

## FUEL, FERTILISER IMPORTS Govt needs \$2.61b extra until June

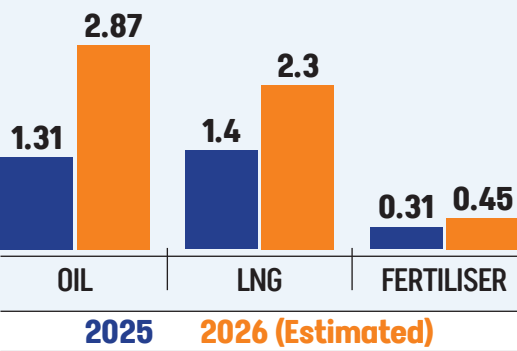
REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh will need an additional \$2.61 billion in foreign exchange to pay the surging energy and fertiliser import bills for March-June period.

The total import costs for oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and fertiliser will be around \$5.62 billion, up from \$3.01 billion in the corresponding period of last year, according to a finance ministry impact analysis.

Subsequently, the government is aiming to secure about \$3 billion in emergency assistance from development

### REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORT BILLS In billions of dollars (March-June)



partners, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB).

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury already placed the request during a meeting with officials of the two multilateral lenders on the sidelines of the ongoing IMF WB Spring Meetings in Washington DC.

The WB has assured Bangladesh of both policy guidance and financial support, Khosru told reporters after the meetings.

"I hope we will receive the extra financing by June and in the next budget. Overall, the discussions have been successful," he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A photograph taken from the Israeli side of the border with Lebanon shows destroyed buildings in a town in southern Lebanon yesterday. Rights groups say there are significant indications that Israel is implementing a strategy in southern Lebanon that closely mirrors its military actions in Gaza.

PHOTO: AFP

## Tarique on Time's list of 100 most influential

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has been featured on Time magazine's list of 100 most influential people of the world for 2026.

The list published yesterday by the New York-based magazine includes prominent leaders such as US



SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Diplomatic bid to end war gains momentum

Pak army chief lands in Tehran as rivals acknowledge backchannel talks

AGENCIES

Diplomatic efforts to end the US-Israel war on Iran gathered pace yesterday, as Pakistan's army chief arrived in Tehran for mediation and US President Donald Trump announced that the conflict was "close to over".

The diplomatic push came as US and Iranian officials weighed a return to Pakistan for further talks after

negotiations there ended on Sunday without a breakthrough.

Iran yesterday said that exchanges with the US via Pakistan continued after the failed negotiations.

In return, the White House also said the US is discussing holding a second round of peace talks with Iran in Pakistan.

"We feel good about the prospects of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## Fuel for April, May secured

Says govt; queues at pumps getting longer

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government yesterday said it has secured enough fuel supplies for this and next month.

"We have made our highest efforts to activate all alternative sources. As a result, the government can now confidently say that there is sufficient fuel in stock, including diesel, for April and May," said Monir Hossain Chowdhury, spokesperson for the Energy Division.

**Octane stock is sufficient for about 27 days, while a 30,000-tonne shipment is expected to arrive by April 18.**

Speaking at a regular briefing at the Secretariat, the joint secretary warned that the ongoing US-Israel war on Iran could take a new turn in the coming week. "If that happens, the government will brief the media accordingly. But at this moment, we are saying that the stock is sufficient."

However, long queues at filling stations continue with little sign of easing.

In Dhaka and on the outskirts, long queues usually spill onto roads adjacent to filling stations, disrupting traffic. In several cases, motorists reported waiting for hours on end to get fuel. Most pumps are rationing fuel.

Yesterday, queues at most pumps in Tejgaon, Paribagh, Motijheel, and Matsya Bhaban in the city had huge queues.

A recent visit to pumps in Gazipur and Mymensingh showed long lines, particularly of cars and motorcycles.

In rural areas, multiple bikers said they were forced to limit their travel due to the fuel crisis.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Energy crisis disrupts apparel production **B1**



Pakistan cuts power to control energy prices **P5**



'Lot of room to improve' in batting **P11**

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## From dreams in the field to a future of possibility

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\*The image is for illustrative purposes and is partially AI-generated.



People from all walks of life joined the festivities as Pahela Baishakh returned with renewed zeal on April 14 this year -- from vibrant Baishakhi Shobhajatra processions and Chhayanaut's traditional performances at Ramna Batamul to little moments of joy reflected in painted faces and flower crowns. Across the capital, the Bangla New Year was welcomed with colour, music, and a collective sense of hope, marking a cultural reset rooted in resilience, unity, and new beginnings.

PHOTOS: STAR



## PM to meet all upazila health officers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman will, for the first time, meet upazila health and family planning officers from across Bangladesh to discuss ways to improve overall healthcare services at the field level, officials said.

The meeting is scheduled for 11:00am on Saturday at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka.

Officials at the health ministry said the prime minister is expected to issue directives to improve services. This would be the first time a PM holds such a meeting with UHFPOs, they added.

In its election manifesto, BNP outlined 22 health-related commitments, including raising health expenditure to five percent of GDP, introducing universal e-health cards, ensuring free and quality primary healthcare, and recruiting 100,000 health workers.

In February, the government formed a 13-member cell, led by Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain, to implement the manifesto.

UHFPOs lead health services at the upazila and sub-district levels and are expected to play a key role in implementing the commitments.

"The prime minister will listen to grassroots-level officials and discuss the challenges and prospects of field-level health services," Health Secretary Quamruzzaman Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

"We also expect that he will give directives to improve overall services," he said.

He added that the initiative reflects a shift from a top-down approach, with the government seeking input from frontline officials to improve service.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## Govt needs \$2.61b extra until June

FROM PAGE 1

The government is also in talks with other multilateral donor agencies to plug the additional financing gap. The Daily Star has learned from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

Yesterday, at a virtual meeting of the Asia Zero Emission Community, a Japanese-led framework designed to promote decarbonisation, energy security, and economic growth across Asia, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman sought \$2 billion in emergency funds from development partners to manage the inflated fuel import bills, reports BSS.

In March, the diesel price surged by 250 percent, while the LNG price doubled and the fertiliser price rose by 50 percent.

The foreign exchange pressures due to higher import costs and an expanded subsidy burden could persist until June, according to the ministry's impact analysis.

The government has so far held off on passing the higher costs on to consumers, though it is considering price adjustments if additional external assistance is not assured.

The impact report estimates that Bangladesh will require an additional Tk 38,542 crore (about \$3.2 billion) in subsidies between March and June to cover energy and fertiliser imports.

Of this, around Tk 18,000 crore would be needed for fuel alone, an extraordinary requirement not seen in previous years. Gas subsidies are estimated at Tk 13,930 crore, electricity at Tk 4,612 crore, and fertiliser at Tk 2,000 crore.

As a result, the total subsidy bill for this fiscal year, originally budgeted around Tk 59,000 crore, is now projected to balloon to Tk 97,542 crore, the report said.

The broader economic picture has also deteriorated: the monthly trade deficit widened between January and February, inflation edged up in March, and the taka remained under strain in early April.

"Taken together, these developments reduce the room to absorb the shock through reserves without risking a disorderly adjustment," the report said.

As of April 9, gross foreign exchange reserves stood at \$29.95 billion, according to data from the

World Bank.

On Tuesday, WB President Ajay Banga said the institution could mobilise \$80-\$100 billion over the next 15 months for countries hit hard by the war, eclipsing the \$70 billion provided during the Covid pandemic, Reuters reported.

This would include \$20-\$25 billion in the coming months through a crisis response window that allows countries to withdraw up to 10 percent of funds earlier than planned from previously approved programmes, with another \$30-\$40 billion from repurposed existing programmes in about six months, he said.

The IMF has separately announced up to \$50 billion in emergency support for developing and low-income countries, while the Asian Development Bank has unveiled a special package for its developing member countries across Asia and the Pacific to help them cope with immediate economic pressures from the war.

Bangladesh has already begun informal discussions with the development partners about securing its share of the support.

## Advisory panel outlines overhaul of governance

FROM PAGE 12

The committee yesterday discussed a draft of the sustainable development strategy, which includes a vision for key sectors such as governance, economic recovery, energy sustainability, and rural development, at its first meeting at the National Economic Council.

Speaking at a press briefing afterwards, Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, finance and planning adviser to the prime minister, said the government is moving towards a "welfare state".

He said the government is set to formulate a new five-year strategic plan focused on "democratising the economy" to ensure every citizen's participation in national growth.

Titumir called for a paradigm shift in national economic planning, criticising past strategies as "imaginary" narratives that failed to align with reality.

State Minister for Planning Zonayed Saki was also present at the meeting.

A copy of the draft outline obtained by The Daily Star shows the committee's governance plan includes implementing BNP's 31-point reform agenda and the July National Charter.

It deliberates on the formation of an election-time neutral caretaker government and the introduction of a 100-member upper chamber (senate), alongside term limits for the prime minister capped at two terms, the creation of a vice-president post, and measures to ensure a balance of power between the president and the prime minister.

The plan also recommends ensuring restorative justice through the formation of a "Truth and Healing Commission" and building a service-oriented police force under judicial oversight.

The committee called for reforms to the existing justice system, including the establishment of a judicial commission.

To enhance transparency,

it suggested open tender, real-time audits, asset declarations, a strong Right to Information Law, an independent anti-corruption commission, and a ban on secret contracts in power and energy procurement.

The committee also outlined a phased economic roadmap, prioritising short-term stabilisation, restructuring and long-term growth.

It emphasised reforms to improve the business climate, strengthen financial governance, attract foreign investment, and expand support for small and medium enterprises.

The strategy identifies key growth sectors such as ICT, renewable energy, the blue economy, and the creative industries, alongside efforts to diversify exports and boost employment.

In the long run, the committee envisions a significant expansion of the economy, driven by increased investment, improved infrastructure, and greater private sector participation.

Dr Monzur Hossain, member secretary of the General Economics Division, said the outline will be discussed at the National Economic Council, presided over by the prime minister.

Following that, the recommendations adopted will be placed before parliament, tentatively during the national budget session in June.

The committee members are Dr SM Abdul Awal, chief coordinator (SDG) at the Prime Minister's Office; Dr Mahbub Ullah, economist and former professor at the University of Dhaka; Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of PPRC; Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD); Professor Mustafizur Rahman, also a distinguished fellow at CPD; Dr KAS Murshid, former director

general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS); Dr Zaidi Sattar, chairman of the Policy Research Institute; Dr AK Enamul Haque, director general of BIDS; Dr Abdur Razzaque, chairman of Research and Policy Integration for Development; and Dr Selim Raihan, executive director of SANEM.

Other members include Dr Rushidan Islam Rahman, former research director at BIDS; Dr Fahmida Khatun, executive director of CPD; Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of the Campaign for Popular Education; Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, executive director of icddr; Professor Dr Akhtar Hossain, chief economist at Bangladesh Bank; Dr Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank (Dhaka Office); Dr Barkat-e-Khuda, former professor of economics at the University of Dhaka; Dr Zakir Ahmed Khan, chairman of PKSF; Dr Mohammad Abdul Majid, chairman of the Social Development Foundation (SDF); and Dr Mirza M Hassan, head of the governance and politics cluster at BIGD.

Also included are Dr ATM Nurul Amin, emeritus professor at AIT; Professor Dr SM Nurul Alam, former professor of anthropology at Jahangirnagar University; Dr Bazlul Haque Khondker, chairman of SANEM; Professor Dr MA Taslim of the University of Dhaka; Professor Mushtaq Khan, of the University of London; Dr Mohammad Zahid Hossain, chairman of Bangladesh Krishi Bank; Dr Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of North South University; Professor Ismail Hossain of North South University; Professor MA Baqui Khalily of the University of Asia Pacific; Syed Nasim Manzoor, president of the Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh; as well as the heads of BGMEA, FBCCI, and BASIS.

## Fuel for April, May secured

FROM PAGE 1

According to the Energy Division, national fuel stock currently stands at 1,01,385 tonnes of diesel, 31,821 tonnes of octane, 18,211 tonnes of petrol, 77,546 tonnes of furnace oil, and 18,223 tonnes of jet fuel.

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) officials said diesel stocks can meet demand for around eight-nine days.

Yesterday, two vessels with 60,000 tonnes of diesel reached the Chattogram port's outer anchorage, and two more vessels carrying the same amount would arrive by April 18, they said.

Octane stock is sufficient for about 27 days, while a 30,000-tonne shipment is expected to arrive by April 18, according to BPC data.

Petrol supply, largely dependent on domestic condensate production, can meet roughly 12-13 days' demand.

Four private condensate fractionation plants continue to supply petrol regularly, officials said.

They said jet fuel stock is sufficient for about 12 days and furnace oil for at least 32 days.

Officials said demand patterns have shifted.

Monir said, "The number of vehicles has not increased since February 28. The supply we provided before that date is the same as what we are providing now."

He added that district administrations, depot in-charge, and distribution companies are coordinating. "We have instructed them not to supply even a single litre less than before to any fuel station."

For example, he said Trust Filling Station near Bijoy Sarani, which has the longest queues, typically requires

50,000-54,000 litres of octane, but over 80,000 litres are being supplied in a single day. "This shows that supply has increased, but the demand has surged abnormally due to panic."

The queue at the filling station, at Bijoy Sarani intersection, snaked its way to Mohakhali Bus Terminal yesterday afternoon, this correspondent saw.

Spokesperson Monir linked part of the fuel-buying behaviour to psychological pressure stemming from the US-Israel war on Iran.

Meanwhile, authorities have intensified drives against hoarding. Between March 3 and April 14, government agencies recovered around 5,42,000 litres of fuel and filed 3,510 cases.

Hoarders were fined Tk 1.56 crore, while 45 individuals were jailed. Of the recovered fuel, diesel accounted for 3,66,000 litres, octane 39,776 litres, petrol 87,959 litres, and furnace oil 48,500 litres, officials said.

The country's sole refinery, Eastern Refinery Ltd (ERL), is operating on a limited scale using "deadstock" as crude oil imports remain disrupted.

A shipment of crude oil is expected to depart from Yanbu port on the Red Sea in Saudi Arabia on April 20 and may reach Chattogram by May 2.

The spokesperson said, "The ERL contributes only one-fifth of the supply, which is minor. Currently, two out of four units are in operation using deadstock. In the interim, we are carrying out regular maintenance on the remaining units."

At present, around 30,000-35,000 tonnes of residual stock are being used to keep ERL running.

In fiscal year 2024-25, ERL supplied

about 15.44 percent of diesel demand and 11.92 percent of petrol demand, while octane supply came entirely from imports, the Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources said in a statement.

The ministry said crude imports were disrupted after the Strait of Hormuz "closed" on February 28, preventing scheduled imports of 3,00,000 tonnes for March and April. "To manage the situation, the government has approved imports of additional refined fuel, which is being ramped up to offset refinery shortfalls."

Replying to a query from a reporter, Monir said priority is being given to ensuring farmers and industries receive adequate diesel. Besides, the government is installing tracking devices on tank lorries and introducing real-time monitoring of fuel movement.

A fuel pass system has already been piloted at seven stations, with around 1,10,000 users registered, he said.

He added that seven more stations are expected to be included next week. There are plans to gradually bring motorcycles in Dhaka under the system.

On fuel pricing, he said monthly adjustments continue and April prices have already been fixed. Any future revision would depend on decisions by the relevant authorities.

At a separate briefing at the Secretariat, Zahed Ur Rahman, PM's adviser on information and broadcasting, said fuel prices may be reconsidered if the war escalates or prolongs. "Any decision on fuel price adjustment would depend on the evolving global situation."

national leader in waiting -- a destiny he fulfilled in February by winning an electoral landslide after 17 years estranged from his homeland," wrote Time Magazine in his profile.

Tarique Rahman's victory came just days after the death of his mother, Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh's first female prime minister. Still grieving, he told TIME in January that he would focus on uniting the country's 175 million people and reviving South Asia's second-largest economy.

Bangladesh is struggling with high

inflation and youth unemployment, while ties with India have hit a historic low. All of these problems need urgent solutions, Time noted.

"Corruption allegations from the aughts (albeit since quashed by the courts) may mean any honeymoon period will be shorter than most. But after so many years in the wilderness, he's determined not to waste any more time."

"We need to work together," Tarique told Time, "so that people can have their political rights."

## Tarique on Time's list of 100 most influentials

FROM PAGE 1

President Donald Trump, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Pope Leo XIV, Benjamin Netanyahu, Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah, New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, among others.

"Rewind just a few months and Tarique Rahman was living a carefree life of exile in leafy southwest London. But the 2024 ousting of Bangladesh's autocratic Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina propelled the 57-year-old scion from opposition agitator to

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TIPAIMUKH DAM  
'A disaster of our own making'  
Says JS Speaker

BSS, Dhaka

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Haliz Uddin Ahmad yesterday described the Tipaimukh Dam on the Barak river in India's Manipur state as "a disaster of our own making", claiming that the neighbouring country moved ahead with the project following a request from Bangladesh.

"The Tipaimukh Dam, a proposed 1,500MW hydroelectric project, was taken up by India following a request from the then foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad. It was a disaster created by our own efforts," the speaker said.

He said this while Environment Minister Abdul Awal Mintoo was replying to a query raised by treasury bench lawmaker Abdul Malique of Sylhet 3 on the adverse impact of the Tipaimukh Dam on Sylhet during question-answer session in the House.

"As I served as water resources minister, I have

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## From political epicentre to a space of neglect

Once central to movements, historic Muktangan now lies occupied and inaccessible

DIPAN NANDY

The Muktangan, an iconic political epicentre at the heart of Dhaka, once echoed with slogans, rallies, and protest speeches.

Now, the ground lies long forgotten amid neglect, buried under garbage, surrounded by waste transfer points and encroached footpaths, and occupied by a car rental business for parking microbuses.

Visiting Muktangan recently, this correspondent found a waste management centre on one side, emitting a constant stench.

Rusted fences, dirty sidewalks, and illegally parked microbuses were seen occupying what was once a green, open field serving as a cradle of political movements from the 1980s till around 2010.

The ground has also become a common spot for drug users and vagrants. The once vibrant public space is now unrecognisable.

Despite its historical and political significance, the government has taken no visible steps to protect or preserve Muktangan.

The Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) had earlier launched a development project to build a park and playground on the site, but work has remained



suspended for over six months.

Visitors passing from Purana Paltan to Zero Point often look for the historic site, only to be met with disappointment and disbelief.

According to sources, Muktangan was designated as a political assembly ground soon after the Liberation War by the then government. From the anti-autocracy movement to

rights protests, it became one of the most important venues for public expression in the country, particularly throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

However, the site began to lose its purpose after 2010, gradually being taken over by illegal structures, car stands, and waste facilities.

Since 2021, DSCC has been using portions of the ground

as a waste transfer centre, from which garbage overflows daily, turning the ground into a muddy, unhygienic site.

Public toilets have been built on another side, while makeshift shops, a small mosque, and even a scrapyard have sprung up along the footpath. Local residents lament that the ground has now become off-limits for them.

Rahim Sheikh, a driver who parks his vehicle there, said, "We park here under our union's rules. We have to pay monthly fees to manage everything."

Another driver, Md Taslim added, "It used to be an open field, but now it's impossible to keep it empty. We agree it should be freed from occupation and maintained, but we have to earn our livelihood. If the government provides an alternative space, we'll move immediately."

Veteran politician and Nagarik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna said, "When Muktangan was created, the idea was good - but the space was too small for large rallies. Nonetheless, a dedicated place for assemblies is urgently needed. If it is renovated now and used again for public gatherings, it would be beneficial. The government should look into this."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

ME INSTABILITY  
Govt eyeing new labour markets  
Tarique tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has drawn up a clear plan to explore alternative labour markets for Bangladeshi workers amid recent instability around the Persian Gulf, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman told the parliament yesterday.

"Local lobbyist and expert firms will be appointed as needed, based on recommendations from Bangladeshi missions overseas," he said while responding to a question from BNP MP

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Country has 1.98 lakh recognised freedom fighters  
Liberation War affairs minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Affairs Minister Ahmed Azam Khan yesterday said according to the integrated list preserved in the ministry, there are currently 1,98,037 recognised freedom fighters in Bangladesh.

He provided this information in response to a question from ruling party MP AM Mahub Uddin Khokon.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

HADI MURDER  
Helal placed on three-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed arms seller Mazedul Haque Helal on a three-day remand in a case filed over the killing of Inqilab Moncho's spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Jashita Islam passed the order after the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced him before the court with a seven-day remand prayer, said a sub-inspector working at the court.

During the remand hearing, no lawyer defended Helal.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

BANGLADESHIS IN SPAIN  
15,000 to be regularised

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Spain has announced an amnesty programme for an estimated 5,00,000 undocumented migrants, including around 15,000 Bangladeshis.

The Spanish Council of Ministers approved the royal decree titled "Extraordinary Regularisation" on Tuesday. Those residing there under an irregular status can start applying from today.

"We are very happy about this generous gesture from the Spanish authorities. This can help the migrants who have been living here without proper documents," Bangladesh Ambassador to Spain Masudur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the embassy will provide any support required for the Bangladeshis to apply for the regularisation.

"My advice to the Bangladeshis applying would be that they must provide correct documents and information," Masudur Rahman said.

They will need some documents from Bangladesh as well, including police clearance, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

SHAPLA CHATTAR  
Former IGP Mamun involved in crackdown

Says ICT chief prosecutor

STAR REPORT

Investigators have found evidence of the involvement of former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun and several high-ranking officials in the Shapla Chattar crackdown, ICT Chief Prosecutor Aminul Islam revealed yesterday.

Speaking to reporters at his office, Islam termed the incident a "heinous massacre" and informed that the complete investigation report is expected within the next 10 to 15 days.

He vowed that all

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Pedestrians, including school children, navigate a risky stretch of sidewalk as the Dhaka Power Distribution Company carries out underground power cable replacement work along Sat Masjid Road in Dhanmondi yesterday. The excavation, which has been ongoing for two weeks, has left open trenches and heavy equipment in commuter paths without adequate safety barriers, disrupting one of the capital's busiest roads during peak hours.

### Change of Date

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## Five killed in road accidents in 3 dists

STAR REPORT

Five people, including two siblings, were killed and several others injured in separate road accidents in three districts over the last two days.

In Nilphamari, Shihab Hossain, 19, and his younger brother Sowad, 6, were killed and another was injured after a truck ran them over around midnight on the Saidpur-Nilphamari road on Tuesday. The victims were sons of Tariqul Islam of Pachhim Kuchiar Moor Dolapara village.

Dewan Shaheen Zaman, inspector of Nilphamari Sadar Police Station, said the Nilphamari-bound truck hit the siblings while they were walking along the roadside, killing them on the spot. The injured - Md Hossain, 10 - is undergoing treatment at Nilphamari Sadar Hospital.

In Patuakhali's Dumki upazila, Harun-or-Rashid Khan, 70, a former official of Rupali Bank, was killed as a vehicle hit him while he was crossing the Dumki-Bauphal road around 8:00am yesterday.

Police and family sources said he had gone out for his routine morning walk when the accident occurred. The vehicle later crashed into a roadside tree, leaving the driver, Riaz Howlader, 24, injured.

In Barguna's Amtali upazila, two people were killed and three others injured when a truck collided with a battery-run autorickshaw on the Patuakhali-Kuakata highway on Tuesday night.

Mirajul Islam Shawon, 20, and Bellal Musullli, 35, succumbed to their injuries on the way to Barishal, said Amtali Police Station OC Md Saidul Islam.

## SYLHET-AKHAURA

# Mounting delays, risks plague rail route

MINTU DESHWARA

The century-old Sylhet-Akhaura railway line has become increasingly unreliable and hazardous, raising growing concerns among passengers.

Originally constructed for transporting goods, the route gradually gained popularity among passengers for its safety and comfort. In recent months, however, the situation has deteriorated sharply.

Railway sources say that in the past month alone, at least 50 trains on this route arrived late due to various issues, including frequent engine failures.

The situation worsened further with a series of accidents. Recently, several train mishaps were reported. The latest occurred on April 2 in the Mantala area in Habiganj, where five wagons of a Sylhet-bound oil train derailed, disrupting communication for nearly 18 hours.

On March 31, operations were disrupted after the Upaban Express suffered an engine failure between Bhanugachh and Shamshearnagar in Moulvibazar. Earlier, on March 26, communication was suspended after a Dhaka to Chittagong train coach derailed at Bhairab Bazar Junction.

Currently, six intercity trains operate daily on the Sylhet route - four between Sylhet and Dhaka, and two between Sylhet and Chattogram - carrying around 30,000 to 35,000 passengers each

day, including tourists visiting Sylhet and Moulvibazar. Annual passenger numbers on this route are estimated at around 10 million.

Railway authorities say the deployment of ageing locomotives, including engines number 2610 and 2902, has worsened the situation. These engines often break down while crossing the hilly sections of the Lawachhara forest area.

Infrastructure issues are also mounting. At least 10 bridges have been marked vulnerable, forcing



trains to slow down. Frequent theft of nuts, bolts, and clips from tracks has increased safety risks, while extreme heat threatens to bend rails. Although patchwork repairs continue, passengers say there is no visible progress in major renovations or new railway construction.

Passengers and tourists are now demanding urgent upgrades, including a double railway line and replacement of old locomotives.

Husna Begum, a resident of Sylhet, said, "I travel to Dhaka regularly for work, and this train line has become

completely unpredictable. Earlier, I could at least plan my meetings and arrive on time, but now I am constantly stuck at stations for hours. Last week my train was delayed almost three hours due to an engine failure near Moulvibazar."

"There is no proper announcement, no clear explanation - just hours of waiting under the sun or inside crowded compartments. It feels like passengers are being ignored even though we pay for tickets like everyone else..."

Sahed Mia said, "My livelihood depends on travelling between Sylhet and Chattogram. These delays and accidents are destroying my schedule and increasing costs..."

Saju Ahmed added, "The journey feels unsafe and stressful... this discourages students and tourists."

However, Sylhet Public Works Engineer (Rail) Saifullah Riyad said maintenance is ongoing and a renovation tender is in process.

Bangladesh Railway (Rolling Stock) Additional Director General Ahmed Mahbub Chowdhury said an investigation is underway following recent disruptions.

Bangladesh Railway Additional Director General (Infrastructure) Al Fatah Md Masudur Rahman said, "We currently have only about 60 of the required 85 engines nationwide," adding that a new ADP project aims to resolve the crisis within two to three years.

## FARAAZ'S BIRTH ANNIV 350 receive free treatment at medical camp in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A free daylong medical camp was held at Bhani Katra Jharka Bazar in Ghatail upazila of Tangail on the occasion of the 30th birth anniversary of Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain yesterday.

According to the Faraaz Hossain Foundation, the organiser of the camp, around 350 patients received free treatment and medicines through their initiative.

Specialist doctors provided free treatment in medicine, surgery, gynaecology and obstetrics, ENT, dentistry, heart disease, diabetes, chest



diseases, and children's diseases and distributed medicines, the organiser added.

Sheikh Md Rabiul Islam, senior regional sales manager of Eskayef Pharmaceuticals, and other officials were present at the medical camp.

Twenty-year-old Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain sacrificed his life for his friends Abinta Kabir and Tarishi Jain during the Holy Artisan Bakery attack on July 1, 2016, in which 22 people, mostly foreigners, were killed.

He was the grandson of Transcom Group Founder Chairman Latifur Rahman and Shahnaz Rahman, and son of Transcom Group CEO Simeen Rahman and Muhammad Waqar.

**STATUTORY NOTICE**

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH HIGH COURT DIVISION (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
COMPANY MATTER NO. 276/2026

IN THE MATTER OF:  
An Application under section 81(2) read with section 85(3) 183 section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.

AND  
IN THE MATTER OF: ..... Petitioner

Md. Ansar Uddin ..... Respondent  
-VERSUS-  
The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms

Notice is hereby given that an application under Section 81(2) read with section 85(3) 183 section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 and Rules 8 and 26.3 of the company Rule was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division on behalf of the above named Petitioner for condonation of Delay in holding the Annual General Meeting (AGMs) from 2022-2026(2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 & 2026) of Barisal Gold Agro Limited and relieving Directors and Officers of the company from the liabilities of payment of fine or penalty. Upon hearing of the application on 12.03.2026 the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque has been pleased to admit the said application and directed to file an affidavit in Compliance on or before 3 weeks from date. Any one desists of opposing the said application he may appear before the Hon'ble High Court either in person or through an Advocate. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of nominal fees.

Ahsanul Quayyum  
Advocate  
Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Room No. 222, Supreme Court Bar Bhaban, Mobile: 01748259455

**LEGAL NOTICE**

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH HIGH COURT DIVISION (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
COMPANY MATTER NO. 244 OF 2026

IN THE MATTER OF:  
An application under section 81(2) read with Section 85(3) and Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.

AND  
IN THE MATTER OF:  
Shamim Hasnain, having its Riversland Industries Limited and another  
-VERSUS-  
The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, Address: TCB Bhaban (6th Floor) 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka - 1215. .... Respondents

Take notice 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 the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of Riversland Industries Limited, for the calendar years 2022, 2023, 2024 2025 & 2026. Upon hearing the application on 09.03.2026, the Hon'ble Company Judge Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque was pleased to admit the application. Anyone interested in the application may appear before the Hon'ble Court either in person or through an advocate on or before the date fixed for the hearing of the matter. Copy of the application may be obtained on payment of necessary cost.

(Mr. Ripan Barai) Advocate  
Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Eastern Arzu, 61, Bijoynagar, Dhaka.  
Mobile : 017050-74227

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
ফায়ার সার্ভিস ও সিভিল ডিফেন্স অধিদপ্তর  
কাজী আশাউদ্দিন রোড, ঢাকা

তারিখ: ০২.০১.২০২৬  
১৫.০১.২০২৬

**নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির সংশোধনী**

ফায়ার সার্ভিস ও সিভিল ডিফেন্স অধিদপ্তরে ০৬.০৪.২০২৬ তারিখের ৫৮.০৩.০০০০.০০২.১১.০০৫.২৬-০৯৮১ নং স্মারকসূলে জারিকৃত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রেক্ষিতে ০৭.০৪.২০২৬ তারিখে "দৈনিক ইত্তেফাক", "দৈনিক যুগান্তর" ও "The Daily Star" পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত ক্রমিক নং-১ ও ৫ এর পদ যথাক্রমে সিভি-সিপিআর কাম-সিপিআর অপারেটর ও অফিস সহকারী কাম কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক-এ বিভাগীয় প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ৪০ (চল্লিশ) পর্যন্ত শিথিলযোগ্য হবে। তবে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদনক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে।

মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান  
উপপরিচালক (প্রশাসন ও অর্থ)  
সমন্বিত সচিব  
বিজ্ঞপ্তি নিয়োগ/পদোন্নতি কমিটি

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
District: Rangamati  
[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)

Memo No.- 46.02.8400.000.000.14.0025.25.364 Date: 15-04-2026

**Invitation for Tenders (IFT for Works)**  
**e-Tender Notice No-15/2025-26**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works as stated as below:

SL No.	Tender ID	Procurement Method	Name of Works	Documents Selling Last Date and Time	Last Date & Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Opening & Closing Date and Time
1.	1229088	OSTETM	CIB2-Ran-W-65 Construction of 195.20m Long Bridge over the Kachalong River on Upazila HQ-Kerengatoli GC Via Masterpara Baribindu Ghat & Rupakari UPC Road at ch. 3750m Road ID 484072007 (Package No: CIB2-Ran-W-65) under Baghaichari Upazila, Dist: Rangamati.	18-May-2026 16:00	18-May-2026 16:30	18-May-2026 17:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

(Ahmad Shafi)  
Executive Engineer  
LGED, Rangamati.  
[xen.rangamati@lged.gov.bd](mailto:xen.rangamati@lged.gov.bd)

## A disaster

FROM PAGE 3

some knowledge of the matter. India initiated the dam following a request from the then Awami League foreign minister, Abdus Samad Azad, and in that sense, we brought this catastrophe upon ourselves," the speaker said while drawing the lawmaker's attention after the minister concluded his reply.

India started the construction of Tipaimukh Dam in 2003 to generate electricity. The construction was halted due to national and international uproar and resistance against probable environmental degradation in and outside India.

The construction resumed in late 2008. In joint declarations made after summits between the premiers of Bangladesh and India, then Indian PM Manmohan Singh assured his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina that New Delhi would not take any step regarding their planned Tipaimukh Dam that may harm Bangladesh.

The Tipaimukh Dam is located near the confluence of the Barak and the Tuivai rivers in the Tipaimukh sub-division of the Churachandpur district of Manipur. This area is close to the Manipur-Mizoram-Assam border, and therefore the project involves the three states in Northeast India. The Barak river, which flows downstream to meet the Surma river system in Bangladesh, is considered to be the lifeline of the Sylhet region in Bangladesh.

## From political

FROM PAGE 3

Urban planner Adil Mohammed Khan, former president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said, "Muktangan was once used for small political gatherings, but now it's being exploited commercially. The authorities must investigate who controls the spaces and hold them accountable. Previous governments had allowed this encroachment, but the current one should act decisively to restore and preserve such historic sites."

Mohammad Mobasher Hasan, chief property officer of DSCC, said, "We have already undertaken a development project under Zone-2 of DSCC to evict all the illegal structures and make Muktangan usable as a public place again."

## 15,000 to be regularised

FROM PAGE 3

According to foreign ministry officials, an estimated 75,000 Bangladeshis, including 15,000 undocumented, live in the South European country that now has a liberal government led by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

Under the amnesty programme, those who meet certain conditions will be able to seek a one-year residency and work permit, reports Al Jazeera.

Migration Minister Elma Saiz said migrants can apply online from April 16 and in person starting April 20. The application window will close on June 30.

The applicants applying for the amnesty must have

arrived in Spain before January 1 and must prove that they have been living in the country for at least five months and have no criminal record.

After a year, those granted the temporary measure will be eligible to apply for other work or residency permits.

PM Sánchez, who is seeking to leverage immigration to help avert the problems of Spain's ageing society on the horizon, labelled the move "an act of justice and a necessity".

The government estimates that half a million people living in the shadows of Spanish society could be eligible. Analysts suggest that the figure is likely to be higher.

Sánchez deemed the move a "necessity", warning that "without new people working and contributing... prosperity slows".

"It is thanks to the dynamism of migrants that the Spanish economy is currently the fastest growing in Europe," he insisted.

Spain's population has risen sharply to around 50 million in recent years, and today, around 10 million of its residents were born outside the country, or one in every five people.

Bangladeshi migrants have expressed gratitude to the Spanish Prime Minister, saying this is a humane and brave decision.



## NOTICE concerning a Gulshan Plot

This is for general information that the owners of Plot No. 34 (old), Block No. CWN(B), Gulshan-2, Mouza: Gulshan Residential Area, Police Station: Gulshan, District: Dhaka, otherwise known as City Corporation Holding No. 113 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka have entered into an agreement on 15th day of April 2026 with the real estate developer South Breeze Housing (Pvt.) Limited, Plot No. 05, Road No. 11, Block-G, 12th Floor, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh for the development of the aforesaid Plot No. 34 (old), 113 (new) into a commercial building by it. Prior to the execution of the deed of agreement the plot owners, South Breeze Housing (Pvt.) Limited and Eastern Housing Limited executed a tripartite deed of agreement 15th April 2026 between them, under the terms of which Eastern Housing Limited gave up its contractual right to develop the said plot under a previous contractual arrangement with the plot owners. immediately after the execution of the tripartite deed of agreement Eastern Housing Limited surrendered the possession of the above plot to the plot owners. On obtaining the possession of the plot, the plot owners executed the aforesaid deed of agreement with the developer South Breeze Housing (Pvt.) Ltd. and the possession of Plot No.113 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka has also been delivered to the newly engaged developer immediately after the execution of the said bilateral deed of agreement.

**South Breeze Housing (Pvt.) Limited**

## Pakistan cuts power to control energy prices

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan will suspend electricity supply for about two hours during peak usage times every evening, the government said, in an effort to manage energy prices affected by the Iran war.

Power will be suspended in most of the country for two-and-a-quarter hours between 5:00 pm and 1:00 am each day, according to a statement released by the energy ministry on Tuesday.

Demand peaks at these times, with expensive furnace-oil-fired plants needed to bridge the gap left by reduced hydroelectric generation.

The blackouts will occur on a rolling basis — rather than at the same time across the country — with the country's largest city Karachi, home to more than 20 million, exempt from the cuts.



Mourners react during the funeral of Palestinians who were killed in an Israeli strike that took place on Tuesday, according to medics, at Al-Shati camp in Gaza City, yesterday. Israeli fire killed at least 11 Palestinians, including two children, in separate incidents across the Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: REUTERS



## Spain to legalise 5 lakh migrants

AGENCIES

Spain has approved a major regularisation programme that could grant legal status to around 5,00,000 undocumented migrants, including a significant number of Bangladeshis living in the country.

The government on Tuesday finalized the migrant amnesty measure it had announced earlier this year. The approach sharply differs from much of Europe's prevailing attitudes on immigration in which governments are trying to reduce the number of arrivals

and step up deportations, and contrasts with the Trump administration's harsh immigration policies.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez hailed the measure as "an act of justice and a necessity." He reiterated his government's position that people who already live and work in the country of 50 million people should "do so under equal conditions" and pay taxes, reports AP.

Those who meet certain conditions can now seek a one-year residency and work permit.

Migration Minister Elma Saiz said migrants could apply in person starting April 20 and online today. The window will close on June 30.

Those who apply must have arrived in Spain before January 1 and prove that they have been living in the country for at least five months.

That can be done by presenting "public or private" documents, Saiz said. Applicants must also show that they have no criminal record, the government said.

After a year, those granted the temporary measure will be eligible to apply for other work or residency permits.

The government estimates that half a million people living in the shadows of Spanish society could be eligible; analysts say the figure is likely higher.

Spanish think tank Funcas estimates there are roughly 840,000 migrants living in Spain without authorization.



## Hormuz blockade 'can complicate' talks

### Iran calls it ceasefire violation, with no confirmation of second US talks

AGENCIES

A senior research fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies said the Iranians have not confirmed a second round of talks with the US.

"However, there are efforts by regional players, specifically the mediators, in order to be moving in that direction," Abbas Aslani told Al Jazeera.

He said some Iranians believe the US is hinting at talks to ease shock to the global oil market following its blockade on Iranian ports. Iran considers the blockade a violation of the ceasefire, and this "can complicate the situation", he said.

"The ceasefire, which is currently in place, is a very fragile one, and it is shaking because Israelis are attacking Lebanon, and the United States is implementing the blockade to somehow exacerbate the situation," Aslani said.

"We are waiting to see what will be the reaction from Iran, inside, to the recent blockade by the United States."

If talks do take place, "it could be possible to reach a kind of understanding on the remaining sticking points, given that [the delegations] might be coming to the new venue with, let's say, political decisions", he added.

The US-sanctioned tanker Rich Starry made its way back to the

Strait of Hormuz yesterday after exiting the Gulf the day before, shipping data showed, failing to break through a US blockade on vessels calling at Iranian ports.

"During the first 24 hours, no ships made it past the US blockade,"



the US Central Command said on X, adding that six vessels complied with direction from US forces to turn around to re-enter an Iranian port.

The Chinese-owned tanker was among at least eight ships crossing the waterway on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

A US destroyer stopped two oil tankers attempting to leave the Iranian port of Chabahar on the Gulf of Oman on Tuesday, a US official said.

The Rich Starry and its owner, Shanghai Xuanrun Shipping Co, were placed under US sanctions for dealing with Iran.

The company could not be reached for immediate comment.

The Rich Starry is a medium-



range tanker carrying about 250,000 barrels of methanol that was loaded at the port of Hamriyah in the United Arab Emirates, Kpler data showed.

Another US-sanctioned vessel, the Very Large Crude Carrier Alicia, is entering the Gulf via the strait yesterday, LSEG data showed. The empty tanker, capable of carrying 2 million barrels of oil, is heading to Iraq to load a cargo today, Kpler data showed.

## They filed a false

FROM PAGE 12

the chest, abdomen, and legs, which he believed reflected extreme brutality.

Testifying as a prosecution witness in a crimes against humanity case over Tayim's killing, Moynal alleged that Sub-Inspector Shahdat, acting under "orders from higher authorities," omitted any reference to police firing in the inquest report prepared at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, noting only holes and black marks on the body.

He told the tribunal that Shahadat informed him his son had been killed in an attack and firing by "student people."

Moynal said he signed the inquest report under severe distress. He said his job was on the line, and because more than 24 hours had passed, the body of his son was decomposing.

"I was compelled to sign the inquest report," he told the tribunal.

He said Tayim left home around noon and joined protests in Kajla with his friends. While Moynal was on duty at Rajarbagh Police Lines, he was informed that his son had been shot and his body was left at the Kajla foot overbridge.

He rushed to DMCH but initially could not find him. Later, a journalist showed him photographs of unidentified bodies, through which he identified his son at the morgue, where 20-30 bodies were kept.

He added that formalities at Shabbagh Police Station were completed later, after which he was informed that SI Shahadat would conduct the inquest and post-mortem on July 21.

Despite his request, he said Shahadat delayed both procedures, with the inquest conducted around noon and the post-mortem at 4:30pm.

During ritual washing at Rajarbagh, a large wound on Tayim's left waist was discovered, which was believed to be a pistol bullet injury. Tayim was later buried that night in the family graveyard in Cumilla.

Moynal, citing Tayim's friends, claimed that protesters, including Tayim, took shelter in a tea stall as around 20-25 police personnel, including Inspectors Zakir Hossain and Mamun and SI Sajjad of Jatrabari Police Station, chased them. Police later forced them out, beat them with batons and rifle butts, and ordered them to run.

As Tayim ran, Mamun and Sajjad opened fire, he added. When he fell, Zakir allegedly shot him repeatedly at close range, Moynal said.

Tayim's friend Rahat, who tried to rescue him, was also shot in the leg but managed to escape. Tayim

was left at the scene for a long time before being taken to DMCH.

Moynal demanded the highest punishment, including the death penalty, for those involved.

Meanwhile, at ICT-1, a grieving mother of a July uprising victim broke down in the witness box, forcing the court to pause proceedings for several minutes.

The incident took place after a graphic video was played in court showing her 23-year-old son, Rakib Hossain, collapsing on a road after being shot, with blood pooling around him.

The footage was shown after the defence counsel for former Border Guard Bangladesh official Lt Col Mohammad Redowanul Islam requested its exhibition during the cross-examination of the victim's mother, Hashi Akhter.

"I carried my son in a rickshaw to Dhaka Medical College Hospital from Rampura, but he could not speak a word to me. I am bearing such a huge pain," she said, her voice breaking as she wept in court, forcing a pause in the proceedings.

Earlier on April 7, Hashi Akhter testified as the third prosecution witness in a crimes against humanity case over the killing of 28 people in Rampura during the July 18-19, 2024 unrest.

The accused include two former Border Guard Bangladesh officers, Redowanul and Maj Rafat Bin Alam Moon, along with two former police officers, then additional deputy commissioner of Khilgaon Md Rashedul Islam and then officer-in-charge of Rampura Police Station Moshirur Rahman.

While Redowanul and Rafat were present in the dock during her testimony, the two police officials remain fugitives.

## Maldives leader cuts cabinet

AFP, Malé

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has cut down his cabinet and brought in new ministers, the government said yesterday, following his party's humiliating defeat at local polls.

Muizzu introduced four new faces into a cabinet trimmed to 15 members from the previous 20. Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel was replaced by the Maldives High Commissioner in London, Iruthisham Adam.

"President Muizzu has restructured the cabinet, reducing the number of ministers to 15 members," his office said in a statement.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Local Government Engineering Department Resilient Infrastructure for Adaptation and Vulnerability Reduction (RIVER) Project Workshop Bhaban (Level-3), Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No.: 46.02.0000.670.07.033.2025-2145

Date: 15/04/2026.

e-Tender Notice

Tender Notice No. 10/2025-2026

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal System (<http://eprocare.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works details are given below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Name of the Project	Description of Works	Tender Last Selling (Time & Date)	Tender Closing (Time & Date)	Tender Opening (Time & Date)
1.	1258603 & Resilient Infrastructure for Adaptation and Vulnerability Reduction (RIVER) Project	Construction of Primary School cum Flood Shelter with Solar PV Nano Grid, Street Light, Lightening Protection & Connecting Roads, Bridge/Culvert, Furniture and Tree Plantation at Bogura District. (Package No.: LGED/RIVER/BOG/21-22/NW-16)	17.00 hrs 17-May-26	14.00 hrs 18-May-26	14.00 hrs 18-May-26

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for the e-GP downloading e-Tender Documents from National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks Branches up to 18-May-2026 upto 13.00 hours. The notice is also published in the [www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd) & [www.riverbd.org](http://www.riverbd.org) websites.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP helpdesk ([helpdesk@eprocare.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocare.gov.bd)).

  
Project Director

Phone: +88-02-55006730

Email: [pd.lged.river@gmail.com](mailto:pd.lged.river@gmail.com)

GD-831



### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Bangladesh Police Rapid Action Battalion-7 Patenga, Chattogram www.rab.gov.bd



### Invitation For e-Tender

For financial year 2025-2026, e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of:


SL	Tender ID No & Reference No	Description of goods	Last selling Date & Time	Closing/Opening Date & Time
1.	1258094, 7453/Q/RAB/Part-1/652	High Quality Local Mashur Dal	16 Apr 2026 09:00	26 Apr 2026 12:00
2.	1258173, 7453/Q/RAB/Part-1/653	Edible Oil (S/Oil)	16 Apr 2026 09:00	26 Apr 2026 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk ([helpdesk@eprocare.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocare.gov.bd))

Tenderer having clarity requirements are requested to contact at 01777-710705 (Assistant Director, Quartermaster).



MD HAFIZUR RAHMAN, PSC  
Lt Col  
Commanding Officer  
Rapid Action Battalion-7

Tel: 023-33300400

GD-826

## Repealing NHRC ordinances raises questions

It has put a dent in public trust

Five now-former members of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), in an open letter, recently expressed their misgivings about the repeal of three ordinances (or variations) related to the NHRC passed between 2024 and 2025, and the reinstatement of the NHRC Act of 2009. The reinstatement would allow government forces to investigate allegations of their own human rights violations. This is quite disappointing as we had expected that the new ordinance, if passed as law, would give the NHRC the independence and capacity it lacked throughout the Awami League regime.

Under the reinstated 2009 act, the NHRC is not authorised to investigate allegations against security forces. The former commission has so far taken cases on issues such as child marriage, violence against women, protection of the rights of marginalised communities and migrant workers, etc. While these are crucial for any human rights organisation to address, the fact that it does not have the power to investigate allegations against law enforcement agencies leaves it significantly handicapped. The recently resigned commissioners have warned that the repeal of the ordinances means that deaths related to the July uprising would be investigated by forces against whom the allegations have been made.

The law minister has said that the new ordinance contained weaknesses and that a new law was in the offing that would be drafted after consultations with stakeholders and further review. According to the outgoing commissioners, the repealed 2025 ordinances had been drafted after consultations with 600 stakeholders. Why couldn't the ordinances have been kept, with amendments to any weaknesses made later, if necessary, in parliament? Three ordinances related to the Human Rights Commission have also been repealed. Two were on the prevention and remedy of enforced disappearance, with maximum punishment for perpetrators of the crime. These were groundbreaking and gave hope that, finally, victims of enforced disappearances and their families would get justice, no matter how powerful the perpetrators. They were also drafted to put an end to such horrific crimes carried out by government forces.

Under the 2009 law, the commission's chairman and members were appointed by a selection committee dominated by government representatives, including the law minister, home minister, chairman of the Law Commission, cabinet secretary, a ruling party member and one from the opposition. The now-repealed ordinances aimed to change this by stipulating that the selection committee would be chaired by a judge of the Appellate Division (nominated by the chief justice) and members would include the cabinet secretary, one lawmaker from the ruling party and one from the opposition, a university professor, a civil society representative, a journalist and a representative of an ethnic minority. Reinstating the 2009 act may allow for a revival of political appointments, again creating a conflict of interest.

The prime minister has reiterated on many occasions his government's commitment to upholding the rule of law and ensuring justice for all. Repealing ordinances aligned with such goals seems contradictory and does little to gain public trust.

## Farmers' card rollout a positive step

Govt must ensure fairness and transparency in the scheme

We welcome the launch of the Farmers' Card programme by the government, which is a timely and encouraging step towards providing the much-needed support to the millions of farmers in the country. In its pre-pilot phase, 22,065 marginal farmers across 11 upazilas have each received Tk 2,500 directly in their mobile wallets. As part of the BNP's election pledges, following the initiative like the Family Card, this programme has the potential to ease farmers' access to essential inputs such as seeds, irrigation, and credit. However, as with any large-scale welfare initiative, its success will depend on how effectively the government can implement it and safeguard the scheme against mismanagement, corruption and political bias.

Reportedly, the programme will cover small, marginal, medium, large, and landless farmers, as well as fish farmers, livestock rearers, and dairy producers. The government plans to expand the coverage to 2.75 crore farmers over the next five years. Achieving this goal will require careful planning. First, its beneficiary selection process must be fair and transparent. Past experiences with agricultural subsidies and support schemes have shown how political favouritism and weak verification systems can lead to serious inclusion and exclusion errors. Selection, therefore, must be based on clear, verifiable criteria, free from political influence or local-level manipulation. As the government has indicated that the programme will cover a wide spectrum of farmers, it must be matched by careful targeting to ensure that the most vulnerable farmers are prioritised.

Another key challenge would be to ensure that financial assistance translates into meaningful benefits. Despite substantial public spending—over Tk 17,000 crore annually in subsidies—our farmers continue to grapple with rising input costs, climate risks, and volatile market conditions. A one-off transfer of Tk 2,500, while helpful, is unlikely to address these challenges. For the programme to be truly transformative, it must evolve into a comprehensive support system, integrating subsidies with access to low-interest credit and real-time agricultural advisory services. Moreover, a unified agricultural database, as often recommended by experts, could help streamline support across ministries, reduce duplication, and enhance efficiency.

Ultimately, the Farmers' Card programme's impact will depend on how it is carried out. The government must ensure that implementation remains efficient, free from partisan bias and corruption so that the programme is not derailed from its goal. Farmers should be able to access their cards and benefits without harassment or unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles. If delivered properly and transparently, this initiative could significantly strengthen our national economy. Lastly, the government must ensure that this initiative does not fall prey to the same governance failures that have undermined similar programmes in the past.

# The march of the microfascist

THE SOUND AND THE FURY

Sushmita S Preetha is a writer, researcher, and organiser.



SUSHMITA S PREETHA

In Shahbagh, a group of friends sat at a tea stall on an otherwise unremarkable evening on April 10, somewhere between the rhythms of the city and the anticipatory hum of Pahela Baishakh. They were not doing anything that could be described as public controversy. They were, by all available accounts, simply there. Visible, perhaps in ways that rendered them legible to others as something else. That, it turns out, was sufficient.

A crowd gathered under the banner of "Azadi Andolon." The slogans, each more incendiary than the other, left little room for ambiguity, and the sequence that followed was equally precise: identification, labelling, escalation, and then, almost predictably, assault. The violence was filmed, amplified, encouraged, and crucially, unimpeded in the immediate sense that matters—within a few yards of the Shahbagh Police Station.

The following day, in Kustia, a Sufi pir was killed within the confines of his own dargah after the circulation of an old video, apparently for hurting religious sentiments. Here, too, there was police presence as well as a prior warning. Here, too, the line between anticipation and prevention proved to be more porous than one might expect from a state that continues to insist upon its authority.

There is something distinctly uncomfortable about how quickly all of this begins to feel familiar. Each new case appears to follow a pattern we have already seen, already debated, and, in some sense, already accommodated.

For years now, accusations of "hurting religious sentiments" have acted as a volatile currency in Bangladesh's public sphere. The legal architecture surrounding such claims—especially the broad and ambiguously worded provisions of laws like the former Digital Security Act—has ensured that offence remains both subjective and actionable. One does not need to prove actual harm so much as simply claim it.

Under the Sheikh Hasina government, this elasticity was repeatedly weaponised. Teachers, students, performers, and ordinary citizens were drawn into legal and extralegal processes on the basis of claims that were often unverifiable, and almost always amplified. As

of early 2024, approximately 528 cases had been filed under the DSA specifically for offences related to "hurting religious sentiments," according to data from the Centre for Governance Studies. Of course, no one ever quite figured out what hurting religious sentiment actually entailed. But with each case, a certain logic took hold—that the assertion of offence, particularly when aligned with majoritarian sentiment, could justify both state action and public hostility. Those accused were as likely



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLO CHAKROBORTY

to be "protected" through detention as they were to be prosecuted, while those mobilising outrage operated with far less scrutiny. From Ramu to Nasiragar to Muradnagar, we saw entire communities being attacked on the basis of fabricated claims, their homes burnt or ransacked. Over time, the threshold for injury lowered, while the range of permissible responses expanded without meaningful containment.

Then came the post-uprising interim period, where we saw a disturbing revival of coercive orthodoxy. The interim government allowed, if not actively enabled, ultra-conservative forces to expand their reach and redraw the boundaries of what could be done in public view, often through the convenient alignment of religion and populist sentiment. Those who had previously operated with a degree of caution began to move with increasing

confidence, carrying out their own forms of sovereign justice in broad daylight, at times with announcement of prior intent.

It is hard to forget how Dipu Chandra Das, accused of insulting the Prophet, was framed and later beaten mercilessly through the streets, hauled for over a kilometre, tied to a tree upside down on a busy highway, and set alight before a cheering crowd. Or how, in Rajbari, the grave of Nurul Haque—known locally as "Nurul Pagla"—was dug up, his remains exhumed and burned in public, an act of the violence of which extended beyond the body to the very idea of sanctity. In Cumilla's Homna upazila, multiple shrines—those of Kafil Uddin Shah, Abdu Shah, Kalai Shah, Hawali Shah—were attacked in a single village last September.

Between August 29, 2024, and April 11 this year, more than a hundred mazars and shrines across the country

were attacked, vandalised, or looted, according to findings by the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS). Meanwhile, at least 197 people were killed in incidents described as mob violence in 2025, up from 128 the year before. By the interim government's own admission, there were at least 46 incidents of temple-related violence. Dozens of cultural festivals were cancelled under duress, to say nothing of the countless daily acts of harassment that rarely entered official records. Entire communities (the "others") began to anticipate violence as part of ordinary public life. Anytime people protested such acts, they were met with a familiar accusation—disloyalty to the uprising, foreign allegiance, or the charge of being "India's dala"—a discursive move that shifted attention away from violence and onto the supposed impurity of those who objected to it.

## Primary school admission tests would be a misguided step

Tamanna Akther Shanta has graduated from the Institute of Education and Research at the University of Dhaka.



TAMANNA AKTHER SHANTA

A recent proposal to base primary school admission on tests has raised concern as critics argue that forcing young children—who are just starting to explore and understand the world around them—into competitive exams ignores the true purpose of education. If children must pass an admission test to enter primary school, then what role is the school supposed to play? Especially at the primary level when children are meant to achieve basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and other life skills. People who support admission tests for entry into primary education believe that such tests can help identify "good students" at an early age. They also argue that admissions based on merit will ensure better academic outcomes and maintain institutional standards. However, this system raises serious concerns as it encourages labelling students as either "meritorious" or "weak" from a very early age and this widely used custom has a considerable psychological cost too. When students enter school with a competitive spirit instead of excitement, they become heavily reliant on coaching centres and private tutors very early on and

learning becomes stressful, instead of being joyous.

This not only affects children's mental well-being but also distorts the purpose of primary education. If they fail to secure a seat in so-called prestigious institutions, they are considered failures and many parents exacerbate this situation by being emotionally and verbally heavy on the children. Sometimes, parents keep pushing the children to attend multiple admission tests into contemporarily considered prestigious institutions, even if it costs their children a full academic year. This is unreasonable and illogical yet, deeply entrenched into Bangladeshi society. But we should remember that an admission test cannot measure a child's true potential. Just as different flowers bloom at different times, children also develop at different paces.

If we were to examine the assessment process through a critical lens, the issue lies in the nature of the assessment system itself. There are various modes of assessment, yet written examinations are only one form that has been traditionally deployed to assess children. Relying

solely on written exams to measure all children is theoretically flawed. A child who does not perform well in a written exam for certain reasons cannot be labelled as "less intelligent" or a "weak student." That same child may excel in creativity, performance, communication, or artistic skills. When we try to assess all children in the same way, we overlook the fact that

**This not only affects children's mental well-being but also distorts the purpose of primary education. If they fail to secure a seat in so-called prestigious institutions, they are considered failures and many parents exacerbate this situation by being emotionally and verbally heavy on the children.**

every human is unique. Additionally, these tests often measure privilege, not potential. Research in child development consistently shows that a child's performance is shaped by various factors—for instance—environment, parental support, financial resources, and access to preparation rather than innate intelligence. As a result, admission tests support social inequality instead of promoting merit. Children from privileged backgrounds generally perform better because they have better opportunities, not because

Then came the BNP government which, in its first week, proclaimed it would stop "mob" violence, terming the interim government as "weak" for having failed to do so. The attacks last week were allowed to unfold under the government's watch, raising a question that cannot be deferred indefinitely: does the problem lie only in what was inherited, or also in how it continues to be handled?

These incidents mark the rise of a new politics—one where small men with clubs decide, in full view, who may pray, who may sing, who may sit at a tea stall, and who is allowed to belong. These incidents, in effect, are coordinated interventions into our socio-cultural landscape, revealing a decided shift (long in the making, of course, long before August 2024) from a society of micro-fascist coexistence to one where microfascists patrol the boundaries of belonging.

By calling such incidents "mob" violence, we miss their social and political character. A mob suggests spontaneity, excess, or a temporary breakdown of order. But what we are witnessing is far more durable and insidious: the production and proliferation of the microfascist. He is an intimate executor of a wider moral order now taking shape in plain view.

Microfascism does not necessarily operate through a centralised ideological project, nor does it require formal alignment with any singular doctrine. It takes shape through repeated dispersed acts that gradually realign sentiment, with religion providing both the language of justification and the terrain upon which authority is exercised. The result resembles, in effect, a vernacular form of authoritarianism—less concerned with doctrinal coherence than with regulating behaviour and disciplining difference, narrowing the space within which alternative ways of being can exist.

Ending impunity for the crimes committed against communities remains urgent, of course, and the government must, at long last, take exemplary action against those who incite and carry out such attacks. But the task runs deeper than enforcement alone. We are confronting a broader transformation, in which the pluralistic, improvisational textures of daily life are steadily giving way to something narrower and more punitive: the everyday social instinct to police the other. We need to understand microfascism as a method that is absorbed into ordinary life, enacted in small acts, until it no longer appears exceptional at all. And confronting it requires, above all, a reckoning with the microfascist within.

# BCB's cycle of political interference



**Bishwajit Roy**  
is sports editor at The Daily Star.

**BISHWAJIT ROY**

Faith to build strong institutions continues to undermine many sectors in Bangladesh, preventing them from achieving their desired goals. When allowed to function independently and sustainably, institutions strive towards good governance and development, but when political interference takes hold of them, short-term interests get priority over long-term stability.

The recent developments at the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) highlight this persisting national predicament. The trajectory involving three former national captains—Faruque Ahmed, Aminul Islam Bulbul, and Tamim Iqbal—is not merely a sequence of power transitions but a reflection of how governance of an apparently autonomous body repeatedly gets disrupted by external influence.

Faruque's appointment as BCB president in August 2024, following the exit of then board chief Nazmul Hassan Papon as a result of the Awami League government's fall, initially raised hopes of reform in the national regulatory body for cricket. But his subsequent removal less than a year later, followed by a politically charged comeback as the vice-president through the election in October 2025, underscored how fragile leadership positions in the BCB have become. The pattern repeated with Aminul Islam Bulbul, first installed as president through a National Sports Council-backed process, then elected in a highly controversial election, only to be removed amid allegations and counterclaims just six months later. Now, the sudden emergence of Tamim Iqbal at the helm of an ad hoc committee, accompanied by individuals with clear political affiliations, continues a familiar cycle.

Such frequent leadership shuffles, driven or influenced by government intervention, fundamentally weakens the institutional spine of the BCB. And it is cricket that suffers the most.

Whoever assumes power in Bangladesh begins with a familiar promise: to keep

sports free from political influence. The newly appointed state minister for youth and sports, Md Aminul Haque, echoed that commitment recently. Yet, the events unfolding at BCB suggest that such promises remain easier said than done.

The dissolution of the elected board led by Aminul and the installation of an 11-member ad hoc committee headed by Tamim, mandated to hold an election within 90 days, have exposed a deep institutional vulnerability. This is not merely a clash of individuals but the result of long-standing constitutional contradictions that have never been properly resolved. At the centre of the crisis lies the BCB constitution which, instead of safeguarding the board's autonomy, enables interference. One of the most glaring issues is the role of National Sports Council (NSC), the government's apex overseeing agency for sports, which retains the power to nominate two directors to the BCB board. This provision institutionalises government presence within the cricket body and creates a fundamental contradiction: a board that claims autonomy while structurally accommodating external influence.

The BCB constitution further allows intervention under the NSC Act, including the dissolution of an elected body, as seen in the recent turn of events. While such authority may be justified in exceptional circumstances, its broad and ambiguous scope leaves the door open for discretionary use.

The root of the problem also lies in the councillor nomination process. The clause allowing district sports associations to send representatives "if" no district cricket association exists has long been exploited. This ambiguity has repeatedly enabled manipulation of the electorate, undermining the integrity of elections before they even take place. The constitution should clearly prioritise district cricket associations—much like district football associations in football governance—with well-defined

criteria for councillor eligibility.

These structural weaknesses are rooted in a critical moment in the board's history: the controversial 2012 constitutional amendment. At that time, amendments to the BCB constitution were introduced but subsequently altered by the NSC before approval. This raised serious legal questions about the limits of the NSC's authority. The matter eventually reached the courts, where

issues. The latest episode is, therefore, not an isolated incident but a continuation of that history.

BCB's centralised nature is another constitutional weakness. Despite a long-standing commitment to decentralise cricket administration, power remains overwhelmingly concentrated in Dhaka. Club representatives, particularly from established clubs in the capital, dominate

reform committee before it could present its recommendations, reportedly under pressure from Dhaka clubs threatening to boycott the leagues.

Financial considerations further complicate matters. With crores of taka in revenue and reserves, the BCB is not just a sporting body but a powerful economic entity. Without strong institutional safeguards, such financial weight inevitably attracts political interest, intensifying competition for control. What is most concerning is that the current transition, instead of breaking this cycle, risks reinforcing it.

Tamim Iqbal's appointment to lead an ad hoc committee could be another opportunity for genuine reform. But reform requires more than administrative reshuffling. It demands structural correction. Before moving towards a fresh election, the priority must be to address the constitutional flaws that have repeatedly undermined the board's credibility. Without reforming the framework, any election, no matter how efficiently conducted, will only reproduce the same problems.

Tamim's first responsibility, therefore, is to ensure that the system under which he is supposed to hold the election is fair, transparent, and free from political manipulation. He has already expressed his desire to contest the polls, which raises a question about the whole agenda. This includes revisiting provisions that allow NSC intervention, clarifying councillor nomination rules, reducing structural ambiguities, and ensuring that the BCB exercises its rightful authority to frame its own constitution in line with both legal rulings and international standards. Otherwise, the risk is clear: a hurried election under an unreformed constitution will simply mark another phase in the ongoing cycle of politicisation.

The lesson extends far beyond cricket. Institutions cannot be strengthened through rhetoric or periodic resets. They require consistent commitment to rules, respect for autonomy, and the courage to implement reform, even when it challenges entrenched interests.

The endurance of institutions is not optional; it is essential. And unless Bangladesh learns to protect its institutions from political encroachment, even its most cherished sectors, such as cricket, will continue to struggle between promises and paralysis.



ILLUSTRATION: **BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY**

it was clearly established that the BCB, as an autonomous body, retains the right to frame and amend its own constitution, subject only to approval—not alteration—by the NSC.

The court's ruling was a defining moment. It reaffirmed institutional autonomy and provided the BCB with an opportunity to correct the structural flaws in its governance framework. But that opportunity was lost.

Instead of addressing the inconsistencies exposed by the ruling, the BCB proceeded with elections under the same contested framework. In doing so, it effectively legitimised a flawed structure rather than reforming it. The failure to "right the wrongs" of 2012 has since haunted the institution, with each subsequent crisis tracing its root back to those unresolved

the board. Out of 25 directors, a significant portion (12) comes from club affiliations, an imbalance rarely seen in other cricketing nations. This structural bias entrenches a narrow power base and sidelines regional cricket development.

With 25 members, the BCB has the largest board of directors among all Test-playing nations—more than twice the size of most, and in some cases, more than three times as large. The question inevitably arises: why?

After the AL government's ouster, there was genuine hope that the interim authority would seize this rare opportunity to introduce reforms in the BCB, paving the way for genuine cricket organisers to reclaim the board. But those expectations quickly faded when the Faruque-led board suspended the much-talked-about constitution

# Can a bank resolution framework work if discredited owners return?



**Mamun Rashid**  
is an economic analyst and chairman at Financial Excellence Ltd.

**MAMUN RASHID**

I worked with senior officials at Bangladesh Bank in developing the framework for the 2025 Bank Resolution Act, which is similar to India's Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, and analogous frameworks in Indonesia and a few other comparable economies. The primary purpose of this arrangement was to protect banks from their old, defaulting owners, who were reluctant to recapitalise their institutions to cover capital shortfalls arising from continuous insider lending and bad loans, which had crippled internal cash generation and stunted future growth.

The people spearheading this process sincerely believed that without increasing the capital base, banks could neither generate fresh loans nor repay small depositors. Although the government itself recapitalised the Sammito Islami Bank, the destination model of the original merger framework was always predicated on owners or strategic investors coming forward to inject fresh, risk-based capital. This was especially critical given that most of the previous defaulting owners had either fled the country to evade legal action or simply lacked the financial capacity to inject funds into ailing, cash-strapped banks.

The recent amendment to the Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025, now passed as legislation by the BNP government in 2026, has created a mechanism through which previously merged banks can revert to their former owners. Under this provision, former shareholders may reacquire control by paying just 7.5 percent of the total funds disbursed by the government and Bangladesh Bank for operating the merged entities. This is where alarm bells ring loudly.

According to a *Samakal* report, the central bank had internally opposed this provision. Parliamentary opposition parties also raised objections. Nevertheless, the bill was passed with Section 18(A) intact.

The section states that former shareholders listed under the Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025 or any individual deemed suitable by Bangladesh Bank may apply to the central bank as resolution authority to reacquire the bank's shares, assets, and liabilities. Applicants must submit undertakings covering: repayment of all government and central bank funds; injection of fresh capital to address existing shortfalls; settlement of all depositor, creditor, and third-party claims; discharge of all tax and regulatory obligations; compensation to parties that incurred losses during resolution; and full compliance with any governance reform conditions stipulated by Bangladesh Bank. On financial terms, applicants must furnish a pay order equivalent to 7.5 percent of total injected funds within three months of final approval, with the remaining 92.5 percent repayable within two years at simple interest of 10 percent per annum.

The concern is unmistakable. In Bangladesh's institutional context, once ownership reverts (even conditionally), dislodging incumbents again becomes an extraordinary challenge. A 7.5 percent upfront threshold is a nominal commitment against the magnitude of systemic damage already inflicted.

Equally troubling is how Section 18(A) entered the bill in the first place. A 10-member review committee constituted on April 1 and led by an additional secretary of the Financial Institutions Division

had recommended reducing the ordinance from 98 to 74 sections after careful deliberation. But this committee, comprising members from the Ministry of Finance, the Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division, and Bangladesh Bank, reportedly did not recommend this clause. According to the *Samakal* report, it was inserted just before the bill was tabled in parliament. Bangladesh Bank apparently only learned of it the following morning and formally requested the Ministry of Finance not to proceed, to no avail.

Regulators rightly argued that any such provision should have explicitly barred those responsible for a bank's deterioration from reacquiring ownership. Full repayment of depositor and creditor liabilities should have been a precondition, not a forward-looking undertaking. The distinction carries enormous practical weight.

The scale of the damage clarifies why. Under the Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025, five Shariah-compliant banks—EXIM Bank, Social Islami Bank, First Security Islami Bank, Union Bank, and Global Islami Bank—were merged into a consolidated Islamic bank. The entity carries paid-up capital of Tk 35,000 crore, with the government contributing Tk 20,000 crore and the remaining Tk 15,000 crore from the institutional deposits of the banks and the Deposit Insurance Trust Fund.

As of last December, the five merged banks held combined loans of Tk 196,827 crore, of which Tk 165,781 crore, or 84.23 percent, had turned non-performing, against a sector-wide default rate of 30.60 percent. Besides, last December, 22 banks faced a banking capital shortfall totalling Tk 282,603 crore, of which Tk 150,691 crore was the capital shortfall of just these five institutions. EXIM Bank, formerly under Nassa Group's control, is in relatively better shape with a 62.45 percent default rate and a capital shortfall of Tk 22,625 crore. The remaining four (previously controlled by S. Alam Group) tell a grimmer story: Union Bank has 97.64 percent of its loans classified

as defaulted; First Security Islami Bank, 96.43 percent; Global Islami Bank, 96.27 percent; and Social Islami Bank, 75.73 percent, with combined capital deficits running into tens of thousands of crores.

This raises the billion-dollar question: when these banks' former owners bled the banks dry and literally plundered the institutions' assets

in connivance with their friends and families, as the central bank's large loans restructuring scrutiny committee revealed, can the banks then ultimately be rescued? Or are we simply opening a new Pandora's box?

Bangladesh's banking, hitherto characterised by high non-performing loans, weak risk management, low capital, rampant insider lending,

and outright plundering by owners, warrants an overhaul, not any piecemeal solution. We desperately need to come out of political cronyism to bring back confidence into the system. Independence, prevention of conflict of interest, and regulatory compliance should be the way forward, not the distortion of the original purpose to rescue the banking sector.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer

PWD Division, Shariatpur

[www.pwd.gov.bd](http://www.pwd.gov.bd)

Memo No. 1375(3)

Dated: 12/04/2026

### e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Last selling date & time	Online (e-GP System) tender closing date & time
01	1257196	03 May-2026 10:00am	03 May-2026 12:01pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

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# A film is the outcome of everyone's collective effort: Tanim Noor

First, it's a story about a train journey. Plenty of films have been made globally about train journeys, and countless movies have shot portions on trains. Through a train story, a picture of the whole of Bangladesh emerges, as everyone from common people to ministers are passengers on a train.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Tanim Noor is a name currently echoing throughout the film industry. His directed film, *Bonolota Express*, is at the peak of audience demand. As of April 14, ticket sales have crossed seven crore BDT, and many are still struggling to find tickets. The film is also drawing significant interest from audiences abroad. Previously, he garnered acclaim for his film *Utshob*. The successful director spoke with The Daily Star.

*Bonolota Express* is a success in every aspect. What is the main secret behind such massive success?

I have always felt that a film doesn't belong to just one person; it is the outcome of everyone's collective effort.

I give credit to everyone who was with me during the making, including the artists, scriptwriters, cinematographers, and the entire team who gave 100% of their labour and love. They did the work out of passion. The credit isn't mine alone; it belongs to everyone. Because everyone worked with such care, the audience is showing this much interest.

Why did you choose Humayun Ahmed's novel *Kichukkhon*?

I liked the novel *Kichukkhon* after reading it. There were two main reasons behind choosing it. First, it's a story about a train journey. Plenty of films have been made globally about train journeys, and countless movies have shot portions on trains. Through a train story,



picture of the whole of Bangladesh emerges, as everyone from common people to ministers are passengers on a train. One day after *Utshob*, Shadhin suggested I work with *Kichukkhon*. I read the book afterward; perhaps I hadn't read it before. Upon reading, I realized this novel has a lot of depth. That's how, I started working on it.

Most of the artistes in *Bonolota Express* said it would surpass *Utshob*. What is your comment?

This happened because of the audience. It was possible for *Bonolota Express* to surpass *Utshob* only because of them. When a good film is made, the audience encourages us and comes to the theaters. The viewers of this country are eager for good stories and good cinema. They watched *Utshob* with interest, but they are watching *Bonolota Express* with even more enthusiasm. That is why this film has surpassed *Utshob*. We are grateful to the audience.

Countless people are watching *Bonolota*

*Express*. Is there a particular memory that has left an impression on you?

There are many wonderful memories that have left a mark on my heart and will stay with me. Seeing audiences go to the halls in groups is a joy. It is a great achievement that 70-80-year-old viewers have come to the halls to see *Bonolota Express*. I am amazed to see everyone from 9-year-old children to elderly citizens in the theaters.

Have you thought about your next film?

I haven't thought about it yet. Let more time pass, then I can say. However, I plan to move into production for a project that another director will helm.

*Bonolota Express* has been released abroad. What kind of response is it getting?

It's getting a very good response abroad. It has been released in several countries, including North America and Australia. International audiences are watching with great interest. In North America, ticket sales have reached \$322,000 so far. In Australia, it's \$100,000. These numbers will rise.

What is the gross collection of *Bonolota Express* in Bangladesh so far?

As of yesterday, it has crossed seven crore BDT. This is the gross collection. People are still not getting tickets. This is certainly happy news for us, and I hope it continues. I'd like to add one piece of information: if tickets worth ten crore BDT are sold in Bangladesh, we have to pay two crore 30 lakh BDT in taxes.

Shows are closed after evening. What do you think about this?

Night shows are closed, and we are suffering immensely because of it. Audiences can't watch the film either. Theater plays and other cultural events are happening at night, but cinema shows are closed. This is putting us at a loss.

## Two new web films release on OTT



Two Bangladeshi web films were released on local OTT platforms during Pahela Baishakh, offering contrasting narratives and new on-screen pairings.

*Tumi Ami Shudhu*, released on Binge, marked the first collaboration between Pritom Hasan and Xeler Rahman. Directed by Shihab Shaheen, the project brought together actors who had previously worked with him separately.

Meanwhile, *Cha Gorom*, released

on Chorki on April 14, took a socially grounded approach. Directed by Shankha Dasgupta, the film stars Safa Kabir and Partho Sheikh, among others.

The film examines the lives of tea plantation workers, moving beyond scenic portrayals to focus on labour, rights, and lived realities.

Together, the releases reflect a widening thematic and creative range in Bangladesh's OTT landscape.



## Taylor Swift leads 2026 AMA nominations

Taylor Swift led nominations for the 2026 American Music Awards with eight nods, driven by her album *The Life of a Showgirl*. She was shortlisted for Artiste of the Year, Album of the Year and Song of the Year for *The Fate of Ophelia*, along with Best Pop Album, Best Pop Song, Best Female Pop Artiste, Best Music Video and Song of the Summer.

She already holds the record for most AMA wins and could extend it this year.

The ceremony is set for May 25 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena, airing live on CBS and Paramount+.

### WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## 'Anandaloke Mangalaloke'

A Baishakh celebration unfolds through colour, craft, and community in *Anandaloke Mangalaloke*. From mask-making and sora painting to live art and folk music, the programme reimagines festive tradition as participatory culture—where heritage is not displayed but lived, inviting audiences into a textured, evolving canvas of Bangla identity.

Date: April 12-25, 2026

Time: 11 am - 7 pm

Venue: Centrepoint, Ground Floor, Uttara



## NEWS

### BNP to go tough

FROM PAGE 12  
the party's credibility and weaken public trust.

Meanwhile, the leadership is also concerned about outsiders using the party's name to influence local disputes, pursue personal interests, or engage in misconduct.

Local leaders have been urged to stay alert in this regard and take action if the BNP's name is used for intimidation, extortion, factional feuds, or other abuses.

Syed Emran Saleh Prince said, "There are many who are not members but are using the party's name to engage in unethical acts -- we are taking immediate action against them too."

Additionally, internal clashes within the BNP and its affiliated bodies have emerged as another major concern, as party leaders said repeated factional confrontations are weakening grassroots discipline and risking long-term damage to public confidence in the party.

Human rights data cited by party sources illustrate the scale of the problem.

According to Ain o Salish Kendra, 28 incidents of BNP infighting in February left 186 people injured and three dead. The organisation also recorded one clash involving Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal that left one person dead.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights

Support Society reported 88 internal clashes in March.

Party leaders said such figures have reinforced the high command's view that the problem can no longer be ignored. They warned that if factional conflict continues unchecked, it could damage both the party organisation and the government's standing.

A senior BNP leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the party aims to reorganise itself ahead of the local government polls to restore organisational discipline and strengthen it at all levels.

Among the steps taken against misconduct was the expulsion of a father and son on April 14 over their alleged involvement in a political dispute that led to a clash in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila.

A central BNP press release identified them as upazila BNP convening committee member Khoka Mia and union BNP activist Tofayel Ahmed Rana, and said both were stripped of their primary membership and all party posts over allegations of involvement in violence, clashes, and bloodshed within the party.

On April 9, two BNP groups clashed over the jute trade, leaving two pedestrians with bullet injuries, after which the party expelled Fatullah thana Jubo Dal convener Masudur Rahman.

However, the party has yet to take action over a clash between two groups of BNP leaders and activists in Natore

on March 19 over dominance, which left a police officer injured.

On April 1, a Narayanganj metropolitan Swachhchasebak Dal president was named in a case over a kidnapping followed by murder, but the party has yet to act on the incident.

On March 24, three people were killed in post-polls violence in Brahmanbaria, but the party has not taken action against its leaders and activists.

### Jamaat men

FROM PAGE 12

Daulatpur upazila unit President Asaduzzaman Asad; and Safi, a madrasa teacher from Abeder Ghat. Arifur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, yesterday said, "Those involved in the attack and murder went into hiding after the incident."

Police are trying to trace and arrest them, he said.

Meanwhile, leaders of Jamaat's Kushtia town unit held a press conference at a restaurant yesterday afternoon and claimed that their party activists have been framed as part of a conspiracy.

On Tuesday, locals and Shamim's followers staged a demonstration and formed a human chain in Daulatpur's Darogar Mor area, demanding immediate arrest of the killers and their trial.

### Tarique seeks \$2b from dev partners

FROM PAGE 12

He stressed that Asia requires a coordinated and forward-looking response to strengthen energy security, address immediate supply disruptions, and support the most vulnerable nations.

Tarique said the crisis has already disrupted Bangladesh's economy. "In response, we have taken a range of short-term measures to contain the impact," he said.

These measures include demand-side management through the rationing of government office and market hours; stabilising fuel supplies through emergency imports and diversified sourcing; and consumption controls, including fuel rationing and limits on retail sales to prevent hoarding and panic buying

### Interim govt

FROM PAGE 12

the Kushtia episode to prevent a recurrence.

"This is being seen very seriously. We will take action. Zero tolerance means zero tolerance," he said, adding that he had spoken to the home minister about the matter.

No one is allowed to take the law into their own hands regardless of the allegations against any individual.

"The power to enforce the law belongs to the state alone."

People can question a pir or feel angry about someone's remarks, but they cannot punish a person on their own even if they believe the government has failed to act, he said.

Drawing a broader comparison, he said the public has no right to assault a thief, pickpocket, or robber even if they are caught red handed.

"Even if you catch a robber red-handed, they cannot be beaten to death. Leave aside killing, they should not even be beaten."

The tendency towards mob violence did not emerge overnight.

"Rather, such incidents had been encouraged during the interim period, creating a dangerous perception that people can punish others themselves."

Asked whether action against incidents during the interim government period could have helped prevent present-day mob attacks, Zahed said many such incidents were not spontaneous acts but planned actions carried out in the name of

through initiatives such as the 'Fuel App'.

He warned that the scale and consequences of the crisis could exceed those of the 1970s oil shock, which triggered a decade of stalled development in the 1980s.

Since independence in 1971, he said, Bangladesh has worked relentlessly to drive economic growth, lift millions out of poverty, and improve living standards.

"Today, these hard-earned gains are in danger of being reversed," he added.

Tarique Rahman said Bangladesh is not alone in facing this risk, nor can it overcome the challenge through national efforts alone.

"This moment calls for decisive and coordinated global action to

contain the impact of the ongoing energy crisis, particularly to protect vulnerable countries, including the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), from severe economic and social consequences," he said.

He also thanked Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who delivered the concluding remarks, for convening the timely summit.

Leaders from Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Timor-Leste, Japan, and other countries took part in the online meeting.

The prime minister delivered his speech from his Sangsad Bhaban office on the day. Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman and Foreign Affairs Adviser M Humayun Kabir were also present.

### INTERNET CRACKDOWN Russia toughens restrictions on VPNs

AFP, Moscow

Russia has hardened its restrictions on the use of VPNs to access a host of online services, state and independent media outlets reported yesterday, as the authorities seek to exert more control over online communications.

Virtual private networks (VPNs) allow users to mask the websites they visit, enhancing security by making it more difficult for telecoms networks or security services to access data.

### PM to meet

FROM PAGE 2  
Monzur Al Murshed Chowdhury, president of the UHFPO Forum of Bangladesh, said officers face multiple challenges, including staff shortages and a lack of security.

"During a meeting with the health minister, we expressed our desire to meet the prime minister to present these issues so that services can be improved," he told The Daily Star.

"The prime minister agreed, and this will be the first such meeting between a prime minister and UHFPOs," he added.

### 'We don't know what happened to them'

FROM PAGE 12

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) said they were deeply saddened by the capsizing, adding that at least 250 people remained missing. The agencies described the incident as a stark reminder of the risks faced by Rohingya refugees and other vulnerable groups undertaking perilous sea journeys.

The boat, which departed from Teknaf and was bound for Malaysia, sank in the second week of April amid rough seas, the UN said. Survivors said nearly 300 people were packed onboard, including women, children, crew members and suspected traffickers.

Rafiqul Islam, one of the survivors, said passengers endured four days and nights at sea as conditions rapidly deteriorated. In an attempt to avoid patrols, traffickers forced passengers into cramped storage compartments meant for fish and nets.

"There was hardly any oxygen," he told Reuters, adding that at least 30

people died from suffocation before the boat capsized.

When the boat overturned, hundreds were thrown into the sea, he said.

Relatives of the missing victims expressed frustration, alleging that there has been no visible action from Bangladeshi authorities so far.

Zainal Abedin, a fisherman from Shah Porir Dwip in Teknaf, left home on April 4 without informing his family. Later, relatives learned that he had planned to travel to Malaysia through brokers.

"We still don't know what has happened to him," said his mother, Hasina Begum.

Two others from the same area, Hasan and Farid, also went missing after travelling to Malaysia, their families said. In Cox's Bazar town's Samitipara area, several young people, including Ibrahim, Harun Noor, and Shafigue, have also been reported missing.

Posts seeking information about missing persons have been circulating on Rohingya-run social media groups.

Rohingya rights activist Khin Maung, in a Facebook post, said one of his acquaintances, Md Ullah, is believed to be among the missing.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Coast Guard said a Bangladeshi flagged vessel, MT Meghna Pride, rescued nine people from the Andaman Sea on April 9. The survivors were later handed over to a Coast Guard patrol vessel.

They are Md Imran, Rahela Begum, Hriday, Sohan Uddin, Md Akbar, Rafiqul Islam, Tofayel, Sayad Alam, and Md Hamid.

A case has been filed with the Teknaf Police Station over the incident.

A rescued victim confirmed to this correspondent that the people accused in the case were traffickers.

Saiful Islam, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, said the investigation was underway.

"We are working to identify those involved," he said, adding that there is no confirmed data yet on the total number of missing persons.

## Former IGP

FROM PAGE 3

involved would be brought to trial.

"We cannot disclose names at this stage, but we are finding involvement of many officials," he said, adding that none found culpable -- whether civilian, police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), or army personnel -- will be prosecuted.

Previously, Mamun, who also served as the deputy inspector general of Dhaka range between 2013 and 2015, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment by the International Crimes Tribunal-1 on November 17 last year, in a crimes against humanity case. Deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal were sentenced to death in the same case.

The chief prosecutor also said former IGP Mamun would be prosecuted for incidents that took place while he was in service, including alleged extrajudicial killings during his time as the Rab chief.

Islam said separate chains of command and decisions in different incidents -- such as the Shapla Chattar crackdown in 2013 -- allow for distinct legal proceedings, dismissing concerns over double jeopardy.

PRAYER TIMING				
APRIL 16				
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-35	12-45	4-45	6-24	7-45
JAMAAT 5-10	1-15	5-00	6-28	8-15
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION				

## Country has 1.98 lakh Govt eyeing new labour markets

FROM PAGE 3

The minister further said increasing the honorarium allowance for freedom fighters is not currently under government consideration.

The minister highlighted the various allowances provided to freedom fighters. At present, each freedom fighter receives a monthly honorarium of Tk 20,000, a festival allowance of Tk 10,000, and a Bangla New Year allowance of Tk 2,000. Moreover, living freedom fighters receive a Victory Day allowance of Tk 5,000.

In addition, through the Bangladesh Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust, each martyr's family receives a monthly honorarium of Tk 23,000, while each Bir Sreshtho family receives Tk 28,000.

Martyrs' families receive a medical allowance of Tk 2,000 each and a food allowance of Tk 5,000.

Among the gallantry-awarded freedom fighters, a Bir Sreshtho family receives a monthly honorarium of Tk 30,000 and a Bangla New Year allowance of Tk 2,000. A Bir Utm family receives a monthly honorarium of Tk 25,000; Bir Bikram receives a monthly honorarium of Tk 20,000; and Bir Protik receives a monthly honorarium of Tk 20,000.

Besides, they receive two festival allowances of Tk 10,000 every year and a Bangla New Year allowance of Tk 2,000.

Meanwhile war-wounded freedom fighters are receiving a monthly honorarium of Tk 30,000 under the "A" category, Tk 28,000 under "B" category, Tk 23,000 under "C"

category, and Tk 20,000 under "D" category.

In response to separate questions, the minister explained that if allegations arise against a gazetted freedom fighter, claiming they are not genuine, the matter is investigated by a sub-committee of the Jatio Muktiyoddha Council (JAMUKA). If proven false, recommendations are made to remove the individual from the list. Since August 2024, JAMUKA has received 842 such complaints. After verification and investigation, the gazette/recognition of 481 individuals has been cancelled.

Since its establishment, JAMUKA has held 103 meetings and recommended the cancellation of gazettes for 6,465 individuals.

## Helal placed

FROM PAGE 3

On Tuesday, Helal, proprietor of Hamidul Haque Arms and Co in Chattogram, was arrested from Hares Shah Mazar Lane in Chattogram's Chawkbazar.

On December 12 last year, Hadi, an independent aspirant for the Dhaka-8 constituency, was shot in Dhaka's Paltan area while campaigning. He died on December 18 while undergoing treatment in Singapore.

On December 14, Inqilab Moncho's Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber filed an attempted murder case with Paltan Model Police Station against Faisal and several

FROM PAGE 3

Ashraf Uddin during the question answer session.

The premier said initiatives were underway to sign bilateral agreements with Serbia, Greece, North Macedonia, Romania, Portugal, Brazil and Russia to expand overseas employment opportunities.

He added that efforts are actively progressing toward reopening the Malaysian labour market. High level visits have also been arranged to strengthen bilateral relations with countries outside the Middle East that recruit foreign labour.

An initiative has been

taken to sign a labour recruitment agreement with Thailand, he added.

The prime minister said the government is continuing efforts to reopen the Malaysian market, answering a related question from BNP MP Nayab Yusuf Ahmed.

The minister and adviser in charge of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment visited Malaysia from April 8-11, and bilateral discussions during the visit are expected to pave the way for sending Bangladeshi workers to the country, he added.

In response to a question from Nurul Islam, MP of Barguna-2, the prime minister said

the government has already taken steps to plan for the maritime zone and assess potential national gains.

He said to ensure sustainable and long-term development of the blue economy by balancing marine resources, fisheries, tourism and environmental conservation, the establishment of an institutional framework in the 2027 fiscal year is under active consideration.

Responding to another question from the Barguna-2 MP, Tarique said the government has decided to recruit five lakh government employees. Of them, the process

of recruiting 2,879 people against vacant posts in the Ministry of Public Administration and subordinate offices and organisations is already underway, he said.

Replying to a question from Chattogram-7 MP Humam Quader Chowdhury, the prime minister said there are currently 3,76,489 teachers in primary schools, of whom 1,30,000 have received training in English.

Under the upcoming Fifth Primary Education Development Programme, set to begin on July 1, plans are in place to provide English training to the remaining teachers, he added.

## Jamalpur AL leader dies in jail custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

SM Ziaul Haque Zia, a local Awami League leader in Jamalpur, died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital on Tuesday night while in jail custody.

According to family, Zia, a member of the advisory council of Jamalpur district AL, also served as adviser to Dignat union AL in Sadar upazila.

Mohammad Shafiqul Alam, superintendent of Jamalpur district jail, said Zia had been in custody since January 15 in a corruption case. On Tuesday, special meals were served in the jail marking Pahela Baishakh. Zia fell ill shortly after lunch. He was first taken to Jamalpur General Hospital. As his condition deteriorated, doctors referred him to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Department of Youth Development  
Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project  
National Sports Council Tower (19th Floor)  
62/3, Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000  
[www.dyd.gov.bd](http://www.dyd.gov.bd)

Memo No. 34.01.0000.046.11.113.25.426

Date: April 15, 2026

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST  
(Individual Consultant Selection)

Country : Bangladesh  
Project Name : Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN)  
Credit No. : IDA-7364-BD  
Assignment Title : Selection of Junior Procurement Specialist  
Reference No. : Package No. - S15.9

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project (P178077) and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The scopes of the consulting services ("the Services") will include but not limited to:

1. Developing the procurement plan for goods, works, and services under the project specially those are designated to be done by LGED.
2. Prepare and regular update of the procurement plan and other procurement transactions of LGED for the project as and when needed through the World Bank's Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) system.
3. Preparing all procurement documents (Request for Expressions of Interest, Request for Proposal/bidding documents, etc.), working in collaboration with technical staff, consultants, Focal Person of LGED and Project Director (PD) of the project.
4. Participating in pre-bid/pre-proposal meetings and bid/proposal opening meetings.
5. Help the members of the tender/bid/proposal evaluation committee in the evaluation of bids/proposals, including following up with the Technical Evaluation Committee and compiling and consolidating bid/proposal evaluation reports prepared by the bid evaluation committee before submission to the approving authorities.
6. Monitoring the procurement processes to ensure compliance with the approved procurement plan and preparing procurement progress reports on the progress of each procurement package, identifying any bottlenecks and recommending measures for resolution. Guiding and advising the concerned government officials involved with procurement in ensuring that all procurement financed under the EARN project is carried out according to the applicable World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers.
7. Reviewing and anticipating potential issues on procurement or any other issues and bringing them to the attention of the focal person of the LGED and PD.
8. Monitoring and keeping track of the deliverables during implementation of goods/works/ services contracts.
9. Carry out the procurement activities under the project through electronic government procurement (e-GP), where applicable.
10. Provide operational advice on concepts, policies, and procedures for international and local procurement matters.
11. Closely monitor procurement activities in reference to the Procurement Plan timeline and the procurement approval process of the Government and bring any slippage of activities immediately to the attention of the LGED Focal Person and Project Director.
12. Prepare reports regularly on procurement status and procurement risk mitigation framework and arrange submission of the same to the Government and the World Bank through an appropriate system for review.
13. Work under the guidance of the Project Director in implementing all aspects of procurement under the project.
14. Any other procurement-related task assigned by the Project Director.
15. The Junior Procurement Specialist will report to and work under the overall guidance of the Project Director.

## Educational Qualifications:

1. At least a Bachelor's Degree in any discipline.
2. Masters in Procurement / Supply Chain / Engineering / Economics / Law / Business Development Studies will be considered as an added advantage.
3. Professional qualifications in procurement/ purchasing and supply chain management will be given preference.

## General Experience:

1. At least 08 (eight) years of overall experience in implementing development projects under any government/semi-government/autonomous organizations or any other reputed international donor organizations.

## Relevant Experience:

1. At least 03 (Three) years specific experience of providing consultancy services in Public Procurement sector at Junior position under development projects of Government/ Semi-Government/ Autonomous Organization/ Development Partner/ Donor Agency.
2. Experience of working directly with the World Bank will be considered as an added advantage.
3. Experience of working in high value service procurement will also be considered as added advantage.
4. Experience of working in high value goods/ ICT procurement will also be preferred.
5. Hands-on experience in managing all steps in the procurement process, including procurement planning, preparation of bidding/contract documents, bid/proposal evaluation, contract award and implementation monitoring, and internationally competitive procurement of goods, works and consultant services.
6. Hands-on working experience in the electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) or in the World Bank's Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) system will be considered a strong advantage.

## Professional Accreditation:

1. Membership in a national/internationally reputed professional body is preferred.

## Suitability:

1. Candidates having training in World Bank Procurement Regulations, Public Procurement of GoB and e-GP are highly desirable.
2. Working knowledge following the World Bank Procurement Regulations, PPA-2006, PPR-2008 or PPR 2025 is required.
3. Analytical capability in identifying and resolving procurement issues. Strong coordination and communication skills in presenting, discussing, and resolving difficult issues.
4. Proficient in Microsoft Office applications and computer operations.
5. Must be proficient in English and Bengali writing and speaking and able to communicate professionally with the donor agencies and other stakeholders.

Regional/Country Experience : Bangladesh

Date of Commencement : 1<sup>st</sup> week of June 2026 (Tentative)

Assignment Period : 25 months from the date of commencement. The duration of the assignment may be increased or decreased depending upon the performance of the consultant, the needs and budget allocated for the Project and the duration of the Project. Depending on the satisfactory performance of the Procurement Specialist his/her period of service might be continued till the project period.

Place of Working: Primarily at PMU of EARN and also at the office of EARN Cell of LGED, where necessary, with field visits anywhere in Bangladesh if required.

Logistics Support: The EARN Project will provide office space, logistics, and institutional support to the consultant in carrying out the assignment.

Payment: This is a time-based contract which would require full time involvement of the consultant. Thus, the payment shall be made monthly (that is, payments made each month will be for services rendered during the immediately preceding month), subject to the submission of timesheets by the consultant. Time sheet of the activities for each month needs to be verified by the concerned officials and approved by the PD. The detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) for the assignment is available in <https://dyd.gov.bd/site/page/7578b924-2f8a-4b8a-891f-788a83980259/Open-Tender-Method>.

The Department of Youth Development now invites eligible candidates ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are qualification (academic, professional, training), experience (general & specific) and suitability for the assignment.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the "World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" dated November 2020 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

A consultant will be selected following the Open Market Approach of Individual Consultant Selection (ICS) method as set forth in the "World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers," dated November 2020.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours:

Office of Project Director  
Economic Acceleration and Resilience for NEET (EARN) Project  
Department of Youth Development  
National Sports Council Tower (19<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
62/3, Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000  
Tel: +880-02-55101121  
e-mail: [pd\\_earn@dyd.gov.bd](mailto:pd_earn@dyd.gov.bd)  
Website: [www.dyd.gov.bd](http://www.dyd.gov.bd)

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail or by e-mail) by 30 April 2026 at 15:00 Hours BST

  
Kazi Moklesur Rahman  
Project Director (Additional Secretary)  
Tel: +880-02-55101121  
e-mail: [pd\\_earn@dyd.gov.bd](mailto:pd_earn@dyd.gov.bd)

## ATOMIC ENERGY CENTRE

Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission

4, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, P.O. Box No.164,  
Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.Fax : 880-2-8617946,  
Tel : 58610902,  
Email: [acd@baec.gov.bd](mailto:acd@baec.gov.bd)

## Invitation for Tender

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Science and Technology		
2. Agency	Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission		
3. Procuring Entity Name	Atomic Energy Centre.		
4. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka.		
5. Invitation for	Supply and Installation of Scientific Equipment, Air Cooler, Office Instruments & Others Item for Atomic Energy Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh.		
6. Invitation Reference no	Tender No. 39.01.2675.271.07.012.25		
7. Date	12-04-2026.		
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>			
8. Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (NCT)		
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>			
9. Budget & Source of Fund	Revenue Budget		
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>			
10. Tender Publishing Date	16-04-2026		
11. Tender last Selling Date	27-04-2026		
12. Tender Closing Date and Time	28-04-2026 up to 12:30 pm.		
13. Tender Opening Date and Time	28-04-2026 at 12:45 pm.		
14. Name & Address of the Office(s)	Address		
- Selling Tender Document	Tender document will be available in the Accounts Branch, Atomic Energy Centre, 4-Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000 on written request to and prior permission of the undersigned.		
- Receiving Tender Document	Tender should be dropped in the tender box kept at the Atomic Energy Centre, Committee Room (1 <sup>st</sup> Floor), 4-Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000. Tenders may be hand delivered, posted by mail or courier services within the specified date and time.		
- Opening Tender Document	Committee Room (1 <sup>st</sup> Floor), of Atomic Energy Centre, 4-Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000. Interested Tenderers or their authorized representatives are allowed to attend, if there is any transport disruption or Govt. holiday on the date for receiving/opening of the Tender, the next normal working day will be considered valid date for receiving/opening of the Tender.		
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDER</b>			
15. Eligibility of Tender	While Purchasing Tender Document Copies of: (i) Up-to-date Trade license. (ii) Up-to-date Income Tax Clearance Certificate. (iii) Up-to-date Financial Solvency Certificate & liquid assets (It must be the date after the tender is published in the newspaper). (iv) VAT Registration Certificate. (v) Manufacturer's Authorization Certificate if possible (vi) Three (03) years' of general experience in supplying similar nature of Goods to Govt./Semi-Govt./Autonomous/Semi-Autonomous Organization for all lot must be enclosed with the application in the letter head pad of the firm and attested copies of the relevant papers must be submitted with the Tender (vii) The minimum specific experience as supplier of similar Goods to Govt./Semi-Govt./Autonomous/Semi-Autonomous Organization at least 02 contacts successfully completed within the last 03 years each with a value of at least Tk.11.55 lac taka for Lot-1, Tk.3.20 lac taka for Lot-2, Tk.7.35 lac taka for Lot-3, Tk.1.68 lac taka for Lot 4 & Tk.6.80 lac taka for Lot 5. (viii) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk.14.00 lac for Lot-1, Tk.3.88 lac for Lot-2, Tk.8.92 lac for Lot-3, Tk.2.00 lac for Lot-4 & Tk.8.26 lac for Lot-5.		
16. Brief Description of works	Supply and Installation of Scientific Equipment, Air Cooler, Office Instruments & Others Item for Atomic Energy Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh.		
17. Price of Tender Document (Tk)	Tk.1000.00 (Taka. One Thousand) only (Non-refundable).		
Lot No	Identification of lot	Destination of Goods	Amount of Tender Security
01	Supply & Installation of Ultra-Pure Water system use for Chemistry Division, of AEC, Dhaka.	Atomic Energy Centre, Dhaka.	Tk.42,000.00
02	Supply of Furniture & Others Item Use for AEC, Dhaka.	-Do-	Tk.12,000.00
03	Supply & Installation of Air Conditioner use for AEC, Dhaka.		Tk.26,000.00
04	Supply of Monohari & Stationary Items use for AEC, Dhaka.		Tk.6,000.00
05	Supply of CRM use for Chemistry Laboratory (AECL), AEC, Dhaka.		Tk.24,000.00
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>			
18. Name of the Official Inviting Tender	Abdur Rahman		
19. Designation of the Official Inviting the Tender	Administrative Officer (Proc.)		
20. Address of Official Inviting the Tender	Procurement Branch, Atomic Energy Centre, 4-Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, P.O. Box-164, Shahbag, Dhaka.		
21. Contact details of Official Inviting the Tender	Tel-58610902.		
22. The Procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.			

  
(Abdur Rahman)  
Administrative Officer (Proc.)

ESSAY

# When fanfiction swapped out fans for publishing deals

ARSHI IBSAN RADIFAH

It sounds flippant to put it that way but, the *Aeneid*, at its core, really is a continuation fic—picking up where Homer's Trojan War ended and following Aeneas, a minor character in the canon, as he stumbles through an entirely new narrative along with original characters and incredibly expanded lore. Cut to a few centuries later, an earnest Virgil fan decides to take it one step further by adding himself into the story, and effectively writing what might be history's first self-insert fic: Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*.

But we don't think of Virgil or Dante when we think of fanfiction. Instead, their works are "derivative" or "revisions". Why?

Because for as long we have been alive, stories have been told and retold and passed along without much concern for originality because, copyright as we understand it today, was not how it always used to be. But once intellectual property became something that could be owned by a person or a corporation, that line between "derivative work" and "fanfiction" changed as well. If Virgil were to borrow from Homer today, it would not be without legal consequences.

So, how does fanfiction manage to operate within that grey area?

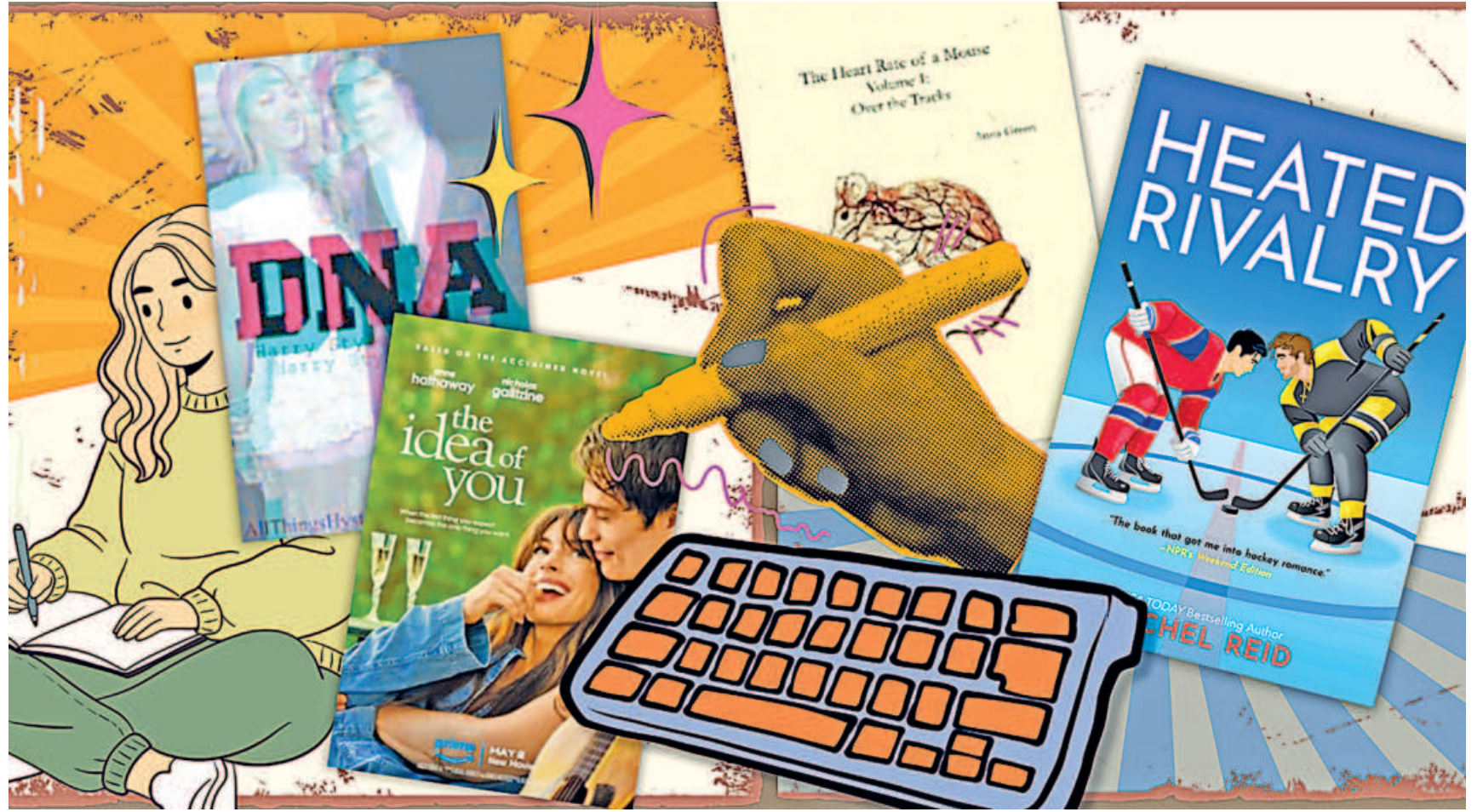


ILLUSTRATION: MAHMUDA EMDAD

**Part of what made fanfiction so special was that shared intimacy of being able to exist in a space so obsessively and still be met with a similar enthusiasm, and in my own selfish way, I'm glad some of its best versions never left that place.**

Fanfiction, as it exists today, mostly does so because of the unspoken argument that you cannot profit from it. You can write as many *Harry Potter* spinoffs as you please, pick up where *Sherlock Holmes* left off, fix it fic the ending of your favorite franchise—but it only exists in this online space where the reward is typically nothing more than adoration from other fans. Or at least, that used to be the rule.

Before it became a pipeline to publishing deals, fanfiction lived quietly within the margins of the internet—forum entries, Wattpad and fanfiction.net, tumblr blogs, AO3. It was not the industry it is today. What is currently often referred to as a genre, started out so many degrees outside these usual circuits of value that it felt more like a *place* we all went to together. You knew people only by their online handles. Feedback was hits, bookmarks and kudos, and recognition (if it came at all)

was from quiet obsession; not royalties or six-digit Netflix deals.

One of the most formative pieces of literature I've encountered came from an old, culturally defunct website, LiveJournal, titled—*The Heart Rate of a Mouse*, or colloquially THROAM (throw-am): a 1970s AU slashfic about Brendon Urie and Ryan Ross of Panic At The Disco, with a rotating cast of early-2000s emo heartthrobs—and even a brief, glittering cameo from a glittery-eyed shadowed David Bowie himself.

What I remember most is the sheer scale of it—just this endless scrolling that never seemed to stop. First published in 2009, the fic ran over half a million words across three volumes, written by someone who was probably as old as I was when I found it at 16. And it didn't make sense to me. How could something this expansive, this *good* just exist on a website like this? For free? With no real expectation of anything beyond people reading it?

Between the fan-made art, merch, and a small stint in self-published copies for sale by the author, none of it translated into what we'd recognise as a career. The author stayed a username (beggarsnotes) and the fic to this day only exists archived on the internet. But over the past decade, many stories that begin on similar platforms have been reworked into traditionally published novels, some even snapped up by major houses for film and television

deals. This trajectory is now consistent enough to be a formula that promises good output: a fanfic gains a cult following, the names and the plot gets filed off, and what once circulated (free of cost) among fans is repackaged as new IP. The success of *Fifty Shades of Grey*—originally a *Twilight* fanfiction—effectively opened the floodgates for this model, and the examples have only multiplied. In one decade, publishers and studios have switched to actively scouting this for their platforms.

After, which began as a One Direction fanfic, was spun into a full-fledged film franchise. *The Love Hypothesis* started life as a Star Wars sequel trilogy "Reylo" fic. *The Mortal Instruments* was originally a Draco Malfoy "Dramione" trilogy by Cassandra Clare. *Heated Rivalry*, the hockey romance on everyone's roster this year reportedly began as a Steve Rogers/Bucky Barnes AU on AO3 before being pulled, reworked, and relaunched. *The Idea of You* is another book-to-movie adaptation in this sage that carries the unmistakable DNA of Harry Styles fanfics. Even *Red, White & Royal Blue*, the glossy Amazon Prime production has a lot of conjecture surrounding its supposed origins back to a Jesse Eisenberg/Andrew Garfield fic inspired by *The Social Network*.

But of course, the caricature of pre-teen girls writing self-indulgent romances about boy bands, or the more

convenient exhibit of *Fifty Shades of Grey* as a kind of infallible proof that fanfiction is embarrassing, cringe, and not "real" literature is still a really popular idea, even though both parties know that it flattens the vast range of what fanfic really is. Because certain forms of excess, especially when it comes to young girls *liking* something, has always been easy to dismiss, even when history is full of works that adapt this similar act of borrowing.

In her 2018 essay, "The Bodies of the Girls Who Made Me", Seanan McGuire points out this obvious double standard. Fanfiction has historically been a space far outnumbered by women and queer writers and part of it was to accommodate a specific lack of representation that was often left out in the original canon. The human desire to expand on narratives, to want to see themselves in a story has always existed. But when men engage in similar acts of transformation, it's derivative, and a homage, but when women do it, it's unoriginal and *just* fanfiction. And there's a particular kind of dismissal that attaches itself to that because the argument regarding lack of originality is just categorically untrue (I once came across a James Bond AU in which everyone worked at a grocery store, which, if anything, is excessively original).

And that's where I start to hesitate. Because there is something undeniably

significant about good writers finding wider audiences and being taken seriously, being *paid*—it would be disingenuous to ignore that. But even as fanfiction is finally being taken seriously it still carries the weight of that same dismissal. It's valuable, but only after it's been reshaped and sanitised to be more palatable to a system that never quite respected it to begin with.

I would love for some of my favorite writers from that era to reach the visibility they deserve. But I'd be lying if I said I wasn't also a little relieved that a million-dollar company hasn't ultimately managed to get its grubby hands on something like THROAM. Part of what made fanfiction so special was that shared intimacy of being able to exist in a space so obsessively and still be met with a similar enthusiasm, and in my own selfish way, I'm glad some of its best versions never left that place. And I'm not sure a Netflix exec would ever take the time to learn how to package the thrill of that experience without tainting all the important parts.

Arshi Ibsan Radifah is a Literature major who loves unreliable narrators and Wes Anderson movie sets. If she had it her way she would have liked to play bass for a girl band in the 90s, but for now she'll suffice by rewatching Empire Records.

## BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

# Aruna Chakravarti's ghosts don't just scare, they remember

Review of 'Creeping Shadows: 13 Ghost Stories' (Penguin Random House India, 2026) by Aruna Chakravarti

MITALI CHAKRAVARTY

Aruna Chakravarti is a doyen of historical fiction, spinning out narratives on the Bengal Renaissance with her *Jorasanko* (HarperCollins, 2013) novels, reviving the story of the Bhawal Prince with *The Mendicant Prince* (Pan Macmillan, 2022) and doing series of fictitious short stories based on chronicles from the past. Then why would she turn suddenly to ghost stories?

She has tried her hand at what she referred to as "a completely new genre" with *Creeping Shadows: 13 Ghost Stories*. Chakravarti elaborated in a recent interview with *Borderless*: "For a change, I decided to try my hand at short stories which emerge straight from the imagination. And while at it, I decided to break out of the mould of 'historical fiction' writer in which I had trapped myself and try a completely new genre."

And in the process, she expands on the genre of traditional ghouls. While one of the narratives, "Grandmother's Bundle", has the traditional petni stories told with a wry sense of humour, most of the ghouls are tormented souls born out of historical events or accidents. The other narratives have supernatural shadows creeping into normal lives to create a horrific outcome.

The first story in the book, "The Caregivers of Gazipur", throws up ghouls from the colonial past who died in torment in a non-syncretic world—torn by religious



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

observances that draw alienation and hatred even from loved ones. The protagonist meets these ghouls in the historic year, 1971, when Bangladesh came into being. A story that takes us into modern Bangladesh, "The Road to Karimganj", has a mother and son duo travel to satisfy their curiosity about their family's past until, haunted and spooked by a ghost, their trip goes awry.

Some of the rural landscapes in Bengal are imagined by Chakravarti based on her past experiences, where she travelled to source

for her historical fictions. But the *pièce de résistance* she creates out of her imagination is a brothel in the early 19th century China in "The House of Flowers", influenced by, she admits, her reading of Pearl S Buck and Amy Tan. The descriptions of the countryside in this story could have been impacted by her travels within China. She has shown a world where political borders didn't exist, and a young man could walk from China to Kolkata without papers. Needless to say, her "spook" here could well be a cross between a

zombie or a vampire—a truly original horrific creation and, perhaps, a bit like what you see in spooky Asian films about the undead.

More ghouls from the slaughtering incidents of history—the horrors of the Partition of 1947—crawl out in "They Come Out After the Dark". Drawing partly from the folklore of nishir dak, the most frightening experiences are not just the spooks but the fact that they could seduce a living person to opt for them.

"One Winter Night", set in a zamindari of yore, has terrifying ghouls too that grow out of the horrors of poverty and deprivation. That they avenge society by harming a person who tried to help them only emphasises the arbitrariness of their choices, leaving the readers with a sense of meaningless horror. Chakravarti's ghosts often function as husband-wife as in this story, or father-daughter, son-father in larger family structures.

The isolated ghouls she creates are sometimes born of black magic or possession.

Chakravarti tells us about her spooks in her interview: "These stories do not belong to the gothic/horror genre. They are not about vampires, blood sucking bats, severed heads or violence heaped on violence. They are essentially human-interest stories with a supernatural twist at the end."

More contemporary sagas creep into her narratives as she recreates ghosts from the Sikh massacre following the murder of Indira Gandhi in "There are More Things in Heaven

and Earth". The narrative weaves in present times and a discussion around the famous quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Thus reinforcing her academic persona, for, she served as a principal of a college in Delhi University for many years.

She has also explored the eco-fiction genre in "Vendetta", with tree spirits seeking revenge from an abuser of nature. Her storytelling skills mesmerise. She writes, "He stopped. Rather, he was made to stop by an enormous tree looming in front of him. Monkeys of all sizes were hanging from the branches, clinging to the trunk and peering from between the leaves. In his frenzied state he thought he saw hundreds and thousands. Every type of Simian. Rhesus, marmoset, baboon, mandrill, macaque, colobus and others. Whole families of them. From huge hoary red-bottomed patriachs to wee babies with beady eyes suckling at their mothers' breasts."

Aruna Chakravarti has proven once again she can master any genre—be it translations, historical fiction, narratives based on reality, or fantastic ghost stories with imaginative spooks that can make shivers run down your spine. *Creeping Shadows* is a gripping read that haunts and lingers beyond its pages.

Mitali Chakravarty wafts on a cloud where rests *Borderless Journal*. She has three books of poems, two anthologies, and a book of humorous essays on China.



Pacers Nahid Rana and Shoriful Islam returned to national duty at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday after playing key roles in Peshawar Zalmi's four-match unbeaten run in the Pakistan Super League (PSL). Rana impressed with his pace and bounce, claiming seven wickets at an economy of 5.42, including a record spell of three for seven in four overs – the most economical by a foreign pacer in PSL history. He was also effective in the death overs. Shoriful, meanwhile, contributed with two wickets, particularly with the new ball. With sporting wickets expected, Rana will look to carry his aggression from the PSL and last month's Pakistan series into the upcoming New Zealand series, beginning tomorrow.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'Lot of room to improve' in Bangladesh batting

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's middle-order issues have been laid bare over the past year, with several players rotating through the role without making a lasting impression. Thus, apart from top-order issues, partnerships down the order and their impact remain a cause for concern in the 50-over setup.

One of the players brought back into the mix to address that gap is Afif Hossain. Dropped after the 2023 Asia Cup, Afif spent a year out of the ODI side. His fortunes improved with a hundred in the Bangladesh Cricket League – coming in at No. 4, where he mostly batted in the competition – earning him a recall for last month's Pakistan series. However, his ODI record since being sidelined after the Asia Cup, yielded 124 runs without a fifty at an average of just over 24, has yet to ease concerns over his comfort and adaptability in a middle-order role.

Those concerns were echoed in Phil Simmons's press conference yesterday ahead of the home ODI series against New Zealand, beginning on Friday, as the Bangladesh head coach surmised why the middle order continues to be an issue following the departure of Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad.

"It seems like all our batsmen bat in the top order in domestic cricket. It is



the same for [Mehidy Hasan] Miraz and everyone else down the order," Simmons said when asked how difficult it is for a top-order batter to adapt to number six.

"Everybody seems to bat in the top order domestically, but when they come here, they have to fit into different positions. So far, the guys have been trying very hard to adapt to those positions. One of the big aspects of international cricket is that you

have to adapt to what is in front of you, not just what you have done in domestic cricket," Simmons added.

The message seemed to be clear: do the job that is being asked of you. Yet, the roles do not always fit the profile. The highest middle-order partnership – four to six in the batting order – in the last 12 months is 101 between Miraz and Tawhid Hridoy, which came in a losing cause. The duo have played six innings together in this period, scoring 172 runs at a run-rate of 4.41, clearly lacking the middle-order acceleration required in ODIs.

Meanwhile, Jaker Ali, Shamim Hossain and Mahidul Islam Ankon have either failed to get a foothold or made little impact despite being carried in the squad, prompting a shift that sees Litton Das preferred in the middle order, while Hridoy has adjusted to greater responsibility. Simmons noted Hridoy is "accepting that responsibility" and backed his domestic form to translate.

Concerns extend to the lower middle order as well, especially when quick runs are required. Among Afif, Miraz and Rishad, only the latter has shown glimpses of big hitting, but without consistency.

Simmons admitted Bangladesh have "a lot of room to improve... from the top down to numbers five, six, seven and eight," underlining the scale of the batting challenge.

## BFF's recurring calendar crisis

ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) continues to grapple with a recurring dilemma: balancing national team preparations with the smooth operation of domestic competitions – two elements crucial to each other's growth.

Unlike most footballing nations, BFF creates time for the national team by carving it out of the domestic calendar. This approach has repeatedly led to the scrapping of tournaments, disrupting the continuity of local competitions.

With the next season set to begin in June, uncertainty surrounds the remaining events of the ongoing campaign. The Independence Cup and Super Cup are now in doubt after the Professional League Management Committee (PLMC) announced that the 2026-27 transfer window will open on June 1.

The current calendar included five top-tier competitions: the one-off Challenge Cup, the Bangladesh Football League (BFL), Federation Cup, Independence Cup and Super Cup. So far, only the Challenge Cup final has been completed. The Federation Cup and BFL are set to end on May 19 and May 23, respectively, leaving just eight days to stage the remaining two tournaments.

PLMC vice chairman Zakir Hossain Chowdhury said they "will be trying to hold the Independence Cup", but the practicality is questionable. The tournament typically involves all professional league teams, divided into four groups, and requires around three weeks to complete.



**Since the BFL kicked off on September 26, 2025, the league has been suspended for more than 15 weeks due to national team preparations, the mid-season transfer window and the national election.**

Meanwhile, the national team will start gearing up for June 5 FIFA international friendly against San Marino, further tightening the already congested schedule.

Since the BFL kicked off on September 26, 2025, the league has been suspended for more than 15 weeks due to national team

preparations, the mid-season transfer window and the national election. Much of this downtime was used for national team camps, raising questions about the emphasis on domestic competitions.

A similar situation unfolded last season, when both the Independence Cup and Super Cup were scrapped due to time constraints. This reduced match exposure for local players, despite the general need for footballers to play 30 to 40 domestic matches annually to maintain their level.

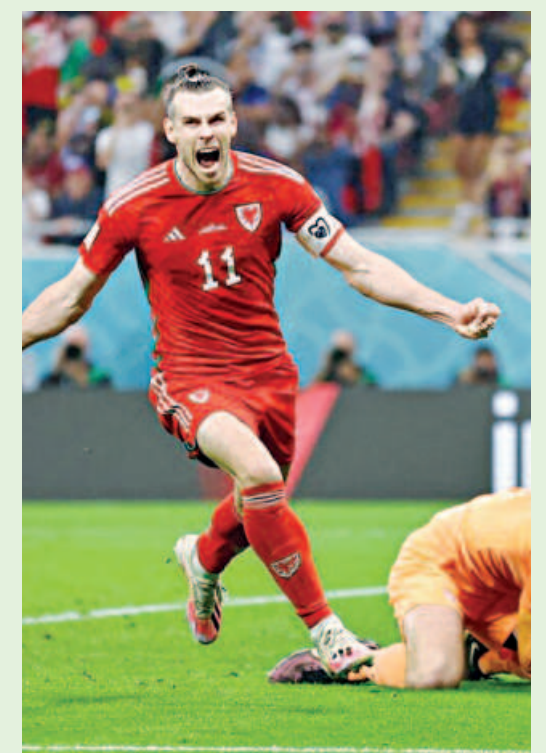
These disruptions reflect a lack of coordination between the PLMC and the National Teams Committee. The BFL schedule has frequently been adjusted to accommodate extended preparation periods, including the recent AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers.

While global practice typically confines national team preparations within FIFA windows, the BFF has regularly allowed extended camps. This has led to repeated interruptions in the BFL and Federation Cup, leaving insufficient time to complete all competitions.

The pauses have also increased costs for financially struggling clubs, many of whom believe regular domestic competition better prepares players for international football than prolonged training camps.

Despite these challenges, the league committee has again included all five competitions in the draft calendar for the 2026-27 season, raising questions about the practicality of planning tournaments that may not be held.

56 DAYS TO GO



## Teams that waited half a century

Two teams have experienced a 56-year gap between World Cup appearances – Egypt (1934 and 1990) and Norway (1938 and 1994). Wales top this list, having ended a 64-year absence when they returned in 2022, their previous appearance dating back to 1958.

**\*\* Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'Howard the human wall'**



## RUBEL retires from international cricket

STAR SPORTS DESK

Pacer Rubel Hossain announced his retirement from international cricket yesterday via a Facebook post, bringing an end to a career that had effectively been inactive at the top level in recent years. The 36-year-old pacer last represented Bangladesh on April 1, 2021, in a T20I against New Zealand in Auckland and has remained out of the national setup since. A right-arm quick who played a key role in several of Bangladesh's finest moments, Rubel last featured in first-class cricket in 2020, before making appearances in a List A match in 2024 and a T20 game in 2025.

ODIs	T20Is	Tests
Matches: 104	Matches: 28	Matches: 27
Wickets: 129	Wickets: 28	Wickets: 36
Economy: 5.67	Economy: 9.45	Economy: 3.92
Average: 34.31	Average: 32.57	Average: 76.77
Strike-rate: 36.2	Strike-rate: 20.6	Strike-rate: 117.3

Rubel took the final wicket against England at the 2015 ICC World Cup in Adelaide, sealing Bangladesh's first-ever quarterfinal berth.

He claimed the final wicket in Bangladesh's 4-0 ODI series win over New Zealand in 2010.

The right-arm pacer took an ODI hat-trick against New Zealand in 2013. His best ODI figures of 6-26 are jointly the best for Bangladesh, alongside Mashrafe Mortaza.

## Local footballers demand abolition of SAARC quota

SPORTS REPORTER

A group of professional footballers, under the banner of the Football Players' Welfare Association (FPWA), yesterday submitted a six-point petition to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Tabith Awal, calling for the complete abolition of the South Asian footballers' quota in the Bangladesh Football League (BFL).

The demands include ensuring greater playing opportunities for domestic players, strengthening the development of local footballers through long-term planning, increasing the number of clubs in the professional league, taking responsibility for the financial security of local players, and reducing the quota of foreign players in the league.

The demands come at a time when the Professional League Management Committee has declared that the transfer window for the

2026-27 season will open on June 1.

Although South Asian players such as Nepal's Ganesh Thapa and Raju Sakya, along with Sri Lanka's Packer Ali and Prem Lal once enthralled football fans in the 1980s and 1990s while playing under the foreign quota, the BFF introduced a new rule in the 2025-26 season allowing each professional league club to field up to five South Asian players as locals. This has reduced opportunities for domestic footballers. With three foreign players also permitted in a match, the total number of non-local players can rise to eight in the starting eleven.

As a result, five of the 10 top-tier BPL clubs signed 11 players from South Asian nations in the first phase of the league. A further 10 players were signed by four clubs during the mid-season transfer window.

The decision has particularly benefited mid- and lower-table clubs operating on limited budgets, as they have been able to strengthen

their squads at a lower cost. However, it has made competition tougher for local players.

Following the student uprising in mid-2024, two established clubs – Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra – withdrew from the professional league, further reducing opportunities for players, as no additional teams were promoted to the top tier in their absence.

Top-tier clubs, including Bashundhara Kings, Abahani and Mohammedan, have also struggled financially. Kings and Abahani have faced multiple transfer bans from FIFA due to unpaid dues to foreign players, while local players have quietly accepted reduced wages over the past two seasons.

Although the number of foreign players allowed has been reduced to three in the ongoing season, the inclusion of five South Asian footballers as local players has further compounded the challenges faced by domestic footballers.

## Dembele, Simeone stamp their authorities



Ousmane Dembele struck twice as defending champions PSG sealed a place in the Champions League semifinals with a 2-0 win over Liverpool at Anfield on Tuesday, completing a 4-0 aggregate win. In the other fixture, Atletico Madrid advanced to the last four despite a 2-1 home defeat (3-2 aggregate win) to Barcelona. The result preserved coach Diego Simeone's remarkable home knockout record in the competition -- 11 wins and six draws. Their only 'home' defeat under Simeone came against Chelsea in 2021 -- a tie played in Romania due to Covid restrictions.





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## ENERGY CRISIS Tarique seeks \$2b from dev partners

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday sought a US\$2 billion fund from development partners to meet Bangladesh's immediate energy needs and safeguard economic stability amid the ongoing global energy crisis.

"The situation before us demands urgency, solidarity, and decisive action. Immediate support for the most vulnerable countries must be at the top of our collective agenda," he said while addressing the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) Plus Online Summit.

"We urge the international community to respond swiftly and positively to this call," he added.

The prime minister said the energy crisis is a stark reminder of the shared vulnerability and interdependence of countries, regardless of size or strength.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



An unusually light traffic at the GPO intersection in the capital yesterday, a week day. Locals opined that it was the result of it being the first working day after the Pehela Baishakh holiday and the ongoing fuel crisis.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Interim govt patronised mob violence Says adviser Zahed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Incidents of mob violence were given patronage during the interim government period, creating a tendency among people to think they could take the law into their own hands, said Zahed Ur Rahman, prime minister's adviser for information and broadcasting.

"If we want to work effectively against mob violence, then the incidents that took place during the interim government period in the name of mobs, or in a planned way, will also have to be examined," he said yesterday at the government's weekly press briefing on the overall situation in the country.

Action will certainly be taken in cases where there is social consensus, he said.

On the Kushtia incident, in which a sufi pir was beaten and hacked to death, Zahed said the government is looking into the matter very seriously in every respect.

A case has already been filed, though there has been some delay and suspects have been identified. Measures are being taken accordingly, he said.

The government is also reviewing the administrative failure behind

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



## BNP to go tough on grassroots

'Says misconduct is damaging govt's image'

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP high command has decided to take a tougher stance against a section of its grassroots leaders and activists amid growing complaints that their misconduct is damaging the ruling party's image and giving the opposition more room to criticise.

Party leaders said disciplinary action has been ongoing, but enforcement slowed in many areas, prompting the leadership to push for stricter and more active measures.

Senior leaders said the issue has now reached the highest level, with the leadership making it clear it will no longer be treated as a routine organisational problem. Instead, the party plans to combine disciplinary action with legal steps against those found involved in misconduct.

The decision comes amid growing concerns within the party that a section of grassroots BNP members have been involved in extortion and other criminal activities since the party took office, damaging the government's image.

A senior BNP leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "We do not tolerate violations of party rules.

However, after the election, enforcement slowed in many areas, allowing some leaders to flout party instructions and engage in misconduct. That is why we have decided to take a tougher, more active stance against them."

According to party insiders, the high command has instructed senior leaders of the BNP and its affiliated bodies to remain cautious, monitor the situation closely, and take preventive steps on the ground.

Tarique Rahman, no one will be spared."

Party sources said the high command has received numerous complaints from grassroots units in multiple districts about local leaders clashing over tenders, while some have also been accused of unlawful activities linked to control of business establishments.

They added that such complaints have reinforced a growing perception within the

**The decision comes amid growing concerns within the party that a section of grassroots BNP members have been involved in extortion and other criminal activities since the party took office.**

BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Emran Saleh Prince said, "If anyone tries to use the party's name for unethical acts, action will be taken against them... Party leaders and activists have been instructed not to get involved in any unethical activities for business interests or jobs.

"...There will be no leniency in this regard. If any misconduct comes to the notice of our prime minister [BNP Chairman

party of indiscipline at the local level.

Following the party's landslide victory in the February 12 election, Prime Minister and BNP Chief Tarique Rahman on February 16 directed lawmakers to maintain coordination with grassroots leaders and ensure all political activities remain within legal boundaries.

He said that any wrongdoing at the local level would damage

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## PIR KILLING Jamaat men among the accused

Cops yet to make any arrest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Four days after the brutal killing of Pir Abdur Rahman Shamim in Kushtia's Daulatpur upazila, police are yet to arrest any of the four named accused, two of whom are affiliated with Jamaat and Chhatra Shibir.

The 52-year-old pir, Abdur Rahman Shamim, was beaten and hacked to death by a mob of 300 to 400 people at his darbar (shrine) in Philipnagar of the upazila on April 11, following allegations of hurting religious sentiments. Two others were injured in the incident.

His brother Fazlur Rahman filed a case with Daulatpur Police Station early Tuesday, accusing four named and 180-200 unidentified persons.

The named accused are Khaja Ahmed, former president of Kushtia district unit Islami Chhatra Shibir and a full member (rukn) of Jamaat; Jamaat activist Rajib Mistri; Khelafat Majlis's

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

## PLANNING COMMISSION Advisory panel outlines overhaul of governance

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

A high-level advisory committee, formed by the Planning Commission to develop a sustainable development strategy, plans to recommend the government introduce a bicameral parliament, reinstate the caretaker government system, and ensure media freedom.

Led by Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, the committee has 35 members, including leading economists, public health and education experts, and heads of three major trade bodies.

It was formed on April 8 to "accelerate the country's economic development and formulate strategies to implement the government's manifesto", as well as "provide necessary advice and guidance to the General Economics Division of the Bangladesh Planning Commission".

MORE ON BI SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## 'They filed a false inquest report'

Father, who asked 'how many bullets does it take to kill a boy', tells ICT-2

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

A grieving father, who once shook the nation's conscience by asking a senior police officer, "How many bullets does it take to kill a boy, sir?", yesterday alleged that police, under pressure from senior officials, filed a false inquest report over his son's killing during the July 2024 mass uprising.

Standing in the witness box of the International Crimes Tribunal-2, Sub-Inspector Moynal Hossain Bhuiyan broke down in tears as he recounted his son's killing and the discovery of his body.

Imam Hasan Tayim Bhuiyan was shot near Kajla Bridge in Jatrabari on July 20. Moynal said the body bore multiple bullet wounds on

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

## 'We don't know what happened to them'

Families of 250 missing in Andaman boat tragedy urge govt action

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Families are worried after a Malaysia-bound fishing trawler carrying around 300 Bangladeshis and Rohingyas from Teknaf capsized in the Andaman Sea last week.

They said they could not contact their relatives for eight to 10 days.

Local sources said the victims, Bangladeshis and Rohingyas, were reportedly lured by promises of jobs or forced or trafficked into the perilous journey.

The incident has drawn international attention.

In a joint statement, United Nations High

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



A child crying in distress at a measles ward at the DNCC hospital in Mohakhali yesterday. At least 166 children have died so far of suspected measles.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN



**বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংকের স্টল পরিদর্শন করলেন মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী তারেক রহমান**

কৃষি সম্প্রসারণ অধিদপ্তরের উদ্যোগে আয়োজিত "কৃষি কার্ড বিতরণ কার্যক্রম ও কৃষি মেলা ২০২৬" এর উদ্বোধন উপলক্ষে গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী তারেক রহমান টাঙ্গাইল পৌর উদ্যানে স্থাপিত বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংকের স্টল পরিদর্শন করেন। স্টল পরিদর্শনকালে মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী দেশের কৃষি উন্নয়ন, কৃষি ঋণ বিতরণ কার্যক্রম এবং প্রান্তিক কৃষকদের জন্য বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংকের বিভিন্ন উদ্ভাবনী ও সহায়ক উদ্যোগ সম্পর্কে বিস্তারিত অবগত হন। এ সময় বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংকের ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক সফিয়া বিনতে আলী মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে অবহিত করেন যে, তাঁর যোগাযোগ্য দশ হাজার টাকা পর্যন্ত কৃষি ঋণ মওকুফ কর্মসূচির আওতায় মোট মওকুফকৃত ঋণের প্রায় ৫২ শতাংশই বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংকের। দেশের মোট কৃষি ঋণের ৪০% কৃষি ব্যাংক কর্তৃক অর্ধায়িত এবং বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক ২০২৫ সালে প্রায় ৩.১৩ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার বৈদেশিক রেমিট্যান্স আহরণ করে দেশের সকল কৃষকদের মধ্যে দ্বিতীয় শীর্ষ স্থান অর্জন করেছে। এই অর্ধবছরে ৪.০০ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলারে উন্নীত করা সম্ভব হবে বলেও তিনি মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে অবহিত করেন। তিনি আরও বলেন, আমরা উজ্জীবিত এবং "সবার আগে বাংলাদেশ" ধারণ করি এবং সেভাবে এগিয়ে যাবো। মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী স্টল পরিদর্শনকালে বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংকের কার্যক্রম সম্পর্কে অবহিত হয়ে গভীর সন্তোষ প্রকাশ করেন এবং রেমিট্যান্স আহরণসহ কৃষি ও কৃষকের কল্যাণে বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক এ ধরনের কার্যক্রম অব্যাহত রাখা হবে বলে আশাবাদ ব্যক্ত করেন। এ সময় বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংকের উপব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক মোঃ আঃ রহিম ও মোহাঃ খালেদুজ্জামান এবং মহাব্যবস্থাপকসহ সন্ত্রিস্ট কর্মকর্তাবৃন্দ উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

**বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক**  
গণমানুষের ব্যাংক

GD-833