the ice facility is intended to support fishermen, given the area's proximity to the Bay of Bengal.

Visiting the site recently, this correspondent saw that excavated soil from the riverbank was being used to fill adjacent land, where labourers were erecting permanent structures.

Locals alleged that one Saidur Rahman Khan is involved with the construction. Workers at the site corroborated the allegation.

Contacted, Saidur claimed ownership of the land and possession of valid documents. However, despite repeated requests, he did not produce any papers in support of his claim.

Lincoln Bayen, Barishal divisional coordinator of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), said no portion between a river's lowest and highest water levels can be occupied. Such alterations disrupt natural flow, accelerate

“The matter has been reported to the upazila administration, and documents have been sought from those involved, but none have been submitted so far,” he added.

Nahid Bhuyan, upazila nirbahi officer in Rangabali, termed cutting soil from a riverbank and building structures as “completely illegal”, adding that no permanent construction is allowed on khas



siltation and may ultimately threaten the river's existence, he added.

Hamidul Haque Bachchu, tahsildar (land revenue officer) in Char Montaz, said poor administrative oversight in the remote union creates opportunities for encroachment.



(government-owned) land.

“We are looking into the matter. If the activities are confirmed, eviction drives will be carried out,” he added.

Mohsin Uddin, additional deputy commissioner (Revenue) in Patuakhali, said necessary action will be taken following an investigation.

Infant dies with measles symptoms at KMCH

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An infant died with symptoms of measles at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) yesterday afternoon.

The deceased, identified as Chan, 2, son of Golam Rasul, was admitted to the hospital's measles isolation centre around 11:00am and died at approximately 2:00pm while undergoing treatment.

According to KMCH authority, the child was brought from Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah.

Dr Syeda Rukhsana Parveen, head of the paediatrics department at KMCH, confirmed the death.

She said the 23-month-old child had been brought to the hospital in a critical condition and was severely malnourished.

“The child had not received any of the recommended vaccinations during the past 23 months,” she said, adding that doctors initiated treatment with utmost care immediately after admission, but he succumbed within a few hours.

Earlier, on April 9, a 10-month-old infant named Shamim also died at the same hospital's measles isolation ward after being brought from Jhenidah for advanced treatment.

According to data from the Office of the Divisional Director of Health in Khulna, till now a total of 752 children were admitted to hospitals with measles-like symptoms across the division's 10 districts from March 15. Among them, 51 cases were confirmed as measles.

Md Mujibur Rahman, the divisional director of health, confirmed that nine children died during this period.

Two found dead in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Police recovered two bodies from separate locations in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Amzad Hossain Adu, 50, and Parvez, 25, of Senuapara in the Thakurgaon municipality area.

Sub-Inspector Amzad Hossain of Thakurgaon Police Station said Amzad used to stay frequently at his poultry farm in the Salondor Kazi Feed Mill area.

As he did not respond to phone calls in the morning, his mother went to the farm and found his body lying on the floor of a room.

Police sent the body to a Thakurgaon hospital morgue.

“The exact cause of death will be known after the autopsy,” the SI said.

Meanwhile, police recovered the hanging body of a youth from a tree in Senuapara in the municipality area on the same day.

He may have died by suicide, but the matter will be confirmed after the post-mortem report, police said.

Two girls raped

FROM PAGE 4

Officer-in-Charge Shahidul Islam of Mirpur Police Station told The Daily Star that both Hamidul and security guard Mohsin were initially brought in for questioning.

Later, Hamidul was shown arrested after the victim's mother filed the case, while Mohsin was released.

(Our correspondents from Patuakhali and Kushtia contributed to this report)



GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
BANGLADESH TELEVISION
CHATTOGRAM CENTER
www.btv.gov.bd

Memo No: 15.54.1543.023.07.025.25.142

Date: 09.04.2026

e-Tender Notice

For the Financial year 2025-2026, This e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the following procurement:

SL No.	Package Name	Tender ID/Package No:	Tender Publication Date and Time	Tender/Proposal closing/Opening Date & Time
1.	“Procurement of Studio Halogen light, Battery for EFP Camera, Tripod & Others Accessories for BTV Chattogram Center”	Tender ID: 1254609 Invitation Reference No: 15.54.1543.023.07.025.25	12 April 2026 10:00 hrs.	26 April 2026 15.00 hrs.

This is an online tender. Where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the national e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any Scheduled bank branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



Abu Syed Sajib
Television Engineer (Grade-2)
On behalf of General Manager
Bangladesh Television, Chattogram Center
Phone No: 02333379309 (Office)

GD-808

Political syndicates behind fuel

FROM PAGE 3

He added that statements by government leaders in parliament create the impression that the country is “floating on oil”, while in reality, people are queuing for miles without getting fuel. “Oil exists only in parliament, not in Bangladesh,” he said.

He advised the government to build buffer stocks to address the crisis and ensure transparency in demand management. He suggested maintaining at least 60 to 90 days of fuel reserves, breaking syndicates, and focusing on alternative energy sources, particularly solar power.

Expressing disappointment over parliamentary proceedings, he said although not all hopes have been dashed, parliament has yet to deliver anything significantly beneficial for the country. “Lawmaking in the interest of the people should be the essence of parliamentary democracy, but reality reflects otherwise,” he added.

Criticising the overall system, he said, “The entire society is now running on patchwork and cosmetic fixes.” He also claimed that in sectors like banking, profits are being shown on paper despite a lack of actual cash.

He stressed the need to build a merit-based, not politicised, society.

The Jamaat ameer also voiced concern over the situation at the Krishibid Institution, alleging attempts at a “coup-like takeover” similar to that at the BCB. He questioned why forceful leadership

capture would occur in a body of professionals.

Highlighting the importance of agriculture, he warned, “If agriculture survives, the country survives.”

He said the fuel shortage is hampering irrigation, posing a serious threat to food security. A collapse in agriculture, he noted, would mean a collapse of the nation, which cannot be remedied by foreign aid.

He also warned that if the path of syndicates, fascism, and coercion continues, they will resist it with all their strength.

A paper presented at the seminar, chaired by ATM Mahbub-e-Elahi, noted that around 18 percent of the country's total energy is used in agriculture, and the ongoing crisis could severely disrupt Boro cultivation.

532 killed, 2,221 injured

FROM PAGE 3

auto-rickshaws. Another 23 passengers were killed in locally made vehicles such as nosimons, and bhatbhaties. In addition, 13 bicycle riders were killed.

RSF shows that 264 accidents occurred on regional roads, 171 on national highways, 70 on rural roads, and 62 on city roads. The remaining nine took place elsewhere.

In terms of the accidents, 166 were head-on collisions, while 231 occurred after drivers lost control.

A total of 1,008 vehicles were involved in the accidents. Among these included 133 buses, 120 trucks, 37 covered vans, 41 pickups, 16 tractors, seven lorries, 16 drum trucks, two tourist cars, 19 minibuses, 42 private cars, two ambulances, eight SUVs, 244 motorcycles, 200 three-wheelers, 65 locally made vehicles, 15 bicycles, and 32 unidentified

vehicles.

Dhaka division recorded the highest number of fatalities, with 137 deaths in 126 accidents, while Sylhet division saw the lowest, with 26 deaths in 27 accidents.

In the capital, 28 people were killed, and 69 were injured in 46 accidents.

According to the report, the daily average of road accident deaths increased by 11.28 percent in March compared to February.



সেনা ক্রীড়া নিয়ন্ত্রণ বোর্ড (এএসসিবি), সেনাসদর, জেনারেল ষ্টাফ শাখা, সামরিক প্রশিক্ষণ পরিদপ্তর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
অর্থ বৎসর ২০২৫-২০২৬

১।	দরপত্রের নাম	১। সেনা ক্রীড়া নিয়ন্ত্রণ বোর্ড (এএসসিবি), সেনাসদর, জেনারেল ষ্টাফ শাখা, সামরিক প্রশিক্ষণ পরিদপ্তর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস।
২।	কাজের নাম	২। সেনা ক্রীড়া দপ্তর খেলোয়াড়দের জন্য খাদ্য সামগ্রী ক্রয় (সিভিউলে বিজ্ঞপ্তির বর্ণনা করা হবে)।
৩।	দরপত্র বিক্রয় মূল্য	৩। প্রয়োজনীয় নাস অর্থ প্রদান পূর্ব সিভিউল সেনা ক্রীড়া নিয়ন্ত্রণ বোর্ড, সেনাসদর, জেনারেল ষ্টাফ শাখা, সামরিক প্রশিক্ষণ পরিদপ্তর এর অধিন হতে করা যাবে।
৪।	জামানতের পরিমাণ	৪। দরপত্র প্রদানকালে মোট টাকার ২.৫% টেন্ডার নিরপাড়া জামানত হিসাবে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের তফসিলভুক্ত যে কোন বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক হতে ইয়াকুত অবনিনিয়ে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/সে-অর্ডার সর্বন আর্থি স্পোটস কন্ট্রোল বোর্ড এর অনুকূলে জমা করতে হবে।
৫।	দরপত্র এন্ডের আবেদন পত্রের সঙ্গে দাখিলযোগ্য সনদপত্রাদি (স্বাক্ষরিত আন্তঃবাণিনী সংস্থার নিম্নলিখিত তালিকাভুক্ত সরবরাহকারীদল উক্ত দরপত্র অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবে)।	ক। সিভিউলে বর্ণিত প্রকারের একক মূল্য, মোট মূল্য ও মিল প্যাকে স্বাক্ষরিত দরপত্র প্রদান করতে হবে। খ। হালনাগাদ নবায়নকৃত বৈধ ট্রেন্ড লাইসেন্স এর স্বত্বোপার্জিত (সত্যায়িত)। গ। বৈধ টিআইএন সনদপত্র (কার্যকর হালনাগাদ ট্যাক্স প্রদানের সত্যায়িত স্বত্বোপার্জিত)। ঘ। প্রস্তুতকারী কর্তৃক অথরাইজেশন নার (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে)। ঙ। কারিগরী তথ্য (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে)। চ। সরবরাহকারী কর্তৃক গত ০২ বছরে একই ধরনের ব্রহ্ম সামগ্রী কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে সরবরাহ করে থাকলে সে বিষয়ে সনদপত্র।
৬।	দরপত্র বিক্রয় শুরু ও শেষ তারিখ	৬। জাতীয় পরিকায় দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের দিন হতে ২০ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ তারিখ ১০৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৭।	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ	৭। ২০ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ তারিখ ১১০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত এবং উল্লেখিত সময়ের পরে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
৮।	দরপত্র ক্রয়/দাখিলের স্থান	ক। ইন্সটিটিউট, সেনাসদর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস এবং আর্থি স্টেডিয়াম, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস। খ। সত্যাপ্তি ক্রয় কমিটি, সেনা ক্রীড়া নিয়ন্ত্রণ বোর্ড, সেনাসদর, জেনারেল ষ্টাফ শাখা, সামরিক প্রশিক্ষণ পরিদপ্তর কার্যকর দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।
৯।	দরপত্র ঘোষণা তারিখ	২০ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ তারিখ ১১০০ ঘটিকায় সকল দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে) দরপত্র বাজ ঘোষণা হবে।
১০।	কাজ শেষ করার তারিখ	৮ কার্যদিবস প্রদানের তারিখ হতে ১০ দিনের মধ্যে।
১১।	অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী	৮ দরপত্র তফসীলে বর্ণিত বিবরণ সমূহ যথাযথভাবে পালন পূর্বক দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।

বিদ্যে কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে সিভিউলে উল্লেখিত ব্রহ্মসামগ্রী/সরঞ্জামাদির পরিমাণ কমানো/বাতানো এবং যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ কিংবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

আই এস পি আর/সেনা/৫১৬

সচিব
সেনা ক্রীড়া নিয়ন্ত্রণ বোর্ড
সেনাসদর, জেনারেল ষ্টাফ শাখা
সামরিক প্রশিক্ষণ পরিদপ্তর
ঢাকা সেনানিবাস

GD-803



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Forest Research Institute
Chattogram

e-GP Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the National e-GP portal.

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Name of the Supply	last selling Date & Time	closing /opening date & time	Tender ID
1	22.04.0000.000.008.30.00 07.24.20 Date:02/03/26	Sewing of dress, Name plate and Umbrella for Bangladesh Forest Research Institute, Chattogram.	26 April 2026 at 14:00 Noon	27 April 2026 at 12:00 Noon	1253704
2	22.04.0000.015.00.010.25 /2099 Date:06/04/26	Repair and Renovation work of inside and outside of residential building B-2 and painting work at BFRI Head Quarter, Chattogram.	26 April 2026 at 14:00 Noon	27 April 2026 at 12:00 Noon	1254470
3	22.04.0000.015.00.010.25 /2100 Date:06/04/26	Repair and Renovation work of inside and outside of residential building B-3 and painting work at BFRI Head Quarter, Chattogram.	26 April 2026 at 14:00 Noon	27 April 2026 at 12:00 Noon	1254478
4	22.04.0000.015.00.010.25 /2101 Date:06/04/26	Repair and Renovation work of inside and outside of residential E-9/2, E-7/1, E-7/2, E-6/2, E-2/2, E-3/2 houses and painting work at BFRI Head Quarter, Chattogram.	26 April 2026 at 14:00 Noon	27 April 2026 at 12:00 Noon	1254482

This is an online Tender. Where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline / hard copies will be accepted. To e-Tender registration in the Nation e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The Fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be de posited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

স্বাক্ষরিত-
(Mohammad Anisur Rahman)
Divisional Officer (Admin)
Bangladesh Forest Research Institute
Chattogram

GD-807

icddr,b and the government scale up life-saving bubble CPAP to combat measles and pneumonia in children

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Bangladesh is stepping up efforts to tackle a surge in measles-related child deaths, with icddr,b partnering the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to scale up an innovative, low-cost respiratory support technology known as bubble CPAP, says a press release.

At a high-level meeting in Dhaka, Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain joined icddr,b Executive Director Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, Senior Scientist Dr Mohammad Jobayer Chisti, and Professor Dr Md Mahbulul Haque of the Bangladesh Institute of Child Health to discuss urgent interventions. Experts warned that children aged six months to three years are at highest risk, with nearly 30 percent of hospitalised measles cases developing pneumonia.

Speakers highlighted that bubble CPAP, developed locally, offers a cost-effective and life-saving alternative to conventional ventilators, costing around BDT 300 per unit. Research published in The Lancet and field studies in Bangladesh and Ethiopia show it significantly improves survival compared to standard oxygen therapy.

A follow-up session with specialists from over 30 hospitals reinforced the need for rapid nationwide implementation. Training programmes are set to begin immediately, with icddr,b providing technical support to strengthen frontline care and reduce preventable child deaths.



Fit or just trending? The reality of gym culture among the youth

DR SUMAIYA KHALED

At 7 am, Arif (*not a real name*), a 21-year-old university student, finishes his workout and reaches for his protein shake. He checks the mirror, hoping for visible change. It has been three weeks. He feels stronger, but not transformed. Like many young people, he wonders if he is doing enough or if something more is missing. From university campuses to social media feeds, gym culture is having a moment in Bangladesh. For many young people, fitness is no longer just about health. It is about aesthetics, identity and discipline. Protein shakes, pre-workouts and supplement stacks have become as common as dumbbells. But beneath this growing trend lies an important question: is it actually working?

For some, regular exercise brings clear benefits. Improved strength, better mood and increased confidence are real outcomes. However, the rising obsession with rapid transformation is changing how fitness is approached. Many young gym-goers expect visible

results within weeks, often influenced by idealised online physiques that are rarely realistic or sustainable.

This is where supplements enter the conversation. Protein powders, fat burners and performance enhancers are increasingly marketed as shortcuts to success. While protein supplements can support muscle recovery when used appropriately, they are not magic solutions. In reality, most individuals can meet their protein needs through a balanced diet that includes eggs, fish, lentils and dairy.

The problem begins when supplements replace fundamentals. Irregular sleep, poor nutrition and inconsistent training cannot be fixed with a scoop of protein. Moreover, unregulated use of supplements raises concerns about safety, especially when products are taken without proper guidance or awareness of quality standards.

There is also a growing psychological dimension. For many young people, the gym is not just a place to exercise but a space tied

to self-worth. Progress becomes a measure of identity, and slow results can lead to frustration, comparison and unhealthy habits. Social media further amplifies this pressure, presenting curated versions of fitness that rarely reflect reality.

Fitness, at its core, is a long-term commitment. Sustainable progress comes from consistency, not intensity alone. Understanding one's body, setting realistic goals and prioritising overall wellbeing are far more important than chasing quick results.

As gym culture continues to expand, especially among youth, the focus must shift from appearance-driven goals to health-driven choices. Exercise should empower, not pressure. Supplements can support, but they cannot replace discipline, patience and balance.

Because in the end, fitness is not about looking strong for a moment, but staying strong for a lifetime.

E-mail: sumaiya.khaled@thedailystar.net

Menstruation and nutrition: A missing link in women's health

RAISA MEHZABEEN

For decades, menstruation has been viewed largely as a reproductive concern. However, emerging evidence highlights a crucial but often overlooked dimension, nutrition. Experts now argue that menstrual health cannot be fully addressed without recognising its strong link to dietary status.

Each menstrual cycle places specific demands on the body. Blood loss during menstruation leads to depletion of essential nutrients, particularly iron. In Bangladesh, where anaemia remains widespread among women, this connection is especially significant. Without adequate intake, many women face fatigue, reduced concentration and lower productivity.

Speakers in the field also highlight that nutrients such as magnesium, vitamin B6, calcium and omega-3 fatty acids play a key role in easing common symptoms, including cramps, mood swings and low energy. Diets rich in leafy vegetables, whole grains, nuts and fish can support hormonal balance, while excessive sugar, caffeine and processed foods may worsen discomfort.

Adolescence is a particularly vulnerable stage. Many girls experience menarche alongside rapid



growth, yet menstrual education often focuses only on hygiene, overlooking nutrition. This gap can lead to irregular cycles, severe discomfort and long-term health risks.

Experts stress the need to integrate nutritional guidance into menstrual health programmes. Schools, healthcare providers and community initiatives must promote awareness of balanced diets and early management of deficiencies.

Reframing menstruation as a nutritional issue offers a more holistic approach. By addressing both biological and dietary factors, policymakers and practitioners can better support women's health and wellbeing.

Raisa Mehzabeen is the founder & CEO of Nutrition For Change. E-mail: raisameh20@gmail.com

Bangladesh hosted global health hackathon focused on AI innovation

United International University hosted the seventh Harvard Health Systems Innovation Lab Hackathon on April 10 and 11, 2026, marking its second consecutive year as the only Bangladesh hub for the global event, according to a press release. Held at the Institute of Research, Innovation, Incubation and Commercialisation, the hackathon focused on building high-value health systems by leveraging artificial intelligence.

The Dhaka hub drew over 650 applications nationwide, from which 22 teams comprising 98 participants and four individual innovators were selected. Participants represented more than 20 universities and institutions, including Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, the University of Dhaka, BRAC University and icddr,b.

Speakers and jury members included the Managing Director of Startup Bangladesh, CEO of United Ayzaz Harun Ortac and Professor Laura J Reichenbach, Dean of the James P Grant School of Public Health. They were joined by mentors and industry leaders who guided participants throughout the event.

Teams developed solutions addressing critical care, infectious diseases, maternal health and healthcare accessibility. The Dhaka champions received cash awards and an opportunity to join the HSIL Venture Incubation Programme, aimed at transforming innovative ideas into scalable health solutions.

The untapped power of nurses and midwives in Bangladesh's future

PROF MD ANISUR RAHMAN FORAZY

Bangladesh's healthcare future may depend more on its nurses and midwives than ever before. Often overlooked in policy discussions, these professionals are central to patient care, maternal health and hospital safety. Experts argue that strengthening their role is not a symbolic step but a structural necessity for a resilient health system.

Specialists highlight that nurses are the backbone of clinical care, monitoring patients, preventing infections and ensuring continuity long after doctors leave the room. Midwives, meanwhile, play a critical role in antenatal care, safe childbirth and newborn protection. Yet despite their importance, both groups remain underutilised and under-recognised within the system.

It is also highlighted that there is point to a persistent gap between demand and empowerment. Many professionals face long hours, limited authority and unclear career pathways, particularly in rural areas where healthcare access remains uneven. Without proper deployment, training and institutional support, their potential to strengthen frontline services remains unrealised.

At the same time, global demand



for skilled nurses and midwives is rising. Experts suggest Bangladesh could benefit from this trend by developing a structured pathway for ethical overseas employment, creating opportunities for skilled migration and foreign currency generation.

However, specialists caution that such strategies must balance domestic needs with global opportunities. Expanding training,

strengthening leadership roles and building public-private partnerships are essential steps.

Reframing nurses and midwives as central actors rather than support staff could transform healthcare delivery while opening new economic pathways for the country.

The writer is a nursing educationist and research consultant (nursing and midwifery). E-mail: forazy@gmail.com

WORLD HEALTH DAY 2026 SEMINAR Reimagining health systems for a changing world

A World Health Day 2026 seminar at North South University brought together leading voices in healthcare to explore how systems can evolve to meet modern challenges. Held on April 7 and organised by the NSU Public Health and Sciences Club, the event focused on reimagining health systems through equity, innovation and resilience.

The keynote address by Dr Dipak Kumar Mitra, Dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences, highlighted the importance of universal health coverage and the need for accessible and affordable care.

Guest speakers added diverse perspectives like, the growing threat

of antimicrobial resistance, quality and excellence in healthcare delivery, transformative potential of digital health, and rising burden of non-communicable diseases in Bangladesh.

As global health systems grapple with rising non-communicable diseases, emerging infections, and widening inequities, the need for resilient and adaptive healthcare models has never been more urgent. In Bangladesh, rapid urbanisation, demographic shifts, and technological transformation are reshaping health demands, calling for stronger policy, innovation, and collaboration across sectors.



New selectors steer clear of ‘chop-and-change’ approach

SPORTS REPORTER

The newly formed four-member national selection panel yesterday named a 15-member Bangladesh squad for the opening two ODIs of the upcoming three-match series against New Zealand, starting on April 17, opting for continuity by retaining an unchanged side from the previous Pakistan series.

The panel, which took charge earlier this month, had 10 days to pick their first squad and chose to stick with the same group that secured a 2-1 series win over Pakistan at home in March, seemingly playing it safe at the start of their tenure by going with the safest option.

During that series, Bangladesh fielded the same playing XI in all three matches, leaving Soumya Sarkar, Mahidul Islam Ankon, Tanvir Islam and Shoriful Islam without a game.

While selectors in the past have often dropped players without giving them sufficient opportunities, the new panel appears keen to move away from that trend.

“When we reviewed the team, we felt the last series was successful. Bangladesh played good cricket, and some players didn’t get the chance to be in the playing XI,” said Habibul Bashar, chairman of the national selection panel, during a press conference to announce the squad while

BANGLADESH SQUAD

Mehidy Hasan Miraz (c), Soumya Sarkar, Saif Hassan, Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Najmul Hossain Shanto (vc), Tawhid Hridoy, Litton Das, Afif Hossain, Mahidul Islam Ankon, Rishad Hossain, Tanvir Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam and Nahid Rana.



“Giving someone just three matches are not enough. We want to give him [Saif] more opportunities before making a decision. We don’t want to get into a chop-and-change approach.”

Habibul Bashar, head of national selection panel

sitting alongside the other three selectors – Hasibul Hossain Shanto, Naeem Islam and Nadif Chowdhury.

“We want to believe in continuity, which is why we didn’t change the team for this series,” he added.

There are some questions over the form of top-order batters Saif Hassan and Najmul Hossain Shanto. Saif, who made his ODI debut last year largely on the back

of his T20 performances, has managed just one half-century in nine innings while Shanto is without a fifty in his last 12 ODI innings.

“Giving someone just three matches are not enough. We want to give him [Saif] more opportunities before making a decision. We don’t want to get into a chop-and-change approach.”

“Shanto is one of our quality batters.

Yes, he is not in great touch, but we hope he will deliver better performances,” Bashar said.

Litton Das was moved to the middle order during the Pakistan series and scored 41 each in the second and third ODI. Prior to that, he had endured a lean run, failing to reach double figures in nine innings, including four ducks.

Bashar confirmed that Litton is currently being considered for the No.4 position, although a return to the top order remains a possibility.

“After Mushfiquir Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad, we needed experience there [in middle-order]. For now, we are considering him [Litton] in that role. We will see what happens in the future,” he said.

Another notable talking point was Soumya, who despite being the highest run-scorer in the West Indies series with 140 runs in three innings, including a match-winning 91 in the decider, did not feature in the playing XI against Pakistan.

Bashar, however, remains optimistic about Soumya’s role going forward, calling him an “important asset” for the team.

The former Bangladesh captain also reiterated the panel’s stance to avoid frequent changes to the squad as they also keep an eye on direct qualification to the 2027 ICC World Cup.

Shakib’s return conditional, says chief selector

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief selector Habibul Bashar Sumon said veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan remains in contention for national selection, but only if key conditions are met.

“The board has unanimously agreed that based on Shakib’s availability, fitness and accessibility, and his ability to be present at match venues, we will certainly consider him for future selection,” Bashar told reporters in Mirpur yesterday.

“He is currently in a place where cricket isn’t played regularly, so while fitness can be maintained, competitive match practice is limited,” he added.

In a recent interview with The Daily Star, Shakib said his motivation to play at the highest level remains strong and that he wants to return home to play before eventually moving back into politics.

Since the fall of the Awami League government in August 2024, Shakib – who served as a Member of Parliament for that administration – has been unable to return to Bangladesh, although he went on to feature in four away Tests. A home farewell series against South Africa in October 2024 did not materialise due to a lack of government clearance.

Despite the uncertainty and long absence, Bashar indicated the selectors are willing to plan long-term around the 39-year-old if conditions align.

“If everything is in order, we want him for a long period,” he said.



Kings, Fortis maintain title charge

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings and Fortis FC maintained their title push in the Bangladesh Football League with important wins on Saturday. Fortis defeated Bangladesh Police 2-0 at the Shaheed Barkat Stadium in Gazipur, with Mithu Chowdhury opening the scoring early and Piash Nova sealing the win in stoppage time. Goalkeeper Sujan Perera also played a key role with crucial saves. The result lifted Fortis to second place with 24 points from 12 matches, three behind leaders Bashundhara Kings and two ahead of Abahani, while Police remained fifth with 16 points.

At the Kings Arena, Bashundhara edged bottom side Arambagh 2-1 to stay top of the table. Dorielson Gomes scored and assisted Sunday Emmanuel to give Kings a two-goal lead before Shadrach Mills pulled one back. Kings held on to register their eighth win, while Arambagh suffered their seventh defeat of the campaign.



PHOTO : BFF



The traditional wrestling event Boli Khela was held at Ching Hla Mong Chowdhury Mari Stadium in Rangamati yesterday as part of the indigenous communities’ new year celebrations -- Biju, Sangrai, Baisu, Bishu, Changkran, Changlan, Pata and Bihu. While the famed Jabbarer Boli Khela takes place annually in Chattogram, Rangamati also upholds the tradition every year during this time in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Rangamati’s Dipu Dewan emerged as champion in this year’s competition.

PHOTO : RIKORS CHAKMA

Ancelotti offers Neymar World Cup lifeline

STAR SPORTS DESK

Will Neymar don Brazil’s iconic blue and yellow at the 2026 FIFA World Cup?

That question has been on the minds of fans of the five-time world champions as the tournament, set to begin on June 11 across the USA, Mexico, and Canada, draws closer.

Until recently, there was little reason for optimism among Neymar supporters. But in an interview with L’Equipe, Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti has reopened the door, suggesting the forward still has two months to prove he deserves a place in his 26-man squad.

Although Ancelotti has consistently maintained that Neymar would be considered if fully fit, the attacker was left out of Brazil’s squad for last month’s warm-up matches against France and Croatia – which were Brazil’s last international matches before the squad announcement.

Brazil’s all-time leading scorer with 79 goals, Neymar has not featured for the national team since suffering a serious knee injury in October 2023. Since returning to Santos FC last year, he has struggled to put together a consistent run of matches – factors that have cast doubt over his chances of appearing at a fourth World Cup.



“He’s [Neymar] being evaluated by the CBF and by me, and he still has two months to show he has the qualities to play in the next World Cup.”

Carlo Ancelotti, Brazil head coach

However, Brazil’s 2-1 defeat to France in Boston saw fans once again chant Neymar’s name. At the time, Ancelotti played down the reaction, insisting the focus should remain on the selected players.

Now, though, the Italian has indicated

that the Santos forward remains in his plans as Brazil weigh their options ahead of the World Cup.

“He’s a great talent, and it’s normal that people think he can help us win the next World Cup,” Ancelotti said.

“He’s being evaluated by the CBF and by me, and he still has two months to show he has the qualities to play in the next World Cup.”

“After his knee injury, Neymar has made a good comeback; he’s scoring goals. He needs to continue in this direction and improve his fitness. He’s on the right track.”

Injury concerns have limited Neymar to just six appearances in Santos’s 20 matches across all competitions this season. While his return of three goals and three assists remains respectable, questions persist over whether he can be the answer for Brazil as they chase a sixth World Cup title after a 24-year wait.

The pressure on Ancelotti is significant. Failure in North America would leave Brazil with their longest World Cup title drought, surpassing the gap between their 1970 and 1994 triumphs.

For now, Neymar’s place on football’s biggest stage remains uncertain. But Ancelotti’s words have at least given fans renewed hope that the 34-year-old can make his case as time continues to tick.



ARSENAL STUMBLE IN TITLE RACE

Bournemouth’s Alex Scott celebrates after scoring the 74th-minute winner in a 2-1 victory over Premier League leaders Arsenal at the Emirates yesterday, dealing a major blow to the Gunners’ hopes of ending their 22-year title wait. Midfielder Scott produced a cool finish after a neat build-up to stun the nervous-looking hosts and provide a huge boost for chasers Manchester City. The defeat left a labouring Arsenal still with a seemingly commanding nine-point lead over City, but Pep Guardiola’s side have played two games fewer and can close the gap if they beat Chelsea today.

PHOTO : REUTERS



‘Ties with India, China not zero-sum’

Khalilur tells Indian media

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's relationship with India or China is not a zero-sum game, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman has said, assuring that any concerns India may have in this regard should be put to rest.

A zero-sum game in international relations refers to a situation where one country's gain equals another's loss, often leading to competition over cooperation.

“Our relationship with India or China is not a zero-sum game. If there are worries, we expect our Indian friends to state them clearly with specifics,” Khalilur told Indian media during his visit to Mauritius on Friday.

He discussed various aspects of Indo-Bangla ties, which saw strains during the interim government but are now moving toward improvement.

During his April 7-9 visit to New Delhi, Khalilur met Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval before flying to Mauritius to attend the Indian Ocean Conference.

In a separate interview with The Hindu in Port Louis, he mentioned a possible visit by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to India.

“There will be a visit, but we have not yet finalised the dates. In the run-up to the visit, there will be many activities,” he said, as he elaborated on how Bangladesh wants to improve relations slowly but surely.

Speaking to NDTV, Khalilur stressed: “Our relations with other countries are not at the cost of India. We cooperate fruitfully with China and do brisk business with India. We have negative trade [trade deficit] with both countries. These are dictated by market prices.”

“Let us put these worries to rest and not view these relationships in ways that do not help. If there are issues, let us work together. Tell us if there is any specific problem,” he said, adding that both countries are willing to engage and move forward.

“However, success must be based on trust and

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2



A man pushes a loaded cycle van past the collapsed bridge over the Kakina canal in Brahmanbaria's Moniando area, which has remained out of service for over a year. Slow reconstruction has kept direct road communication between Kasba and Akhaura upazilas suspended, forcing locals to rely on an earthen alternative route and endure prolonged hardship. PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCES AND HOSPITAL

Tk 506cr new unit remains idle for lack of manpower

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Parvin Begum came to the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital (NINS) along with one of her ailing relatives who needed treatment there. However, she suddenly felt dizzy, collapsed and became critically ill.

Her son Tanzir stood in the queue for nearly an hour before managing to have his mother seen by an outdoor doctor.

The doctor advised them to take her to another hospital as there were no vacant beds available. In fact, many patients who had arrived before them could not be



admitted either, he was told, as the 500-bed public hospital is struggling to cope with the growing number of patients.

And yet, a new 500-bed unit of the

hospital has remained unutilised for over four months since its inauguration on December 8 last year due to a lack of necessary manpower and budgetary allocation.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the then chief adviser at the health ministry, inaugurated the unit, which was built at a cost of Tk 506 crore between January 2018 and December 2024, without ensuring the required manpower and budgetary allocation.

Doctors and staffers said that all

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Nasa's Orion spacecraft with Artemis II crewmembers splashes down in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of California yesterday (BST). Inset, Astronauts Reid Wiseman, Christina Koch, Jeremy Hansen and Victor Glover pose for a group photo in front of Orion in the well deck of USS John P Murtha, in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of California, after the completion of the mission. PHOTO: REUTERS, AFP

Israeli strikes kill 7 in Gaza

AFP, Deir el Balah

Gaza's civil defence agency yesterday reported that Israeli airstrikes in the Palestinian territory had killed seven people overnight, with the military saying it had struck an “armed terrorist cell”.

Despite an October 10 ceasefire, Gaza remains gripped by daily violence as both the Israeli military and Hamas accuse one another of breaching the truce.

Mahmoud Bassal, spokesman for Gaza's civil defence agency, which operates as a rescue service under Hamas, said an Israeli drone had fired two missiles close to a police post in the Al-Bureij refugee camp.

In addition to the seven dead, he said, several more people were wounded, four of them critically.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in central Gaza said it had received six bodies and seven wounded, “including four in a critical condition because of direct impacts to the face, torso and other parts of the body”.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Artemis astronauts return to Earth after lunar flyby

AFP, San Diego

An elated Nasa late Friday was celebrating its successful voyage around the Moon, after four astronauts safely returned to Earth having completed the first lunar flyby in more than 50 years.

The Nasa spacecraft carrying four astronauts – three Americans and one Canadian – splashed down without a hitch off the California coast, capping the US space agency's crewed test mission that returned with spectacular images of the Moon.

“What a journey,” said mission commander Reid Wiseman, who reported that the crewmembers – himself along with Christina Koch, Victor Glover and Jeremy Hansen – were “stable” and “green.”

“They're in great condition, that's what that means,” said Rob Navias, the Nasa public affairs official who narrated their return on the agency's livestream.

Following an expected but nerve-racking communications blackout during their high-stakes re-entry, Wiseman's voice triggered relief that the astronauts were well on their way back home. “We have you loud and clear,” he said following a voice check from mission control in Houston.

Nasa personnel and the US military helped extract the astronauts from the bobbing capsule – to the applause of those watching from mission control.

By late Friday, helicopters had lifted the astronauts to a recovery

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

FACULTY SEARCH

Grameen University has been established with a bold and transformative vision, as envisioned by Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus, to contribute meaningfully to the creation of a world of **Three Zeros - Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, and Zero Net Carbon Emissions**. Rooted in the Grameen philosophy and inspired by decades of proven social innovation, the University seeks to redefine the role of higher education by aligning academic excellence with social responsibility, sustainability, and ethical leadership. It is envisioned not merely as a conventional degree-awarding institution, but as a purpose-driven university where education serves as a powerful catalyst for inclusive growth, innovation, and long-term sustainable development. The University is duly accredited by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and officially approved by the Ministry of Education, Government of Bangladesh.

MULTIPLE OPEN RANK FACULTY POSITIONS

The University seeks to fill positions at various ranks, including **Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Lecturer**. These positions are available across multiple schools and fields as outlined below :

School of Entrepreneurship and Business

- Management
- Entrepreneurship
- Finance
- Marketing
- Accounting
- Human Resource Management
- Economics

School of Engineering

- Computer Science and Engineering
- Data Science
- AI, Machine Learning
- Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Health Science and Technology

School of Social Business

- Social Business
- Microfinance
- Innovation
- Development Studies

Required Qualification

- Excellent academic credentials; applicants must hold a **master's degree** in a relevant field for **Lecturer positions**. Preference will be given to the candidates with journal publications.
- For the rank of **Assistant Professor and above**, a **PhD** from a **highly reputed university** is preferred.
- Applicants must have the potential to teach effectively.
- Applicants with **PhD degrees** should have strong research potential, preferably in areas of priority at Grameen University.

Application Procedure

Interested candidates who fulfill the aforementioned requirements are requested to submit their applications electronically to Grameen University at the following email address: **recruitment@grameenu.ac**

Salary & Benefits

Grameen University offers an attractive salary and benefits package commensurate with prevailing market standards.

Application Deadline

26 April 2026

For inquiries or further information, please visit **www.grameenu.ac** or contact: **recruitment@grameenu.ac**

ONLY SHORTLISTED CANDIDATE WILL BE CONTACTED

Grameen University is an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity and inclusion in its workforce.

Grameen University 06 Main Road, Diabari South, Uttara, Dhaka 1230