



NHRC ORDINANCES

Govt's rationale for repeal flawed

Say 'immediate past' commissioners; law minister refutes the claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government presented wrong information in parliament to justify the repeal of NHRC-related ordinances, the "immediate past" commissioners of the National Human Rights Commission alleged yesterday.

In an open letter, they said the government's real motive behind the repeal was to curb the NHRC's independence, and warned that the move could put victims of enforced disappearances and participants in the July uprising at serious risk.

They also said that under the reinstated NHRC act of 2009, security forces would be responsible for investigating allegations of their own human rights violations.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman, however, said all the points made in the open letter were "based on misconceptions and are incorrect".

Meanwhile, the reinstatement of the 2009 act has created confusion over the commission's current status.

On April 9, parliament repealed three ordinances related to the NHRC, passed between 2024 and 2025, and reinstated the 2009 law enacted during the Awami League era.

"If a government agency is accused, an investigation subject to that same government's permission is meaningless."

'Immediate past' NHRC commissioners

"All the points made in the open letter are based on misconceptions and are incorrect."

Law Minister Asaduzzaman

The repealed ordinances are the National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024; the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance, 2025; and the National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025.

Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, Nur Khan, Ilira Dewan, Prof Md Shariful Islam, and Nabila Idris said their roles as commissioners ceased to exist following the repeal.

"Since the ordinances have been repealed, we are no longer serving," Nur Khan told this newspaper, replying to a query about why they described themselves as "immediate past" in the open letter.

Asked about their status now, he explained, "We did not resign, and the government did not ask us to resign.... The status is -- when the law under which we were appointed is repealed, we cease to exist."

"We have no relation to the 2009 law as our appointments were made in line with the 2025 ordinance."

Under the 2009 act, the selection committee for appointing the NHRC chairperson and commissioners was dominated by the ruling party. It was chaired by the then Speaker and included the home minister, the chairman of the law commission, the cabinet secretary, and one member each from the ruling and opposition parties.

The interim government, however, changed this process through an ordinance. Under it, the committee would be chaired by a judge of the Appellate Division nominated by the chief justice.

Other members included the cabinet secretary, one ruling party MP, one opposition MP, a university professor, a citizen representative, a journalist representative, and a representative of minority ethnic groups.

The interim government reconstituted the commission following the promulgation of the ordinance in November last year.

OPEN LETTER; MINISTER'S RESPONSE

The open letter, issued by commissioners who described themselves as "immediate past", responded to what they called incorrect information

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IN THE SPIRIT OF BAISHAKH

With gentle strokes of a brush, a woman paints alpona art on a young girl's cheek on the eve of Pahela Baishakh. This traditional art form, which embodies the spirit of the celebration, will adorn spaces and faces across the country today as the nation revels in festivity. The photo was taken yesterday at Dhaka University's Faculty of Fine Arts.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

US blockade of Hormuz begins

Trump vows to sink Iranian boats as oil surges; Tehran slams 'US piracy', vows to attack Gulf ports

Nato allies refuse to join blockade

Pak PM says truce 'holding', efforts on to resolve issues

China slams move UN says blockade illegal

Trump says gas prices may remain high till November

AGENCIES

The US military began a blockade of ships leaving Iran's ports yesterday, President Donald Trump said, and Tehran threatened to retaliate against ports of its Gulf neighbours after weekend talks on ending the war broke down.

Oil prices climbed back over \$100 per barrel, with no sign of a swift reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to ease the biggest ever disruption in supplies and broader concerns over the durability of a two-week ceasefire agreement reached last week.

Trump said that Iran had been in touch and wanted to make a deal, but that he would not sanction any agreement that allows Tehran to have a nuclear weapon.

"Iran will not have a nuclear weapon," Trump

told reporters at the White House yesterday. "We can't let a country blackmail or extort the world."

Since the war started on February 28, Iran has effectively shut the Strait of Hormuz to all vessels except its own, saying passage would be permitted only under Iranian control and subject to a fee.

Trump said earlier that Washington would block Iranian vessels and any ships that paid such tolls and that any Iranian "fast-attack" ships that went near the blockade would be eliminated.

Brigadier General Reza Talaei-Nik, a spokesperson for Iran's Ministry of Defence, warned that efforts by foreign military to police the strait would escalate the crisis and

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Invest in agro in the north

Tarique urges businesspeople

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday asked a group of top businesspeople to increase investment in production of agricultural products and agro-processing industries in northern districts and other remote areas.

He also suggested that the businesspeople invest more in sugar, poultry, seed industries, and fruit production so that the overall agricultural sector can advance significantly, particularly in the northern region.

Tarique assured them of more support for developing the agricultural and agro-processing sectors at a meeting at his Secretariat office.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman and chief executive director of PRAN-RFL Group, said the prime minister wants an agricultural revolution.

He said that during the meeting, they demanded the premier ease doing business by removing different tax and non-tax barriers.

Ahsan added that the businesspersons want the establishment of a zoning system in the agricultural sector, such as zoning for the production of crops, paddy,

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Bhasan Char forest bears brunt as LPG runs dry

Left without LPG cylinders due to fund crunch, Rohingyas forced to chop down trees for firewood, making the island more vulnerable to storm surges, erosion



Rohingya residents living in refugee camps on Bhasan Char resort to denuding the forest to collect firewood for cooking amid a prolonged shortage of LPG supplies.

PHOTO: SAJJAD HOSSAIN

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, back from bhasan char

As dawn broke over Bhasan Char, Mohammad Nur, a Rohingya refugee, stepped out of his shelter with an axe and headed towards a patch of trees on the island, southwest of Sandwip and 37 miles off the coast of the Bay of Bengal.

After a 15-minute walk, he reached a thicket of coastal vegetation. He began cutting branches of a kewra tree, chopped them into pieces and carried them home to use them as firewood. He stored them in a small kitchen space in his shelter in Cluster 23.

"Over the last two months, I have cut at least

14 trees," Nur told this correspondent who visited the island last month.

When Nur, now in his late 20s, arrived on the island with his family from a congested Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar five years ago, life felt relatively stable.

Apart from having a roof over their heads, they received Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders for cooking through aid distribution.

However, the LPG supply began to dwindle in August last year, making it increasingly difficult to cook meals for his seven-member family. About three months ago, the supply ground to an abrupt halt. With no gas and no

alternatives available, Nur turned to the only source of fuel within reach: the island's trees.

"What else could we do? How will we survive if we cannot cook food?" asked Nur, who lives with his wife, three sons, a daughter, and his younger brother in the shelter.

Nur is not alone. Across the island under Noakhali's Hatiya upazila, members of around 8,000 Rohingya families enter the forest in small groups to collect firewood, carrying axes, sacks and ropes.

For more than 34,000 Rohingya refugees on the 40-square-kilometre island, collection of

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US blockade of Iran a major military effort, say experts

P5



Corn imports shift away from India to Brazil, US

B4

১৫ এপ্রিল হতে ১১ জুন পর্যন্ত মোট ৫৮ (আটান্ন) দিন বঙ্গোপসাগরে সকল প্রকার মৎস্য নৌযান কর্তৃক মৎস্য আহরণ নিষিদ্ধকরণ বিষয়ে বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সামুদ্রিক মৎস্য (Marine Fisheries) আইন, ২০২০ এর ধারা ৩ এর উপধারা ২ মোতাবেক বাংলাদেশের সামুদ্রিক মৎস্য জলসীমায় ১৫ এপ্রিল হতে ১১ জুন পর্যন্ত মোট ৫৮ (আটান্ন) দিন সকল প্রকার মৎস্য নৌযান দ্বারা যে কোন প্রজাতির সামুদ্রিক মৎস্য আহরণ নিষিদ্ধ করা হয়েছে। সকল মৎস্য নৌযান মালিক/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে এ নিষেধাজ্ঞা প্রতিপালনের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

এর ব্যতায় ঘটলে সামুদ্রিক মৎস্য আইন, ২০২০ এবং সামুদ্রিক মৎস্য বিধিমালা, ২০২৩ অনুযায়ী ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

প্রচারে :

মৎস্য অধিদপ্তর

মৎস্য ও প্রাণিসম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়

GD-819

DGHS confirms 2 more deaths from measles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more patients died of confirmed cases of measles in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

With this, the total confirmed measles deaths stand at 30, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Both deaths were reported in the Dhaka division.

Besides, the DGHS recorded five additional deaths from suspected cases of measles in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of suspected measles deaths to 156.

Of the five, four were reported in the Dhaka division and one in the Rajshahi division.

In the last 24 hours, a total of 82 confirmed measles cases were recorded. Currently, the total confirmed cases in the country are 2,721.

Meanwhile, some 1,371 suspected measles cases were recorded during the same period, taking the total number of suspected cases to 17,024.



Family members pray at the grave of a relative buried alongside Hezbollah fighters killed in Israeli strikes, at a cemetery in Choueifat, south of Beirut, Lebanon yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bhasan Char forest bears brunt

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firewood has become a matter of survival. But for the island, this poses serious environmental risks, exposing it to the dangers of storm surges and erosion.

Although the LPG crisis was anticipated months ago, the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), responsible for managing the cluster villages for the refugees, could not make any alternative arrangements.

Between 2017 and 2019, a total of 120 cluster villages were built under a Tk 2,312-crore project for accommodating one lakh of the 10 lakh Rohingyas from Cox's Bazar. The first batch was transferred to the island in December 2020.

More than 7.5 lakh Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh in the months after August 2017 following the Myanmar military's brutal campaign in Rakhine State. They joined several lakh others, who had escaped earlier waves of violence, in cramped camps in Cox's Bazar.

Over four years since 2020, more than 8,000 refugee families were moved to the island from Cox's Bazar, according to the office of RRRC.

Before their relocation, the government carried out afforestation drives on around 15,000 acres of the island between 2010 and 2014, according to project records.

Dense plantations, including coastal species like kewra, later spread across parts of the island, then known as Thengarchar. These trees provide more than just shade; they serve as primary natural defence against cyclones and storm surges. They stabilise soil and mitigate erosion.

RRRC documents show that 22.35 lakh trees were planted on the island over the six years after the Rohingyas arrived there in 2020.

RRRC officials and aid workers said that around 2.55 lakh trees have been cut down since the LPG crisis began in September last year.

According to the Forest Act of 1927, tree felling in the island's forest is prohibited.

A CRISIS LONG IN THE MAKING

Since 2020, each Rohingya family received a 12 kg LPG cylinder at regular intervals, roughly every 36 days. The supply stopped in January this year after Islamic Relief Bangladesh, a non-governmental organisation, halted LPG distribution due to a fund crunch.

In a letter dated February 9, the Office of the RRRC informed the NGO Affairs Bureau that firewood collection from forest areas had increased amid the LPG crisis, and that the island's limited coastal vegetation could be depleted rapidly.

Internal correspondence shows the crisis had been anticipated much earlier.

On August 12 last year, the RRRC office in Bhasan Char warned the Cox's Bazar office of a looming LPG shortage.

In a letter, it said only 2,500 cylinders a month -- half the requirement of 5,000 cylinders -- were expected from August 2025 to June 2026 and that uninterrupted distribution would only be possible till August 26, 2025.

Two weeks later, the Cox's Bazar office wrote to the NGO Affairs Bureau and asked it to take steps urgently, saying around 5,000 cylinders were needed for the refugees each month. On September 9, the bureau asked the organisations concerned to arrange LPG supply immediately. However, the problem remains unresolved.

Several staffers at Islamic Relief Bangladesh said the funding for LPG cylinders had come through Islamic Relief USA, a Virginia-based nonprofit organisation. But there was a fund crunch after US President Donald Trump halted foreign aid last year, affecting support streams tied to Islamic Relief USA.

Between January and June last year, around 3,500 cylinders were distributed among the refugees per month, which fell to about 3,000 between July and December.

They said it would require over Tk 8 crore a year to ensure uninterrupted LPG supply to 8,000 Rohingya families. When contacted, RRRC

Commissioner Mohammed Mizanur Rahman said,

"There is actually no government fund for providing LPG cylinders to Rohingyas. The funds came from NGOs. The government did not spend any money."

He further said his office does not have the means to arrange government funding.

Seeking anonymity, an Islamic Relief Bangladesh official posted at Bhasan Char said, "We are uncertain when funding can be arranged. The RRRC has contacted us but we are unable to give any assurance because funding comes from abroad."

TREES FELLE ON A LARGE SCALE During visits to multiple sites near refugee clusters, embankments and forest patches, this correspondent found ample evidence of tree cutting.

More than a hundred tree stumps were seen in six locations near Cluster 75, the Bhasan Char Multipurpose Complex and outside the main project boundary. Near the Ghat area, more than 108 trees were found stripped of branches.

Elsewhere, firewood lay drying on the rooftops of many shelters, while stacks of branches were piled in front of many houses. Some families stored branches in bags while others kept them beside cooking spaces or under makeshift covers to keep them dry.

To understand the scale of tree felling, this correspondent talked to more than 50 families.

Households with two to three members cut about two trees a month, compared with five trees for families of four to five members and seven for those with six to seven members.

Families with eight to nine members cut 10 trees, while those with 10 or more members cut 11 trees a month.

Ibrahim Khalil, wildlife and biodiversity conservation officer in Noakhali, said the risks from deforestation goes beyond ecology.

If tree cutting continues, the island's inhabitants may be exposed to storm surges, erosion and temporary inundation, he said.

Invest in agro in the north

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and fruits, for better yield and improved management of agricultural produce and agro-processing industries.

The PM assured them that the government will reduce tax on the import of solar panels, as per their demand, so that they rely less on fossil fuels.

Tarique said that his government would reduce tolls on vehicles used for transporting goods via the Jamuna Bridge.

Seeking anonymity, another businessperson who was in the meeting said it was a business-friendly meeting, as the prime minister listened to them and assured them of resolving various challenges that can be addressed by the government.

He added that the PM wants the northern region to develop into an agricultural hub for products such as vegetables, fruits, and agro-processing industries.

The prime minister also suggested that businesspersons use LPG to meet the demand for gas, as it may take more time to extract additional gas from the fields.

Another businessperson who attended the meeting said the PM mainly discussed the future of agriculture and the agro-industries in the country.

He also wants Bangladesh to export more agricultural products and produce, the businessperson told The Daily Star over the phone, wishing not

to be named.

The PM added that he would support businesspersons in building cold chain facilities for preserving produce such as mangoes, potatoes, and other fruits for local consumption and export.

Yesterday's meeting was the second one between the PM and the businesspersons after Tarique assumed office.

He held the first meeting with another group of businesspersons on April 4, where they mainly demanded uninterrupted energy supply, easing of regulatory bottlenecks, lower bank interest rates, and the inauguration of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's third terminal to improve investment climate.

Trawler 'with 250' Bangladeshis

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been lured with a job offer from Kutupalong Bazar on April 2. He was taken to a house in the Rajarchhara area of Teknaf's Kachhopia union, where he was confined with 20 to 25 others in inhumane conditions.

He alleged that victims were subjected to abuse whenever they attempted to escape, adding that multiple houses in the area were used to confine trafficked individuals.

On the night of April 4, they were taken to the Marine Drive adjacent coast near Rajarchhara and boarded onto small fishing boats. At one stage, they were forced to hide in nearby bushes as a Border Guard Bangladesh patrol passed.

"We were later transferred in stages to a larger fishing trawler near Myanmar waters, close to Saint Martin's Island," he said.

According to Rafiqul, more passengers were loaded onto the vessel, bringing the total to around 280, including 13 crew members and traffickers, 21 Rohingya women, and four children. Around 150 of the passengers were Rohingya, while the rest were Bangladeshis.

After leaving waters near Shamila in Myanmar (near St Martin's Island) on April 4, the trawler reached near the

Andaman Islands on April 8.

Due to rough seas, traffickers allegedly forced passengers into four cramped storage compartments meant for fish and nets.

Rafiqul claimed that 25 to 30 people died from suffocation and overcrowding.

He further alleged that traffickers threatened to sink the vessel if those on deck refused to move into the compartments.

The trawler eventually capsized after being hit by large waves, Rafiqul said.

He survived by clinging to a two-litre water bottle but could not say what happened to the others. He was rescued along with eight others on April 9.

Another survivor, Md Imran from a Rohingya camp in Kutupalong, said he had joined the journey hoping to escape camp life.

"When we reached near the Andaman Sea, the trawler sank. I held onto a water tank and fought for my life for two days before being rescued by a Bangladeshi ship," he said.

"I still cannot process how many people died. Living with this memory is extremely painful."

The coast guard members filed a case under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012 with Teknaf Model Police Station on Sunday

in connection with the incident.

According to the case statement, the victims were being transported illegally to Malaysia on a boat named "Tanjina Sultana" when it sank due to adverse weather.

Officer-in-Charge Saiful Islam said the nine rescued individuals were brought to the police station. Legal action has been taken against six alleged traffickers among them.

Among the rescued, six are Bangladeshi nationals and three are Rohingya, the OC said, adding that three victims have been sent home following court orders after initial questioning, while the suspected traffickers were sent to jail on Sunday.

The officer said investigators have yet to determine the exact number of passengers on board or the fate of the missing.

"The rescued persons are not clearly describing what happened to the trawler or how they survived at sea," he said, adding that the total number of victims remains uncertain.

At one stage, he declined to comment further.

The rescued individuals were identified as Md Imran, Rahela Begum, Hridoy, Sohan Uddin, Md Akbar, Rafiqul Islam, Tofayel, Sayad Alam, and Md Hamid.

US blockade of Hormuz begins

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instability in global energy security.

Nato allies, including Britain and France, said they would not be drawn into the conflict by taking part in the blockade, stressing instead the need to reopen the waterway, through which about one-fifth of the world's oil normally passes.

China, Washington's great power rival and a big importer of Iranian oil, also criticised the plan.

"The Strait of Hormuz is an important international trade route for goods and energy, and maintaining its security, stability, and unimpeded flow is in the common interest of the international community," foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said, urging Iran and the US not to reignite the war.

Spain's Defence Minister Margarita Robles said the planned naval blockade "makes no sense".

And in a BBC radio interview, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Britain would not join the blockade, adding the UK "is not getting dragged in".

French President Emmanuel Macron said that France and Britain would host a conference with countries prepared to join a "peaceful multinational mission" to secure the strait, but it would be "strictly defensive" and only operational once circumstances permit.

Last Wednesday, the US and Iran agreed a two-week truce to allow the negotiations to go ahead, and mediator Pakistan and Gulf state Qatar were still calling yesterday for it to be respected as diplomatic efforts continue.

"The ceasefire is still holding and,

as I speak, full efforts are underway to resolve the outstanding issues," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan told a cabinet meeting.

The head of the International Maritime Organization, Secretary General Arsenio Dominguez, said no country could "prohibit the right of innocent passage or the freedom of navigation through international straits that are used for international transit".

The US military's regional Central Command said the blockade would be "enforced impartially against vessels of all nations" entering or leaving Iranian ports in the Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

"The blockade will not impede neutral transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz to or from non-Iranian destinations," Central Command said in a note to seafarers seen by Reuters yesterday.

The US leader's latest change of tack left some observers perplexed.

"Presumably, Trump's intent is to try to starve Iran of export revenue and compel Iran's main oil customers, particularly China, to pressure Tehran to end its blockade of the strait," think tank The Soufan Center said in its daily note.

Two Iranian-linked tankers, the Aurora and New Future, laden with oil products, left the strait yesterday before the deadline, according to LSEG data.

An Iranian military spokesperson called any US restrictions on international shipping "piracy," warning that if Iranian ports were threatened, no port in the Gulf or Gulf of Oman would be secure. Any military vessels approaching the strait would violate the ceasefire, Iran's

Revolutionary Guards said.

The US delegation in Islamabad -- led by US Vice-President JD Vance, special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner -- was frustrated by Iran's refusal to give up what it insists is a civilian nuclear programme.

In the talks, Iran brought new demands, including recognition of its control of the waterway, lifting of sanctions and the withdrawal of forces from US military bases across the Middle East.

Russia has offered to hold Iran's enriched uranium safely as part of any deal.

"The offer still stands, but has not been acted upon," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Trump has declared victory, despite failing to achieve the objectives he set out at the start of the war: to eliminate Iran's ability to strike its neighbours, end its nuclear programme and make it easier for Iranians to topple their government.

On Sunday, Trump said the price of oil and gasoline may remain high through November's midterm elections, a rare acknowledgement of the potential political fallout from his decision to attack Iran six weeks ago.

"It could be, or the same, or maybe a little bit higher, but it should be around the same," Trump told Fox News.

The average price for regular gas at US service stations has exceeded \$4 per gallon for most of April, according to data from GasBuddy. Average US gas prices in February hovered just below \$3 per gallon, and over the past year, never exceeded \$3.25 per gallon, according to GasBuddy.

Govt's rationale for repeal flawed

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about the NHRC-related ordinances presented in parliament. It also outlined the government's perceived objections and offered proposals for future legislation.

The letter noted that the government in parliament claimed that an ordinance ensured necessary protection for those involved in the July uprising.

However, the commissioners said that under the July Mass Uprising (Protection and Liability Determination) Ordinance, 2026, ratified by parliament, participants would be protected if deaths occurred due to political resistance during the uprising. If murders were committed by exploiting the chaos, cases would be filed.

To avoid conflicts of interest, the NHRC was tasked with determining which category a death fell into through investigation. However, under the reinstated 2009 act, the commission, now under the law ministry, will require prior government permission to investigate officials of security forces.

They said investigations would instead be carried out by the same security forces involved during the uprising.

"If a government agency is accused, an investigation subject to that same government's permission is meaningless.

"Consequently, July warriors from

all political parties may be at risk in the future."

The letter systematically addressed what the commissioners called "incorrect information" presented in parliament to justify the repeal.

Contrary to the law minister's earlier claim that the punishment for enforced disappearance is limited to 10 years, the commissioners said the 2025 Enforced Disappearance Ordinance provides for the death penalty and life imprisonment, depending on the severity of the crime.

They also rejected the government's assertion that the International Crimes Tribunal Act is sufficient to handle such cases.

"The ICT can only try 'mass' disappearances as crimes against humanity. It cannot adjudicate isolated criminal cases of disappearance," the letter stated.

It added that as of April 11, new cases of enforced disappearance are no longer defined as criminal offences under the reinstated legal framework.

The commissioners further criticised the new selection committee structure, expressing fears of a return to the "politicisation of appointments". They added that under the reinstated act, 60 percent of the selection committee is executive-leaning, including the home and law ministers.

While the government has promised a "stronger" law after further scrutiny, the outgoing commissioners expressed scepticism, arguing that

the 2025 ordinances were already the result of consultations with over 600 stakeholders.

They also noted that it was argued in parliament that the commission was autonomous under both the 2009 and 2025 laws, and therefore equally strong.

However, under the 2009 act, the commission cannot investigate allegations against security forces (section 18), while it could do so under the 2025 ordinance. "Therefore, autonomy does not equate to having effective power," the letter read.

Referring to the points raised in the letter, Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman said the NHRC's arguments on punishment under the Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance are "totally incorrect".

"If you look at the law, [in section 4] clearly says punishment can be life imprisonment or up to 10 years. Now what does 'up to 10 years' mean? It means not exceeding 10 years. So, 'up to 10 years' means the court has the discretion to give even one hour, one day, one month, or any period within that limit. So how can this be contradictory? They [NHRC] have clearly misinterpreted this.

"Secondly, I have said in all press conferences and elsewhere that there is a timeframe within which the report must be submitted. But there is no guideline stating how long they will take to make a decision after receiving the report."

BPSC rolls out one-year reform plan to streamline recruitment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Public Service Commission yesterday unveiled a one-year reform report, outlining a set of measures aimed to strengthen the public recruitment system, improve efficiency, cut delays, digitise recruitment, and ensure fair and transparent government hiring.

The report, titled "From Gridlock to Governance Renewal: One Year of Institutional Reform", covers reform steps taken between October 2024 and November 2025. It was presented by BPSC member Prof Chowdhury Saima Ferdous at an event jointly organised by the BPSC and UNDP at a Dhaka hotel.

BPSC Chairman Prof Mobasser Monem said the commission had taken a structured

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Large papier-mâché sculptures, crafted over the past few days, sit ready at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Dhaka University ahead of the Baishakhi Shobhajatra (formerly known as the Mongol Shobhajatra), to be held this morning, on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh. With the Bangla New Year set to begin with the rising sun, the faculty is abuzz with last-minute preparations as fine arts students put finishing touches on the motifs that will lead the Baishakh procession. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

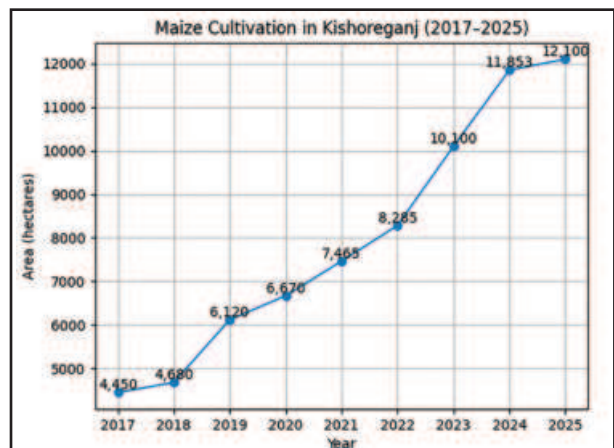
Haor farmers opt for maize amid flood risks, higher profits

TAFSILUL AZIZ

Farmers across the haor region of Kishoreganj are rapidly shifting from paddy to maize cultivation, citing lower risks from early floods, reduced production costs and higher market returns, officials and growers say.

The transition reflects a broader change in the district's haor economy, where recurring crop losses and declining profitability in rice farming have prompted growers to adopt maize and, to a lesser extent, vegetables as alternative crops.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), maize was cultivated on 12,210 hectares



of land in the district this year, with a production target of 1,20,509 tonnes. The figure marks a sharp rise from 4,450 hectares in 2017, indicating a steady expansion over the past decade.

Farmers said maize offers a critical advantage in haor areas — it can be harvested before the onset of monsoon floods, unlike boro paddy, which remains vulnerable to early inundation and adverse weather.

"Maize is more profitable and less risky," said Ali Hossain, a farmer in Nikli Sadar, adding that he cultivated the crop on four acres this season.

He expects to earn around Tk 4-4.5 lakh by selling

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A road to cut through Osmani Udyan

Authorities cite parking needs; planners warn of long-term environmental damage, call for project cancellation

HELEMUL ALAM

Ignoring concerns raised by environmentalists, the government has constructed a around 20-foot-wide road through Osmani Udyan, connecting Fulbaria's Phoenix Road with Abdul Gani Road to facilitate vehicular movement towards the Secretariat.

The construction, now in its final stage, has led to the removal of numerous trees within the 29-acre park, which has remained closed for the past eight years due to an ongoing "modernisation" project.

During the tenure of the interim government, a component for a July monument was added and is nearing completion. The same administration also approved the road project, which was implemented after the 13th national election.

Muntasir Mamun, executive engineer of the Eden Division of the Public Works Department, said the initiative is part of a broader plan to address acute parking shortages and space constraints inside the Secretariat.

To tackle the issue, the Ministry of Housing and Public Works has undertaken a project titled "Construction of Ground Floor Office Building of the Government Transport Department with Car Parking Facilities", with an estimated cost of Tk 448 crore.

The proposed 20-storey building will house transport workshop operations on the basement, semi-

basement, and ground floors, while the upper floors will be used for elevated parking. Floors above the 10th level may be used for offices, as parking becomes less practical at higher levels.

Mamun said the project was reviewed by the Planning Commission and sent back for revision following observations.



This is a terrible decision. Destroying parks and playgrounds to accommodate private cars is unacceptable. If this road is built, it will cause irreversible damage to the park's environment.

ADIL MOHAMMED KHAN
Chief executive of Institute of Planning and Development

One key recommendation was to introduce a circular, one-way traffic system to ease congestion, which led to the construction of the new road through the park.

The road project began with a special allocation in the previous fiscal year but was delayed due to

time constraints. Work resumed in the 2025-26 fiscal year and is now almost complete, with only finishing work remaining, he said.

He added that only a small portion of the park is being used for vehicle movement and that no permanent structure will be built — only open paved space. The initiative, he said, is being carried out in the "greater public interest" to reduce roadside parking and congestion around the Secretariat.

Abdus Salam, administrator of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), said the permission was granted by a previous administration and is being implemented by the housing and public works ministry. "I will visit the site and take necessary steps," he said.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS
Urban planners and environmentalists have strongly criticised the decision, warning of long-term environmental damage.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) demanded cancellation of both the road construction and the planned 20-storey parking facility within the park.

After publishing a report in The Daily Star on February 6, 2025, BELA, in a letter sent on February 9 that year, called for an immediate halt to all activities encroaching on open spaces and urged consultations with urban planners to restore public access.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

25YRS OF RAMNA BLAST

No appeal filed yet to challenge HC verdict

Full text of HC judgement still unreleased; two convicts released from jail

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

This Pahela Baishakh marks the 25th year of the gruesome bomb blasts at Ramna Batamul in Dhaka during Bangla New Year celebrations that left 10 dead and scores injured.

On May 13 last year, a High Court bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice Nasreen Akter reduced the sentences of 10 convicted leaders of the banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (Huji), rejecting the death reference and disposing of the appeals filed by the convicts.

The convicts had earlier been handed either the death penalty or life imprisonment by the trial court in the murder case filed over the incident.

However, even 11 months later, no appeal has been filed with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the High Court verdict.

Moreover, the full text of the HC verdict is yet to be released, although it was expected within a few weeks, said a source close to the HC bench.

The full text of any HC judgement is required to move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

'Govt's submissive stance enabling mob violence'

Teachers' Network, We Can condemn Shahbagh attack, demand swift action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Teachers' Network and Amrai Pari Paribarik Nirjaton Protirodh Jote (WE CAN) have expressed deep concern and strongly condemned a recent attack on a gathering in the capital's Shahbagh, as well as the growing incidents of mob violence across the country.

In separate statements issued yesterday, the two organisations criticised law enforcement agencies for failing to ensure citizens' safety and demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible.

According to the statements, a group of friends,

who were having tea

in Shahbagh, was

suddenly attacked

and indiscriminately

beaten on April

10. At least eight

people, including

a private university

teacher and several

rights activists,

were injured. The

attackers allegedly

targeted the victims

by labelling

them as "homosexual,"

"transgender," or

"hijra."

Expressing outrage,

the Teachers' Network

said the attack took

place right in front

of Shahbagh

Police Station, yet

police remained

silent spectators.

The police station

even refused to

register a case

or a general diary

(GD) when the

victims approached

them, the network

said.

The statement

further highlighted

incidents of mob

violence outside

Dhaka. On April 10,

members of the

Hindu community

and their businesses

were attacked

and vandalised in

Rangpur. A day

later, a pir was

beaten to death

and his shrine set

on fire in

Kushia's Daulatpur

over allegations

of blasphemy.

The Teachers' Network

said despite the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Barrister Shafique laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent jurist and former law minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed was laid to rest at Azimpur Graveyard in Dhaka yesterday, as people from across professions paid their final respects, his son Barrister Mahbub Shafique told The Daily Star.

His body was kept at the Supreme Court premises from 2:00pm for about an hour, where judges, lawyers, law officers, officials, political leaders, educationists and family members gathered to pay tribute. His second namaz-e-janaza was held there.

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman, Appellate Division Justice SM Emdadul Hoque, Attorney General Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, Supreme Court Bar Association President AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7



KAKINA ZAMINDARBARI

once vibrant, now stands silent

Historic landmark faces ruin after decades of neglect

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The Kakina Zamindarbari, a historic palace located in Kakina village under Kaliganj upazila of Lalmonirhat, was once a centre of wealth, education, culture, and self-governance in the region.

However, the century-old landmark from the erstwhile feudal era in Bengal is now on the verge of ruin following decades of neglect, lack of maintenance and renovation. Once vibrant with dazzling cultural gatherings, the palace now stands silent, holding only the remnants of past memories.

Dr Ashrafuzzaman Mondal, director of the Lalmonirhat District Museum, said the Kakina area used to be an ancient settlement that flourished in the northeastern edge of the Indian subcontinent, with a history spanning several centuries. Over time, the region used to be known by various names such as Konkona, Konkania, Kankina, Koikina, Kakinia, and Kakina.

He also said that about 300 years ago, a zamindari (feudal estate) was



established in Kakina through a land grant by the then Mughal emperor to Zamindar Kashinath Roy, the patriarch of this influential family. Kashinath later reorganised agriculture, trade, architecture, and administration in the region. His successors, Mahima Ranjan Roy and Shambhucharan Roy, further expanded the estate and its influence, turning Kakina into an economic and cultural hub of northern Bengal.

Zamindar Mahima Ranjan Roy Chowdhury played a significant role in the development and cultural advancement of Kakina. He established "Banga Bidyalaya" in Rangpur, which later became known as Kailash Ranjan High School.

During his time, Mahimaganj, Teesta, Mahendranagar, Lalmonirhat, Aditmari, Mogolhat, and Kakina railway stations were established under the Kakina Zamindari. He was also the founding president of the Rangpur Literary Society and had donated land for the construction of a theatre hall.

Nurul Amin, a local college teacher

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

Dhaka urges New Delhi to curb Hasina's activities

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka requested New Delhi to ensure that deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina does not do anything to destabilise Bangladesh using the soil of India, said Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir.

"There would be some challenges as Hasina is still staying there [India]," he told reporters at the Secretariat yesterday.

Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman and Humaiun Kobir held meetings with Indian External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, Oil and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval in New Delhi on April 8, reports UNB.

"We will continue to seek her extradition through a transparent judicial process. It will be dealt

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Private ambulances dominate KMCH

Patients struggle to get services from govt vehicles

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Critically ill patients at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) are facing delays in emergency transfers, with patients and staff alleging that private ambulance operators dominate the premises, limiting access to government services and charging higher fares.

Hospital insiders and patients' relatives said a group of private operators effectively controls patient transport, often steering families towards their vehicles amid a shortage of functional government ambulances.

Last week, relatives of Hanif Morol from Gopalganj said they could not arrange a government ambulance to transfer him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"No government ambulance was available, and we had to rely on a private operator, paying heavily," said Noman Biswas, a relative.

According to the Khulna District Civil Surgeon's office, only 11 of 21 government ambulances are currently operational across the district. KMCH has four ambulances, one of which is out of service, despite handling around 1,500 inpatients daily against a capacity of 500 beds.

Patients allege they are often compelled to use private ambulances at higher rates. Government ambulances charge around Tk 300 within Khulna city, while private operators demand Tk 800 to Tk 1,200. Trips to Dhaka cost about Tk 8,500 in government vehicles, compared with Tk 9,000 to Tk 11,000 privately, often with additional charges.

Drivers and staffers allege that private operators discourage the use of government ambulances and obstruct outside vehicles from entering hospital grounds.

During visits between 8:00am and 12:30pm, and again from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, this correspondent found



private ambulances crowding the hospital entrance and surrounding government vehicles, making access difficult.

Some drivers from outside districts alleged they were turned away upon arrival, limiting competition.

Around 60-70 private ambulances were seen in the morning and 45-50 in the afternoon, with a network of drivers and intermediaries present.

Government ambulance drivers also alleged intimidation. "After the director and assistant director leave at 2:00pm, their dominance grows. They force us to park in the garage and position their own vehicles in front," said one driver, requesting anonymity.

Hayat Ali, KMCH ambulance in-charge, said, "All our vehicles are functional. However, it has become very difficult for patients to access government ambulances due to pressure from private operators. Notices about low-fare government services have been torn down."

At the hospital entrance, private operators were seen distributing visiting cards and offering fare negotiations, sometimes making claims that government ambulances do not operate on long distance routes.

Some drivers, however, denied the existence of a single syndicate, saying vehicles operate independently.

"Drivers receive a share of the fare, and many patients prefer private ambulances as they are more readily available," said Rob Hawlader, a driver.

Observers say the situation reflects weak oversight.

Gouranga Nandy, vice-president of the Committees of Concerned Citizens, Khulna, said stronger enforcement and hospital management are needed to protect patients from alleged irregularities.

KMCH Deputy Director Md Aktaruzzaman said the authorities have repeatedly raised the issue with law enforcement and regulatory bodies. "We are extremely frustrated. We have held meetings and written to the relevant authorities, but there has been no effective outcome," he said.



An employee undergoes a health test at an on-site screening camp organised by Unico Hospitals PLC at The Daily Star Centre as part of the newspaper's 35th anniversary initiative to promote staff well-being. The three-day event will conclude tomorrow. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Timber market takes over school playground in B'baria

MASUK HRIDOY, Brahmanbaria

Students of Fordabad Adarsha High School in Brahmanbaria have been deprived of their only playground for nearly two decades, as the field has been used as a timber market since 2004, allegedly with the approval of school authorities.

Located in Banchharampur upazila, the field beside the Titas River was once a lively space for football and cricket. Locals say the market began on a temporary basis but gradually expanded, now occupying almost the entire field.

Although Monday is officially designated as market day, trading reportedly continues from Saturday through Tuesday, with timber and construction materials stored on the field year-round.

During a recent visit to the site, this correspondent saw around a hundred makeshift shops built with bamboo, stacks of timber, and the constant movement of vehicles and buyers, fully occupying the space. At a glance, it is almost impossible to recognise the spot as a school's playground.

Students say the long-standing situation has left them without opportunities for sports and outdoor activities. A student of the school, Jisan Ahmed, said, "We cannot play because of the timber market. This has been the situation for many years. If the field

was kept for students, it would have benefited us."

Former student Shahin Ahmed recalled a different time. "After school, we used to play here every afternoon. Now the field remains occupied by the market. Many young people now spend time loitering outside," he said, adding



that the lack of sports often leads to frustration among the youth.

Guardians have also voiced concern. A Guardian named Shafiqul Islam said, "Children are always on their phones now. It is affecting both their studies and character. If the school field is used as a market, where will they play?"

Locals, requesting anonymity, alleged that school representatives regularly collect money from traders, despite the market being officially weekly.

Head teacher Faruk Mia acknowledged the long-standing operation of the market, saying part of the funds supports school

expenses. However, he added that the issue could be reviewed.

Banchharampur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Tarikul Islam said authorities will look into the matter and take necessary actions if the educational environment or student activities are compromised.

Baul Abul Sarkar walks out of jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Renowned baul singer Maharaj Abul Sarkar was released from Kashimpur High Security Central Jail-2 in Gazipur yesterday morning.

He left the prison premises around 11:15am.

Abul Hossain, the jailer of Kashimpur High Security Central Jail 2, Gazipur, confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

Family members were present at the gate to receive him. However, he did not speak to journalists.

The jailer said that Sarkar was released after the bail documents reached the prison and were verified.

Sarkar was arrested in a case filed by Mufti Md Abdullah, imam of Ghior Bandar Mosque, with Ghior Police Station on charges of hurting religious sentiments. On November 20, 2025, Detective Branch (DB) of the police arrested him in Madaripur.



Man hacked to death in Jhalakathi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A man died at Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital early yesterday, a day after he was hacked in Nalchhity upazila of Jhalakathi.

The deceased was identified as Ikbal Hossain Howlader, 45, of Khagrakhana village in the upazila.

According to locals, he had been "slightly mentally imbalanced" for the last few years.

Earlier, miscreants hacked him in front of Khagrakhana Model High School and fled the scene, confirmed Ariful Islam, officer-in-charge of Nalchhity Police Station. However, he could not provide further details about the murder.

He said police personnel recovered the critically injured Ikbal from Khagrakhana village around 11:00pm on Sunday and rushed him to Nalchhity Upazila Health Complex, from where he was referred to Barishal. He later died while undergoing treatment at the hospital, said the OC.

On the other hand, SM Bayzid Ibne Akbar, additional superintendent of police (Jhalakathi Sadar Circle), said, "After investigation, I will be able to provide details about the incident."

Govt's submissive

FROM PAGE 3

government's promise to stop mob violence, it has demonstrated an extreme failure to do so. It warned that the administration's passive stance towards extremist groups is creating a terrifying situation in the country.

Meanwhile, the "WE CAN" alliance cited Article 28(3) of the Constitution, which guarantees equal rights and safe access to public spaces for all citizens.

It stressed that a citizen's gender identity or sexual orientation can never justify violence, adding that gender-diverse individuals have equal rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Both organisations

described the incidents as a serious blow to human rights and democratic values.

They called for swift arrests and exemplary punishment of those involved in the Shahbagh, Rangpur, and Kushtia attacks through transparent investigations.

They also warned that a democratic Bangladesh cannot be achieved without fostering tolerance and respect instead of fear and violence.

The statements were signed by prominent rights activists, including Sultana Kamal, Shaheen Anam, and teachers from various universities, including Anu Muhammad and Gitira Nasreen.

Haor farmers opt for maize

FROM PAGE 3

his produce at about Tk 1,400 per maund, against a production cost of roughly Tk 1.5 lakh.

Another farmer, Nasir Uddin, expanded maize cultivation from one acre last year to five acres this season, having made a profit previously.

He said he expects sales exceeding Tk 5 lakh, compared to an investment of about Tk 2 lakh.

Farmers also noted a significant rise in maize prices. A maund of maize that sold for Tk 700-750 a few years ago is now fetching Tk 1,300-1,500, further incentivising the

shift.

During a recent visit to Nikli, large stretches of land that previously grew paddy were found covered with maize.

Families, including women and children, were seen drying, threshing, and processing the crop in open spaces, such as school grounds and roadside areas.

"Earlier, we cultivated paddy on these lands despite the risk of floods and hailstorms," said farmer Abu Sayeed. "This year, we switched to maize and are satisfied with the yield."

Maize cultivation has expanded notably in haor

upazilas such as Nikli, Mithamoin, Bajitpur and Austagram, according to local agricultural officials.

Sadiqur Rahman, deputy director of the DAE in Kishoreganj, said farmers' growing interest is driven by stable prices and favourable yields.

"Maize was once rarely seen in haor areas, but now it is widely cultivated because it faces less risk from early floods," he said.

He added that agricultural officials are regularly advising farmers on maize cultivation, which is also considered a nutritious crop, further contributing to its rising popularity.

STATUTORY NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
Company Matter No. 299 of 2026
IN THE MATTER OF:
An application under section 81(2), 81(3) and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.
AND
IN THE MATTER OF: Gobinda Chandra Saha, Share Holder and Managing Director of ABG JAPAN BANGLA COMPANY LTD., House-66 (3rd Floor), Road 13, Sector-14, Uttara, Dhaka., Bangladesh. -----Petitioner.
-Versus-
The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, 1, Kawran Bazar, TCB Bhaban, Dhaka. -----Respondent.
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 81(2), read with Section 85(3) and Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994, was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for condonation of delay in holding the Annual General Meetings of ABG JAPAN BANGLA COMPANY LTD. for the calendar years 2024, 2025, and 2026. The said petition was admitted on 7th April, 2026, by the Honorable Justice Mr. Sikder Mahmudur Razi of the High Court Division. Following the publication of this notice, the petitioner is directed to submit an affidavit-in-compliance within 30 (thirty) days from the date of such publication. If any person is interested in the said application, he/she may appear on the date of hearing either himself or through his /her Advocate. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed fees.
Ripon Chandra Bhowmik, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Gloriana, Room No 123 (1st Floor), 16, Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000. Mob: 01747-570627

Chittagong Dry Dock Limited
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২৩.০২.১৫৬৫.৩৪১.৫৩.০০৩.২৬.৬৯ ১৩ এপ্রিল ২০২৬

“দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি”

চিটাগাং ড্রাই ডক লিমিটেড (সিডিডিএল) এর জেটি ১ ও ২ এর অব্যবহৃত অংশ সুদৃষ্ট ব্যবহারের নিমিত্তে ফেব্রুয়ারি পাইল এবং বোলাড স্থান কাজ সম্পাদনের জন্য উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে, যা বিস্তারিত ওয়েবসাইটে (www.cddl.gov.bd/notice) দেওয়া হলো।

০৫/২৬
খবির উদ্দিন আহমেদ
ক্যান্টেন বিএন
মহাব্যবস্থাপক (উৎপাদন ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ)

GD-823

বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতাল
(বাংলাদেশ ডায়ালটিক সমিতির একটি প্রতিষ্ঠান)
ইব্রাহিম মেমোরিয়াল ডায়ালটিক সেন্টার
শাহবাগ, ঢাকা-১০০০

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির সংশোধনী

গত ০৬.০৪.২০২৬ তারিখের দৈনিক ডেইলী স্টার ও বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির সিনিয়র স্টাফ নার্স পদের যোগ্যতা নিম্নরূপ হবে-
(1) Three Years Diploma in Nursing Science & Midwifery/Midwifery or BSc Nursing.
(2) BSc in Nursing degree holders will be given preference.
Only short listed candidates will be called for interview.
নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।
For details please visit BIRDEM & BADAS Website:
www.birdembd.org & www.dab-bd.org

GD-820 **Director General**

Pragati Insurance PLC.
Head office: Pragati Insurance Bhaban, 20-21, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
Tel: PABX: 55012680-2 Fax: 880-2-55013694
Symbol of Security

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Pragati Insurance PLC. in its 341st meeting held on April 12, 2026 at 3.00 p.m. unanimously decided/recommended as under:

1. Date & Time of the 40 th AGM	June 18, 2026 at 12:00 Noon.	
2. Venue	By using digital platform (Zoom meeting).	
3. Recommended Dividend for the year 2025	Cash dividend @ 27% and Stock dividend @ 03% Subject to final approval of the shareholders in the 40 th AGM.	
4. Record date	May 12, 2026	
5. Comparative statement	2025	2024
i) Earning Per Share (EPS) after tax	Tk. 5.31	Tk. 5.24 (Re)
ii) Net Asset Value(NAV) per share	Tk. 57.36	Tk. 53.82
iii) Net Operating Cash Flow per share	Tk. 1.44	Tk. 3.13
6. Notes:		
(a) The shareholders, whose names appear in the Share Depository register on May 12, 2026 will be eligible to participate in the meeting & receive dividend.		
(b) The Shareholders bearing BO Accounts are requested to update their respective account with 12 digit e-TIN & any other changes in the particulars through their Depository Participant (DP), and the Shareholders bearing Folio Numbers are requested to submit their e-TIN certificate & Bank Account Number to the Share Department of the company latest by 10 th June, 2026, failing of which Income Tax will be deducted at source @ 15% instead of 10% from cash dividend as per Income Tax Act, 2023 under the Section-117 (Kha).		
(c) All shareholders/stakeholders are requested to up-date their respective Bank Account through their Depository Participant (DP) for depositing their Cash dividend through BEFTN.		
By order of the Board of Directors Sd/- Mohammad Jafar Ali, FCS Company Secretary		
Dated: Dhaka April 12, 2026		

TRUMP CRITICISM
Pope blasts
‘neocolonial’
conflicts

Plans to continue
speaking out
against war

REUTERS, Algiers

Pope Leo blasted violations of international law by “neocolonial” world powers in a forceful speech yesterday during an Africa tour, hours after US President Donald Trump’s direct attack on the leader of the 1.4-billion-member Church.

Leo is travelling to Africa “as a witness to the peace and hope that the world so ardently desires,” he told political leaders in Algeria, his first stop on a whirlwind four-nation trip.

“The future belongs (to) those who do not allow themselves to be blinded by power or wealth,” the first US pope said. “Africa knows all too well that



people and organizations that dominate others destroy the world.”

Leo, originally from Chicago, did not single out specific countries for criticism, but he has emerged as an outspoken critic of the Iran war in recent weeks and decried the “madness of war” in a peace appeal on Saturday.

Trump, in an apparent response to the pope’s statements about the conflict and the White House’s hard-line immigration policies, said late on Sunday that Leo was “terrible”, in remarks that drew immediate rebuke from US believers.

Leo told Reuters on the papal flight from Rome to Algiers yesterday morning that he planned to continue speaking out against war, despite Trump’s comments.

“I don’t want to get into a debate with him,” said the Pope. “I will continue to speak out loudly against war, looking to promote peace, promoting dialogue and multilateral relationships.”

Leo is undertaking one of the most complicated papal trips arranged in decades. It will take him to 11 cities and towns across Algeria, Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea, traversing nearly 18,000 km (11,185 miles) over 18 flights.



Lebanese Red Cross volunteers inspect the damage to their rescue ambulances at the site of an Israeli drone strike that targeted their headquarters in the southern city of Tyre yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

US blockade of Iran a
major military effort

Experts warn it’s an act of war, requiring
open-ended naval commitment

REUTERS, Washington

A US naval blockade of Iran is a major, open-ended military endeavor that could trigger fresh retaliation from Tehran and put tremendous strain on an already fragile ceasefire, experts say.

President Trump, in a social media post after no deal emerged from peace talks this weekend in Islamabad, said the US Navy “will begin the process of BLOCKADING any and all Ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz.”

The US military’s Central



With enough
warships, the US
Navy could set up
a blockade that
intimidates many
commercial tankers
from trying to
power through with
Iranian oil: experts

Command later said the blockade will only apply to ships going to or from Iran, including all Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. It was due to take effect yesterday at 10:00 am in Washington (1400 GMT).

Trump also said US forces would interdict vessels that have paid tolls to Iran, even if those ships

are now in international waters. The ultimate goal, Trump said, would be to pressure Iran to end its effective closure of the strait to all but the countries that secure safe passage from Tehran.

If Trump’s strategy succeeds, he would eliminate Iran’s greatest point of leverage in negotiations with the US and clear the strait again for global trade, potentially lowering oil prices. But a blockade, experts say, is an act of war that requires an open-ended commitment of a significant number of warships.

“Trump wants a quick fix. The reality is, this mission is difficult to execute alone and likely unsustainable over the medium to long-term,” said Dana Stroul, a former senior Pentagon official during the Biden administration now at The Washington Institute

for Near East Policy. The US military has not offered basic details yet about the blockade, including how many US warships will enforce it.

But would the United States be prepared to board and seize — or even damage or sink — ships that try to break the blockade? What if they carry oil for China, a major power, or US partners such as India or South Korea?

And what would Iran do? Retd Admiral Gary Roughead, a former chief of US navy, cautioned that Iran could fire on ships in the Gulf or attack infrastructure of the Gulf states that host US forces.

“I honestly believe that if we begin to do it, that Iran will have some kind of a reaction,” Roughead said. Iran’s threats to shipping caused oil prices to skyrocket by about 50 percent since war broke out on February 28.

Netanyahu’s
call changed
everything

Iranian FM alleges
after Vance leaves
Pakistan without
an agreement

AGENCIES

A phone call from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to US Vice President JD Vance made in the middle of negotiations derailed what could have been a breakthrough in the Iran-US standoff, Tehran has claimed.

Iran’s Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi made the allegation on X, hours after Vance left Islamabad without an agreement following over 21 hours of talks in the Pakistani capital.

“Netanyahu’s call to Vance during the meeting shifted the focus from US-Iran negotiations to Israel’s interests,” Araghchi wrote. “The US tried to achieve at the negotiating table what it could not achieve through war.”

He said Iran had entered the Pakistan-hosted negotiations in good faith, adding Vance’s press conference before his departure was “unnecessary.” He said Iran remained “committed and prepared to safeguard our nation’s interest and sovereignty.”

Washington has not confirmed or denied the Netanyahu call.

WEST BENGAL POLLS

No SC relief for
voters deleted in
SIR process

AGENCIES

India’s Supreme Court (SC) has declined to grant interim voting rights to those whose names were deleted during the voter roll clean-up process special intensive revision (SIR) and whose appeals are still pending before the appellate tribunals.

During the proceedings, Trinamool Congress leader Kalyan Banerjee said that at least 1.6 million appeals have been filed, and they should be allowed to vote in the two-phase assembly election due later this month.

In response, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said, “That is entirely out of the question. If we were to permit this, then the voting rights of the individuals involved would have to be suspended.”

Justice Joymalya Bagchi said there are 3.4 million appeals in the SIR exercise, and added that a report submitted by the Calcutta High Court Chief Justice clearly stated this data, reports NDTV online.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has already frozen the West Bengal voter list and no new name can be included before the election, unless the Supreme Court gives a specific direction on this count, which did not happen yesterday.

Nineteen appellate tribunals have been set up in the state bordering Bangladesh to decide the fate of 27 lakh cases that have been deleted in the judicial adjudication cases.

END OF EASTER TRUCE

Ukraine,
Russia renew
drone strikes

AFP, Kyiv

Ukraine and Russia renewed overnight drone strikes yesterday, after the end of a 32-hour Orthodox Easter truce marred by accusations of mass violations, both countries said.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia had launched 98 drones, adding that its air defence units had downed 87 of them.

An infrastructure facility was hit in the central-eastern Dnipropetrovsk region, Ukrainian authorities said, adding that information about casualties was being clarified.

Russia meanwhile reported that “on April 13, air defence forces on duty intercepted and destroyed 33 Ukrainian aircraft-type unmanned aerial vehicles.”

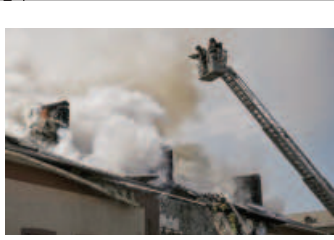
Last week, Moscow and Kyiv agreed to observe the ceasefire, which lasted from 4:00 pm on Saturday until the end of the day on Sunday.

But as with a similar agreement last year, only relative calm reigned along the 1,200-kilometre (745-mile) front line.

The Ukrainian army said it had counted more than 10,000 violations by the Russian army, most of which were front-line skirmishes.

However, it said that “during the declared ceasefire period, no missile strikes, air strikes, or attack drone strikes (of the Shahed/Gerbera type) were recorded.” Russia’s defence ministry accused Kyiv of nearly 2,000 breaches of the truce.

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will visit China this week, Beijing said on Monday, as the two sides hope to boost cooperation.



Australia names
first woman army
chief

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia yesterday said a woman would lead its army for the first time in history, as part of a reshuffle of the country’s defence force leadership.

Lieutenant General Susan Coyle, the current chief of joint capabilities, will become chief of army in July, the government said in a statement. She will replace Lieutenant General Simon Stuart.

Coyle’s appointment comes as Australia’s military seeks to boost the number of female officers in its ranks. It faces a wave of allegations of systematic sexual harassment and discrimination.

“From July, we will have the first ever female chief of army in the Australian Army’s 125-year history,” Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement.

Defence Minister Richard Marles called Coyle’s appointment a “deeply historic moment.”

“As Susan said to me, you cannot be what you cannot see,” he said.

“Susan’s achievement will be deeply significant to women who are serving in the Australian Defence Force today and women who are thinking about serving in the Australian Defence Force in the future.”

Coyle, 55, enlisted in the military in 1987 and has held a number of senior command roles. She will be the first woman to lead any service branch of the military, Marles said.



People push an overturned vehicle damaged during a workers’ protest in Noida, India, yesterday, after factory employees demanded wage hikes amid soaring living costs linked to the US-Israeli conflict with Iran.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israeli strike
kills 3 outside
Gaza school

REUTERS, Gaza

An Israeli airstrike killed at least three Palestinians in the Gaza Strip yesterday, health officials said, as mediators met leaders from Hamas in an effort to shore up a US-brokered ceasefire deal.

Medics said the strike had hit a group of men outside a school in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip. There was no immediate comment by the Israeli military.

At Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, the bodies of those killed lay on the ground in white shrouds outside the morgue as relatives and friends arrived to bid them farewell. Some kissed the victims’ foreheads before holding special prayers.

“This isn’t a truce; it’s a trap for our young men. Every day there are martyrs, every single day. How long can this continue?” said Umm Hussam Abu El-Rous, a female relative of one of the victims.

Keep soldiers and politics apart

PM has rightly drawn a clear boundary

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has said what needed saying. While addressing the armed forces at Dhaka Cantonment on Sunday, he made it clear that the military belongs to no individual, no family, no party. Its loyalty is to the Constitution and the people. This is a powerful statement, and that the PM felt it necessary to say so before an audience of uniformed officers is itself a measure of how far a section of the armed forces had strayed from that norm in the past, especially under Sheikh Hasina's rule.

Under 15 years of Awami League rule, individual officers deputed to different security agencies were drawn into the machinery of political control, and their professional culture was eroded. That erosion often took scandalous forms—enforced disappearances, unlawful detention, and the brazen takeover of Islami Bank by serving officers. Credit, however, must be given where it is due. In moments of crisis, the armed forces have often filled the vacuum. When law and order faltered, or when natural disasters overwhelmed civilian agencies, they stepped in. They did so again after the 2024 mass uprising to make up for the administrative paralysis that followed it. That deserves recognition.

The army's role in elections, too, has become hard to avoid. In the past, votes were stolen, suppressed, or stage-managed. But the February 12 election, by most accounts, marked a departure. Soldiers were deployed across constituencies, and polling proceeded without the organised thuggery that marred previous elections, resulting in a proper democratic transition. The PM has acknowledged this, and rightly so. But this is where the distinction must be held. There is a difference between soldiers who hold a country steady during a crisis and soldiers who stray beyond their constitutional role. This is why the PM's address warrants careful scrutiny.

Bangladesh faces a gap it has not yet honestly confronted: what legal protection does an officer have for refusing an illegal order—one that violates the Constitution or basic human decency? At present, the answer is not reassuring. Refusing an illegal order from superior officers requires courage but lacks clear legal protection. It is time to confront this if Bangladesh is serious about having armed forces that remain within constitutional bounds. Officers who decline to become instruments of state crime deserve not just moral recognition but also institutional protection.

Bangladesh's armed forces have earned a reputation that extends well beyond our borders. The country is among the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions in the world, deploying troops to conflict zones. Our soldiers have served in some of the most demanding areas, often in conditions that test not just military competence but moral judgement. That record remains a source of national pride.

At home, a military that safeguards elections while remaining neutral is an institution a democracy must accommodate. But a military that begins to see itself as the final arbiter of political order is one a democracy cannot sustain. So, we wholeheartedly support Tarique Rahman's remark that the armed forces must serve the nation through the Constitution. What remains is the harder part: making it stick. Democratic consolidation is earned slowly, through consistent practice.

Bring Kushtia pir's killers to justice

Culture of mob violence must be eradicated without delay

We unequivocally condemn the brutal mob lynching of a pir in Kushtia's Daulatpur upazila, reportedly over allegations of hurting religious sentiments. The victim, Abdur Rahman alias Shamim al-Jahangir, was beaten and hacked to death by a mob at his *darbar*, which was vandalised and set ablaze. This reprehensible act once again shows how mob violence, often fuelled by rumours and religious incitement, continues unabated in Bangladesh with impunity. As of this writing, no arrest has been made in the Kushtia murder case.

Mob violence saw a sharp rise during the interim government, claiming 197 lives in 2025 alone. With the return of an elected government in February this year, we hoped such lawlessness would come to an end. But the brutality of the Kushtia killing suggests that those behind mob violence still remain emboldened. Just a few days ago, another violent mob assaulted at least four people near the Shahbagh police station in Dhaka. Many of these attacks take place in plain sight, with law enforcement members failing to intervene even if they are present at the scene.

In the first quarter of 2026, 49 people were reportedly killed in 88 mob-related incidents. Attacks targeting shrines, Baul singers, religious minorities, and other vulnerable groups have become disturbingly regular. This state of affairs points to a serious failure of law enforcement in the country. In Kushtia, the authorities reportedly knew about the possibility of an unrest, and police were also present there. Still, they failed to prevent the attack. There was no strong and immediate response from the government either, which is equally frustrating. At a time when a clear condemnation and warning could have reassured the public, the government's silence sent the wrong message. Meanwhile, the Kushtia pir's family has reportedly decided not to file a case, likely out of fear and insecurity. This is most unfortunate and utterly unacceptable.

We urge the police to file a case and launch a thorough investigation into Shamim's murder, and arrest everyone involved. The government must send a strong message that mob violence will no longer be tolerated by ensuring proper punishment for the perpetrators. It must also take action to stem the spread of hate speech and incitement and strengthen preventive measures at the community level. If left unchecked, this trend of mob violence will continue to erode public trust in the rule of law and threaten our social fabric. As we celebrate Pahela Baishakh today, the government must reaffirm that no violent groups can attack our diverse social and cultural practices and traditions in the name of religion or any other pretext.

Even if deferred, we must prepare for eventual LDC graduation



MACRO MIRROR
Dr Fahmida Khatun is an economist and executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

Unless the government's request for deferment is granted, Bangladesh is set to graduate from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category in November this year. This would be a historic milestone for the country as this is the culmination of decades of steady progress in income levels, human development, and structural changes. The country has consistently surpassed all three graduation criteria: per capita gross national income (GNI), human asset index (HAI), and economic vulnerability index (EVI). However, behind this achievement lies a troubling truth: while it may appear ready to graduate officially, Bangladesh is still not fully equipped to handle the practical aspects of the transition.

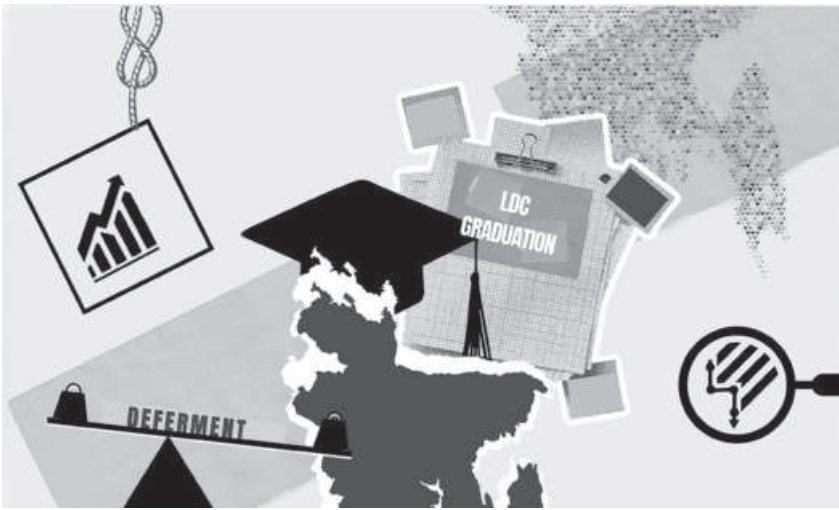
There are key differences between eligibility and readiness. Graduation is not just about past achievements. It is a future-oriented assessment of whether a country's economy, institutions, and policies can sustain progress without international support and various forms of flexibility. Recent evidence suggests we should proceed with caution on this matter. Bangladesh's readiness for LDC graduation is under strain due to macroeconomic pressures and structural weaknesses. The country is entering the final stage of its graduation process during a fragile macroeconomic period. A consistently high inflation rate over the past three years reduced real incomes and pushed many people back into poverty. This setback in poverty reduction is the first of its kind in recent decades and highlights deep vulnerabilities that must be addressed.

External sector pressures are also significant. Foreign exchange reserves have fallen sharply—from \$46 billion at the end of 2021 to \$30 billion (BPM6) as of April 9, 2026. This covers import expenses of four or five months only. The taka has depreciated continuously, raising the domestic costs of essential imports such as fuel, food, and industrial input. In this circumstance, policy options to address post-graduation shocks are quite limited.

Fiscal fragility compounds these risks. Bangladesh's tax-GDP ratio was only 6.6 percent in FY2025, one of the lowest worldwide. This greatly restricts the government's capacity to invest in critical sectors such as infrastructure, human capital, and

social safety nets, among others. Fiscal capacity is further constrained by high debt servicing. The country now faces a moderate risk of debt distress, up from low risk, mainly due to downward revisions in export data that weakened key debt indicators under stress scenarios.

The financial sector poses perhaps the most immediate systemic risk. Non-performing loans (NPLs) have surged to 30.6 percent of total banking sector loans as of December 2025. Such a high NPL ratio indicates



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

significant governance failures, regulatory gaps, and politically driven lending practices. Such a stressed banking system is ill-prepared to sustain the investment growth needed to boost competitiveness in a post-LDC landscape.

Overall, these macroeconomic indicators suggest that Bangladesh is approaching LDC graduation amid increased economic vulnerability rather than stability. The most immediate and tangible impact of this transition will be on trade. The country's export success, especially in the RMG sector, has heavily relied on preferential market access and policy flexibilities provided by the World Trade Organization (WTO). Revocation of these preferences post-graduation will fundamentally alter the country's competitive landscape. The European Union is the most vital market for Bangladesh, accounting for about 44 percent of its exports. As trade policies evolve, safeguard measures could lead to tariffs of 12 percent on average on Bangladeshi

RMG products, even if the country qualifies for GSP+. On the other hand, countries like Vietnam and India enjoy zero tariffs through free trade agreements. This disparity could significantly diminish Bangladesh's market share.

That Bangladesh's capacity to offset these preference losses is limited adds to the concerns. Export diversification has progressed slowly, with dependency on RMG products increasing rather than decreasing. Structural challenges such as high logistics costs, which are currently about 16 percent of GDP, port congestion, energy shortages, and compliance issues continue to raise the cost of doing business.

In effect, Bangladesh risks transitioning to the post-LDC phase with weakened external competitiveness at a time when global trade itself is becoming more fragmented and protectionist. The

country was initially set to graduate in 2024, but the graduation period was extended due to the global shock caused by the Covid pandemic. The two-year extension till 2026 was intended to be a phase of strategic readiness, including reforms, diversification, and institutional strengthening. However, this period has, unfortunately, been overtaken by a series of overlapping crises. The pandemic was followed by worldwide commodity shocks, supply chain disruptions, tighter financial conditions, and rising geopolitical tensions. Domestic political upheaval in July-August 2024 led to a change of government, which shifted policy focus from long-term reform to stabilisation. In this context, following the national election in February 2026, the new government promptly applied for a three-year deferment of LDC graduation considering the ongoing macroeconomic stress, a political transition, and global uncertainty.

Although a smooth transition

Ration cuts without work rights may worsen the Rohingya plight



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MOHAMMED ZONAIID

While global attention is on tensions involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, another crisis continues quietly in Bangladesh. Recently, the World Food Programme (WFP) introduced a revised Targeting and Prioritisation Exercise (TPE) for nearly 12 lakh refugees living in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char. Under the new system, refugee households will receive food assistance of \$12, \$10, or \$7 per person per month. The amount depends on their assessed level of food insecurity. Previously, all refugees received \$12 per person. On paper, vulnerability-based targeting appears reasonable. In many humanitarian crises, such systems help ensure that limited resources reach those most in need. However, the Rohingya context is slightly different.

Unlike refugees in some other countries, Rohingya in Bangladesh have extremely limited freedom of movement, and they have restrictions on the work they can do. Refugees are also generally not formally employed by humanitarian organisations, except as volunteers, who receive small daily allowances. As a result, they

remain almost entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance. Within this context, reducing aid raises serious concerns, as when refugees are not legally permitted to engage in meaningful economic activity, food insecurity becomes less of a household condition and more of a structural outcome. Humanitarian agencies have provided life-saving support for years, and their efforts should not be overlooked; however, survival is not the same as stability. Instead of creating pathways toward self-reliance for Rohingya and local communities in Cox's Bazar who are affected due to refugee settlements, the current system has largely institutionalised dependency.

Many programmes labelled as "livelihood initiatives" have not produced meaningful outcomes. Skills training programmes—such as electrical repair or other technical courses often fail to translate into real opportunities because refugees do not own motorbikes, electricity access is limited in many camp areas and they cannot legally move beyond the camps

to seek work. This raises difficult questions: why invest donor resources in skills that cannot realistically be applied? And what long-term strategy do these initiatives serve? The new targeting model categorises refugees as extremely food insecure, highly food insecure, or food insecure. Some vulnerable households—such as those led by elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, or children—will continue receiving the highest level of assistance. Yet, the broader reality remains unchanged: the entire Rohingya population in Bangladesh faces severe restrictions on economic participation.

Recent protests in the camps are often described as reactions to ration reductions. In reality, they reflect deeper concerns about uncertainty and the absence of long-term planning. This can include discussions about ensuring safe and dignified lives in the camps until the Rohingya are able to return to Myanmar, expanding economic participation for refugees, and creating policies that allow them to contribute economically while remaining under appropriate regulation. At the same time, Bangladesh itself is going through a transitional period after the February 2026 election. The new government has said they will work closely to make Rohingya repatriation possible and shared data on 8.29 lakh Rohingyas with Myanmar. But the crisis facing the Rohingya on the ground cannot be a lesser priority. The new government

strategy (STS) with 157 actions was adopted in February 2025, its meaningful implementation has been hindered by insufficient preparation. Institutional coordination remains weak and implementation capacity strained. Therefore, a three-year deferment would provide critical breathing space to stabilise the macroeconomy, address major trade uncertainties, especially with the EU, strengthen financial governance, and accelerate STS implementation.

However, this extension should not lead to complacency. It must be rooted in a well-defined, efficient reform plan with specific, measurable milestones.

This preparation must contain a stringent reform agenda. Macroeconomic stabilisation should be prioritised. Revenue collection must be improved via comprehensive tax reforms, establishing a credible plan to increase the revenue-GDP ratio to at least 10 percent in the short to medium terms. Public spending should be reoriented to focus on investments that boost productivity and on social protection.

In the banking sector, tackling NPLs, strengthening regulatory discipline, and improving governance are crucial to restoring confidence and enabling credit for productive investments. The banking sector reform measures must be an ongoing process. Political intervention in the sector's decision-making process must be curtailed to achieve better outcomes.

Enhancing competitiveness requires structural reforms. Key steps include reducing logistics costs, improving port efficiency, ensuring a reliable energy supply, and helping firms meet global compliance standards. To effectively diversify exports, it is essential to create sector-specific hubs, implement performance-based tax incentives, and establish a dedicated technology upgrading fund for SMEs. Active support should be directed towards sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agro-processing, electronics, and light engineering through targeted policies and investments. In addition, trade diplomacy efforts should focus on early negotiations with the EU and on developing institutional capacity to handle tariff changes after LDC graduation. Bangladesh needs to prepare for a future where it can comply with WTO rules without preferences.

Institutional coordination must be enhanced by establishing high-level mechanisms with clear accountability. And last but not the least, it is essential to incorporate climate resilience into the development strategy. Bangladesh must obtain concessional funds while enhancing its domestic capacity for climate adaptation and mitigation.

also needs to recognise that prolonged encampment cannot be managed indefinitely through restriction and aid relief alone. Carefully regulated work opportunities—such as camp-based enterprises, pilot employment schemes, or limited work authorisation programmes could help reduce humanitarian dependency while preserving government oversight. If even one or two members of each refugee household were allowed to work legally under controlled frameworks, the humanitarian costs could gradually decline, camp economies could stabilise, and youth frustration could decrease.

As global funding pressures increase and donor fatigue grows, humanitarian assistance is being recalibrated downward. Without structural reforms, this risks managing dependency more efficiently rather than reducing it. The Rohingya crisis requires more than improved targeting of aid. It requires policies that combine protection with participation and living with safety. The global community has shown it can keep the Rohingya fed. The real challenge is whether it will ensure they can live with dignity until they are able to return to Myanmar safely and with their rights guaranteed. If not, families will continue to cut back on meals, young people will be pushed into unsafe, informal work, and the risks of child labour, early marriage, hazardous migration, and involvement in illicit activities will only grow.

Why is BNP reneging on its own commitments to judicial independence?



Dr Sharif Bhuiyan
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SHARIF BHUYAN

In discussions on legal and constitutional reforms in Bangladesh, the independence of the judiciary has long been a central issue. Indeed, the BNP, now in government after a long period in opposition, has itself consistently called for ensuring full judicial independence over the past two decades or so.

There were political factors behind these demands. As BNP itself has repeatedly alleged, the judiciary was used to harass its leaders and activists. The conviction of the party's top leader, Begum Khaleda Zia, in controversial cases, her imprisonment, and the restrictions on her movement abroad for medical treatment as well as defaming her using the judiciary—all of these were indicators of a lack of judicial independence in the country. Similarly, the current prime minister also faced politically motivated cases. He had to stay outside the country for a long period due to such cases and convictions against him.

BNP has at various times stated that if the judiciary were truly independent and impartial, its leaders and activists would not have faced judicial harassment. However, following BNP's formation of the government in February 2026, a sharp contradiction seems to have emerged in its position.

While in opposition, on July 13, 2023, BNP announced a 31-point outline for structural reforms in Bangladesh. Point 10 reads: "The effective independence of the Judiciary will be ensured in line with the Constitution and the Masdar Hossain Case verdict... Control and discipline of sub-ordinate courts shall vest with the Supreme Court. A separate secretariat for the Judiciary will be established to function under the Supreme Court... Legislation specifying qualifications and standards for Supreme Court Judges will be enacted..."

During discussions at the National Consensus Commission last year, BNP supported all of the above. These are also fully reflected in the July National Charter, and BNP has not expressed any note of dissent in regard to any of these. BNP does not have any stated reservations whatsoever about



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

the July charter's commitments to vesting control of the subordinate courts with the Supreme Court, establishing a separate secretariat for the judiciary, or enacting a law for the appointment of SC judges. BNP also supported the referendum on the July charter, requesting citizens to vote "yes" and thereby endorsing the charter's mandate on control of the subordinate courts, establishment of a judicial secretariat, and the appointment process of judges under a law. Finally, in its manifesto for the February 12 election, BNP stated that control of the subordinate courts will be placed under the SC, a law for the appointment of judges will be enacted, and the separate secretariat for the judiciary established in 2025 will be strengthened.

Regrettably, the parliament formed after the election, in which BNP holds a two-thirds majority, repealed on April 9 the ordinances on the separate secretariat for the judiciary

and the appointment of judges to the SC.

It is interesting that BNP's 31-point outline refers to the famous Masdar Hossain Case, a landmark ruling on judicial independence. This case was decided within the framework of the then version of Article 116 of the constitution, which provided that "the control (including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and

consultation with the SC. Within this framework, the Appellate Division of the SC sought, through legal interpretation, to assert a degree of judicial independence. However, the Appellate Division was fully cognisant of the limits of such interpretive efforts, not only in the Masdar Hossain case but also on other occasions. For instance, in the case of the 16th Amendment, the Appellate Division observed that so long as the control and

the establishment of a judicial secretariat.

Following this judgment, the ordinance establishing a separate judicial secretariat was issued on November 30, 2025. Considerable progress in this regard was also made during the tenure of the interim government. A secretary has been appointed to the secretariat and, pursuant to the ordinance, a committee was constituted to develop the human resources organogram. The committee has held multiple meetings, finalised the organogram, and a significant number of personnel have already been appointed. In addition, budget allocations for the secretariat have been made up to June of the current fiscal year, and work is ongoing based on these allocations. Preparations are also underway to release the budget for the next fiscal year.

In other words, significant progress has been made under the ordinance since its issuance. Both formal and practical measures have been taken to establish the secretariat, which is already operational.

But now that parliament has repealed the ordinance, the secretariat's status has become uncertain, potentially creating a vacuum and administrative complications. Since the court ruling imposes a legal obligation to establish a separate secretariat, a question arises as to how the law ministry would fulfil this obligation. Failure by the ministry to comply could constitute contempt of court, thereby giving rise to various difficulties.

It is essential to consider whether, at this early stage of the current government's tenure, this could trigger an unnecessary, entirely avoidable conflict between the judiciary and the executive over a matter of significant importance. Since an independent, impartial judiciary free from executive influence is one of the key prerequisites for good governance, we, as citizens, would expect that the High Court's verdict in the Article 116 case will be upheld by the Appellate Division as well, and that the judgment will be fully implemented. This would mean that control over the subordinate courts would be vested in the Supreme Court, and a separate secretariat under the SC would be made operational to ensure effective implementation of this control.

However, by outright repealing the relevant ordinances, BNP has cast serious doubt on its own commitment to implementing the July charter word for word. While BNP remains insistent on implementing the charter along with its notes of dissent, it is telling that none of these dissents relate to judicial independence. Hence, citizens are left perplexed by its actions so far.

The Bank Resolution Act and a troubling shift in direction



Dr Birupaksha Paul
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BIRUPAKSHA PAUL

One of the main reasons why the Awami League government was dethroned is the mishandling of the banking sector. After plundering the capital market, all the oligarchs eventually ambushed various banks and converted them into family-owned businesses, a degradation that helped the tycoons loot the banks at their whim. The interim government, despite failing in real major economic scores such as investment, employment, inflation control, and growth, made at least one correct decision.

The interim government's appointment of Dr Ahsan H. Mansur was a respectable step. Governor Mansur, being a veteran monetarist, initiated a series of reforms aimed at reshaping the banking and financial industry. His step for the merger of nearly half a dozen Shariah-based banks was a welcome move to correct three things: i) lack of confidence of depositors; ii) poor capital base of the banks, and finally, iii) erosion of trust for Islamic Shariah-based banking because of the irregularities that took place. The former governor's move also

supported textbook corrective measures, such as mergers, acquisitions, or takeovers for the limping banks that neared bankruptcy or capital dehydration.

This move, however, deeply troubled the former owners of the banks, who believed in using these institutions as a vehicle to syphon off domestic funds into foreign asset markets. They failed to take the governor on their side. However, later, the governor, who remained resolute in his direction, was abruptly replaced by a businessman within days after BNP took office. The financial hooligans appear to have won the game somehow under the current regime, although the finance minister is giving some lullaby explanations for passing the contentious Banking Resolution Act 2026, enabling wrongdoers to repurchase their lost banks at a discount. Not only is it a bad precedent, but it sends an unethical message to the financial industry as well.

That is how the country's private banking industry has been developing in a defective way—bagging banking licenses by managing

people in power. But the sector does not know how to close the deal professionally in case of probable bankruptcy. By this compromise, the BNP government is allowing the old bank owners to stage the same drama they orchestrated under the Awami regime, with no recovery of the banking sector in sight.

Under the Act, the former directors or owners of the troubled banks can pay 7.5 percent upfront of the amount already injected by Bangladesh Bank on behalf of the interim government to reclaim the banks. The remaining 92.5 percent will be repaid within two years at 10 percent simple interest. During the pandemic, I witnessed many clearance sales in American shopping malls. Bangladesh's government is holding a similar discount sale for nonperforming banks. This is an indirect incentive for wrongdoers who will gain more goodies in the days ahead. It is a discount sale paired with lottery tickets that are destined to win prizes. How?

Here's the answer: it will be difficult for the government to recover the remaining 92.5 percent of the bailout fund because these banks are already in shambles. The government is also likely to waive the interest, a practice often exercised during the Awami regime. Next, the government will extend the time from two years to, maybe, another three to five years, making the receivables largely impossible. This compromise is akin to the style of loan restructuring where defaulters were allowed to regularise their loans by adjusting as low as even five percent of their defaulted amount. These are accommodating

tactics for the financial delinquents devised by politicians in power, and people did not expect their repetition by the BNP government, which came to power after a mass uprising.

If the economy is akin to a bird, the capital market and the banking sector are the two wings that help it fly. The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) broad index, as Trading Economics reports, fell drastically in the Covid year of 2020. However, the index displayed its resilience by rising from around 3,900 in April 2020 to as high as nearly 7,300 in 2021, which generated abundant hopes that the share market would thrive to pull the economy upwards. But the index has consistently remained in a downtrend since then. It came down to 5,229 on August 4, 2024, just before the Sheikh Hasina government fell. When the interim government took office on August 8, 2024, the index was 5,924.81.

The Yunus government's strategy, which was thought to be the last reviving mantra contributed by a group of experts, soon nosedived. Mobocracy and industrial vandalism reached their historic highs during the Yunus era, while the index remained low—close to 5,200 in early February 2026—when the interim tenure neared its end. The index closed at 5,271 on April 12, 2026, suggesting no "booster ignition" for the market even after the new government took office following a landslide.

Thus, the last resort of hope is the banking sector, which must act prudently by

not only ensuring the resurgence of deposit mobilisation and credit expansion but also enabling the sector's rebirth by observing stricter rules and governance. However, the compromise that allows the old wrongdoers to repurchase their banks has cast a shadow on both the recovery and dynamism of the banking sector. The BNP government has just reverted the process of correction by passing the Bank Resolution Act, 2026, signalling no cure for the cancer of the sector.

More important was the Bangladesh Bank Ordinance (Amendment), 2025, aimed at enhancing the autonomy of the central bank. However, it did not reach the desk of parliament due to the insincerity of the Yunus government. Its finance adviser, who otherwise advocated for Bangladesh Bank's autonomy during the Awami regime, did not let the ordinance pass, although the total number of ordinances by the Yunus government reached as high as 133 in 18 months—a record for any interim/ caretaker government in this country.

One reason the central bank autonomy ordinance did not get approved is probably that it could potentially restrict the government's borrowing from the banking sector. This raises the question whether the BNP government suffers from a similar fear that BB autonomy might restrict the government's desperate borrowings, as well as the rehabilitation of the seasoned bank looters. The government must explain its real intent, so people can have confidence in the banking sector.

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

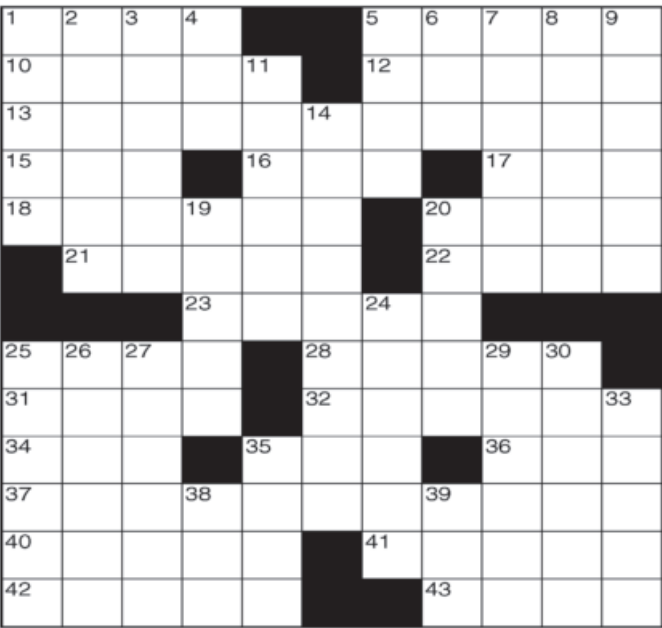
ACROSS

- 1 Dull pain
- 5 Actor Willis
- 10 Was bright
- 12 Admit
- 13 Fill in until the boss gets back
- 15 Squeeze (out)
- 16 In what way
- 17 Golf goal
- 18 Kind of network
- 20 Despicable
- 21 Forgo frugality
- 22 Move slowly
- 23 Put off
- 25 Outside: Prefix
- 28 Command
- 31 Shop tools
- 32 Came down
- 34 Uno plus due
- 35 "___ a Wonderful Life"
- 36 Game cube
- 37 Maintain one's position
- 40 "The King"
- 41 Michelangelo work
- 42 Like cattails

43 Corrals

DOWN

- 1 Pale
- 2 Folds under pressure
- 3 Find a place to hide
- 4 Finish
- 5 Was windy
- 6 Field worker
- 7 Perfect place
- 8 Reef materials
- 9 Main course
- 11 Flammable gas
- 14 Talk at length
- 19 Mulligans, e.g.
- 20 "Rigoletto" composer
- 24 Wiped off
- 25 Purim honoree
- 26 Singer King
- 27 Clock topper
- 29 Salad green
- 30 Control
- 33 Actions
- 35 Tiny
- 38 Pulled off
- 39 Trip around the track



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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NOT JUST CHILD’S PLAY

Bengal’s rhymes as cultural memory



DESIGN: DOWEL BISWAS

“I think I had a learning disability as a child. I took my time with words,” says Faria Raisha, a homemaker and former corporate employee. “But my mother and grandparents kept repeating chhoras and folktales. I began speaking through rhythm before I understood meaning.”

DOWEL BISWAS

Now a mother, she sees the same process unfold. “My son doesn’t fully understand yet. But he reacts to rhythm, to gestures. Bengali *chhoras* have their own way of communicating.”

For journalist Tanim Ahmed, memory resides elsewhere. “I don’t quite remember what the stories were about. I just remember the sense of the stories, *chhoras* and most of all, Dadijaan’s (grandmother’s) voice. Dadijaan, who is very dear to me, used to tell me these stories. Later on, in life, Dadijaan caught dementia, and she started to forget things; she sometimes could not recognise me. But every time I looked at her—and now that I miss her—I miss her voice telling me these stories most.”

These are not simply memories. They point to a structure. To speak of Bengali rhymes—*chhora*—only as child’s play is to miss their cultural gravity. Embedded in everyday speech, games, lullabies, counting chants and ritual contexts, these short verses function as a vernacular archive of social experience, historical memory and collective

imagination.

The recognition of this form is not new. As early as the late 19th century, Jogindranath Sarkar, in his work on “Khukumonir Chhora”, formally identified rhymes as a literary category—Chhorasahitya (rhythmic literature). Later, Dinesh Chandra Sen’s extensive documentation of Bengali folk literature further established their anthropological and historical value.

They circulate where formal records never reached—in rural compounds, in play circles under mango trees, in kitchens and in the rhythms of work and rest. As a cultural practice and as a form of early cognition, they are among the most enduring modes through which people in Bengal have learned language, absorbed social relations and, often without conscious intent, encoded history.

This is not mere assertion. Folklorists have long recognised multiple categories within Bengali folk literature—songs, proverbs, riddles, and rhymes. Rhymes are not homogeneous; they appear in distinct functional types: nursery rhymes, social or satirical rhymes,

occupational rhymes, ritual rhymes, and those associated with games. That diversity signals not triviality, but embeddedness. In their rhythmic repetition are folded patterns of labour, hierarchy, crisis and adaptation.

To understand why this matters, one must return to the verses themselves. “*Agdom bagdom ghoradom saje, dhak mridang jhanjhar baje...*”

At one level, it is soundplay. At another, structure. Scholars—including interpretations referenced by Haraprasad Shastri—have read within it traces of Dom military formations in pre-modern Bengal. Roughly translating to vanguard, flank, mounted movement: formations now largely absent from formal historiography. Yet they persist in rhyme.

What history omits, rhythm retains. “*Ikir mikir chamchikir, chame kata Majumdar...*”

Now a counting chant, the line carries a sharper edge. Some readings connect

Here, the colonial world enters. The “saheb babu” marks hierarchy; the “boithokkhana” becomes a site of access and control. The insertion of “bioscope” suggests temporal layering—oral forms absorbing modern technologies without losing their structure.

The most enduring example remains the lullaby: “*Khoka ghumalo para juralo, Bargi elo deshe... Khajna debo kise?*”

Rooted in the Maratha incursions during the reign of Alivardi Khan, this rhyme compresses an entire economic crisis into four lines: crop loss, taxation, dispossession.

“*Dhan furalo, pan furalo... ar K’ta din shobor koro, roshun bunechi.*”

A plea for time under extraction. Its logic reappears, centuries later, in Satyajit Ray’s *Hirak Rajar Deshe*, where rhyme becomes overt political critique. This continuity is not accidental. It

not limit ideological force.

Equally important is authorship. Much of this corpus emerges from women’s voices—mothers, grandmothers, caregivers—composing in motion, in labour, in intimacy. Like nakshi kantha or alpana, these rhymes are not authored in the literary sense; they are accumulated, adapted, and transmitted. As Tagore noted, their language moves like breath—unforced, continuous.

It is within this structure that personal experience sits.

In rural Bengal, these rhymes were not separate from life. My grandparents, my maternal aunt, my sisters repeated them as part of daily rhythm. My khalamoni (aunt) would narrate them at night, shaping figures—horses, warriors, princesses—from dough or arranging them on plates of rice and vegetables. Through repetition and gesture, narrative became tactile. Language arrived not through instruction, but immersion.

This is not exceptional. It reflects a broader cultural method—learning through rhythm, memory through repetition, imagination through participation.

And yet, in contemporary preservation, this dimension is often flattened.

During Pahela Baishakh or Chaitra Sankranti, visual and performative traditions are foregrounded—alpana, nakshi kantha, music. Rhymes remain present, but often unexamined, reduced to children’s content.

To treat these forms as trivial is to detach them from the histories they carry. They are not simply tools for language or play. They are ways of remembering without writing, critiquing without declaration, teaching without institution. The question is not whether these rhymes will survive.

They likely will. The question is whether we will continue to recognise what they are doing. Because within these short, rhythmic lines lies a method—of compressing experience, transmitting structure, and making sense of power and vulnerability through play.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

NEWS

A festival of hope and new beginnings

FROM PAGE 12

emperor Akbar, associated with the introduction of the Bangla New Year; the emergence of Bangladesh and the anti-autocracy movement; Gazi’s Pat, a traditional visual storytelling technique; and Behula, a key character of the Mangalkavya Manasamangal, among others.

The programme will also include performances of the national anthem, Tagore’s Esho Hey Baishakh, and patriotic songs by 35 instrumentalists, UNB reported, adding that 200 students will carry a national flag during the procession.

Performances by indigenous communities and traditional ‘Laathi Khela’ will also be featured, organisers added.

The procession will begin at 9:00am from the Faculty of Fine Arts and pass Shahbagh, Raju Sculpture, TSC, and Doel Chattar before returning via Bangla Academy.

DU authorities have announced strict guidelines, allowing entry only via the Nilkhet and Palashi routes.

A cultural programme will also be held at Bakultala on the faculty premises at 4:00pm.

Celebrations will begin early, with Chhayanaut’s programme at Ramna Batamul at 6:15am and Rishij Shilpigosthi’s event in front of Shishu

Park at 7:00am.

Traffic restrictions in key areas of the capital will begin from 5:00am, with alternative routes advised. Emergency services, including fire engines, ambulances, medical teams, and naval divers, will remain on standby.

Several gates of Suhrawardy Udyan will remain closed during the procession. All campus programmes must end by 5:00pm, after which no one will be allowed to enter. From 7:00pm last night, only vehicles with university stickers or emergency clearance were permitted on campus.

Rab will have 308 patrol teams nationwide, while the DMP will deploy SWAT, bomb disposal, K-9, DB, CTCF personnel, and mounted police units alongside regular police members.

On the eve of the Bangla New Year, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman greeted the nation and Bangla-speaking people worldwide, describing Pahela Baishakh as a unique symbol of Bangalee history, culture, and identity.

He said the country’s thousand-year-old traditions, folk culture, civilisation, and continuity of values are renewed with the arrival of the new year.

Traditional events such as Baishakhi mela, Baishakhi

Shobhajatra, and halkhata reflect the multidimensional beauty of Bangalee culture, he said, adding that the new year brings fresh expectations and possibilities. He also expressed hope that harmony, tolerance, and generosity would strengthen democracy and the coexistence of differing opinions.

THE HISTORY

Historians trace back the festival’s origins to the Mughal era. During emperor Akbar’s reign, taxes were collected according to the Islamic lunar calendar, which did not align with agricultural seasons, often forcing farmers to pay before harvests.

To address this, Akbar introduced a new calendar system in 1584, later evolving into the Bangla calendar.

However, many historians differ.

Folk researcher Aminur Rahman Sultan notes that Meghnad Saha, Kashi Prasad Jayaswal, and Amartya Sen link the calendar to Akbar’s reign, while Ahmad Sharif argues that Akbar introduced the Tarikh-e-Ilahi, not the Bangla calendar, citing Abul Fazl. A third view traces its origin to the Sultanate period under Husain Shah.

Aminur adds that the nawabs of Murshidabad later institutionalised the calendar for administrative use.

Yet household celebrations predate

these systems. Traditionally, on the eve of Pahela Baishakh, women soaked rice with water and tender mango twigs. The next morning they performed rituals like ‘Amani’ to ward off evil and welcome prosperity.

With expanding trade, Halkhata (new account books) added a commercial dimension to the festival.

Folk performances such as Gambhira, Maljora, Kabigan, Palagan, and Chaitra songs once defined rural celebrations. Today, urban elements like the Baishakh (Mangal) Shobhajatra and symbolic masks blend folk tradition with civic expression.

Reflecting on this evolution, Aminur Rahman notes that rural households once celebrated with simple foods like soaked rice, green chillies, onions, and roasted peppers, while hilsa is a later urban addition.

During the Pakistan period, when cultural expression faced pressure, the festival gained deeper significance. In 1967, Chhayanaut began welcoming the New Year with music at Ramna Batamul.

After independence, the celebration expanded in scale and symbolism. The Faculty of Fine Arts’ Shobhajatra, introduced in 1989, added a powerful visual language of resistance, hope, and unity.

A positive start to build on

FROM PAGE 12

ambassador Humayun Kabir, also president of the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute.

Regarding Khalilur’s meeting with Ajit Doval, former ambassador M Shafiullah said the presence of Hasina and thousands of Awami League leaders in India is embarrassing for India. “I think India wants to return the Awami League leaders to Bangladesh,” he added.

Both analysts welcomed India’s positive response to Bangladesh’s request for increased diesel and fertiliser supplies amid the Middle East crisis.

Jaishankar also indicated that visas — particularly medical and business categories — would be eased in the coming weeks, but the analysts observed that India’s resuming of all categories of visas for Bangladeshis would give a strong signal for improving relations, as Bangladesh did so in late February.

Khalilur Rahman’s remark in this regard was striking. “People-to-people contact will sustain our relations. If they cannot reach us, you basically deny the important source of trust and confidence,” he had told NDTV.

Jaishankar had reiterated India’s desire to engage constructively with Bangladesh’s new government, strengthen bilateral ties, and explore ways to deepen cooperation through existing mechanisms and added that follow-up official meetings are expected soon. The statement said both sides exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Shafiullah described the statement as encouraging but cautioned that the future of the relationship will depend on how sincerely both sides engage and address longstanding concerns.

Neither of the statements spoke of several critical issues, including India’s trade restrictions, border killings, water sharing, or even India’s concerns. One of the vital ones is the renewal of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty that expires in December this year.

In his NDTV interview, Khalilur Rahman had stressed that Bangladesh would like to see a new or revised treaty or arrangement on the Ganges water.

Shafiullah said the Teesta water-sharing deal has remained unsigned, despite being nearly finalised in 2011. So, India needs to take a serious look at the water sharing of the common rivers.

Another irritant in the relation is border killing, said Shafiullah,

adding, “Border management issues can be resolved through dialogue, but loss of life cannot be justified.”

The statements made no mention of anti-Bangladesh or anti-India rhetoric used, especially during the interim government.

Khalilur Rahman had stressed that propaganda from the Indian side concerned the policymakers in Bangladesh deeply and sought to ensure that the narratives are not negative when both sides try to build confidence and trust.

According to the Indian newspaper The Economic Times, security cooperation had featured prominently in the India-Bangladesh talks, particularly in the context of cross-border crime and extradition matters.

India had also reiterated its position that its territory would not be used for activities against Bangladesh’s interests — an assurance that must be welcome for the Bangladesh government, given that Hasina and many other political leaders and activists are now living in India.

Shafiullah said security for northeastern states is a serious issue for India, while another concern is Chinese influence in the region.

On this matter, Khalilur Rahman had said Bangladesh’s relationship with India or China is not a zero-sum game, while assuring that any worries of India should be put to rest.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman’s letter to Indian ruling party BJP National President Nitin Nabin is noteworthy.

“This means BNP as a party also wants to build party-level relations with the BJP, keeping in mind that India traditionally favoured Awami League,” said M Humayun Kabir.

Humayun Kabir said the spirit of the July uprising emphasises that relations with foreign countries should be based on mutual respect and shared interests. The BNP government’s foreign policy slogan, “Bangladesh First”, reflects a similar approach.

He emphasised that Bangladeshis are unlikely to support a return to past patterns where external actors were seen as favouring particular political parties or intervening in domestic affairs.

“All in all, the future relationship between the two countries will depend on how India accepts the new realities of Bangladesh and how efficiently Bangladesh can deal with them,” said Humayun Kabir.

‘Fascism’s shadow’ returning to JS

FROM PAGE 12

the will of 70 percent of the people, honouring the blood of the martyrs, and fulfilling the aspirations of the July fighters.”

The Jamaat ameer also expressed anger over placing the managing director of Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC on mandatory leave. “After what happened at Bangladesh Bank, a fresh takeover has now begun at the country’s largest bank, Islami Bank.”

He warned that Jamaat would not remain silent if such malpractices continue.

He said the struggle is not only for a change in political power but for a fundamental transformation of culture. “Wherever this malpractice exists — be it in banking, the economy, industry, culture, education or the legal system — we will resist it alongside the people.”

He added, “We do not want to turn our children into anyone’s subjects. Nor will we tolerate any family-based rule in Bangladesh in the name of fascism. This vicious cycle in politics

must be broken.”

Speaking as a special guest, opposition chief whip in parliament and convener of the National Citizen Party (NCP), Nahid Islam, said the issues they had been raising for the past 16 years and during the interim government over the last one and a half years are now forcing them back into discussions and movement again.

He alleged that BNP has dragged the nation into the current crisis and will have to bear responsibility for its consequences.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President Oli Ahmad said the 11-party alliance must take to the streets step by step, adding that there is no alternative.

Political scientist Dilara Chowdhury criticised the home minister’s interpretation of the law, saying he avoids addressing the “spirit” of the constitution. “The constitution exists for the people. Laws alone cannot address everything. In many countries, people’s will is placed

above written constitutions. By presenting half-truths, the minister is doing something even more dangerous than spreading outright falsehoods.”

Editor of the daily Amar Desh, Mahmudur Rahman, said those trying to weaken the referendum or raise legal debate around it are questionable in how much they truly uphold the July uprising.

Supreme Court senior lawyer and Jamaat central executive council member Mohammad Shishir Monir presented the keynote paper, warning that failure to implement the referendum verdict could push the country into a fresh constitutional and trust crisis.

Explaining the reform process, he said a constitutional reform assembly should be convened for 180 days based on the referendum results, followed by the formation of a bicameral parliament. The upper house would consist of 100 members allocated proportionally based on votes. “Failure to undertake this

process will become a disgraceful chapter in history.”

The seminar was chaired by Ameer of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Mamunul Haque, who said there is no precedent in world history of ignoring a referendum verdict in such a manner. “Do not consign yourselves to the dustbin of history.”

Brother files case

FROM PAGE 12

suspects were identified.

Since the incident, police personnel have been deployed at Shamim’s house to ensure the family’s safety.

Police personnel have also been placed since Saturday night at the home of baul singer Shafi Mandol, located about 5km away, amid concerns of further unrest, said OC Arifur.

The darbar area, which had been crowded in the days leading up to the attack, remained quiet yesterday, with few outsiders present.

Man gets life term for raping girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A Meherpur court yesterday sentenced a man to life term rigorous imprisonment for raping a child.

The court also fined the convict named Rigan, of Tergharia village in Sadar upazila, Tk 2 lakh in default of which he will have to suffer one more year in jail.

Judge Tajul Islam of the Meherpur Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal delivered the verdict.

According to the case details, on March 15, 2023, around 11:00am, a third-grade schoolgirl went to visit her grandparents' house at Sholmary village.

While playing near a local shop, Rigan lured her with chocolates and took her into a room, where he raped her. The victim lost consciousness during the assault.

Locals later rescued the child and admitted her to a hospital.

Following the incident, the victim's uncle filed a case with Meherpur Sadar Police Station.



A farmer weeds a soybean field while holding his young son in his arms. The photo was taken at Ramkathi village in Barishal yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

PUBLIC OFFICES

Women demand breastfeeding corners in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Women under the Upazila Network Committee of Cooperative Societies in Pabna have demanded breastfeeding corners and women-friendly facilities in all local offices, citing difficulties faced by mothers visiting service centres with infants.

Yesterday, a memorandum signed by 2,000 members, including 1,500 women, was submitted to Pabna Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Tamara Tasbiha at a programme held at the CCDB-CPRP office in Jalalpur.

Hamida Khatun, president of the network committee and a union parishad member, said mothers often struggle while accessing services.

"We have to bring our babies, and when feeding is needed, the lack of private space causes distress," she said.

CCDB Gender and Advocacy Coordinator Marzia Prova said the High Court in November 2023 directed all offices, factories and transport hubs to ensure breastfeeding corners, but compliance remains limited.

UNO Tamara Tasbiha assured steps to establish such facilities across Pabna within the year. Local officials and CCDB representatives also pledged support for implementation.

BPSC rolls out

FROM PAGE 3

approach over the past year to address problems including overlapping BCS examination schedules, lengthy recruitment procedures, reliance on manual systems, and capacity constraints. A coordinated roadmap was prepared to streamline examination schedules, which helped resolve multiple ongoing BCS processes at the same time and improve coordination across different stages of recruitment, he added.

The BPSC has also introduced a "One BCS, One Year" approach to ensure a predictable and time-bound recruitment cycle.

Ismail Zabiullah, prime minister's adviser on public administration, said the report reaffirms a commitment to the countrymen that fairness, integrity, and merit would remain the foundation of public recruitment.

Md Abdul Bari, state minister for public administration, said merit would be the final determinant in government recruitments.

Policy and strategy adviser on information, broadcasting and cultural affairs Zahed Ur Rahman said the BCS exam questions should be made harder so that those unsuited to the BCS would move towards other professions earlier.

The report said the reforms were guided by four institutional values – merit, integrity, impartiality, and efficiency – and backed by the BPSC's first five-year strategic plan for 2025–2029.

It mentioned major improvements in exam management, including reduced time for written script assessment from around a year to about three months, alongside digital improvements and automated systems to enable publishing results within around a week.

Moreover, reforms focused on ensuring fair, structured and consistent assessment include changes in question-setting procedures, stronger confidentiality protocols, refined evaluation methods, and introducing competency-based viva exams.

The commission said the introduction of online applications, automated result processing, and unique candidate IDs had improved efficiency, accuracy, and transparency at different stages of recruitment, while application fee has also been reduced to lower financial barriers and widen participation.

Development of a fully automated system in collaboration with Buet was underway, the report added.

Kakina Zamindarbari

FROM PAGE 3

and poet, said the two-storey palace was built with a unique blend of architectural styles, with main features combining European design and Mughal ornamentation. It includes a royal court, guest house, hawa khana, hidden chambers and passages that still bear witness to its past grandeur.

"Once, this palace regularly hosted drama [jatra] and puppet performances, musical events, and various cultural festivals. As a result, Kakina became known as one of the major cultural centres of northern Bengal," he said.

Around 1925, following years of financial crisis, revenue complications, and administrative shortcomings, the estate was auctioned off. Once the feudal system was abolished, the palace fell into gradual decline due to the lack of government or administrative attention. After the independence of Bangladesh, neglect, encroachment, and natural decay left the palace in ruins.

Visiting the palace recently, this correspondent observed

that the roof has collapsed and wide cracks have appeared in the walls. The royal court, guest house, and most other parts of the palace are in a dilapidated condition.

"A part of the palace now hosts the Uttar Bangla College. Nearby stands the Kakina Mahima Ranjan Memorial High School. There are also Kakina Janomilon Kendra, Mission House, Kachhari Ghar, and the historic Hawa Khana, which still helps preserve parts of the palace," said Abdur Rouf Sarkar, principal of the college.

"It is necessary to preserve and renovate the Kakina Zamindarbari through immediate government initiatives before it is lost to oblivion. If this historic architectural landmark is restored, it could facilitate local tourism prospects," he added.

Contacted, Abu Sayeed Inam Tanvirul, field officer of the Rangpur Divisional Department of Archaeology, said they were aware of the palace's present condition.

"We will visit the area and take steps to bring the palace under the DoA's protection," he added.

Dhaka urges

FROM PAGE 3

with through a transparent judicial process," Humaiun Kobir said.

"We told [the Indian side] she [Hasina] is a terrorist. She is irrelevant to Bangladesh. People have moved on."

Humaiun said Dhaka is expecting a goodwill gesture on resuming visas, particularly medical and business, in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma yesterday paid separate courtesy calls on Speaker of Bangladesh National Parliament Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, Deputy Speaker Barrister Kayser Kamal at the Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, according to an Indian High Commission statement.

They expressed interest in promoting deeper exchanges with the Parliament of India, while also discussed possible opportunities for exchanges between the parliamentary committees, capacity-building opportunities for MPs and parliament officials and mutual visits of parliamentary delegations.

Pranay Verma briefed them on various institutional initiatives by the Indian Parliament to strengthen and modernise resources and practices, while also stressing the potential collaboration between the libraries of the parliaments of the two countries.

During a courtesy call, Minister of Information and Broadcasting Zahir Uddin Swapon at the Secretariat and Pranay Verma agreed to enhance exchange visits of media delegations between the two countries to promote mutual understanding. They also exchanged views on cooperation in films, including the organisation of film screening and film festivals between the two countries, as well as collaboration in production and post-production technological support.

Shama Obaed seeks Algeria's support for energy State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed requested enhanced cooperation from Algeria in the energy sector to ensure long-term energy security.

She made the request when Algerian Ambassador Abdelouahab Saidani paid a courtesy call on her at the foreign ministry yesterday. Both sides discussed avenues to strengthen cooperation in trade and investment, particularly in the energy, infrastructure, pharmaceutical, shipbuilding and manpower sectors.

Shama Obaed emphasised the importance of increased collaboration in the education sector and welcomed the ongoing process of establishing a Joint Consultative Commission. The ambassador reiterated Algeria's commitment to strengthening cooperation in labour recruitment, as well as collaboration in energy, education and agriculture.

A road to cut through

FROM PAGE 3

According to BELA, various structures have been built in the park over the past seven years under the guise of renovation, significantly restricting access. While regulations allow a maximum of 5 percent infrastructure development in parks, urban planners say about 23 percent of Osmani Udyan has already been occupied.

They also noted that Bangladesh's laws strictly prohibit the use or transfer of parks and open spaces for purposes other than their intended use. Courts have repeatedly directed authorities to protect such spaces and remove unauthorised structures.

"This is a terrible decision," said Adil Mohammed Khan, former president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) and chief executive of the Institute of Planning and Development.

"Destroying parks and playgrounds to accommodate private cars is unacceptable. If this road is built, it will cause irreversible damage to the park's environment."

He added that under existing laws, including the Open Space Conservation Act 2000, there is no scope to interfere with parks in this manner.

Former BIP president Mohammad Fazle Reza Sumon said, "When we don't even have one square metre of park space per person – where at least nine square metres are required – such a move will only worsen the situation for city residents."

"Out of Dhaka's 265 parks, only 42 remain. If the government does not protect them, what will we tell future generations?"

The World Health Organization recommends

at least nine square metres of open space per person within a 15-minute walking distance from home.

IMPLEMENTATION DELAYS

The Osmani Udyan modernisation project, originally scheduled for completion in 2018, has faced repeated delays. Work was stalled for around two years after the initial contractor's contract was cancelled in 2022 over alleged irregularities.

A new contractor was appointed in September 2023, but the project has since missed multiple deadlines. The latest deadline was June 2025, with about 95 percent of the work completed so far.

Officials estimate that at least three more months will be needed to complete the remaining work.

The July monument component is about 70 percent complete and is also expected to be finished by June.

The project includes boundary walls, entry gates, walkways connecting key government facilities, a library, a food court, drainage systems, lake development, an indoor games zone, and parking facilities.

Osmani Udyan, once a key urban green space, is home to rare trees, small lakes, sand islands, sculptures, and an auditorium – features that environmentalists say should be preserved rather than compromised.

FROM PAGE 12

individuals or groups responsible for a bank's collapse from returning to ownership even if all funds were repaid, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the inclusion of section 18(a) in the "Bank Resolution Act, 2026" guarantees impunity rather than justice.

"Whatever justification the government may offer, this decision – one that facilitates and shields corruption and plunder – does not ensure legal accountability for those who looted the banking sector; instead, it effectively rewards them on a massive scale, making it self-defeating."

"The fall of authoritarianism does not necessarily mark an end to the abuse of power and forcible capture in the banking sector... ." "This move by the government exemplifies that trend and is merely a continuation of the highly controversial decision surrounding the appointment of the Bangladesh Bank governor," Iftekharuzzaman said.

"By what magic have the former owners of crisis-ridden banks, who

were the pioneers of plundering this sector, suddenly attained such purity that they will deposit only 7.5 percent while the remaining 92.5 percent will be repaid over two years at only 10 percent interest?" he said.

He further questioned how such owners would inject new capital, cover existing capital shortfalls, repay depositors and creditors, meet tax obligations, compensate affected parties, and rebuild regulatory compliance frameworks.

Iftekharuzzaman also expressed concern over Bangladesh Bank's ability to enforce post-reacquisition conditions, citing conflicts of interest. He warned that under the guise of meeting conditions, former owners might secure fresh loans on favourable terms and exploit the ongoing normalisation of loan defaults, potentially deepening insolvency in the banking sector.

"The burden of this will ultimately fall on the people," he said.

TIB urged the government to reconsider the move.

Barrister Shafique

FROM PAGE 3

and its Secretary Mahfuzur Rahman Milon, among others, attended the janaza.

Earlier, his first janaza was held at his Indira Road residence around 11:00am.

The third janaza took place at the Central Shaheed Minar before his

burial.

Barrister Shafique died at 5:30pm on Sunday while undergoing treatment at Bangladesh Medical College Hospital in Dhaka. He was 89.

Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury expressed shock at his death.

Dhaka South City Corporation

Engineering Department
Electrical Circle

Memo No-46.207.007.09.22.13.2026

Date-13/04/2026

Tender Notice

Tender notice is invited through e-GP Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, Electrical Circle, Dhaka South Corporation for the Procurement of following packages :-

No SI	Tender ID	Description of Work	Last Selling (Date & time)	Closing (Date & time)
1	1236461	Supply, Fitting & fixing of necessary spare parts for maintenance & repair of existing Air Coolers at Gandaria Community Center, Sutrapur Community Center, Johir Raihan Cultural Center and Outfall Staff Quarter under Zone-5 of DSCC.	26-APR-2026 12.30 PM	26-APR-2026 02.30 PM

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and hard copies/offline will not accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). If necessary, information please contact to the PE's Support Desk (02-223386009).

(Nur Mohammad)
Executive Engineer
Electrical Circle
Dhaka South City Corporation.
Phone:02-223386009

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/২১৮/২০২৫-২৬

GD-822

Breaking into tech in the US

Insights for mid-career business professionals from Bangladesh



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

For many onlookers, ‘tech’ can seem like a single glamorous industry, shaped by popular depictions of Silicon Valley and mainstream media coverage of Big Tech. In reality, it is a broad ecosystem with multiple entry points across product, marketing, strategy, business development and data science. For mid-career professionals from non-STEM backgrounds, breaking into that ecosystem is often less about learning to code and more about understanding how to position existing experience, build the right skills, and navigate a highly competitive hiring market.

SYEDA ADIBA ARIF

To MBA or not to MBA

A sizable Bangladeshi diaspora in the US works in tech. Bangladeshis with Bachelor's, Master's, and PhDs in STEM find it relatively easier to directly break into the industry, versus those who come from a background in business. For the latter, an MBA from a reputable US university can help. An MBA offers on-campus recruiting opportunities and access to the right networks. Lamia Aroni, who studied business in Bangladesh before completing an MBA in the US and building a career in the American tech industry, says that tech is a high-risk, high-reward industry. “Tech recruiting is extremely competitive,” she said. “On top of that, there have been a lot of layoffs recently in the industry, which has left many competent and experienced professionals out of work.” It is currently an employer's market, with recruiters able to choose from a large pool of experienced, plug and play candidates. She added that most US tech companies have limited familiarity with Bangladeshi universities and local employers, and in that context, a globally recognised MBA can help business graduates build credibility and move to business or managerial roles in tech.

For mid-career professionals, an MBA is not just a credential but also a way to make a career pivot more legible to recruiters. Such pivots can be framed around three dimensions: geography, function, and industry. Abreshmee Haque, who followed a similar path from business studies in Bangladesh to an MBA and a career in US tech, advises to keep at least one of those three constants. For Bangladeshis looking to move to the US, that can mean shifting function within the same industry, for example, moving from data science to product management within tech, or moving industry while keeping the same function, such as transitioning from FMCG marketing to a marketing role in tech. Noting that an MBA can signal adaptability, she said, “Recruiters often see MBA graduates as people who can learn quickly and navigate unfamiliar environments in a structured way.”

Past experiences that help

For professionals trying to pivot into tech, prior experience can be valuable, but it often needs to be reframed to demonstrate transferability. Unless they are applying for a very similar role in a comparable company, candidates usually

need to show clearly how their earlier work has prepared them for the job they now want. According to Abreshmee and Lamia, many hard and soft skills can transfer well into tech if positioned effectively during the hiring process.

The ability to work cross-functionally is a highly transferable skill needed across roles. Marketing and product management, for instance, are highly people-oriented and require strong stakeholder management, with product roles often demanding experience working closely with engineers. Reflecting on her own background, Lamia said, “In my previous role at a multinational company, I predominantly worked in brands, which gave me ample opportunity to work with people across the value chain, including creative agencies, sales teams, supply chain, etc.” Abreshmee highlights another important skill that tech recruiters value: the ability to navigate ambiguity and manage stakeholders. “Working in an MNC creates many opportunities to harness these skills,” she said.

New skills to build

For many graduates, strategy or business roles become the entry point into tech, with technical upskilling happening on the job. Candidates coming from all backgrounds need to build familiarity with emerging technologies and develop strong product awareness. When recruiting from MBA programmes, companies are also interested in people who can bring fresh perspectives, strong people skills and strong business judgment.

Abreshmee pointed to data literacy as increasingly important, with some skills such as SQL and Tableau now functioning as ‘points-of-parity’ qualifications. Building credentials in Scrum, Agile methodology, product management, and cloud fundamentals can further differentiate a candidate's profile. Abreshmee also highlights AI fluency as a trait increasingly valued by employers. “It's not just about core AI work,” she said. “Any experience with AI, whether in daily life or as a side hobby, can be useful. Employers want to be sure you're ahead on the adoption curve.”

Lamia stressed the importance of understanding B2B tools for business audiences. “One major gap in Bangladesh is that B2B operations are still not very mature, and CRM adoption remains limited. That is a serious blind spot because tech is largely a B2B

game globally.”

Inside the hiring process

Many companies recruit directly from university campuses, creating networking opportunities for students. When a target company is not on campus, candidates often need to rely on their networks to get their resumes referred to hiring managers. Lamia said, “When I was recruiting, I made sure to utilise every single network I'm a part of: IBA, MBA, my professional circle, and the broader Bangladeshi MBA network.”

Candidates typically go through several rounds of interviews and assessments. Companies use case-based, behavioural or situational interviews across multiple rounds to get to know the candidates' competencies, experiences, and interests. Cases can range from navigating business downfalls, designing a product or experience, or entering a new market. Abreshmee said, “Interviewers go beyond just tech-related questions. In one of my interviews, for example, we chatted on what might be a good investment in this market.” She added that strong interview performance depends heavily on understanding the company in depth, including its culture and leadership. “Most founders have written at least one book. Read at least the summary,” she said. “Your research will help you understand the company's culture and where you fit in.”

Final advice

Abreshmee's advice to aspiring candidates is to choose a niche and focus deeply on it. “Whether it is payments, retail tech and customer experience, cloud and enterprise, or startup technology, having three or four broad areas of focus helps signal genuine interest to employers,” she said.

For those planning to pursue an MBA, Lamia recommends gaining relevant experience before the programme begins. “If you know what your dream role is, do it in Bangladesh before your MBA starts. There are many local startups in edtech, fintech, and healthtech where you can gain relevant experience.” Lamia's final advice is to be realistic about the volatility of the industry. “Tech is reactive to economic volatility, shifting trends and changing market demands, resulting in cycles of workforce layoffs,” she said. “There is no stigma to getting laid off here. It's part of life. You need to train yourself to be resilient.” Given the uncertainty of the system, she strongly recommends having a long-term immigration strategy from the outset. “Don't treat the H-1B as your only path. If you have a STEM degree and are working in tech, use your OPT/STEM OPT window strategically, and speak to a strong immigration lawyer early about whether you may qualify to self-petition through a National Interest Waiver.”

A career in tech offers the opportunity to work close to products, trends, and ideas that are making global headlines. In the US, the industry can also offer a level of autonomy and flexibility that adds to its appeal. At the same time, the market today is highly competitive, and the industry remains quite turbulent. For those willing to take that risk and make that investment, the transition can be both possible and highly rewarding.

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



Anthropic warns AI will accelerate cyberattacks, recommends precaution

NEXT STEP DESK

AI models will soon discover and exploit software vulnerabilities much faster, according to a new security guide from Anthropic, the maker of Claude. To prepare, the company says organisations should close their patch gap immediately, treating CISA's known exploited vulnerabilities as emergencies and patching internet-facing systems within 24 hours. Security teams should expect a sharp rise in vulnerability reports and automate triage with human oversight.

Companies should also find bugs before shipping code using static analysis and AI-assisted

reviews, prefer memory-safe languages, and scan existing codebases with the same models attackers would use. Zero-trust architecture is essential: tie access to verified hardware, replace long-lived secrets with short-lived tokens, and isolate services by identity.

Incident response times must also shorten. Anthropic suggests putting a model at the front of alert queues and running tabletops for five simultaneous incidents. Small teams should turn on automatic updates, use managed services, enable passkeys, and activate free security tooling on code hosts.

Canva acquires two more companies that love to work with AI

NEXT STEP DESK

Canva has announced the acquisition of two technology companies, Simtheory, an AI collaboration and agent management platform, alongside Orto, a customer data and marketing automation company. The acquisition comes

as the design platform continues to expand its investments in artificial intelligence (AI) and marketing infrastructure. Financial terms of the deals were not disclosed.

Both Simtheory and Orto were founded by Chris and Mike Sharkey, entrepreneurs previously behind Stayz, the

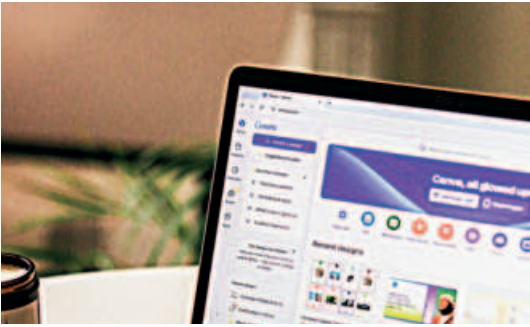


IMAGE: SWELO/UNSPLASH

vacation rental platform which was acquired by Fairfax Media. The founders are set to join Canva in leadership roles across its AI and marketing technology divisions. According to Canva, the additions would strengthen its capabilities in areas including agentic AI, data infrastructure, and marketing automation.

Intel joins Musk-backed semiconductor project

NEXT STEP DESK

Intel is set to join SpaceX, xAI, and Tesla, companies backed by Elon Musk, in an effort to build a new semiconductor manufacturing facility in Texas, marking an expansion of a project aimed at producing advanced chips for artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics.

Known as Terafab, the project was announced in March by Elon Musk as a collaboration



IMAGE: INTEL/X

between his two companies to develop high-performance chips for applications including AI computing, satellite systems

and a proposed space-based data centre, as well as future autonomous vehicles and robotics.

“Our ability to design, fabricate, and package ultra-high-performance chips at scale will help accelerate Terafab's aim to produce 1TW/year of compute to power future advances in AI and robotics,” Intel said in a recent post on X. Intel did not provide further details on the scope of its involvement.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT



Swisscontact

Manager, Strategy & Partnerships

Deadline: N/A

Eligibility: Master's degree in Economics, Social Science, Development Studies, Public Administration, Management, or a relevant field.

Minimum experience: 8 years

Square Pharmaceuticals PLC.

Executive, Microbiology

Deadline: April 19

Eligibility: M. Sc/ B. Sc in Microbiology from any reputed public university.

Minimum experience: 1-2 years



CONCERN worldwide

Concern Worldwide

Programme Coordinator, MEAL

Deadline: April 21

Eligibility: Postgraduate degree in Statistics, Social Sciences, Development Studies, or a related field.

Minimum experience: 5-7 years

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)

Lecturer A, Department of Computer Science and Engineering

Deadline: April 23

Eligibility: Master's degree in CSE/IT/CS/ SWE/ECE/relevant subject area from a reputed university.

Minimum experience: 3 years



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



“Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect.”

VINCE LOMBARDI

OpenAI forces macOS app updates after third-party tool compromise

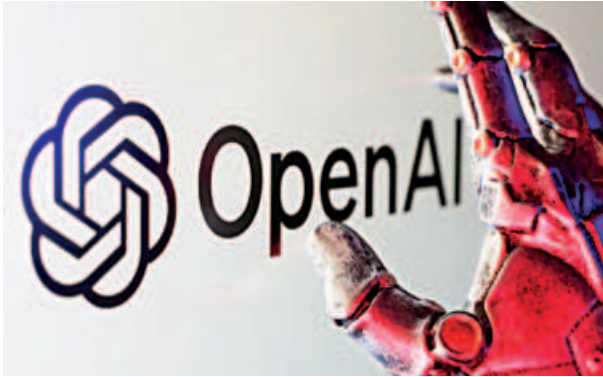


IMAGE: REUTERS

NEXT STEP DESK

OpenAI is requiring all macOS users to update their desktop applications after a security issue involving a widely used third-party developer library called Axios, the company has announced. The incident was part of a broader software supply chain attack reported on March 31, 2026. A GitHub Actions workflow used in OpenAI's macOS app-signing process downloaded and executed a malicious version of Axios. OpenAI says the workflow had access to certificates used to sign macOS applications, including ChatGPT Desktop, Codex, Codex-cli and Atlas.

OpenAI said its analysis found that the signing certificate was “likely not successfully exfiltrated” by the malicious payload due to timing and other factors. However, the company says it is treating the certificate as compromised and is revoking and rotating it. The company stated that it has found no evidence that user data was accessed, that its systems or intellectual property were compromised, or that its software was altered.



PHOTO: BCB/FIROZ AHMED

Saif Hassan belted 138 off 133 balls for Team 'A' against Team 'B' in an inter-squad practice match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday ahead of the three-match ODI series against New Zealand, set to begin on April 17. Saif struck six fours and eight sixes as Team 'A' notched a dominating 128-run win. [Inset] Meanwhile, the first batch of New Zealand players touched down in Dhaka yesterday morning and the remaining members were expected to land at around 11:00pm later that night.

Mountains to climb for Barca, Liverpool

STAR SPORTS DESK

Will Tuesday night produce yet another incredible chapter of Champions League comeback, or will it see a predictable script?

Barcelona, traveling to the Spanish capital to face Atletico Madrid, and Liverpool, welcoming defending champions PSG to Anfield, will definitely hope for the former to come true. But for that, both sides would need to climb mountains, having lost their respective first-leg quarterfinals by identical 2-0 margins.

For Barcelona, the task appears particularly daunting as they head to the Metropolitano, where Atletico have been formidable. Hansi Flick's side were stunned at home in the first leg, undone by a red card and ruthless finishing, despite dominating large spells. History offers little comfort -- only twice has a team overturned a two-goal first-leg home defeat in a knockout tie in the competition's history.

Yet Barca arrive with renewed confidence after a 4-1 league win over Espanyol, with Lamine Yamal and Ferran Torres in fine touch, while Marcus Rashford -- who scored off the bench in that game -- could again prove pivotal. The England forward, who missed a string of chances in the first leg, insisted Barcelona have the



belief to turn the tie around. "This team is always going to create chances... on another day, they go in," Rashford said, adding that their "mindset and intent" must be at its peak to engineer a comeback. Flick will once again rely on attacking intent, even if that approach leaves them vulnerable. Barca have struggled defensively, conceding in 14 straight



Champions League games, while Atletico boast one of the most potent home attacks in the competition. Julian Alvarez, who opened the scoring in the first leg, remains their biggest threat, alongside the ever-dangerous Antoine Griezmann and Alexander Sorloth. At Anfield, Liverpool will bank on history and atmosphere as they attempt to overturn their own 2-0 deficit against

PSG. The Reds were comprehensively outplayed in Paris, failing to register a shot on target, as goals from Desire Doue and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia handed the holders control of the tie.

But Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk believes another famous European night is possible.

"We are at home, and we have to show belief... it needs a special performance," said Van Dijk, who was part of the side that famously overturned a three-goal deficit against Barcelona at Anfield in 2019.

Manager Arne Slot echoed that sentiment, calling on the Anfield crowd to inspire his side. "Anfield has shown many times that it can lift the team to another level and we need that again," he said.

Liverpool's recent 2-0 win over Fulham -- featuring goals from youngster Rio Ngunmoha and Mohamed Salah -- offers some momentum, but questions remain over consistency and defensive solidity.

PSG, meanwhile, arrive well-rested and in ruthless form, with Kvaratskhelia continuing a remarkable scoring streak in knockout matches.

Whether it is Barcelona's attacking gamble in Madrid or Liverpool's reliance on Anfield magic, Tuesday night promises high stakes -- and the possibility of another unforgettable chapter in Champions League folklore.

Record prize money in Women's T20 WC

REUTERS

This year's Women's Twenty20 World Cup will have a tournament-record prize pool of \$8.8 million with the winners set to earn \$2.3 million, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Monday.

The 12-team competition will be held in England and Wales from June 12, with New Zealand set to defend the maiden title they won in 2024.

"The runners-up will receive \$1.17 million. Both losing semi-finalists will earn \$675,000 each," the ICC said in a statement, adding that every participating team was guaranteed a minimum prize of \$248,000.



T20 WORLD CUP TEAMS

Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Scotland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies

The prize pool will be smaller than those at the men's and women's World Cups held in the Indian subcontinent in the last three years.

Last year's 50-over Women's World Cup in India and Sri Lanka had a prize pool of \$13.9 million, the highest pot at an ICC event, and a 297% increase from its previous edition in 2022. Champions India took home \$4.5 million.

The 2023 edition of the men's 50-over World Cup, held in India, had a prize pot of \$10 million, while this year's men's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka offered \$11.25 million in prize money.

"The continued rise of women's cricket through increased investment and opportunity reflects the growing influence and impact of female athletes on the global stage," the ICC's CEO Sanjog Gupta said.

58 GOALS
DAYS LEFT



Finals decided in style

The highest-scoring World Cup final took place in 1958, when Brazil thrashed hosts Sweden 5-2 to claim their first-ever title. Two other finals were decided by a three-goal margin: Brazil's 4-1 win over Italy in 1970 and France's 3-0 triumph against Brazil in 1998.

**** Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'Tardelli's scream'**

WOMEN'S ASIAN GAMES QUALIFIERS

'Tough task' awaits Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's hockey team have been placed alongside strong sides Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and Uzbekistan in Pool A of the upcoming Women's Asian Games Qualifiers, scheduled to be held from April 23 to 29 in Jakarta, Indonesia, as the Asian Hockey Federation disclosed the schedule yesterday.

Pool B consists of Singapore, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka and hosts Indonesia, with the four semifinalists set to qualify for September's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in Japan.

Although the senior women's team have yet to feature in this or any international tournament in their brief journey, Bangladesh's U-21 and U-18 sides produced impressive results last year. The U-21 team finished runners-up in the Junior (U-21) AHF Cup in Singapore, while the U-18 side clinched bronze at the Women's U-18 Asia Cup in China.

The senior squad is largely made up of those players, with the majority coming from BKSP, where they have trained together year-round over the past three-and-a-half years.

Preparations for the qualifiers began on February 1 with a 36-member training

FIXTURES	
April 23	Bangladesh vs Chinese Taipei
April 24	Bangladesh vs Uzbekistan
April 26	Bangladesh vs Hong Kong

camp, including 12 players from outside BKSP.

With hopes of reaching the Asian Games, the Bangladesh squad is scheduled to leave for Jakarta on April 19.

"Our target is to qualify for the Asian Games by reaching the semifinals, though it will be a tough task," women's team coach Zahid Hossain Raju told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Chinese Taipei are a very strong team, having played hockey for the last 20 years, and their U-21 side also became champions in the Junior AHF Cup. Hong Kong and Uzbekistan are also good opponents, but we have a good opportunity to reach the semifinals if the girls can deliver their natural performance," added the BKSP head coach.

DPL players' transfer set for April 18-19

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Premier League (DPL) crisis appears to be untangling as the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) announced the dates for players' transfer yesterday.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) issued a press release on Monday, declaring that the players' transfer will be held on April 18 and 19. The BCB also announced the names of the 12 participating teams.

Of the 12 teams, there were concerns over Legends of Rugbanj's participation after the team's councillor Lutfar Rahman Badal had told The Daily Star on Friday that he was yet to decide whether they would take part.

However, when asked yesterday, Badal answered in a more optimistic tone, saying, "I have spoken with president Tamim Iqbal and since he has requested, we will consider it."

Meanwhile, Brothers Union's stance on the matter has remained vague. An official from another club informed that they have not been able to reach any officials from Brothers Union to know of their position.

The tentative starting date for the league is May 4.



Denzel Dumfries is the toast of his teammates as his braced fired Inter Milan to a 4-3 win over Como in a topsy-turvy Serie A fixture at the Giuseppe Sinigaglia Stadium in Como on Sunday. The league leaders fought back from two goals down to beat Cesc Fabregas's charges -- thanks to a brace each from Marcus Thuram and Dumfries -- and take a massive step towards reclaiming the Scudetto. The win took the Nerazzuri nine points clear at the top with six games remaining, while Como dropped to sixth position, two points behind the fourth Champions League slot.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK



BANK RESOLUTION ACT New law risks rehabilitating looters: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday said the newly passed Bank Resolution Act, 2026, could open the door to corruption and rehabilitate individuals responsible for looting the banking sector.

A provision in the new law allows former shareholders of weak banks that have been merged to regain ownership without any form of accountability, the anti-corruption watchdog said in a press release.

The banking sector may once again turn into a haven for corruption and plunder as a result, it added.

TIB also observed that instead of addressing long standing mismanagement, irregularities, and governance deficits, the provision perpetuates an entrenched culture of impunity associated with past authoritarian practices.

Referring to an earlier amendment under the “Bank Resolution Ordinance, 2025” issued during the interim government, which barred

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A father carries in his arms the body of his three-year-old daughter, who just died from a suspected case of measles, as the child's mother and uncle are seen inconsolable in the background. The measles situation in the country continues to deteriorate, with both confirmed and suspected cases climbing steadily. The photo was taken outside the DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital in Mohakhali yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

‘Fascism’s shadow’ returning to JS Says Jamaat ameer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leader and Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Shafiqur Rahman has said that the “shadow of fascism” is once again visible in the Jatiya Sangsad.

He said, “In the past, those who are now sitting on the government benches were spoken to in a dismissive manner on the floor of the House. Now, one or two members have started using similar language against us. We urge them to restrain their tongues.”

He made the remarks yesterday while speaking as the chief guest at a seminar titled “Government Against the Referendum Verdict: The Country Facing a Crisis”.

The seminar was organised by the Jamaat-led 11-party alliance at the Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB) auditorium in the capital's Kakrail as part of their ongoing movement demanding implementation of the referendum verdict.

Addressing the government, he said, “Remember, wrongdoing leads to consequences even more severe than before. You are walking down that path. We do not see you among the people; instead, you are concentrating everything in your own hands.”

Referring to the ongoing movement to implement the referendum verdict, he said it is not driven by opportunism or power sharing. “This movement is about respecting

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PAHELA BAISHAKH

A festival of hope and new beginnings PM greets nation; security tightened

STAR REPORT

The country celebrates Pahela Baishakh today with colourful processions and cultural programmes, ushering in Bangla New Year 1433 amid tight security.

Authorities have taken extensive measures nationwide, deploying police, Rab, and other law enforcement

rebranded the rally as “Barshabaran Ananda Shobhajatra” from “Mangal Shobhajatra”, following demands from certain quarters.

Preparations were nearly complete yesterday, with DU teachers and students busy putting the finishing touches on the artworks.

Dean of fine arts Azharul Islam



agencies at key venues to ensure peaceful celebrations.

In the capital, one of the main attractions will be the procession from Dhaka University's Faculty of Fine Arts, themed “Harmony of the New Year, Resurrection of Democracy”.

Organisers said the procession, along with its traditional motifs and masks, will feature a 150-page ‘Pata Chitra’ and five major motifs.

The government has renamed the traditional procession “Baishakhi Shobhajatra”. Last year, authorities

Sheikh said the main motifs will reflect the country's democratic resurgence as well as its rich heritage and traditions.

According to organisers, the five large motifs -- a rooster, an elephant, a pigeon, a dotara (a traditional string instrument), and a horse -- will represent strength, creation, peace, glory, and dynamism.

Azharul said the ‘Pata Chitra’ will feature folktale-based artworks depicting Bonbibi, the goddess of the Sundarbans; the Mughal

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

PIR KILLING

Brother files case against 4 people

Mentions over
180 unidentified
attackers in FIR

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kushia

A case has been filed over the killing of Abdur Rahman, alias Shamim al-Jahangir, a pir based in Kushia's Daulatpur upazila.

His elder brother, Fazlur Rahman, lodged the case with Daulatpur Police Station early today, naming four individuals and 180-200 unidentified persons, Arifur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the station, told The Daily Star.

He, however, could not provide the names of the four accused.

Earlier, the family decided not to file the case, despite repeated requests from police officials. Fazlur had told this newspaper yesterday morning that he was too old and weary to pursue legal proceedings.

The 52-year-old pir was beaten and hacked to death by a mob of 300 to 400 people at his darbar (shrine) in Philipnagar on Saturday, following allegations of hurting religious sentiments. Two others were injured in the attack.

Police said they were scrutinising video clips circulated on social media to identify the attackers.

Mohammed Jasim Uddin, superintendent of Kushia police, earlier said arrests would follow once

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KHALILUR'S INDIA VISIT

A positive start to build on

PORIMOL PALMA

Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman's first visit to India after the BNP government assumed office has been described as a positive beginning, though the future of high stakes bilateral relations will hinge on how both countries address longstanding and emerging challenges.

During the three-day visit to India on his way to Mauritius to attend the Indian Ocean Conference from April 10-11, he met Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Oil and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.

While Bangladesh described it as a “goodwill visit”, India had put it as an official one. Foreign policy analysts think the meetings were more about understanding each other's points of views to take forward the relations after strained relations during the interim government period since August 2024.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Indian officials indicated that engagement with an elected government and the recent developments suggest a shift.

Jaishankar's attendance at the funeral of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's attending the BNP government's oath-taking ceremony, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's multiple messages to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and invitation to visit India -- all indicate New Delhi's eagerness to mend ties with Dhaka.

Dhaka responded positively by resuming all categories of visas for Indians and sending Khalilur Rahman to New Delhi. There are indications of a visit by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to India, though a date has not been fixed yet.

Following the meetings, Dhaka and New Delhi issued separate statements committing to improve overall relations, but many of the specific challenges in their relations remained untouched or were not made public.

Bangladesh had raised the extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and others accused in the killing of Inqilab Moncho spokesperson Sharif Osman Bin Hadi. While India has agreed to extradite those accused in Hadi's killing, the statements did not mention any response regarding Hasina or Kamal.

“This suggests there was no consensus on the matter,” said former

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Trawler ‘with 250’ Bangladeshis and Rohingyas sinks

Catastrophe feared near Andaman

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

A humanitarian catastrophe is feared after a Malaysia-bound trawler, allegedly carrying more than 250 trafficked Bangladeshis and Rohingya, capsized near the Andaman Islands recently.

The incident came to light after nine survivors were rescued from the sea.

In a press release, Bangladesh Coast Guard media officer Lt Commander Sabbir Alam Sujon said the Bangladesh-flagged vessel MT Meghna Pride, en route from Chattogram to Indonesia, rescued nine individuals -- eight men and one woman -- from international waters near the Andaman Islands on the afternoon of April 9.

They were later handed over to Bangladesh Coast Guard's patrol ship Mansur Ali around midnight.

After being rescued, the survivors described harrowing accounts of human trafficking and the deadly voyage.

Rafiqul Islam, a Rohingya survivor, claimed he had

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



A dilapidated footbridge on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Paribagh in the capital. It has remained unusable for pedestrians for months.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

HUNGARY ELECTION

Orban loses to pro-Europe newcomer

His 16-year rule ends

AFP, Budapest

Congratulations from across Europe poured in yesterday for Hungarian political newcomer Peter Magyar, who defeated nationalist Viktor Orban in elections seen as a blow to right-wing populism worldwide.

Orban, a self-described “thorn” in the EU's side and defender of “illiberal democracy” endorsed by US President Donald Trump, lost Sunday's elections after 16 years in power as Hungarians fed up with corruption gave Magyar a decisive victory.

Magyar's party, Tisza, won a thumping majority in the parliamentary elections, which drew record turnout and sent tens of thousands of jubilant supporters into the streets to celebrate as car horns sounded in the capital, Budapest.

Leaders across the EU welcomed Magyar's win, including French President Emmanuel Macron, who hailed a victory for the “values of the European Union”, and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who called it a “heavy defeat” for “right-wing populism”.

With Orban the EU's most Russia-friendly leader, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said yesterday Moscow hoped for “pragmatic” relations with Hungary's new leadership.

Crowds of Magyar supporters celebrated into the early morning hours outside his party's election headquarters on the banks of the Danube river and in Budapest's streets, waving Hungarian flags and dancing.

