

I have ordered the US Navy to shoot and kill any boat ... that is putting mines in the waters of the Strait of Hormuz.
Donald Trump

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

Star

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Power cuts worsen amid searing heat

Dhaka city to endure 110MW of load shedding, state minister tells JS

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government continues to struggle to meet electricity demand amid a sweltering heatwave, with rural Bangladesh suffering frequent and lengthy outages as power generation remains under strain due to fuel shortages.

Bangladesh's power system largely depends on imported gas, coal, and furnace oil, supplies of which have fallen since the US-Israel war on Iran began.

Consumers in most rural areas reported seven to eight hours of power cuts a day, some up to 10 hours. People in urban areas, outside Dhaka, are experiencing two to three hours.

To reduce the disparity, the government decided to increase load shedding in urban areas as well, State Minister for Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources Aninda Islam Amit told parliament yesterday.

As part of the initiative, 110 megawatts (MW) trial load shedding will be introduced in Dhaka, he added.

Officials said the shortfall may translate into one to two hours of power cuts in Dhaka city.

As per the Power Development Board's

PDB officials said a 110MW shortfall may translate into one to two hours of power cuts in Dhaka city.

forecasts, in Dhaka district, areas under the Rural Electrification Board (REB) were facing around 500MW of power cuts yesterday. However, no load shedding was forecast for Dhaka Power Distribution Company and Dhaka Electric Supply Company, the two distributors in the capital. REB supplies to 75 percent of total electricity consumers in the country.

Aninda said it was not right that urban residents would remain comfortable while rural people suffered. He added that a discrimination-free Bangladesh was the spirit of the July uprising.

"To eliminate this gap, we have decided to enforce load shedding in cities if necessary, so that farmers in villages can get adequate electricity for irrigation," he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



HIGHEST TEMPERATURE IN KHULNA
37.5°C

A SIP OF RELIEF... An elderly man, his shirt drenched in sweat, sits under the shade of a tree and rehydrates on a hot summer day in Khulna yesterday. A mild to moderate heatwave is sweeping across 20 districts, including Dhaka, with children, the elderly, and low-income groups suffering the most. The photo was taken in Debitala village of Botiaghata upazila.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

UNBOWED

The Daily Star
CELEBRATING

35

YEARS of

Journalism without fear or favour

The Daily Star begins its two-day 35th anniversary celebrations at its office today.

Founded on January 14, 1991, the newspaper has grown into one of the country's most trusted news sources and the largest circulating English-language daily.

The Daily Star pays tribute to its readers and patrons who have stood by it for over three decades.

Govt, opposition team up on fuel crisis

Committee formed with 5 MPs from each side

These 10 individuals will be able to sit together and discuss the issues. If there are any suggestions, those will reach the government through this committee, and if the government finds any of them realistic, it will certainly take steps to implement them.

TARIQUE RAHMAN



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to form a 10-member parliamentary committee comprising ruling and opposition MPs to address the ongoing fuel situation.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday proposed the initiative in parliament, naming five representatives from the ruling side.

They are Energy Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku, State Minister for Energy Aninda Islam Amit, Lakshampur-4 MP ABM Ashraf Uddin, Manikganj-2 MP Moinul Islam Khan, and Shariatpur-3 MP Miah Nuruddin Ahmad Apu.

He further proposed that Energy Minister Iqbal Hassan serve as chair of the committee.

The prime minister urged the opposition to nominate five members from their side.

"These 10 individuals will be able to sit together and discuss the issues. If there are any suggestions, those will reach the government through this committee, and if the government finds any of them realistic, it will certainly take steps to implement them," he said.

Opposition Leader Shafiqur Rahman welcomed the move, thanking the PM for taking the matter positively. "We hope parliament will become the centre for resolving all national problems. This marks a new journey for the House, and we will soon submit names," he said.

Later, Shafiqur proposed five

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Bus fare hiked by about 5%

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday raised bus fares by 11 paise per kilometre following the recent hike in diesel prices, although the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association submitted a note of dissent over the decision.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Sheikh Rabiul Alam announced the new fares after a meeting with transport owners and other stakeholders at the ministry in the capital.

The revised fares took effect from yesterday, while the minimum fares of Tk 10 in metropolitan areas and Tk 8 outside will remain unchanged.

Under the new rates, fares in Dhaka and Chattogram metropolitan areas have increased from Tk 2.45 to Tk 2.56 per kilometre, while fares for 52-seat inter-district buses have risen from Tk 2.12 to Tk 2.23 per kilometre.

In areas under the Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority, the fare has gone up from Tk 2.32 to Tk 2.43 per kilometre.

The fare from Sayedabad to Chattogram and Cox's Bazar has been set at Tk 1,300, up from Tk 1,249, according to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority fare chart. Within the capital, a trip from Mirpur-12 to Jatrabari will now cost Tk 51, compared to Tk 49 previously.

ASM Ahmed Khokon, additional secretary general of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, expressed dissatisfaction over the fare hike.

The association had initially proposed a 28-paise increase, which was later revised to 22 paise during the discussions.

The transport sector does not depend solely on fuel costs; there are many other operating expenses

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

THE THIRD VIEW



When independent newspapers burn, so does democracy

As The Daily Star celebrates its 35th anniversary, Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam reflects on the arson attacks on

THE DAILY STAR AND PROTHOM ALO offices on the night of December 18, 2025, arguing that such acts strike at the heart of democracy. He questions the silence and inaction of those in power, defends the role of a free press, and calls for a renewed commitment to rights, inclusion, and a future driven by human potential and technology.

READ THE ARTICLE ON PAGE 6

Iran tightens its grip on Hormuz as talks uncertain

Starts taking tolls from tankers; Trump orders sinking of any boats laying mines in the strait

US boards another supertanker in Indian Ocean

Iran says talks only possible if Washington lifts blockade

Experts say Iran economy looks set to withstand blockade

UN says war pushing more than 30m back into poverty



An Iranian gunboat.

AGENCIES

Iran showcased its tightened grip over the Strait of Hormuz yesterday, releasing footage of commandos storming a large cargo ship and announcing its first proceeds from tolls imposed on vessels transiting the waterway.

With planned peace talks hanging in the balance, more fuel-hungry airlines cancelled flights, oil prices opened higher, and the keenly watched S&P Global PMI index showed eurozone business activity shrinking for the first time in 16 months.

Iran vowed it will keep the strait closed to all but a trickle of approved vessels for as long as the United States blockades its ports, brushing off demands from President Donald Trump that it buckle to US threats and both reopen Hormuz and surrender its enriched uranium.

While strikes around the region have mostly ceased since the two-week-old truce began, there has been no letup in the stand-off over the crucial trade route, with both sides seeking economic leverage — only for Trump to announce an indefinite ceasefire to create space for more Pakistani-mediated talks.

Iranian state television broadcast footage overnight of masked troops pulling up in a grey speedboat alongside the MSC Francesca, climbing a rope ladder to a shell door in the hull and jumping through, brandishing rifles.

The footage, presented with an action-movie style soundtrack and no commentary, also included views of another ship, the Epaminondas. Iran said it had captured both on Wednesday, accusing them of trying to cross the strait without permits.

Washington, which has been confronting Iranian ships in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4




Economic outlook fragile: PRI

B1



Lebanon accuses Israel of war crime over journo killings

P5



মশক নিয়ন্ত্রণে প্রয়োজন জনগণের অংশগ্রহণ

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

নগর ভবন, ৫, ফিনিক্স রোড, রমনা, ঢাকা

নিয়মিত প্রতিদিন জমা পানি ফেলে দিন

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, 'পশু জবাই ও মাংসের মান নিয়ন্ত্রণ আইন, ২০১১' এবং 'পশু জবাই ও মাংসের মান নিয়ন্ত্রণ বিধিমালা, ২০২১' অনুযায়ী, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের আওতাধীন/মালিকানাধীন বিভিন্ন গবাদি পশুর মাংসের দোকানসমূহ হতে প্রতি জবাইকৃত পশু হতে নির্দিষ্ট হারে ফি (ছাগল/ভেড়া ১০ টাকা, গরু ৫০ টাকা ও মহিষ ৭৫ টাকা) আদায় করার নির্দেশনা রয়েছে। উপর্যুক্ত নির্দেশনা প্রতিপালন করার জন্য ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের আওতাধীন সকল মাংস ব্যবসায়ীকে বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

কোন ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠান উক্ত নির্দেশনা অমান্য করলে বিদ্যমান আইন ও বিধিবিধান অনুযায়ী সংশ্লিষ্ট পক্ষের বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

নিজ আঙ্গিনা পরিষ্কার রাখি, সবাই মিলে সুস্থ থাকি

কর্তৃপক্ষ

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/২২৭/২০২৫-২০২৬

GD-905

New govt faces 'a daunting set of challenges'

Int'l Crisis Group urges swift economic, governance reforms

UNB, Dhaka

The International Crisis Group yesterday said Bangladesh's newly elected government faces a "daunting set of challenges", but how it handles these competing pressures will shape the country's trajectory in the years ahead.

"If it can revive the economy, the government will create space to pursue the rest of its ambitious agenda, including improving public services and strengthening the rule of law."

It added that if the government fails to create the jobs needed to meet the aspirations of young Bangladeshis or struggles to ensure clean governance, the country could face another bout of instability and political upheaval.

The organisation said the BNP should take advantage of the "post-election honeymoon period" to move quickly on economic, governance and security reforms.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Amnaa al-Abed mourns over the bodies of her sons, Salah and Abdullah, killed in a reported Israeli airstrike the previous night during their funeral at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City yesterday. Gaza's civil defence agency said an Israeli airstrike targeted a group of civilians in a northern part of the Palestinian territory late on April 22, killing five people, including three children.

PHOTO: AFP

Power cuts worsen

FROM PAGE 1

The decision was made on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's instruction upon consultation with opposition leader Shafiqur Rahman.

WORSENING POWER CUTS

Data showed the power situation has been deteriorating.

Yesterday, as of 8:00pm, the demand stood at 16,237MW while the production was 13,988MW, leaving a 2,249MW shortfall, PDB data showed. Outages continued throughout the day, with the highest load shedding recorded at 2,483MW around 7:00pm.

On Tuesday, daytime peak demand reached 15,500MW at noon, against a generation of 14,069MW, leaving a shortfall of 1,431MW, according to the PDB. The shortage exceeded 1,000MW almost every hour that day, peaking at 1,840MW at 9:00pm.

PDB mentioned that 72 out of 143 power plants had shortages of gas, coal, or furnace oil.

To manage the shortfall, the PDB had to increase power generation from costly furnace oil based plants, said officials.

Furnace oil based plants yesterday produced 3,000MW. They had been producing around 1,000MW for most of the time this month.

The situation worsened after one of the two units of India's Adani power plant, with a combined capacity of 1,435MW, went offline due to technical issues. Besides, imports from India, except Adani, also decreased to 800MW from 1,100MW yesterday.

Three of Bangladesh's eight coal-fired plants are also running below capacity: SS Power (1,224MW) in Chattogram and RNPL

(1,320MW) in Patuakhali due to coal shortages and Barapukuria due to mechanical issues.

Power Division Joint Secretary Umme Rehana said generation is expected to improve once these plants resume full operation. The Adani unit is expected to resume operation by April 26, SS Power by April 28, and RNPL by early May, according to her.

"We expect an increase of around 1,982MW in generation from coal-fired plants from the first week of May," she said at a briefing at the Secretariat.

Even then, total generation may reach 17,000MW against a projected summer demand of 18,500MW.

Meanwhile, the government plans to reopen the Ashuganj fertiliser factory on May 1, diverting around 50 million cubic feet per day (Mcf/d) of gas from power plants.

Currently, gas fired plants receive about 900Mcf/d, producing up to 5,400MW.

A drop to 850Mcf/d could reduce output by 400MW, according to officials.

Although installed capacity in gas-fired plants is 12,154MW, nearly 60 percent may remain unused this summer due to shortfalls in domestic production and reduced imports.

"We need around 2,000Mcf/d of gas to run the plants at capacity, but the Energy Division cannot supply that volume as gas also goes to industries and fertiliser production," Rehana said.

Acknowledging public suffering, State Minister Aninda said the crisis is not a short-term issue but the result of accumulated problems.

"Despite higher installed capacity on paper, there

remains a mismatch with actual generation," he told parliament.

He said gas demand is 3,800Mcf/d, while domestic production is 1,616Mcf/d and 950Mcf/d comes from imports, leaving a shortfall of 1,164Mcf/d.

"Even if we had the financial capacity, it is not possible to increase imports immediately due to infrastructure limitations," he said, adding that expanding energy infrastructure is among the government's priorities under its 180 day action plan.

VILLAGES BEAR THE BRUNT

Across districts, prolonged outages continued to disrupt daily life, farming, and healthcare.

In Noakhali, consumers reported up to seven to eight hours of load shedding daily.

"In 24 hours, we don't get more than five to six hours of electricity. Once it comes, it stays only 30-40 minutes," said Poli Akhter, a homemaker from Chatkhil. "We can't store food properly, and even IPS batteries don't get charged."

Farmers and students are among the worst affected.

"SSC examinees are suffering the most," said Abu Sayeed Ratan, a schoolteacher from Mymensingh.

In Khulna's Batiaghata, shrimp farmer Prosad Roy said outages of four to seven hours daily are affecting production. "Even an hour's outage can kill shrimp. Running generators is too costly," he said.

Similar accounts came from Rajshahi and Cumilla, where residents reported sleepless nights, disrupted studies, and harvesting problems.

[Our correspondents in respective districts contributed to the report]

Iran tightens its grip on Hormuz as talks uncertain

FROM PAGE 1

international waters to enforce a blockade of its own, said it had boarded another tanker, the Majestic, in the Indian Ocean yesterday, an apparent reference to a supertanker last reported off the coast of Sri Lanka carrying 2 million barrels of crude.

Amid diplomatic efforts to restart the failed talks, a senior Iranian source told Reuters that Iran could consider attending a meeting in Pakistan, but only if the US blockade is lifted and seized Iranian ships are released.

In an early morning social media post, U.S. President Donald Trump said it was Washington that was in "total control" of the strait, which he described as "Scaled up Tight," until such time as Iran is able to make a DEAL!!!

The US blockade has not, however, halted Iran's own use of the strait, according to data analytics firm Vortexa, which said about 10.7 million barrels of Iranian crude exports had crossed it and left the area blockaded by the US Navy between April 13 and 21.

"A complete ceasefire only has meaning if it is not violated through a naval blockade," said Iran's parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who led Tehran's delegation at the first round of talks. "Reopening the Strait of Hormuz is not possible amid a blatant violation of the ceasefire."

Ghalibaf's deputy, Hamidrez Hajibabei said Iran has received its first revenue from tolls it is imposing on ships seeking to cross Hormuz, a route that in peacetime accounts for a fifth of the world's oil and gas flows, and other vital commodities. However, he did not disclose any information regarding the nationality of the ship or ships.

Analysts said Tehran, in particular its headline

leaders associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), believes that Iran's blockade gives it sufficient economic leverage to force Washington to back down on its main demands in eventual peace talks.

Meanwhile, the global economy is facing ever more tangible strains from the energy shock as factories grapple with soaring production costs and activity weakens even in services sectors, major surveys showed on

The global economy is facing ever more tangible strains from the energy shock as factories grapple with soaring production costs and activity weakens even in services sectors, major surveys showed on Thursday.

Thursday.

Trump also said he had ordered the Navy to "shoot and kill" Iranian boats laying mines in the strait, and step up demining activity, though he did not mention other means Iran has used to block shipping, such as speedboats, missiles and drones.

Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejdi said the merchant vessels Iran had seized had "faced the law", while Iranian speedboats and marine drones were sheltering in sea caves off an island, keeping the US Navy from approaching.

Trump cancelled threats to restart attacks on Iran in the ceasefire's final hours on Tuesday, but refuses to lift the naval blockade. There has been no formal extension of the ceasefire, and no plans have been announced for further talks.

Pakistan, which hosted talks this month and had been preparing for a second

round before it was called off on Tuesday, was still in touch with both sides, a Pakistani government source said. Iranian officials were still declining to commit to attending over the US blockade, the source added.

Meanwhile, in the latest wartime shakeup at the Pentagon, John Phelan, a financier appointed by Trump as navy secretary, was ousted late on Wednesday. Two sources told Reuters he had been fired over disagreements around shipbuilding and bad relations with officials, including Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

Experts say a US naval blockade of Iranian ports is likely to squeeze Iran's oil output in the coming weeks, but claims it will throw the Islamic republic into economic free fall remain premature.

They said the US blockade is likely to fail at least in the short term.

"If the blockade lasts for more than two or three months, it can cause more damage" to Iran, economic analyst and professor at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran Saeed Laylaz told AFP.

"If Iran suffers any damage, the damage to the countries in the southern Persian Gulf will definitely be greater," he added.

Arne Lohmann Rasmussen, chief analyst at Global Risk Management said Iran "was expected to run out of storage capacity within approximately one month, but it may already be forced to shut in part of its oil production within a couple of weeks".

Jamie Ingram, managing editor of Middle East Economic Survey (MEES), said the disruptions will hurt Iran.

"But Iran has also proven its ability to withstand huge oil-revenue declines during previous rounds of sanctions. I would not underestimate the regime's resilience in this regard," he added.

FROM PRESS GALLERY



Begin Dhaka load shedding from JS Bhaban

Shafiqur suggests in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leader Shafiqur Rahman yesterday proposed that the government's planned load-shedding in Dhaka should begin at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

He made the suggestion while taking the floor in the House around 8:00 pm, hours after State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Aninda Islam Amit gave a statement on the power crisis.

"It is not desirable that those living in urban areas remain comfortable while rural people suffer. The spirit of the July uprising calls for a discrimination-free Bangladesh. There should be no disparity between urban and rural areas," Aninda said while speaking under Rule 300 of the Rules of Procedure.

Following discussions with the opposition leader, the government decided to conduct an initial trial of 110 MW of load-shedding in Dhaka, he announced.

Referring to Aninda's statement, Shafiqur added, "I would request that this begin from parliament itself... If other parts of Dhaka face one hour of load shedding, then there should be one here too. Let it begin here, so people understand that we are trying to build a Bangladesh based on equality."

Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed responded, "Parliament must continue functioning. The House cannot be shut down."

Shafiqur then clarified, "I meant the parliament, not the parliamentary session. There are many working hours outside the session. That is what I meant."

Govt to publish white paper on education sector

Irregularities, corruption during AL era to be probed, says Milon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon yesterday told parliament that a white paper will be published on irregularities and corruption in the education sector during the Awami League era.

His announcement came in response to a query by Pabna-5 MP Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas during the question-and-answer session chaired by Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad.

Milon said the government has placed policy emphasis on investigating irregularities and corruption in the education sector from the 2008-09 fiscal year to 2024-25, adding that the education ministry has already instructed relevant authorities to thoroughly examine possible financial and administrative lapses, along with managerial weaknesses, and prepare a consolidated report.

The minister added that once the investigation and verification process is complete, the government will take steps to draft and publish the white paper in phases.

However, given the broad scope of the inquiry, he noted that it is not possible at this stage to set a specific timeline.

OVER 92,000 TEACHER POSTS VACANT

The education minister also said the country's secondary institutions are suffering from around 92,081 vacant teacher posts across government and non-government institutions in general, madrasa, and technical streams.

Replying to queries from MPs at the question-and-answer session, he added that 77,227 posts remain vacant in private (MPO-listed) educational institutions.

Through the e-requisition process, the ministry has compiled a nationwide list of vacancies, and the Non-Government Teachers' Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA) will soon issue a recruitment circular to gradually fill the posts, he said.

In another response, Milon said that technical education institutions have 15,844 sanctioned teacher posts, of which 7,074 are occupied and 8,770 are vacant.

The minister added that recruitment is already underway for 1,552 positions, while the Directorate of Technical Education has sent a requisition to the Public Service Commission to fill another 1,579 posts.

He said three government Alia madrasas currently have 114 vacant teaching posts, while non-government madrasas face 1,354 vacancies for superintendents and 1,774 for assistant superintendents.

Milon further informed parliament that government secondary schools have 2,842 vacant posts, assuring that steps are being taken to fill them through the PSC in government schools and through NTRCA in non-government institutions.

Govt to form a cell

FROM PAGE 12

implementation, including those dealing with information technology, law enforcement, and education.

The initiative comes at a time when the government has identified a rise in online harassment, particularly targeting women and young people.

Speaking to this correspondent, an adviser to the prime minister said cyberbullying has become a serious social issue, with many women facing abuse, threats, and harassment on social media platforms.

"This is not only a digital problem; it is a social problem. It affects people's mental health and their ability to participate freely in public life," he said, adding that while existing government units are already working on cybercrime issues, a more coordinated and centralised approach is needed.

Another PM adviser with the rank of state minister said cyberbullying has become a serious concern in the current context, with ministers, their family members, and women leaders increasingly targeted by coordinated smear campaigns, which need to be put a stop to.

PMO insiders said the planned system will place

special focus on crimes against women and children, online stalking, identity misuse, and abusive content on social media.

There are also plans to engage with major social media companies to improve moderation in the Bangla language, allowing harmful content to be identified and removed faster.

Alongside enforcement, the initiative also includes an awareness and education component. Schools and universities are expected to introduce practical digital safety training, especially during student orientation programmes.

Teachers may be trained to act as "safety focal points", providing guidance to students on how to deal with online risks. Annual awareness campaigns are also being considered to help young users navigate digital spaces responsibly, PMO sources said.

However, the complaint-receiving mechanism of the cell is yet to be finalised. Sources said the proposed cyber cell will operate as a central coordination hub, receiving complaints through a hotline and online portal and directing them to relevant agencies for immediate action.

Once a complaint is filed, trained responders will

verify the case, classify the type of abuse, and forward it to specialised units, including law enforcement, digital forensics teams, and regulatory bodies.

For urgent cases involving threats, harassment, or the spread of private images, authorities will prioritise rapid response, including content removal requests and victim protection measures.

The cell is also expected to maintain direct communication channels with major social media platforms to flag harmful content in both English and Bangla and seek quicker takedowns.

Officials said a tracking system will allow complainants to monitor the progress of their cases, aiming to improve transparency and trust in the system.

In cases involving coordinated smear campaigns or repeated harassment, the cell may initiate deeper investigations by linking multiple complaints and identifying organised networks.

The proposed initiative is in line with the BNP's election manifesto, which promised the establishment of a National Cyber Security Centre to coordinate efforts across government and private sectors.

Bus fare hiked by about 5%

FROM PAGE 1

involved, he said.

"Since the current government has been in office for only two months, we have accepted its decision out of respect. We have officially submitted a note of dissent over our concerns."

On the other hand, the increase applies only to diesel-run buses, while fares for CNG-run vehicles remain unchanged.

The fares would be adjusted automatically in line with changes in fuel prices.

Khokon also warned of strict monitoring to prevent overcharging.

Meanwhile, fares were

Minimum fare unchanged at Tk 10

Fares rise in Dhaka, Chattogram cities 4.6%

Inter-district fares rise by 5.1%

Operators hiked fare before announcement

already increased before the official announcement.

On routes such as Gulistan to Farmgate, where the fixed fare is Tk 13, passengers were charged between Tk 15 and Tk 20.

Similar irregularities were reported on long-distance routes, with operators citing fuel shortages and rising costs.

Fuel shortages and long queues at filling stations have reduced trips while increasing operational costs, prompting fare hikes, said Enamul Haque Liton, a counter master at a Fulbaria bus terminal operator.

Meanwhile, Mozammel Haque Chowdhury, Secretary General of the Bangladesh Passenger Welfare Association, urged stricter enforcement to ensure discipline on roads, prevent accidents and stop overcharging.



Take steps to cultivate reading habits PM directs authorities

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday directed authorities to take initiatives to cultivate reading habits among students nationwide.

The directive came at a meeting at the Secretariat with Bishwo Shahitto Kendro and ministers of education, primary and mass education, and cultural affairs. It was decided that the government would work jointly with the organisation to expand reading programmes across the country.

The meeting, attended by Bishwo Shahitto Kendro

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

DMP to install 11,000 CCTV cameras Mohammadpur alone to get 700

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police is planning to install around 11,000 CCTV cameras across the capital, including about 700 in Mohammadpur, to strengthen surveillance and curb crime.

The initiative will also introduce data-driven policing and expand digital services to improve



monitoring and help identify suspects more quickly, said DMP Acting Commissioner Md Sarwar while inaugurating the Basila Police Outpost in Mohammadpur.

An "Open House Day" was held on the occasion, where residents raised concerns and shared suggestions with police.

Sarwar said there is a plan to set up a new police station in Basila within the next year. Residents and businesses will also be encouraged to install cameras at homes, shops and institutions to support investigations.

Police are introducing an app-based system to store information on hotel and restaurant owners, managers and tenants.

He said coordinated drives are underway to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Victims' families and labour leaders from several organisations light candles at a memorial in front of Rana Plaza yesterday to commemorate those killed in the 2013 tragedy.

PHOTO: AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

2013 RANA PLAZA TRAGEDY

Survivors still battling for survival

Lack of compensation, rehabilitation worsens their plight; rights groups slam govt, factory owners

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

Even 13 years after the Rana Plaza collapse, injured workers are living in inhumane conditions due to a lack of compensation, rehabilitation, and proper medical treatment.

On April 24, 2013, the 10-storey Rana Plaza building collapsed, killing 1,136 workers and injuring over 2,000.

More than a decade on, families of the deceased and those injured continue to suffer, as many have not received adequate compensation. At the same time, those responsible for the collapse have yet to be properly punished.

“Due to a lack of money, I cannot buy necessary medicine. I have not received any compensation. I do not even dream of living anymore. If I had received compensation, my life might have been different.”

Taslima, 55
A survivor

Nilufa Yasmin, a sewing operator on the seventh floor, survived but was left seriously injured and unable to return to work.

“I have not been able to return to my normal life after suffering spinal and head injuries. I have received only a nominal grant. None of our demands has been met,” she told The Daily Star.

“My husband, a daily wage labourer, is now also ill and unable to work. We are a family of six. I have taken loans to support my children's education. If the government provides jobs for my son and daughter, I will not ask for anything more.”

Masuda, 31, who also worked on the seventh floor, sustained severe injuries to her spine, head, and legs.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

13 years on, justice yet to be served

Failure to produce witnesses delaying proceedings



EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Thirteen years after the collapse of Rana Plaza, justice remains elusive as trials in two cases continue to stall due to the prosecution's failure to produce witnesses.

At least 1,136 people, mostly garment workers, were killed and over 2,500 were injured when the nine-storey building collapsed in Savar on April 24, 2013 -- the deadliest garment sector disaster in history.

Court records show that 145 of 594 witnesses have testified so far in the murder case against 41 accused, including building owner Sohel Rana, since the trial began in 2016.

However, proceedings in a separate case over building code violations have yet to begin.

On March 30 this year, the Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court-8 of Dhaka issued non-bailable warrants against 50 witnesses and set April 30 for recording statements.

The court also expressed dissatisfaction over the prosecution's repeated failure to produce witnesses

despite multiple summonses and warrants issued over a long time. It questioned why these orders were not executed and why the police failed to submit reports.

“Due to the absence of important witnesses, the trial is being prolonged, and justice is also being delayed,” the court said, directing police to ensure the witnesses' presence on the next date.

“If the police authorities fail to produce the witnesses on the scheduled date and the case remains unproven as a result, the responsibility shall lie with the police department,” the court warned.

According to the prosecution, till September 28 last year, 96 witnesses testified before the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court after it framed charges against the 41 accused in the murder case on July 18, 2016.

The case was later transferred to Court-8, which has since recorded statements of 49 more witnesses after receiving the case records on October 12 last year.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Govt eyes scaling up of childcare, support services

Minister says move aims to boost women's workforce participation, create jobs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to expand childcare and caregiving services across the country to support working families, address the needs of vulnerable groups, and create new employment opportunities, said Abu Zafar Md Zahid Hossain, minister for women and children affairs and social welfare.

He made the announcement yesterday at the National Care Conclave 2026, jointly organised by ILO, UN Women, and the Asian Development Bank, in coordination with the Ministries of Women and Children Affairs, Labour and Employment, and Social Welfare, at a city hotel.

The minister said daycare centres are already operating within ministry premises and in different parts of Dhaka with funding from both development and revenue budgets, and the government now plans to scale up these services.

“Very soon, we will expand beyond Dhaka to divisional headquarters and gradually to most districts,” he said.

“Within 180 days, we aim to cover some divisional headquarters and Dhaka, including facilities in hospitals and other institutions, to ensure accessible childcare for working parents.”

He added that the government is also working to strengthen support systems for persons with disabilities and the elderly.

No more duty-free car facility for MPs Draft of amended act gets cabinet nod

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to end the duty-free car facility for members of parliament, as part of efforts to cut costs and review privileges amid current economic conditions.

The decision was taken at the cabinet meeting held last night, which was chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

The draft of the Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Allowances) (Amendment) Act, 2026, was given final approval at the meeting to abolish the existing duty-free car benefit for MPs.

The remuneration and allowances of MPs are

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

‘Exposing children to measles outbreak a rights violation’ MJF urges immediate, coordinated action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation has expressed deep concern over the ongoing measles outbreak, calling it a serious public health crisis and urging immediate, coordinated action.

In a statement issued yesterday, the organisation said the outbreak poses a direct threat to children's rights to health and life.

Citing the Directorate General of Health Services, MJF said 28,334 suspected measles cases have been reported since March 15, of which 4,059 were confirmed.

Stressing the severity of the situation, it added that 39 deaths from confirmed measles and 194 from suspected measles were reported during the same period.

While noting that a nationwide vaccination campaign targeting around 1.8 crore children aged between six months and under five years began on April 20, MJF expressed concern over shortages of testing kits and a prolonged suspension in vaccine imports.

The organisation also referred to the prime

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



2026

BTKG

বাংলাদেশ আন্তর্জাতিক টেক্সটাইল,
নিটিং ও গার্মেন্ট শিল্প প্রদর্শনী

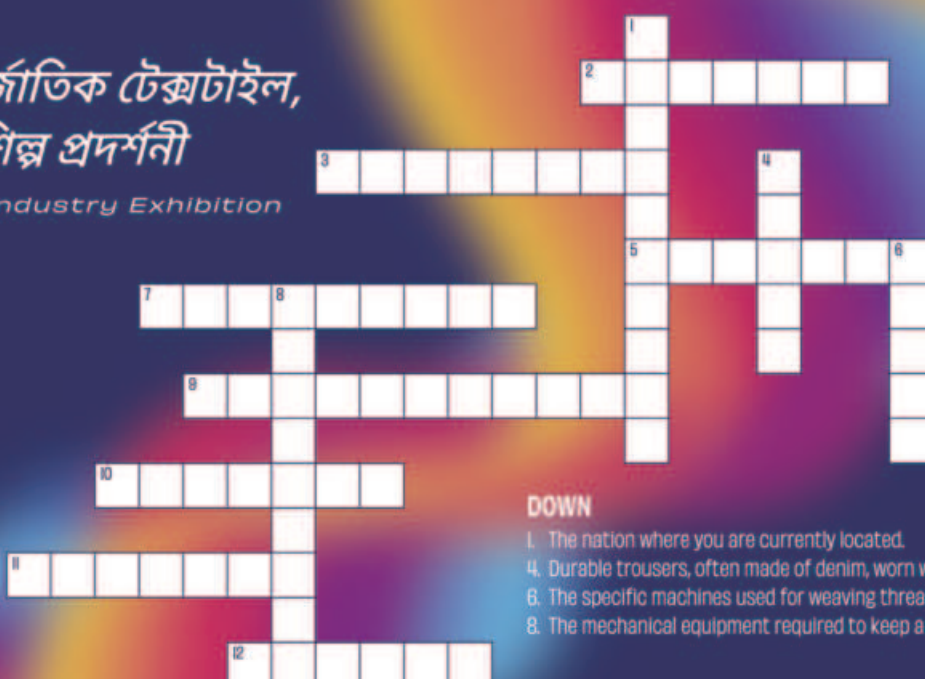
Bangladesh International Textile, Knitting & Garment Industry Exhibition



ফ্রি রেজিস্ট্রেশন

২৯ এপ্রিল - ২ মে

ইন্টারন্যাশনাল কনভেনশন সিটি
বসুন্ধরা (আইসিসিবি)



ACROSS

- A general term for an individual item of clothing.
- The primary method used to create sweaters, socks, or T-shirts.
- Another formal word for clothing or attire.
- Substances used in factories for washing, bleaching, or processing.
- Items like zippers, buttons, and labels used to finish a garment.
- Cloth produced by weaving or knitting textile fibers together.
- Bangladesh is one of the world's leading exporters of this material.
- The process of adding color to hair, yarn, or finished fabric.

DOWN

- The nation where you are currently located.
- Durable trousers, often made of denim, worn worldwide.
- The specific machines used for weaving thread into cloth.
- The mechanical equipment required to keep a factory running.

ANSWER



BTKGexpo



Two workers die as bus runs them over in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two workers were killed and three others injured after a passenger bus hit a road divider and ran them over near a footbridge opposite Setu Bhaban in the capital's Chairman Bari area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased – identified as Sagar Mia, 35, and Muslim Uddin, 74, – were working on the road divider through a city corporation contractor during the accident, police said.

Faridul Islam, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station, said the accident took place around 3:45pm. An Uttara-bound bus of Bhuiya Paribahan lost control and hit them. The two died on the spot.

The injured were taken to Kurmitola General Hospital for treatment.

Quoting witnesses, AKM Moin Uddin, inspector (operations) of Banani Police Station, told The Daily Star that the bus was speeding when the driver swerved to avoid hitting a member of the hijra community who was crossing the road.

Sub-Inspector Md Shahidul Islam said the bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.



A worker pours rice into a sack as a consumer buys essentials from a TCB truck at subsidised prices. Despite the heat, low-income earners queue for hours to purchase items like rice and flour. The photo was taken in front of Rajshahi Government Women's College gate yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

BRAC PUBLIC HEALTH SCHOOL Study launched on self-care use of contraceptive pills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (BRAC JPGSPH) of BRAC University yesterday launched a major implementation research study on self-care interventions for sexual and reproductive health and rights at a hotel in the capital.

The 18-month study will examine how oral contraceptive pills (OCPs) and emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs) can be strengthened as self-care interventions to improve access, utilisation, and health outcomes, particularly for underserved and vulnerable populations.

The study aims to identify context-specific factors that enable or hinder access to OCPs and ECPs among vulnerable groups.

Led by BRAC JPGSPH, the study is supported by the UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP).

Manjur Hossain, assistant director at the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP), presented the current situation of contraceptive use in the country.

He said only 1.08 percent of married women aged 15–49 use ECPs, while 79 percent of women who recently gave birth were unaware of them.

He added that although the contraceptive

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

DMP to install 11,000 CCTV Survivors still battling

FROM PAGE 3
improve law and order in Mohammadpur and Basila. The activities at Rayer Bazar and Basila police camps will be strengthened.

A "No Drugs" campaign will be carried out through house-to-house visits, he added.

Residents expressed concern over rising teen gang activity and drug-related offences, and suggested forming local committees to support police.

Police said patrols are being reinforced, with increased motorcycle and foot patrols, and monitoring will be tightened in areas prone to illegal activities.

Senior officials, including Additional Commissioner (Crime and Operations) SN Nazrul Islam and Rab-2 Commanding Officer Additional DIG Khalidul Haque Howlader, were present.

FROM PAGE 3
"I lost my ability to work at a young age. My husband left me. I undergo regular therapy, and my son earns Tk 6,000 a month from a shop. We spend Tk 2,500 on rent, and the rest barely covers food and clothing," she said. "My life is almost inhumane. I am not getting proper treatment or food. I want compensation, rehabilitation, and maximum punishment for those involved."

Taslima, 55, said she has been unable to work since the collapse. "I could no longer work after sustaining injuries to my spine, legs, and head. I still have to undergo treatment. I cannot even stand."

"Due to a lack of money, I cannot buy necessary medicine. I have not received any compensation. I do not even dream of living anymore. If I had received compensation, my life might have been different."

Khairul Mamun Mintu, legal affairs secretary of

Bangladesh Garments and Sweater Workers Trade Union Centre, said, "The Rana Plaza collapse was a planned murder. The trial of those involved has not yet been ensured. The government under Sheikh Hasina did not fulfil a single demand of the Rana Plaza workers. The interim government also failed to fulfil their demands."

"We expect the present government to ensure compensation, rehabilitation of the workers, and punishment of the guilty,"

He added that all 2,438 injured workers of Rana Plaza are living inhumane lives, as none of them has received adequate compensation.

Meanwhile, at a discussion titled "Rana Plaza Building Collapse: Protracted Trials and Rights of the Affected", organised by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) at the Jatiya Press Club, labour rights

advocates criticised the government and factory owners for failing to ensure "dignified compensation".

BLAST Honorary Executive Director Sara Hossain said no case has reached a final settlement in 13 years, and no verdict has been delivered.

She added that full legal remedies and compensation, in line with ILO standards, have yet to be secured for the victims and their families.

Taslima Akhter of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati said, "Thirteen years is a long time, but the horror of Rana Plaza has not faded. The scars still haunt survivors."

Regarding compensation, Taslima said, "Compensation is not an act of charity; it is a legal right of the workers. But compared to the loss suffered, the compensation provided is highly inadequate and undignified."

Take steps to cultivate

FROM PAGE 3
founder Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed and relevant ministers, discussed strategies to widen access to books and strengthen reading culture among young learners.

According to the Prime Minister's Press Wing, the

initiative aims to encourage students to engage more with literature.

Earlier, on April 7, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed met the prime minister to discuss collaboration in expanding the organisation's reading programmes.

Exposing

FROM PAGE 3
minister's remarks in parliament, acknowledging the issue and warning that such limitations could hinder prevention efforts.

Calling the situation unacceptable, MJF said exposing children to a preventable disease like measles amounts to a violation of their fundamental rights to survival, health and protection.

It urged the government to ensure an adequate supply of measles rubella vaccines, expand the vaccination campaign, strengthen testing and diagnosis, and provide accessible, quality treatment for affected children.

MJF also called for greater transparency and accountability in managing the outbreak, adding that protecting children's health is both a constitutional and moral obligation of the state.

13 years on, justice yet to be served

FROM PAGE 3
"A total of eight witnesses testified on March 30 this year. Now 449 witnesses remain," said Riazul Islam Shajib, bench assistant of the court.

Talking to The Daily Star, Additional Public Prosecutor Faisal Mahmud said efforts are underway to produce key witnesses and expressed hope that the trial could conclude by December this year.

"The witnesses, who were the victims in the collapse, are coming for statements, but other witnesses do not appear before the court, so the trial is being delayed," he claimed.

A day after the incident, Wali Ashraf Khan, sub-

inspector of Savar Police Station, filed the murder case against Sohel Rana, also a former Jubo League leader in Savar, and several others.

On May 24, 2015, CID official Bijay Krishna Kar pressed charges against Sohel Rana, his parents Abdul Khaleque and Morjina Begum, and 38 others.

Of the 41 accused, only Sohel Rana remains in custody; 25 are on bail, 11 are absconding, and four, including his parents, have died.

STATUS OF BUILDING CODE VIOLATION CASE

Rajuk filed a separate case over building code violations regarding the construction of Rana Plaza on the day of the

collapse. Charges were submitted against Sohel Rana and 17 others on May 24, 2015, and they were indicted on June 14, 2016.

However, none of the 135 witnesses has testified so far, according to a court staffer.

The case is currently pending at the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Dhaka.

After no witnesses appeared on April 20 this year, the court set September 30 as the next date for recording statements, said Assistant Public Prosecutor Estiyak Hossain Zipu.

"The court has issued a summons, but we cannot say why witnesses are not appearing," he added.

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উত্তরায় ৩ কাঠার প্লট বিক্রয়
উত্তরায় ১৭ নম্বর সেক্টর বিজিএমইএ ভবনের
সরকারি, এফ-সুপ, রোড-৫, প্লট নম্বর-২৫,
তিনটি ৬০ ফিট রোডের মোড় ও কাঠা
সাইজের, দক্ষিণমুখী একটি প্লট মার্চ ৪
কোটি ২৫ লক্ষ টাকায় বিক্রয় হবে।
০১৭১১-৯৪৬০১৫

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এবং বড়আমদিয়া মৌজায় প্রশস্ত সরকারী হাসপাতাল এবং পাকা রাস্তা
সংলগ্ন আবাসিক/বাণিজ্যিক/ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল/ইউনিভার্সিটি স্থাপন করার
উপযোগী ভবনসহ ৬৭৮ শতক জমি বিক্রি হবে।
মোবাইল ০১৯৯২-০৭৭০৩৪, ০১৯৯২-০৭৭০৩৫

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
EDUCATION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
SHERPUR

Memo No-37.07.8900.001.48.006.26-8621 Date: 23/04/2026

e-Tender Notice No-23/EED/Sher-2025-2026

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

SL	Tender ID No	Description of works	Procurement Method
1	1263387	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building with 4 (Four) Storied Foundation IN/C Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification Works at Ideal Technical & BM College, Nakla, Sherpur.	OTM
2	1263967	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building with 4 (Four) Storied Foundation (pile Foundation) IN/C Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification Works at Pushpakanon Technical & BM College, Sribordi, Sherpur.	OTM
3	1264291	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building with 4 (Four) Storied Foundation (Pile Foundation) IN/C Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification Works at Nayagaon Islamia Dakhil Madrasa, Jhenaigati, Sherpur.	OTM
4	1264411	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building with 4 (Four) Storied Foundation (Pile Foundation) IN/C Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification Works at Bilashpur Dakhil Madrasa, Jhenaigati, Sherpur.	OTM
5	1264446	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building with 4 (Four) Storied Foundation IN/C Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification Works at Muksedpur High School, Sadar, Sherpur.	OTM

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 up to one hour before Tender last selling time. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (help desk@eprocure.gov.bd)

(Syd. Minuzzaman)
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Sherpur
e-mail: ee_she@eedmoe.gov.bd

United Nations Development Programme
জাতিসংঘ উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচী

Procurement Notice: Invitation to Bid
Quantum Reference number: UNDP-BGD-01116

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh is seeking bids from interested firms for the following requirement:

Long-term Agreement for Security Services for UNDP Bangladesh.

Deadline for submission of quotation is at 4:30 p.m. (Bangladesh Local Time), 7th May 2026.

Quotation may be submitted on or before the deadline indicated by UNDP in the **procurement notice**. For learning more about ITB, pre-bid meeting link & submission documents through the quantum platform, please visit the link below: https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=44804

For any technical query, please write to us through bd.procurement@undp.org mentioning the reference no: **UNDP-BGD-01116** in the email subject line within **4th May 2026**.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Meteorological Department
Meteorological & Geo-Physical Center
Agrabad, Chattogram
www.bmd.chittagong.gov.bd

No. 23.09.1528.560.30.012.25. Date: বৈশাখ ১৪৩৩ April 2026

e-Tender Notice

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 of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to 05 May 2026 and 13:00 BST as on the tender notice.

S.N.	Package description	Tender ID	Package No.	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
01.	Supply of Other Stationery Items	1247650	23.09.1528.560.30.012.25.	04 May 2026 16:00 BST	05 May 2026 14:00 BST	05 May 2026 14:00 BST

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.helpdesk.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Mohammad Abdur Rahman Khan
Deputy Director
E-mail: ctgbmd@gmail.com

Another US aircraft carrier arrives in ME

AFP, Washington

The USS George HW Bush aircraft carrier has arrived in the Middle East, the US military said Thursday, bringing the number of the massive American warships operating in the region to three.

The Bush was sailing "in the Indian Ocean in the US Central Command area of responsibility, April 23," the military command responsible for the Middle East said in a post on X that included an image of the carrier with its deck packed with warplanes.

A second carrier -- the USS Gerald R Ford -- was operating in the Red Sea on Thursday, while a third -- the USS Abraham Lincoln -- is also in the region, according to social media posts by CENTCOM.

The deployment of the third aircraft carrier to the Middle East comes during a more than two-week ceasefire that paused the devastating US-Israeli air campaign against Iran that was launched in late February.

The Ford sailed to Croatia for repairs several weeks ago after a laundry fire broke out aboard the ship on March 12, but the world's largest aircraft carrier has since returned to operations.

The Ford has been at sea for more about 10 months -- a deployment that has already seen it take part in US operations in the Caribbean, where Washington's forces have carried out strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats, interdicted sanctioned tankers and seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.



Security brings the son of Iran's last shah, exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, into a car after he was splashed with red liquid by an activist after a press conference at the BPK building in Berlin, yesterday. Reza Pahlavi yesterday argued that any negotiations with the clerical leadership in Tehran amount to "appeasement" and voiced hope that renewed street protests will topple it. PHOTO: AFP

Hackers steal \$2.5m from Sri Lanka finance ministry

AFP, Colombo

Cyber criminals hacked into the Sri Lankan finance ministry's computer system and siphoned off \$2.5 million, the government said yesterday, the most amount of cash ever stolen by hackers from a state institution in the debt-saddled country.

The cyber attack is a major blow to Sri Lanka, which is recovering from a crippling economic crisis in 2022 after Colombo defaulted on its \$46 billion external debt.

The money was destined for debt repayment to Australia, a finance ministry official told reporters.

Four senior officers at the Public Debt Management Office (PDMO) were suspended after the breach, he said.

Lebanon leaders accuse Israel of war crime

AFP, Beirut

Lebanon's president and prime minister yesterday accused Israel of a war crime, after an airstrike killed a Lebanese journalist in the country's south, where Israeli forces occupy several areas.

Rescuers and the reporter's employer on Wednesday confirmed the death of Amal Khalil, a 42-year-old journalist who worked for the Lebanese daily Al-Akbar.

The civil defence agency said she was killed in a strike on a house in the village of al-Tiril.

"Israel deliberately targets journalists in order to conceal the truth about its crimes against Lebanon," said President Joseph Aoun, in a statement denouncing "war crimes."

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam wrote on X that "targeting journalists and obstructing access for rescue teams constitutes a war crime," adding that his government would take the attack to international bodies.

A 10-day ceasefire has been in effect in Lebanon since Friday, pausing the war between Israel and the pro-Iranian Hezbollah that has left more than 2,400 dead in Lebanon.

Khalil and another journalist had taken refuge in a house in al-Tiri after an Israeli airstrike targeted a car in front of them, according to Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA).

It said the two occupants of the vehicle, the mayor of the nearby Israeli-occupied town of Bint Jbeil and a man

with him, were killed.

An Israeli strike then targeted the house where the two journalists had taken refuge.

The health ministry said the attack wounded journalist Zeinab Faraj -- who was taken to hospital -- and left Khalil trapped.

A Lebanese Red Cross official had told AFP they had "managed to rescue Zeinab Faraj" but had not reached Khalil and withdrew "because of a warning strike".

Lebanese authorities had to contact UN peacekeepers deployed in southern



Lebanon, and it took several hours before rescue workers could regain access to the area to recover the journalist's body from the rubble.

Khalil, known for her courage and respected by her colleagues, had covered various wars in the region.

On March 28, three journalists were killed in an Israeli airstrike in the south, and UN experts called for an international investigation.

Attack on Pak mining project kills 10; 8 injured

AFP, Quetta

A group of militants killed at least 10 people, including a Turkish national, at a copper and gold mining project in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, officials said yesterday, with another Turk taken hostage.

About 40 militants on motorcycles and other vehicles stormed the mining project site of Pakistani company National Resources Private Limited in Chagai district on Wednesday.

"At least 10 people were killed in the incident, including a Turkish national, six workers, and three guards," a local administration official told AFP on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

No group claimed responsibility, but local ethnic separatist groups have intensified their attacks in the region in recent years, including on mining projects.

The Turk and three guards were killed when a fuel tanker at the mine exploded during the attack, the official said. "The militants also abducted one Turkish national during the attack," he said.

Balochistan is Pakistan's poorest province and largest by landmass. Baloch separatists accuse Pakistan's government of exploiting the province's natural gas and abundant mineral resources without benefiting the local population.

Climate issue scrubbed from G7 climate meeting!

AFP, Paris

Environment ministers from G7 nations yesterday launched a two-day meeting in Paris, with climate change kept off the agenda to avoid a row with the United States.

The office of France's ecology minister Monique Barbut had said the Group of Seven would focus on "less contentious issues" to appease its largest and most powerful member, drawing criticism from activists.

Barbut said the G7 "must remain a forum for convergence" and France as host was prioritising unity at a time when environmental protection was slipping down the global agenda.

"I hope we can send a strong message of unity and ambition", Barbut said at the opening of the meeting.

Italy, Canada, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom sent their environment ministers to Paris, but Washington dispatched Usha-Maria Turner, an assistant administrator at the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Ocean conservation, funding for biodiversity, and the transformation of dry areas into desert are on the agenda, among other broad environmental themes.

President Donald Trump's administration has withdrawn the United States from global agreements on climate change and weakened environmental protections since he returned to office in 2025.



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Corrigendum Notice-2

Ref. No. 28.19.0000.701.40.11.26/599 Date: 23-04-2026

Subject: Invitation for the Enlistment (IFE) as a Potential LNG Supplier for Supplying LNG on Spot Basis.

This is to notify all concerned that the following amendment has been made for Ref. No. 28.19.0000.701.40.11.26/589 dated 19-03-2026 regarding the Invitation for the Enlistment (IFE) as a potential LNG supplier to supply LNG on Spot basis:

Description	Amendment Particulars
Application Closing Date, Time	The application closing date has been extended to 30 April 2026 at 12.30pm (BST) instead of 23 April 2026 at 12.30pm.

All other terms and conditions of the original notice/documents shall remain unchanged. This corrigendum shall be treated as an integral part of the original IFE documents.

This notice is available on websites: <https://rpgcl.org.bd/>; <https://petrobangla.org.bd/>; <https://emrd.gov.bd/> and <https://bpps.gov.bd/>.

RPGCL/PR-280 Engr. Md. Anwarul Islam
Managing Director
Tel: +8802-41040229
Email: md.lng@rpgcl.org.bd
Website: www.rpgcl.org.bd

GD-904

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board
Directorate of Purchase
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1	1555392	GRF-1 Fy-25/26	27.11.0000. 304.26.137.26 Date: 22/04/2026	Supply of 110 V3.5 (6) A 3-Phse, 4-wire Programmable Energy Meter.	17-Jun 2026 17.00	18-Jun 2026 14.00	18-Jun 2026 14.00

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Md. Shahedul Azim
ID No. 1-01460
Director
Directorate of Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka

GD-907

UK, France agree 3-year deal to stop illegal crossings

AFP, Paris

Britain and France have agreed a new three-year deal to stop undocumented migrants making the risky journey across the Channel in small boats, the two sides announced.

Under the deal, France pledged to increase law enforcement on the coast by more than half to fight irregular migration to Britain -- reaching 1,400 officers by 2029.

Britain will meanwhile provide up to 766 million euros in funding -- though nearly a quarter of that will be conditional.

The cross-Channel neighbours have wrangled for months over renewing the Sandhurst treaty, which sets out the UK's financial contribution to French efforts to stop migrants attempting the perilous sea crossing to Britain. The UK has accused France of doing too little to prevent would-be asylum seekers from setting off from French shores.

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GD-906

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Fuel crisis, unequal cuts worsen power situation

Govt must make genuine efforts to ensure fair electricity distribution

Bangladesh is in the grip of a severe power crisis that is leaving millions of people without electricity for hours, especially in rural areas. Shortfalls are widening rapidly. On Tuesday evening, the gap between generation and demand stood at 1,923MW—already punishing. By Wednesday evening, this gap widened to 2,180MW. The government itself now concedes the shortfall could hit 3,000MW.

The power crisis is, in equal measure, a fuel problem. Currently, 71 of the country's 143 power plants are either completely idle or operating well below capacity, constrained by shortages of gas, coal, and furnace oil. To meet peak summer demand, the Bangladesh Power Development Board requires 1,200 million cubic feet of gas daily, yet it is receiving only about 870 million. However, domestic fuel scarcity only explains part of the problem. Internal data from April 22 reveals that India's Adani Power, our largest single source of imported electricity, shut down the second unit of its cross-border plant for maintenance. This slashed Adani's supply by half, down to 748MW. Because Bangladesh relies on these twin units for roughly 10 percent of its daily electricity, the reduction has been a major blow to an already strained grid. The Power Division confirmed yesterday that the offline unit is expected to resume operations by April 26.

Beyond the generation deficit, the distribution of available electricity is highly unequal. Current data shows rural communities are enduring five to six hours of blackouts daily, while major cities remain largely unaffected. Loadshedding is actively managed to protect high-demand commercial and metropolitan areas, forcing rural grids to absorb the brunt of the outages. This inequity is compounded by a lack of transparent reporting. The national grid's official shortfall figures contradict the data shared by the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board. Officials have admitted that national statistics often measure how much electricity can be generated in a given hour, rather than actual consumer demand. Such reporting is a statistical sleight of hand that effectively masks the true scale of power outages outside city limits.

When authorities fail to acknowledge the reality on the ground, formulating an effective response becomes impossible. While the government recently formed a committee to examine these discrepancies, the fact that basic measurement flaws persist in 2026 is a major institutional failure. Over the past decade, Bangladesh has invested heavily in expanding its grid. But infrastructure reaching every village means little if it leaves rural residents in the dark for half the day.

To stabilise the grid and ensure fairness, three systemic issues must be addressed. First, the government must implement an honest and accurate reporting system that tracks where electricity is actually distributed and records the true duration of outages across all regions. Second, authorities need a revised load management protocol that fairly shares the burden of power cuts between urban and rural consumers. Finally, Bangladesh must develop a robust, long-term fuel supply strategy that reduces dependence on volatile global LNG markets and mitigates the risks of relying heavily on cross-border energy imports.

First light of justice, at last

Tonu murder case must not get stalled again

After a decade's wait and countless calls for justice, we are heartened to see the case for Sohagi Jahan Tonu's murder finally picking up pace. On Tuesday, a retired senior warrant officer of Bangladesh Army, Hafizur Rahman, was arrested from his home. The following day, he was placed on a three-day remand by Cumilla Sadar Cognisance Court-1 after being produced there by the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI). Earlier on April 6, the same court ordered the cross-matching of the DNA profiles of three retired army personnel (including Hafizur) against evidence collected in 2016. What makes this case unique is not just the brutality of the crime—Tonu's body was found dumped in bushes; she had been raped, and her hair had been chopped off with scissors—but also the unexplainably long road to justice that the victim's family is still having to tread.

To date, the case has had 80 hearing dates, with six investigation officers from four agencies handling the probe over the years. When contacted recently by *Prothom Alo*, Inspector Mojibur Rahman, who was the investigation officer of the case for four years under CID Cumilla, said they had already been aware of the three suspects now known by name, but matching DNA samples had not been possible at the time "for various reasons." The fact that the DNA evidence was there and that the suspects were known for years, and yet the investigation did not move forward at all, is unacceptable. And when an officer provides such dubious reasons behind justice being delayed for a decade, the logical conclusion to draw is that there were factors and quarters actively preventing the case from making progress.

Since 2016, this case has been surrounded by mystery, which we now know was manufactured. What has prevented the case from going to trial was the need to preserve the impunity that certain defence forces were used to enjoying. Now that progress is finally being made, does it mean that the influence of these quarters no longer exists? Can we rest assured that these influences will not show up again to further stall the case?

We urge that the DNA samples be tested without delay and that utmost procedural transparency be maintained going forward. The trial process must also be initiated promptly and be free of influence. Tonu's family deserves to receive justice for the heinous crimes committed against their daughter. All relevant authorities must do their best to achieve this outcome.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Rana Plaza collapses

On this day in 2013, Rana Plaza collapsed in Savar, killing some 1,136 people, after large structural cracks were discovered in the building a day before.

35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAILY STAR

When independent newspapers burn, so does democracy

Without free media, we will lose our direction again



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

When independent, objective and fact-based newspapers are set on fire, it is democracy that burns. It is the diversity of views, the culture of dissent, and the right to protest that are set on fire. The need for debate, the practice of argument and counterargument in search of truth, and the ability to look at the same thing from different angles and perspectives are what get destroyed. From creative thinkers, we turn into obedient servants.

This was the real intention—destroying democracy—when *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo*, two leading newspapers that truly strengthened and institutionalised independent journalism in Bangladesh, were set on fire on the night of December 18, 2025.

Yes, the very institutions that held all governments to account, relentlessly criticised those in power for their repressive and corrupt measures, and fought against more than 15 years of Sheikh Hasina's rule; whose editors were prosecuted, one charged in 84 cases and the other charged with murder; whose reporters were not allowed to attend the prime minister's events and press conferences after 2014; who suffered forced curtailment of government and private advertisements; who endured attempts to change ownership, and were denigrated and called "enemies" of Bangladesh on the floor of parliament.

These are the two papers that stood up against enforced disappearances, custodial deaths, police brutalities, and other violations of human rights. We have always stood for democracy, the rights of opposition, and culture of dissent, and have relentlessly criticised any assault on human rights. It is these two papers that fought most spiritedly against the Digital Security Act and all other attempts to muzzle the press and suppress public opinion.

And these newspapers were set on fire with the hope that they would be reduced to ashes. Instead, we resurfaced with one single word: Unbowed.

The people captured in videos of the fire incident do not appear to be newspaper readers. So, how can

people who don't read us nurture so much hatred that they would take the law into their own hands, break the fundamental norms that govern a society, and commit criminal acts to burn down two of the most well-read and well-respected newspapers? The more one examines that night's events, the more undeniable it becomes that these were pre-planned and meticulously organised. The planners were waiting for an "appropriate" moment to execute it.



In the wee hours between December 18 and 19 last year, an unruly crowd set *The Daily Star* office on fire with journalists and other staff still inside the building, an attack not just against a single media house but the spirit of independent journalism.

FILE PHOTO: ABDUL GONI

That moment came when the young and popular leader Osman Hadi was murdered.

Who were these people? Who indoctrinated them, instigated them, and finally set them out to burn us down?

What surprised us was the role played by members of the interim government. All of them knew us well. Some were columnists of these very papers, and others had written for us at one time or another. They knew us and were well-versed in our editorial policies. Many even sought our help in carrying out their programmes.

Where were their voices of protest, especially following December 18? They were well-aware of the social

media vilification, and knew that the accusations being brought against us were completely false. Yet, they did nothing to protect the newspapers that had helped them and carried their columns, often angering the power of the day for doing so. They did nothing to prevent the destruction.

Most disappointing was the role of the then government as a whole. We still cannot reconcile ourselves to the fact that law enforcers did not prevent the arson attacks, especially when one newspaper was set on fire and the mob was publicly announcing that it would attack the other. The time gap between the two fires was about 40 minutes. Surely, something could have been done.

What is the story of *The Daily Star*'s 35 years of "journalism without fear or favour"? This is what we pledged to our readers in our first editorial: "... the strength of *The Daily Star* lies

to strengthen democracy, ensure fundamental rights, fight corruption, and promote good governance. We devoted ourselves to people's rights, press freedom, the right to dissent, and took a strong stand against all repressive laws. We always emphasised strengthening parliament as a "House of the people," and not an extension of the executive branch. We worked tirelessly to institutionalise democracy by advocating for an independent judiciary, a powerful election commission, and depoliticisation of the bureaucracy, law enforcement and administration.

There is one distinct area where our hearts fill with pride: our focus on the environment. We ran countless reports and photo features on river encroachment, groundwater preservation, forest conservation, and air and noise pollution. We held hundreds of roundtables and seminars on women's issues, child rights, human rights, the right to information, and the right to protest and dissent. Ours was among the strongest voices condemning all forms of repressive laws.

The July uprising came as a beacon of freedom, and it is towards freedom that we must march. Burning newspapers will not take us there. The uprising's main theme was "anti-discrimination." We want to make it *The Daily Star*'s main focus. The rich-poor gap has widened to a cruel and inhuman level. The AI revolution will further marginalise the poor unless we use this transformative technology for the opposite purpose. In universalising education, spreading skills, providing basic healthcare, and ensuring agricultural productivity and renewable energy, AI has tremendous potential to transform our society in ways that may seem like a fantasy at the moment. We must transform our thinking and recognise our population as our greatest asset. Each skilled individual with higher productivity can help turn Bangladesh into a prosperous country. AI can help us do that.

For that, we need to change our mindset—from seeing the poor as a liability to recognising them as an asset. We need to turn 180 degrees in our policy priorities.

It is in this technology-based and human resource-focused direction that *The Daily Star* feels convinced that our future lies, along with, of course, democracy and a free press. We have a new government and a leadership that is fresh and young. Will they show the innovation, courage, and determination that history has given them a rare opportunity to demonstrate?

Climate change demands a smarter approach to healthcare

Dr Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed
is WHO representative in Bangladesh.
Catherine Breen Kamkong
is UNFPA representative in Bangladesh.

AHMED JAMSHEED MOHAMED and CATHERINE BREEN KAMKONG

On a hot, humid morning in the coastal village of Satkhira, Rahima Begum wades through waist-deep saline water to reach the nearest health facility. She is unsure if it is still functioning after the recent cyclone. Behind her, she drags a makeshift wooden raft carrying her seven-year-old daughter, severely ill with diarrhoea and dehydration. Rahima's village has long been on the frontline of climate change consequences.

Over the years, salinity intrusion in groundwater has reduced access to fresh water. Tubewells, once a lifeline, no longer act as reliable sources of safe drinking water. Daily exposure to saline water for washing, cooking, and drinking is increasing the risk of diarrhoeal diseases, skin infections, menstrual and reproductive health complications, as well as cardiometabolic diseases. For Rahima, and millions like her, climate change is no longer a distant threat but an everyday reality. It is reshaping disease patterns, increasing the occurrence of acute public health events, and straining access to essential health

services.

Across Bangladesh, climate-sensitive health risks are intensifying. Heatwaves are becoming more frequent and severe which heightens risks of heat stress, dehydration, and mortality. Dengue, once seasonal and largely confined to urban areas, has become a year-round, nationwide threat. In 2023 alone, Bangladesh recorded over 3,21,000 cases and 1,705 deaths from the disease which is the deadliest outbreak on record.

Waterborne diseases, including diarrhoeal illnesses, often surge after floods, and they remain a major contributor to mortality among children under five. Ambient air pollution continues to exacerbate respiratory diseases, contributing to a considerable number of premature deaths every year. These converging risks underscore the importance of a systemic, forward-looking response in protecting health in a changing climate.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's new Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP) provides a critical framework to do just that. Developed with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the plan sets out a clear roadmap to build climate-resilient, low-carbon health systems in alignment with the country's commitments under COP26. It defines priorities across infrastructure, surveillance,

workforce capacity, and governance. Crucially, it marks a decisive shift from a reactive approach to one grounded in preparedness, resilience, and long-term sustainability.

The priority now is implementation. Health facilities must withstand floods, heatwaves and cyclones while maintaining essential services, including safe water, sanitation and reliable energy. Disease surveillance must integrate climate data to improve early warning and rapid response, particularly for climate-sensitive threats such as dengue. The health workforce must be equipped to recognise and manage emerging risks, from heat-related illness to shifting patterns of infectious disease. Groups who are being disproportionately affected—women, adolescent girls, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities—must be prioritised in both planning and implementation. The health sector itself must reduce its environmental footprint. Improving energy efficiency, expanding renewable energy use, and adopting sustainable procurement practices can lower emissions while strengthening system reliability. Climate resilience and sustainability are not competing priorities but mutually reinforcing.

Stronger domestic investment must be matched by more accessible and predictable international climate finance, aligned with country priorities. Only through sustained funding and effective partnerships can

the HNAP be translated into tangible health gains for communities like Rahima's, which are on the frontlines of climate change. Cross-sectoral action is likewise critical. Addressing climate-related health risks requires coordinated efforts across water and sanitation, agriculture, environment, infrastructure, urban planning, and disaster management. Empowering local governments and communities is essential in delivering practical, context-specific solutions, while stronger coordination, combined with locally driven action, may help to build resilience while delivering broader health and development gains, with equity at the centre.

The conversation must shift from commitment to implementation and from planning to protection. Success will be measured in lives protected: fewer disease outbreaks, reduced heat-related deaths, and declines in maternal, neonatal, and child mortality. Success will also be measured in the ability of health systems to withstand and continue delivering care in the face of repeated climate shocks. For communities like Rahima's, resilience cannot remain an aspiration, it must become a reality. The HNAP provides a clear path forward, but its impact will depend on how quickly and effectively it is implemented. In a changing climate, protecting health will ultimately be defined not by plans alone, but by the actions taken today.

'Even BNP is not beyond ICT's reach if it commits crimes against humanity'

Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Md Asaduzzaman, who previously served as the 17th attorney general during the interim government's tenure, speaks with Baharam Khan of The Daily Star about the repeal of several key ordinances, the debate surrounding them, and other legal and legislative issues that have been in discussion of late.

Now that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Ordinance has been repealed, and the 2009 act reinstated, what will happen to the current commission?

As soon as the repeal bill that was passed in parliament is enacted through the issuance of a gazette, the current commission will cease to exist. Until then, it remains operational.

Why didn't you retain such a significant reform measure?

It's not like it's gone for good. The repeal and reinstatement bill that we introduced states that we will enact a law after further scrutiny and verification. This is not just an assurance; it's a part of the bill, and thus creates a legal obligation.

Political governments often avoid enacting strict human rights laws. Couldn't you have retained the ordinance instead of repealing it?

This ordinance was quite a hotchpotch. As per the ordinance, the NHRC can take cognisance of an abuse either *suo motu* or based on a complaint. The ordinance maintained two ways to go about the inquiry and investigation of an incident. While it specified a deadline for submitting an inquiry report, there was no timeframe for when that inquiry must actually begin. Once an inquiry finds preliminary evidence, it is sent for investigation. The ordinance failed to mention the timeframe for transferring the case from inquiry to investigation.

Furthermore, while the commission was given the power to impose a fine after a hearing between both parties, the basis and amount of that fine were not mentioned. Secondly, the commission could order compensation, but there were no guidelines on the specifics or amount of that compensation. Thirdly, the commission could provide legal advice to the victim. Fourthly, the commission itself could act as a plaintiff to file a case. What is the logic for a commission serving as a quasi-judicial body to become a plaintiff? What is the point of sitting with both parties for a hearing then?

Couldn't you have passed the ordinance by addressing these and other limitations?

Like I said, we will conduct further scrutiny. The issue of enforced disappearance has been tagged here. The NHRC lacks the necessary capacity for investigation into such crimes. There is a provision for enforced disappearance in the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act. There is a dedicated, specialised investigation department for the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT).

You might argue that only widespread and systematic crimes of enforced disappearance would go there, but no such distinction was made in the ordinance for enforced disappearance.

These are but technical matters, and no law is above debate. Is it possible that the major issue here is political willingness?

No, that is not correct. We will fulfil our political commitments to the letter. How much vengeful politics have you seen in these few weeks of our tenure? Have there been any disappearances or crossfires? How many cases have been filed by BNP or the police as plaintiffs?

There have been custodial deaths. In the last four months, at least 40 people have died in custody.

We are looking into those cases. Most are related to medical issues. No incidents of torture have occurred.

During the Awami League era, medical issues were also cited as the cause for the deaths of many BNP leaders and activists. But even if we consider that to be the case, why has your government kept such sick people detained?

This is not a matter of us keeping them detained. You talk about the independence of the judiciary; here too, the judiciary is dealing with this independently. The detention has

nothing to do with us.

Let's get back to the ordinances. In an internal evaluation by the law ministry regarding the ordinances, we saw recommendations like requiring approval to arrest government employees or members of the forces, not granting financial powers to the chief justice, etc.

We will not take those into consideration when we go for consultations with stakeholders about the unpassed ordinances.

Does that mean those ordinances will be passed as they are?

That may not be the case. Something even better may come out of the consultation process once we start it.

How could it be made better?

I cannot say that right now. It can only be determined after the consultation.

The interim government also consulted with stakeholders. A foundation was already established.

If you go back to the basics, there is no jurisprudential theory that says that an elected government or parliament must accept everything an interim government has done. We have accepted more than 100 out of their 133 ordinances. There is no rule that says all of them must be accepted.

In terms of numbers, this is undoubtedly notable. However, in terms of significance, some four or five ordinances are more important and in focus than the others.

Public policy is so deeply involved with those ordinances that the special committee of parliament and the parliament itself believed that further scrutiny is necessary.

There is currently no significant record of looted money being brought back to Bangladesh from abroad. Now, if someone wants to return by paying back the money, and we can recover it with interest, that is one aspect. But the law does not state that this will exempt them from any charge of crimes or corruption. In other words, there is no guarantee of asset recovery even after spending years in foreign tribunals and incurring huge costs, and in that context, this provision creates a scope for recovering the looted money. The media should look at this objectively rather than being influenced by unnecessary fear or rumours.

Do you think the government has failed to shed enough light on its activities surrounding key ordinances to dispel misgivings about its reform commitment? It's also the responsibility of the media to clear up misconceptions. Take, for instance, the referendum, the July charter, and the July charter implementation order. If you try to present public perceptions regarding these three matters incorrectly, that's your way of working. Our way is that we want to go by exactly what is stated in the July charter.

I don't disagree that there is a debate surrounding the July charter implementation order.

Fraud was committed regarding the July charter implementation order. The order states that a bicameral parliament will be formed based on the proportion of votes received by parties in the national election. However, BNP gave a note of dissent on this

very issue in Article 18 of the July charter. Not only that, a separate note was added to this article stating that if political parties or alliances gain a public mandate by mentioning it in their election manifestos, they can take measures accordingly. BNP is accepting almost everything related to the referendum, yet some people are alleging that we are going against the referendum ordinance.

Let's get back to the discussion on the ordinance regarding enforced disappearances.

Defining the same crime (enforced disappearance) in two different ways in two laws has created ambiguity. "Widespread and systematic" disappearances were not mentioned separately in the ordinance for



Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman

enforced disappearance. If someone facing trial at the ICT argues, "I can be tried under that other law (on enforced disappearances), so why am I being tried here?", then what?

Secondly, regarding punishment, it mentioned life imprisonment or imprisonment not exceeding 10 years. Here, "or" is a disjunctive word. "Not exceeding 10 years" could mean a sentence as short as one hour. We are working to bring clarity to these areas of ambiguity.

Couldn't you have brought these changes after passing the law?

If passed now, those currently under trial at the ICT would try to take advantage of this law. That would create new legal complications. We don't want to leave room for such complexities.

But the ICT is not a court that is meant to last forever.

Why not? If even this government becomes involved in crimes against humanity, why shouldn't there be a trial? The ICT law is perpetual unless it is repealed.

Does that mean the ICT will continue to function like a regular court indefinitely? It is a tribunal. If there is a necessity, it will continue. If not, it won't.

But don't we need a specific law to address the issue of enforced disappearances? Will disappearances continue forever?

People may have that fear.

We can bring back this law (ordinance) at any time. I believe we have clarified our position in this regard both inside and outside parliament. We have an MP whose husband was a victim of enforced disappearance; the home minister himself was a victim of disappearance. Is their pain any less?

Besides, this matter does not fall under the law ministry; it belongs to the home ministry. It is the home ministry that felt this issue requires further consultation with more stakeholders.

So, can we expect the law on enforced disappearances to be enacted in the next session of parliament?

After May 15, there will be discussions with stakeholders regarding the NHRC Act. Later,

discussions on the enforced disappearance law will also take place.

Does that mean it is likely to be placed in the next session?

We will try.

What was the problem with passing the Supreme Court Judges' Appointment Ordinance?

According to Article 95 of the constitution, the president appoints Supreme Court judges in consultation with the chief justice. The ordinance, however, mentions a council for appointments, which is not in the constitution. While the idea of the council is sound, we are considering how to make it consistent with the constitution. Nevertheless, we have safeguarded the activities conducted under that ordinance.

What is the government's stance on the Supreme Court Secretariat?

Firstly, the ordinance was not aligned with the guidelines of the Masdar Hossain case. Secondly, the High Court has issued a certificate following the verdict on Article 116; so this will go before the Appellate Division. There is also the matter of discussing it with stakeholders. But we never said we wouldn't establish this secretariat.

An adviser to the interim government told me that some lower court judges didn't want a separate secretariat. Is that credible?

Yes. I have received such lobbying as well.

What kind of lobbying?

They believe that if a separate secretariat is formed, it will lead to greater subjugation rather than protecting the independence of the judiciary. This is because sometimes some retired Supreme Court judges lobby so extensively in some cases that if those requests are not met and some lower court judges face consequences as a result, they may have no place to place their grievances. Since the chief justice remains extremely busy with judicial work, some lower court judges fear they will not get a remedy if they face injustice. This is why further scrutiny is required.

That means the matter of complete judicial autonomy...

What do you mean by the complete independence of the judiciary? An independent judiciary does not mean that one organ of the state is completely separate from the others. Rather, it means that the judiciary functions independently in its judicial activities and decision-making. In other words, a judge should not be influenced in any way while carrying out judicial duties.

For this, appointments, promotions, postings, and disciplinary actions must be transparent, along with ensuring financial autonomy. At the same time, judges must have the confidence that they cannot be transferred, denied promotion, dismissed, or otherwise penalised simply for writing a judgment that the government may not like. Only then can a judge truly act independently.

Since 1975, the law ministry has not had the power to transfer even an assistant judge unilaterally.

Consultations take place though.

It's not consultation; the government sends recommendations, and the Supreme Court makes the decision.

They want to carry out the process themselves. What is the problem with that?

The government will scrutinise before granting that.

Does that mean government interference will remain?

It is not a matter of interference. Supreme Court judges are completely independent; there is no risk of them losing their jobs.

Let's talk about the Bank Resolution Act. Many stakeholders were surprised by the

amendment allowing discredited owners of merging banks to reclaim ownership. Why was this necessary?

You would get a better answer from the finance ministry. However, from what I understand, there is currently no significant record of looted money being brought back to Bangladesh from abroad. Now, if someone wants to return by paying back the money, and we can recover it with interest, that is one aspect. But the law does not state that this will exempt them from any charge of crimes or corruption.

In other words, there is no guarantee of asset recovery even after spending years in foreign tribunals and incurring huge costs, and in that context, this provision creates a scope for recovering the looted money. The media should look at this objectively rather than being influenced by unnecessary fear or rumours.

Has the government received any such assurance or application?

I am not aware of any.

Let's talk about the individuals who have been in detention without trial after being arrested during the interim government's tenure. Will they remain in custody indefinitely?

In this regard, the concerned individuals can take advantage of Section 173A of the Code of Criminal Procedure. If the victims provide sufficient evidence to the concerned metropolitan police commissioner or the superintendent of police at the district level regarding harassment, they can investigate and provide relief through an interim final report. To my knowledge, many are receiving remedy this way.

But bail is hardly granted if the government raises an objection in court.

We perform our duties as usual and as necessary; the matter of bail is for the court to decide.

There is criticism regarding many cases filed in the post-uprising period. What is your comment on that?

Victims must seek remedy according to the Code of Criminal Procedure. A committee is already scrutinising false and harassing cases. Another committee is working under the leadership of deputy commissioners.

Recently, we saw the arrest and swift bail of former Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury. Could this have been possible without the government's consent?

There is no issue of government consent here. There is no obligation to arrest someone just because their name appears in an FIR; it is entirely a matter of the investigation officer's discretion. It is up to those who made the arrest and those who granted the bail.

Will people believe that a leader like the former speaker secured bail without the government's consent? Many journalists have also been arrested in similar cases. The investigation officer likely did not find sufficient grounds to keep her under arrest or show her arrested in other cases.

Can the government not take action regarding other similar cases as well?

This is for the home ministry to answer.

You are the law minister, and it is a matter of law.

Investigation officers are not under the jurisdiction of the law ministry.

A final question. The interim government talked about forming a reconciliation commission but never followed through with it. Are you going to consider it?

A truth and reconciliation commission is a major policy decision. If such a discussion ever comes before me, I will try to play a role. I think it is a good option.

Has there been any discussion on this within the government?

Not yet.

CROSSWORD
BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS
1 Craig of "Skyfall"
7 Speedy
11 Marigold color
12 Ready for business
13 Warning with no follow-through
15 English racing town
16 Shopping aid
18 A+, for one
21 Ethanol source
22 Eye part
24 Mine matter
25 Sedan or SUV
26 Like Pride Parade participants
27 Willful

- 29 Chess turn
30 Placed down
31 Fast runner
32 Toil away
34 Like some gas stations
40 "Got it"
41 Book worker
42 Tavern order
43 Burglar alarm part
DOWN
1 Buck's mate
2 Ulna's place
3 Catch some z's
4 Hospital worker
5 Sphinx setting
6 "Why don't we!"
7 Layout
8 King Kong, for one

- 9 Marlin's home
10 Booming stuff
14 "Iliad" author
16 Reef material
17 Game setting
19 Strictness
20 Rascal
21 Farm grazer
22 Operated
23 Pro vote
25 Musical closes
28 Boat part
29 Singer Gaye
31 Large mob
33 Honey bunch
34 Tell tales
35 Purpose
36 Director Spike
37 "___ not for me to say"
38 Pigeon sound
39 Make missteps

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12-12

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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Eid-ul-Azha film lineup manifests with major releases

ZAHID AKBAR

Bangladesh's Eid-ul-Azha film lineup is taking shape, with several high-profile titles set to draw audience interest. Following Eid-ul-Fitr, when five films—*Bonolota Express*, *Dom*, *Prince*, *Pressure Cooker*, and *Rakkhosh*—were released, focus has now shifted to the next major holiday window. Among them, *Bonolota Express* is still holding the top position, while others recorded moderate commercial returns and some overseas response.



Industry observers are now assessing which films may lead the Eid-ul-Azha race, as a mix of star-led projects and delayed productions move toward release. One of the most anticipated titles is *Rockstar*, starring Shakib Khan opposite Sabila Nur. Directed by Azman Rusho, the film marks their second collaboration after *Tandoob*. Production is nearing completion, with a release planned for Eid.

Another key contender is *Roid*, directed by Mejbaur Rahman Sumon, following the success of his film *Hawa*. The director has confirmed an Eid-ul-Azha release, and the film's first song has already been unveiled as part of its promotional campaign. *Malik*, starring Arifin Shuvoo and Bidya Sinha Mim, is also being prepared for release. Director Saif Chandan said no official announcement has been made, but the film is being readied with Eid in consideration.

The long-delayed *Masud Rana*, directed by Saikat Nasir, is also targeting the Eid window. Production began nearly five years ago and is now nearing completion, with only a song and several scenes left to be filmed. The title role is played by Rasel Rana, with Puja Chery cast opposite him.

Pinik, starring Shobnom Bubby and Ador Azad, is another film expected to join the lineup after multiple delays. Directed by Zahid Jewel, it had previously been slated for earlier Eid releases.

Meanwhile, *Tribunal*, directed by Raihan Rafi, is also likely to enter the race. The cast includes Tanjin Tisha, Nusraat Faria, Mousumi Hamid and Saira Akhter, alongside Tariq Anam Khan. Some portions of the film remain unfinished.

As several films progress through production and promotion, the Eid-ul-Azha release lineup is shaping up to be highly competitive, with final schedules yet to be confirmed.

As several films advance through production, post-production and promotional campaigns, the race for Eid-ul-Azha release is becoming increasingly competitive. While a number of highly anticipated titles are eyeing the festive window, official release schedules have yet to be finalised.

'Michael' releases in Bangladesh today with global premiere



The Michael Jackson biopic *Michael* is set to release globally today (April 24), with audiences in Bangladesh able to watch it at Star Cineplex on the same day.

Directed by Antoine Fuqua, the film stars Jaafar Jackson in the lead role, portraying the iconic singer's journey from his early days with the Jackson 5 to his rise as a global music legend. The cast also includes Miles Teller, Colman Domingo, Nia Long, and Kat Graham.

Beyond his musical legacy, the film explores key moments from Jackson's personal life and career. It also features important figures such as Joe Jackson, Katherine Jackson, and Diana Ross, offering a broader look at the influences behind his success.



'A Summer Soirée with Eastwords'

Eastwords presents an intimate evening of original compositions and reimagined classics, blending poetry, memory, and melody. Led by Sharmee Hossain, the ensemble moves across genres with textured instrumentation and restrained emotion, crafting a reflective soundscape shaped by voice, rhythm, and acoustic intimacy rather than spectacle.

Date: Today | April 24, 2026
Time: 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm
Venue: Satori Academy of Arts, Banani

AFZAL HOSSAIN to star in Nuhash Humayun's 'Moving Bangladesh'



Filmmaker Nuhash Humayun is set to make his feature film debut with *Moving Bangladesh*, following his success in short films both locally and internationally. While the official cast has not yet been announced, sources confirm that veteran actor Afzal Hossain will play a key role in the project.

Afzal Hossain has already completed several days of shooting, with the remaining portions expected to wrap up soon. The actor confirmed his involvement to The Daily Star but did not disclose further details.

The film reportedly follows the struggles of a bike rider, offering a grounded, character-driven narrative. Alongside this project, Afzal Hossain is also working on two web series and a television drama.

NEWS

Ducusu leaders assaulted

FROM PAGE 12
The Ducusu leaders were then escorted out safely through the police station's north side pocket gate next to Shahbagh Thana Jaame Mosque a little after 9:00pm. They were then taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

After that, Ducusu Vice President Abu Shadik Kayem led Ducusu and Shibir activists to the front of Shahbagh police station. They came face-to-face with Chhatra Dal activists already present there. At one point, some Chhatra Dal activists hurled water bottles at the Ducusu and Shibir men, sparking brief tension at the scene.

DMP Ramna Division Assistant Commissioner Mazharul Islam said tension between Chhatra Dal and Islami Chhatra Shibir escalated into jostling and shoving, but no serious injuries were reported, adding that the situation was brought under control by 10:00pm.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Chhatra Dal President Rakibul Islam Rakib said the incident was deeply regrettable.

"We maintain communication with Chhatra Shibir and have addressed this social media issue several times, but it is ultimately creating a major division among us. They assured us that if any of their members were involved, they would take action."

On the attack, Rakib said, "It was a sensitive matter for Chhatra Dal, as it centred on the daughter of our prime minister. Such an incident by Chhatra Dal is unexpected. We expressed regret and will take measures to ensure it does not recur."

Ducusu VP Shadik Kayem, speaking to the media after returning from the scene, said the very police station meant to ensure citizens' safety had failed to do so. "In front of the police, even in front of the officer-in-charge, those who went to file a general diary seeking

protection for their lives were attacked." Kayem described the incident as "a shameful chapter in history", alleging that outsiders were brought in alongside university activists.

"I want to ask the home minister and the prime minister -- is this democracy? A student is being threatened, and when he goes to a police station to file a GD for his safety, he is brutally attacked. Is this democracy? Is this the new Bangladesh?"

JURNOS ASSAULTED
Amid tensions between the two sides, student journalists of Dhaka University also came under attack while trying to gather news and were later taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

At least 10 journalists, including the president of the Dhaka University Journalists' Association, were injured in the incident. The injured journalists alleged that Chhatra Dal activists attacked them even after identifying themselves as journalists.

Dhaka University Journalists' Association President Manjurul Hossain Mahi said, "We went to Shahbagh Police Station to collect news. Immediately after arriving there, we were deliberately obstructed from gathering information in a pre-planned manner. At one point, we were suddenly attacked. One after another, ten of us were brutally beaten. Shahbagh Police remained silent spectators." PROTESTS AT JNU Jagannath University Central Students' Union brought out a protest march on campus last night, condemning the attack on Ducusu leaders and student journalists by Chhatra Dal activists.

Earlier, leaders and activists of Chhatra Dal's JnU unit staged a procession, denouncing the circulation of "derogatory images" of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and Zaima Rahman on social media.

Govt, opposition team

FROM PAGE 1
opposition members for the committee. They are Jamaat-e-Islami MPs Saiful Alam (Dhaka-12), Abdul Baten (Dhaka-16), and Nurul Islam (Chapainawabganj-3); NCP MP Hasnat Abdullah (Cumilla-4); and Khelafat Majlis MP Mohammed Abul Hasan (Sylhet-5).

Bangladesh has been facing fuel shortages since the US-Israel war on Iran started disrupting global supply chains. While long queues at fuel pumps have eased, power cuts due to a lack of fuel have intensified.

The opposition leader had earlier called for a "common committee"

of government and opposition MPs to tackle the crisis. On Wednesday, parliament held a discussion on the issue as an urgent public matter.

During the discussion, Shafiqur said the opposition was ready to sit with an open heart and present proposals, but stressed it was the government's responsibility to implement them.

In response, Tarique said the government would consider the proposal to form a committee. "The issue we discussed today is undoubtedly an important one. It's not only crucial for Bangladesh; considering global politics and realities, it is of great importance for the world," he said.

Rohingya exodus

FROM PAGE 12
aid," Save the Children official Golam Mostofa said in a statement.

"Many families feel that they have no choice but to risk their lives and leave by boat -- but their journeys are fraught with danger."

Last year was the deadliest on record for Rohingya refugees fleeing by sea, with deaths continuing to soar in 2026, according to UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency.

Nearly 900 Rohingya refugees were reported missing or dead in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal in 2025.

More than 250 Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi migrants were reported missing this month after their boat capsized in the Andaman Sea, a route many travel when heading towards Indonesia.

Data from the UNHCR shows that 2,907 people left by sea from Myanmar and Bangladesh up to March 31 this year, compared to 1,517 people over the same period in 2025.

The cash-strapped UN World Food Programme cut aid for large portions of the 1.2 million-strong Rohingya group in Bangladesh this month.

Save the Children said the ration cuts had affected at least 500,000 Rohingya refugee children.

That was "putting further strain on families, with reduced food security inside the camps driving more refugees to attempt dangerous sea journeys", the agency said.

Rooppur set

FROM PAGE 12
officer of the ministry of science and technology.

It will take between 30 to 40 days to load the nuclear fuel into the reactor, said Md Zahedul Hasan, managing director of Nuclear Power Plant Company.

After fuel loading, tests will be conducted at various stages to prepare the Final Safety Analysis Report.

"The commissioning stage requires us to navigate a rigorous and challenging testing period," he said.

Once these processes are successfully completed, test power generation will begin within three months, gradually increasing to full capacity.

The entire process is expected to take 10 to 11 months, he added.

The nuclear power plant, built on the banks of the Padma river in Pabna's Ishwardi at a cost of \$12.65 billion, features two VVER-1200 reactors with Russian financial and technical support.

Once both units are operational, the plant will generate 2,400MW of electricity, meeting over 10 percent of national demand.

Tigers seal ODI series

FROM PAGE 12
Bangladesh had slumped to 32 for three in the ninth over.

New Zealand pacer William O'Rourke was the early destroyer, removing Saif Hassan (0), Tanzid Tamim (1), and Soumya Sarkar (18) after Bangladesh were put in to bat.

Shanto's innings, featuring nine fours and two sixes, also ended his 20-innings drought for an ODI hundred. His previous ton came at the same venue in March 2024 against Sri Lanka.

Litton, too, ended a 19-innings drought for a fifty but fell short of a century, dismissed by Jayden Lennox in the 39th over.

Following the departures of Shanto and Litton, Bangladesh's lower order again struggled to accelerate, adding just 61 runs in the final 10 overs to post 265 for eight.

Tawhid Hridoy remained unbeaten on 33 off 29 balls, but his innings drew criticism for poor match awareness as he failed to take strike at key moments while batting with the tail.

In reply, New Zealand also lost early wickets, but opener Nick Kelly anchored the innings with his second successive

West Bengal records 92%

FROM PAGE 12
government saying it aims to prevent "infiltrators", a pejorative term largely referring to illegal Muslim immigrants, from voting.

Experts and organisations say Muslims and other religious minorities have been disproportionately removed from the rolls in West Bengal, a key segment of voters who usually vote against BJP.

The second round of voting will be held on April 29, covering 142 constituencies in West Bengal.

One of the key battles will take place between Mamata and BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari in Bhabanipur.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu went to polls yesterday for 234 election constituencies, with the key constituencies being Kolathur, Edappadi, Tiruchirappalli

half-century of the series. However, once he was dismissed for 59 off 80 balls by Mustafizur, the visitors lost wickets in quick succession.

Mustafizur (5-43) turned the game in the middle overs, claiming four quick wickets to register his sixth five-wicket haul in ODIs. He now stands joint-second among left-arm pacers alongside Wasim Akram and Trent Boult for most fifters. Mitchell Starc leads with nine, while Waqar Younis holds the overall ODI record with 13.

Dean Foxcroft then produced a fighting 75 off 72 balls, including seven sixes, and added 50 runs for the last wicket with Ben Lister to briefly revive New Zealand's hopes. However, his dismissal to Mehidy Hasan Miraz (2-36) ended the resistance as the visitors were bowled out for 210 in 44.5 overs.

Pacer Nahid Rana also took two wickets to finish with eight in the series and earned back-to-back Player of the Series awards, following the recent Pakistan ODI series.

Both teams will now turn their attention to a three-match T20I series, with the opener scheduled at the same venue on April 27.

East, Coimbatore South, and Dr Radhakrishnan Nagar.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin is contesting the 2026 Assembly elections from the Kolathur constituency in Chennai, hoping to secure another term as the CM. He will be contesting against AIADMK candidate P Santhana Krishnan.

Another candidate central to the Tamil Nadu polls this year is actor-turned politician Vijay, who is contesting the polls from two seats - Trichy East and Perambur. Vijay founded the political party Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) for his maiden polls, fielding 233 candidates in the polls.

The counting of votes for the states -- as well as Assam, Kerala, and Puducherry -- will take place on May 4.

New govt faces

FROM PAGE 2
"Dealing with economic disruption linked to the Iran conflict will be a crucial test."

The Crisis Group Asia Briefing titled "Bangladesh's New Government Gets Down to Business" said the ruling party should avoid confrontation with the opposition over proposed reforms and review cases against Awami League activists.

"The stakes are high for the BNP. It should move quickly to take advantage of the narrow post-election window for political and economic reforms, and demonstrate to the Bangladeshi people that it is not simply reverting to past practices now that it is back in power," said the crisis group's Senior Consultant on Bangladesh and Myanmar, Thomas Kean.

No more duty-free car

FROM PAGE 3
determined under the Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 1973. Under Article 3C of that order, MPs have been allowed to import cars without paying duty, said a press release from the Prime Minister's Office.

The new amendment aims to remove this facility in view of the current economic situation, it added. According to the Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 1973 (President's Order), a member shall be entitled to import another new car or microbus after the expiration of a period of five years from the date of his last import at the same terms and conditions provided in the sub-section. Earlier, in their first parliamentary party meeting after taking oath at the Jatiya Sangsad in February, BNP lawmakers had decided not to take duty-free cars and government plots.

Opposition Jamaat-e-Islami had also taken a similar decision. There has been widespread criticism of the duty-free car privilege for MPs in previous terms. Allegations also surfaced that some MPs purchased cars without paying taxes and later sold them at a high profit.

The cabinet also approved a proposal to bring Rugganj upazila of Narayanganj and Kaliganj upazila of Gazipur

under Dhaka district. Besides, it gave approval to include the Purbachal New Town project area within Dhaka North City Corporation, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and Dhaka Waza.

The cabinet has decided to change the date of National Tea Day. Bangladesh will now observe it on May 21, in line with International Tea Day, instead of June 4.

In addition, the cabinet approved a plan to remove the age limit for the chairman and commissioners of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission.

The draft of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (Amendment) Act, 2026 was approved, subject to vetting by the Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division.

Under subsection (6) of Section 5 of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission Act, 1993, the maximum age limit for appointing the chairman and commissioners is 65 years. The amendment seeks to remove this limit to allow more experienced individuals to take up these positions.

Similarly, the cabinet approved a proposal to abolish the age limit for the chairman and members of the Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority.

The draft of the Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act, 2026, was also approved, subject to vetting.



Farmers harvest watermelons amid intense heat and a heatwave, boosting demand for the hydrating fruit. The yield is estimated at Tk 70,000-1,00,000 per bigha of land, strengthening the rural economy this season. The photo was taken in Debitala village of Batiaghata upazila in Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Study launched

FROM PAGE 4
prevalence rate rose to 65.9 percent in 2022, it declined to 58.2 percent in 2025.

DGFP Director General Ashrafi Ahmad said despite limited government funding, people continue to access OCPs and ECPs. She stressed the importance of understanding access pathways to better support self-care practices.

She also noted that despite social taboos, young girls and unmarried individuals are

accessing contraceptives, highlighting the need to break stigma and address biases.

Ashrafi said the study could generate important evidence to help shift public perception and strengthen family planning services.

WHO Deputy Representative to Bangladesh Rajesh Narwal emphasised the importance of the research, noting a gap between policy and implementation that the study could help bridge.

Govt eyes scaling up of childcare

FROM PAGE 3
While disability care services remain limited, he said expanding them would require more time and resources. With the ageing population on the rise, elderly care has also been identified as a priority, and existing public and private care centres will be further developed.

The government also plans to establish caregiving training centres to meet domestic demand and prepare workers for overseas employment, said the minister, adding that training will include languages such as Japanese, Mandarin, English, and Arabic.

The minister encouraged private investment in the sector, saying the government would support viable initiatives despite resource constraints.

Such investments would yield long-term economic and social benefits, he added.

"Empowering women is a

macroeconomic necessity. By redefining care as a shared responsibility rather than a workload borne solely by women, we can unlock the full potential of our workforce," he also said.

State Minister for Social Welfare Farzana Sharmin said the care economy must be recognised as a key driver of development.

Positioning care as a dignified sector that drives economic prosperity and empowers women, she said.

Max Tunon, country director of ILO in Bangladesh, said transforming care into a public policy priority is unlocking a vital engine for economic prosperity and gender equality.

"We are committed to expanding quality and accessible childcare and long-term care services to address the evolving needs of society."

The conclave comes

as Bangladesh aims to raise women's labour force participation to 50 percent by 2030. The rate currently stands at 42.6 percent, with challenges including unpaid care burdens, underemployment, wage gaps, and informal work.

Gitanjali Singh, country representative of UN Women Bangladesh, in her opening remarks, said, "The undervaluing and gendered division of care work is one of the biggest drivers of gender inequality. Investing in care systems is a triple win for women, society and the economy."

Keynote speakers from the ILO and ADB noted that investment in care systems could significantly boost economic growth.

According to ILO estimates, universal investment in childcare and long-term care could create over seven million decent jobs in Bangladesh by 2035, they noted.

A panel discussion titled "From Commitment to Action: Advancing the Care Economy in Bangladesh" explored pathways for translating policy commitments into practical reforms.

Speakers included senior secretaries from relevant ministries, representatives from the National Skills Development Authority, the Ministry of Finance, the Asian Development Bank, and academia.

The conclave also featured an interactive marketplace showcasing existing models of childcare, long-term care and training services in the country.

PRAYER TIMING
APRIL 24
Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:25 12:30 4:45 6:27 8:00
JAMAAT 5:00 1:15 5:00 6:31 8:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

KUSHTIA KILLINGS CASE ICT sets May 11 for arguments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday set May 11 to begin arguments in a crimes against humanity case over the killing of six people in Kushtia during the July uprising, involving four absconding Awami League leaders.

The date was fixed after cross-examination of the investigation officer concluded, completing testimony from all 19 prosecution witnesses.

The accused are AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif, Kushtia district AL President Saluddin Khan, General Secretary Azgar Ali and city AL General Secretary Ataur Rahman Ata.

In another case, three state-appointed defence lawyers for former AL lawmaker AKM Shamim Osman and 11 others sought discharge, calling the case over killings during the 2024 uprising in Narayanganj "politically motivated". The tribunal will pass an order on May 5. All the accused are absconding.

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স্মারক নম্বর-০৫.৪১.৯৩০০.০০০.০১১.০২.০০৯০.২৬.২০২৬

তারিখঃ ০৮ বৈশাখ ১৪৩৩
২১ এপ্রিল ২০২৬

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থবছরে টাঙ্গাইল জেলার ১২টি উপজেলার ১২০টি ইউনিয়ন পরিষদে কর্মরত ১,১০৮ (এক হাজার একশত আট) জন গ্রামপুলিশদের (দফাদার ও মহস্তাদার) তফসিল 'খ' বর্ণিত পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি এবং ৪০৮টি (চারশত আট) টি উন্নতমানের বাইসাইকেল ক্রয়ের নির্দিষ্ট উপযুক্ত ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান/ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী/টিকাদারের নিম্নে তফসিলে ২০০৬ এবং পিপিআর, ২০২৫ এর নিয়মানুসারে নির্ধারিত শর্তসমূহের আধায়ে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

তফসিল-ক

ক্রঃ	বিবরণ	বিজ্ঞপিত তথ্য
০১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	: স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ, স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়, ঢাকা
০২	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী	: জেলা প্রশাসক, টাঙ্গাইল
০৩	কাজের বিবরণ	: ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থবছরে টাঙ্গাইল জেলাবাসী গ্রামপুলিশদের (দফাদার ও মহস্তাদার) পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি এবং বাইসাইকেল সরবরাহ
০৪	সম্প্রদায়িক পদ্ধতি	: উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)
০৫	বাজেট এন্ড পোর্ট ফাভ	: ২০২৫-২৬ অর্থবছরে পরিচালক বাজেটের মঞ্জুরী নং-৩৪, হিসাবের খাত নং- ১৩৭০১০১/১২০০১৩০৮/৩৬৩১১০৩ গ্রামপুলিশদের পণ্য ও সেবা বাবদ সহায়তা খাত
০৬	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	: ২৩/০৪/২০২৬খ্রিঃ
০৭	১ম পর্যায়ের দরপত্র/সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শুরু ও শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	: ২৩/০৪/২০২৬খ্রিঃ
০৮	১ম পর্যায়ের দরপত্র/সিডিউল দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	: ১০/০৫/২০২৬খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৯	১ম পর্যায়ের দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	: ১০/০৫/২০২৬খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৩:৪৫টা। উপপরিচালক, স্থানীয় সরকার, টাঙ্গাইল এর অফিস কক্ষ (কক্ষ নং-২০১)
১০	২য় পর্যায়ের দরপত্র/সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	: ১২/০৫/২০২৬খ্রিঃ হতে ১৪/০৫/২০২৬খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালিন পর্যন্ত
১১	২য় পর্যায়ের দরপত্র/সিডিউল দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	: ১৭/০৫/২০২৬খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
১২	২য় পর্যায়ের দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	: ১৭/০৫/২০২৬খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৩:৪৫টা। উপপরিচালক, স্থানীয় সরকার, টাঙ্গাইল এর অফিস কক্ষ (কক্ষ নং-২০১)
১৩	দরপত্র/সিডিউলের মূল্য	: ২,৫০০/- (দুই হাজার পাঁচশত) টাকা। যা অফিসে/সেখানে
১৪	দরপত্র/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	: (ক) বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, ঢাকা বিভাগ, ঢাকা অর্থাৎ পরিচালক, স্থানীয় সরকার, ঢাকা বিভাগ, ঢাকা-এর দপ্তর (খ) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, টাঙ্গাইল (স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা, কক্ষ নং-১০৫)
১৫	দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থানসমূহ	: (ক) বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, ঢাকা বিভাগ, ঢাকা অর্থাৎ পরিচালক, স্থানীয় সরকার, ঢাকা বিভাগ, ঢাকা-এর দপ্তর (খ) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, টাঙ্গাইল এর উপপরিচালক, স্থানীয় সরকার এর অফিস কক্ষ নং-(২০১)

তফসিল-খ

ক্রমিক নং	পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি বিবরণ	সংখ্যা	জামানতের পরিমাণ	কার্য-সম্পাদনের মেয়াদকাল
১	২	৩	৪	৫
১	জামা- দফাদার ও মহস্তাদারদের ব্যক্তিগত শারীরিক মাপ অনুযায়ী স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ কর্তৃক সরবরাহকৃত টিলি কাপড়ের নমুনা মোতাবেক ফুল শার্ট (চাকনাসহ ২ পকেট বিশিষ্ট, উভয় কাঁধের উপর ১ টি করে ৬"x২" মাপের ফিতাসহ)	১০৪৬ পিছ	দরপত্রে উদ্ধৃত মতের ৩%	সর্বোচ্চ ১৫ (পনের) দিন
২	জামা- দফাদার ও মহস্তাদারদের ব্যক্তিগত শারীরিক মাপ অনুযায়ী স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ কর্তৃক সরবরাহকৃত টিলি কাপড়ের নমুনা মোতাবেক হাফ শার্ট (মুদ্রায়ন কমিটির সিদ্ধান্ত মোতাবেক ফুল শার্টের রঙের ন্যায় এবং ফিটতা পাতলা কাপড়ের), (চাকনাসহ ২ পকেট বিশিষ্ট, উভয় কাঁধের উপর ১ টি করে ৬"x২" মাপের ফিতাসহ)	১০৪৬ পিছ		
৩	প্যান্ট- দফাদার ও মহস্তাদারদের ব্যক্তিগত শারীরিক মাপ অনুযায়ী স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ কর্তৃক সরবরাহকৃত টিলি কাপড়ের নমুনা মোতাবেক ফুল প্যান্ট (মুগু ও পিছনে ১টি পকেটসহ মোট ৩ পকেট বিশিষ্ট)	২০১২ পিছ		
৪	শাড়ি- মহিলা মহস্তাদারদের জন্য নারী পুলিশের ন্যায় উন্নতমানের ২টি করে	১২৪টি		
৫	পেটিকোট- মহিলা মহস্তাদারদের জন্য নারী পুলিশের ন্যায় উন্নতমানের ২টি করে	১২৪টি		
৬	ব্রাউজ- মহিলা মহস্তাদারদের জন্য নারী পুলিশের ন্যায় উন্নতমানের ২টি করে	১২৪টি		
৭	সোজার ব্যাগ- ইউনিয়ন কমান্ডার/দফাদার (পুরুষ ও মহিলা) উন্নতমানের কাপো কাপড়ের রিবন ২টি করে	স্টারফোর্ড ব্যাগ- ১৫৫ জোড়া		
৮	মাথার কাপ (মেনোগ্রামসহ)	১১০৮ টি		
৯	উলের জামা পুরুষ এর জন্য	১০৪৬ পিছ		
১০	ট্রাইজার	১০৪৬ পিছ		
১১	পেঁজ ০২টি করে	২০৯২ টি		
১২	কটি ০১ টি করে	১১০৮ টি		
১৩	নেম ব্যাজ (Name Badge) ০১ টি করে	১১০৮ টি		
১৪	মেনোগ্রাম ০১ টি করে	১১০৮ টি		
১৫	কাপড়ের জুতা ০১ জোড়া পুরুষ	১০৪৬ জোড়া		
১৬	কাপড়ের জুতা ০১ জোড়া মহিলা	৬২ জোড়া		
১৭	মোজা ০২ জোড়া করে পুরুষ	২০৯২ জোড়া		
১৮	মোজা ০২ জোড়া করে মহিলা	১২৪ জোড়া		
১৯	চামড়ার বেস্ত ০১ টি করে	১০৪৬ টি		
২০	ছাতা (গ্রামপুলিশদের মেনোগ্রামসহ ০১ টি করে)	১১০৮ টি		
২১	লায়নার বাঁশী ০১ টি করে	১১০৮ টি		
২২	বেস্তের লাঠি ০১ টি করে	১১০৮ টি		
২৩	গ্রামপুলিশদের (পুরুষ ও মহিলা) জন্য বাইসাইকেল Supplying best quality (RFL, duronto or equivalent) original quality bicycle with size (28"x1.5", Rim steel, type, body-steel, built in kick stand with carrier, bell, lock-zongly (China) and Fork guard, Colour-black etc. all complete as per direction of the EIC for men and women	পুরুষ= ৩৭৬ টি মহিলা ৩২ টি মোট=৪০৮ টি		

দরপত্রগ্রহণের যোগ্যতাঃ

- (ক) দরপত্রগ্রহণকারী গ্রামপুলিশ সদস্যদের পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি এবং বাইসাইকেল সরবরাহের ক্ষেত্রে পিপিআর শিডিও ১৪.১(এ) ও ১৪.১(বি) এর আলোকে যে কোন সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের ১,২১,০০,০০০/- (এক কোটি একশ লক্ষ) বা তদুর্ধ্ব টাকার গ্রামপুলিশদের পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহকারী হিসাবে অথবা সমজাতীয় মালামাল সরবরাহ করেছে মর্মে সত ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের মধ্যে সুনামত ০২ (দুই) টি একক কার্যদেপসহ মোট ০৩ (তিন) টি অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ দাখিল করতে হবে।
- (খ) দরপত্রগ্রহণকারী সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি দাখিল করতে হবে।
- (গ) গ্রামপুলিশদের পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি এবং বাইসাইকেল সরবরাহের জন্য দরপত্রগ্রহণকারী গ্রামপুলিশদের পিপিআর শিডিও ২৮ (আটশ) দিন পূর্বের ইয়াকৃত পিপিআর শিডিও এর আইটিটি ১৫.১ (এ) এর আলোকে কমপক্ষে ১,৩৮,০০,০০০/- (এক কোটি ত্রিশ লক্ষ) টাকার ব্যাংক ডাখলা/ছিন্নিত সঞ্চয় প্রত্যয়নপত্র ও ০৬ (ছয়) মাসের বেনেফেনের হিসাব বিবরণী, ড্রইং লাইসেন্স, টিআইএন, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন ও জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
- (ঘ) পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট অক্ট, ২০০৬ এবং পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট রুল, ২০২৫ মোতাবেক দরপত্রগ্রহণকারী অন্যান্য সকল যোগ্যতা থাকতে হবে।
- ২) এই দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাহিনীর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- ৩) এই দরপত্র সফলত, দরপত্র সফলত বিজ্ঞপিত তথ্য ও শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত থাকবে এবং তা এ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপিত অংশে বর্ণিত হবে।
- ৪) ১ম পর্যায়ের যোগ্য ও কাজিত দরদাতা পাওয়া না গেলে ২য় পর্যায়ের দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে। ১ম পর্যায়ের যোগ্য ও কাজিত দরদাতা পাওয়া গেলে ২য় পর্যায়ের যোগ্য হবে না।
- ৫) পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি এবং বাইসাইকেলের সংখ্যা বাড়ানো অথবা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- ৬) দরপত্রের সাথে সকল প্রকার পোশাক ও অন্যান্য সরঞ্জামাদি এবং বাইসাইকেল (পুরুষ) ০১ (এক) পিছ/জোড়া করে নমুনা শুধুমাত্র জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, টাঙ্গাইলের স্থানীয় সরকার শাখায় জমা দিতে হবে।
- ৭) দরপত্রে স্পষ্টভাবে উদ্ধৃত দর অঙ্কে ও কথায় লিখিত হবে। দরপত্রে কোন কাটাকাটি ও ঘণামাজা করা যাবে না।
- ৮) কোন কারণ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকেই টেন্ডার কমিটি যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
- ৯) দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপিত প্রকাশের তারিখের পরবর্তীতে জেলা প্রশাসক, টাঙ্গাইল এর ওয়েবসাইট www.dettangail.gov.bd এ পাওয়া যাবে।

২১/০৪/২৬

শ্রীকান্ত হক

জেলা প্রশাসক, টাঙ্গাইল

ফোনঃ ০১৯৯৭৭৫৪৯০২

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কর কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, কর অঞ্চল- নোয়াখালী
আয়কর অফিস, প্রধান সড়ক, মাইজদী, নোয়াখালী

নথি নং: ০৮.০১.০০০০.৫৬১.০০১.১১.০০০১.০৫.১৯
তারিখ: ০৮ বৈশাখ ১৪৩৩ বঙ্গাব্দ
২১ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

কর অঞ্চল- নোয়াখালীর অমিক্রেত্রাধীন নোয়াখালী, ফেনী ও লক্ষ্মীপুর জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দাগণের মধ্য হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত বিভিন্ন পদে মোট ১২২ জন জনবল নিয়োগ করার জন্য অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত পূর্ণাঙ্গ বিজ্ঞপ্তি দেখার জন্য কর অঞ্চল- নোয়াখালীর ওয়েবসাইট www.tax.noakhali.gov.bd ভিজিট করুন অথবা নিয়োগ কিউআর কোডটি স্ক্যান করুন।

ক্রঃ নং	পদের নাম	পদ সংখ্যা
(১)	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	০১টি
(২)	প্রধান সহকারী	২২টি
(৩)	উচ্চমান সহকারী	২২টি
(৪)	সাঁটমুদ্রাক্ষরিক-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	২৩টি
(৫)	অফিস সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক	২৭টি
(৬)	অফিস সহায়ক	২৭টি

(এনামুল হাফিজ-আল-নোমান)
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কর অঞ্চল-নোয়াখালী

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TRIBUTE

Humayun Azad and the courage to dissent

RUFAYIA ZIA NUHA

Does our society support free thinking or blindly imitate patriarchy, prejudices, and silence? Humayun Azad was one of the most controversial writers, professors, and researchers in Bangladesh. He explored various branches of Bangla literature. Through his novels, short stories, poems, and essays, he revealed the harsh realities and hypocrisies of Bengali society. This multidimensional writer often described himself as a nonconformist. For his rejection of traditional social and religious norms, he was heavily criticised by reactionaries. At the same time, he became an eyesore to many for fearlessly pointing out the cruel flaws of society. Yet, as a writer and thinker, he only sought to break down unjust customs, patriarchal restrictions imposed on women, and blind religious dogma, and also wanted to spread the spirit of progressivism. For this out of the box thinking and boldness in wielding a pen, he became a unique voice not only among his



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

To depict the suffering and difficult situations of women who have been raped, Humayun Azad wrote *10,000 Ebong Aro Iti Dhorshon* (2003). In the story, Mayna's tragic journey highlights the societal stigma, victim blaming, and injustice faced by rape survivors.

contemporaries but also among many other writers of Bangla literature.

"Man has called woman a goddess, eternal, benevolent, the household Lakshmi, half imagined; but has desired her as an eternal servant." The quotation is excerpted from his magnum opus *Nari* (1995). This quote exactly aligns with Mary Wollstonecraft's view in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). She said, "They are formed into creatures who appear to men as ornaments rather than companions, as if their business were to amuse, not to be useful; to please, not to reason; to be passive, not active; to be obedient, not to govern." In his book he also states: "A woman must remember that she is a person, not a woman; 'woman' is only her sexual identity; she must remember that she differs from man only by one

chromosome, for this one chromosome cannot become one master and another maid." *Nari* highlights how religion, society, and politics have discriminated against women since ancient times.

To depict the suffering and difficult situations of women who have been raped, Humayun Azad wrote *10,000 Ebong Aro Iti Dhorshon* (2003). In the story, Mayna's tragic journey highlights the societal stigma, victim blaming, and injustice faced by rape survivors. Moreover, the book highlights how some religious leaders demean women, labeling them as negligible and sinful, attempting to corner and oppress them. In both his books, *Pak Sar Jamin Sad Bad* (2004) and *10,000 Ebong Aro Iti Dhorshon*, Azad illustrates how minority women are perceived as mere objects, facing oppression and sexual violence, which dehumanises them. Domestic violence is significantly discussed in his books, which is rarely found in most other prominent writers' works.

He exclaims in *Narake Ananta Ritu* (1992), "Bengalis are extremely authoritarian, seemingly mild, yet everyone is a Genghis. If we consider each family as a small state, the father is its absolute ruler [...] Even a small child understands whether the father is powerful or uncontrollable and whether the mother is powerless. The

mother, like them, is oppressed." This book challenges the long-standing imbalance within family structures, the struggles over equal rights, power, and authority between men and women in the family, and the weaknesses in parenting that arise from them. Even today, such issues are often considered less important to discuss, and thus, they rarely receive serious attention. However, Azad confronted them directly in his works. Azad further said in "Manusher Shongo Chara" (2004), "I prefer not to comment on people. /I just wonder how these beasts became so ugly. How do their mouths get filled with trash/ How did they become so ill-natured? There is hatred in everyone's eyes /desire to enjoy the delightful taste of life." In this poem, he expresses his grief and condemns societal injustices. In most of his writings, he has exhibited intense resentment against social hypocrisy and moral corruption.

As an example of Bengali double standards, Azad's remark on Bangladesh's national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam is particularly relevant. He said in *Prabachanguchchho* (1992), "While alive, Kazi Nazrul Islam was labeled a 'heretic-atheist-apostate' by contemporary mullahs and clerics, but after being half-dead, Bangladesh granted him citizenship and named

him the national poet. Bengalis destroy living talent but light incense over the graves of the dead." Indeed, recurring circumstances have repeated throughout history, with the likes of Socrates and Galileo, and the same goes for Azad—all of whom became revered figures after their deaths.

In the context of religion, Humayun Azad stated: "Secularism means that religion exists in society, and anyone can choose to practice it or not; yet the state will not support any particular religion nor persecute those who do not follow one." However, over time, across the world, authoritarians have often tried to impose religion, and religious minorities around the world have faced persecution. Even today, building a conflict-free society requires the establishment of a truly secular state, as Azad emphasised. Azad fearlessly criticised social structures, governments, and authorities, challenging entrenched norms that he considered unjust or unnecessary.

Humayun Azad is a true devotee of beauty. In "Kafane Mora Ashrubindu" (1998), he notes: "I'll probably die for something small/ For a single drop of beauty." He finds beauty in the petals of flowers, in the songs of birds, in the sparkling sunlight, and even in human generosity and simplicity. In his memoirs, *Phuler Gandhe Ghum Ashe*

(1985) and *Buk Pokete Jonakipoka* (1993), he depicts the simple, honest people of his village magnificently. Even amidst the struggles of the oppressed, he perceives this beauty. In his poem, "The Beauty of the Poor" (1993) the first and last lines convey that, "The poor are not usually beautiful; only when they protest, their beauty shines."

During his lifetime, this writer faced widespread criticism. In 1995, his book *Nari* was banned by the government for its writings against conventional religious beliefs and regulations. Though, in 2000, the ban was lifted. In objection to his works, religious extremists erupted into protest, even demanding exemplary punishment on charges of blasphemy. On February 27, 2004, while returning from the Ekushey Boi Mela, he was brutally attacked by extremists with machetes, leaving him severely wounded. After receiving treatment first in Dhaka and later in Thailand, he eventually recovered.

Even today, many continue to hold agonistic views about him, which are often expressed on social media. Some slanderers misinterpret his words, intentionally or unintentionally, to discourage readers from reading him. Humayun Azad never bothered about the criticism. He stated in *Prabachanguchchho*, "Most great men of the world are still controversial; there is no debate about any donkey anywhere on Earth. From Plato and Aristotle to Marx and Rabindranath, they remain subjects of controversy."

In today's world, gender inequality, persecution of minorities, and religious conflicts persist. Moreover, people are often attacked for expressing opinions contrary to the mainstream. The speed and intensity with which hatred spreads on social media, targeting followers of other religions or communities and the despicable comments, slut-shaming, and misogyny directed at women is truly alarming. Throughout his life, this writer expressed intense hatred for and protest against all forms of such conflicts through his writings, which established him as a humanist writer. Yet, discussion about him remains limited, but he is still relevant. May he not be lost to oblivion but live in the hearts of readers.

Rufaiya Zia Nuha is an undergraduate student at the Department of World Religions and Culture, University of Dhaka. She can be reached at rufaiyazia-2021014361@wrc.du.ac.bd.

INTERVIEW

Writing what silence carries: Mohua Chinappa on memory, pain, and inheritance

NAMRATA

Thorns in My Quilt (Rupa Publications India, 2024) unfolds through address rather than disclosure. Written as a series of letters to her father, Mohua Chinappa's memoir traces memory not as a sequence of events, but as an emotional inheritance shaped by silence, expectation, and the subtle negotiations that govern family life. The book lingers over what is absorbed rather than spoken, attending to forms of hurt that leave no visible trace yet quietly shape a life.

Moving from poetry and short fiction into the epistolary memoir form, Chinappa adopts a voice of restraint and attentiveness. The letters neither accuse nor seek resolution; instead, they allow complexity to remain intact. Parenting, care, ego, and endurance emerge as lived experiences rather than arguments.

In this conversation, Chinappa reflects on writing memory as something felt rather than retrieved, on finding language for invisible harm, and on the kind of hope that does not arrive as consolation but as a steady, hard-won presence.

Choosing the epistolary form—letters addressed to your father—creates both intimacy and distance. What does the letter allow you to hold that a conventional memoir might flatten or over-explain?

I began writing the book immediately after my father's death. It was a way to process the



ILLUSTRATION: MAHMUDA EMDAD

pain, the final ending, a sublimation on my part to write this book. Letters helped me pen my thoughts unhindered, without the fear of judgment, as letters are extremely personal. I wanted to bleed without the fear of the outcome.

Memory in *Thorns in My Quilt* feels less archival and more emotional—shaped by silence, omission, and repetition. How did you approach memory not as fact to be verified, but as something lived and carried?

Our memories sometimes fail in their accuracy, but the feelings of certain events remain truthful in their essence. Also, memories have a range of emotions. Some

are more profound than others. They enable us to delve into a deep state of reckoning and reflection on the stories our heart carries. Some details may be fractured, yet they are an amalgamation of all the darkness and light in their entirety in each of my entries.

Much of the book attends to forms of hurt that leave no visible mark—expectations, control, emotional withdrawal, unspoken hierarchies. As a writer, how did you find a language for harm that is systemic yet quiet, and therefore often dismissed?

As a female writer, words are our saviours in expressing harm that is systemic yet hidden in the folds of propriety that society deems right or wrong. Therefore, there can be no

specific language to express emotion, except from the deepest recesses of my heart that I knew needed to be acknowledged—for all the dismissals, the denials, and dehumanising feelings. They needed to be written by me.

Parenting in the book appears as a site of deep love, but also of inherited pressure. Were you interested in examining how care and control sometimes coexist, especially in family structures that value obedience and endurance?

I don't think I was aware at that juncture of my life of what I was enduring, till my father passed away and my marriage of 24 years fell apart. I was forced to look at myself in my rawest state of vulnerability and muster the courage to pick up each piece as I went along.

The image of the quilt suggests warmth and continuity, while the 'thorns' complicate that comfort. How do you see this metaphor working across the book—as inheritance, memory, and survival stitched together?

Our families are supposed to be a safe haven for all of us. We return to the comfort and familiarity of our lineage and bloodline after fighting the external world that can be brutal, demanding, and bruise us. But safety is often a negotiation of where you stand in the pecking order. It is far from ideal in dysfunctional families.

There is a strong sense in the memoir

of women carrying invisible labour—emotional regulation, accommodation, endurance—without naming it as such. Was it important for you to let this burden reveal itself through narrative rather than argument?

Yes, it was extremely important to lend my art and voice to more women across the globe who are silenced and burdened with tremendous guilt for feeling resentment towards duties they are sometimes emotionally and physically incapable of handling without a mental breakdown. I wanted them to know that I see them and hear their pleas too; their voices are loud to me in their silence.

Throughout *Thorns in My Quilt*, there is a quiet movement from hurt toward a tempered, hard-earned hope—not resolution, but steadiness. As a writer, what does it mean to arrive at that kind of hope on the page, one that does not erase pain but learns to live alongside it?

My sublimation came from my betrayals, grief, and pain. Not a single day do I wish away the gift of pain that bestowed me with the steadiness these experiences have helped me evolve into as a human being.

I also hope I can write more on unspoken emotions for my sacred sisterhood.

Namrata is a writer, a digital marketing professional, and an editor at Kitaab literary magazine.

Pace battery building momentum, bringing success

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Chattogram

Raw pace, guile, perseverance and skill – Bangladesh's pace unit's rise has seen them catch up to all those traits in the recent past and, with a series on the line against a depleted New Zealand, Tigers' fast bowlers turned things up a notch to turn things around, handing skipper Mehidy Hasan Miraz his third straight series win.

"Our pace unit is bowling really well and not just now but over the last three-four years," Miraz said after his side sealed the

"It was very hot, and I guess people probably don't necessarily see on TV the conditions we were faced with. It was really hot – probably one of my hottest experiences playing in these conditions."

New Zealand stand in skipper Tom Latham

"They [Shanto and Litton] worked really hard at the crease. Given the conditions and the heat, the way they batted and took responsibility was certainly very good."

Bangladesh ODI captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

ODI series against New Zealand 2-1 with a 55-run win in the third ODI at Chattogram yesterday.

Nahid Rana set the series on fire with a five-wicket haul in the second ODI at Mirpur to pave the way for a comeback, while Mustafizur Rahman once again showed his guile in his first game this series, picking up a five-for as Tigers' pace attack continued its upsurge.

At home or away, including the recent Pakistan series, the pace unit has delivered consistently – certainly a luxury for any Bangladesh skipper. It also means competition. Someone like Shoriful Islam played all three matches series after a one-and-a-half-year gap from 50-over format, and that was only possible as Mustafizur had discomfort right before the toss in the

series opener. "We went to South Africa [2022] and beat them there because of the pace unit. A pace unit which is doing well changes momentum of a team," added the Bangladesh skipper.

Shoriful had been hitting great lengths and picking up five wickets. "It's difficult for a player to play a format suddenly... but the way he adjusted and was a consistent performer in all three matches... I think if everyone has that hunger, it will be great for the team," Miraz said on the left-arm quick.

Mustafizur, meanwhile, picked up his sixth career five-for, a feat that saw him

● Bangladesh's 55-run win over New Zealand in Chattogram is their biggest victory by runs against the Black Caps in ODIs. Their previous highest was a 43-run win in Mirpur in 2013.

● Left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman claimed his sixth five-wicket haul in ODIs. He now stands joint-second among left-arm pacers alongside Wasim Akram and Trent Boult. Mitchell Starc leads this category with nine, while Waqar Younis holds the overall ODI record with 13 five-wicket hauls.

● The 2-1 series win over New Zealand marks Bangladesh's third consecutive ODI series victory, following home wins against Pakistan and West Indies.

match the great Wasim Akram and Trent Boult.

Rana was the superstar this series. He turned things around in the Mirpur cauldron on a spectacularly hot day, bowling consistently at speeds over 140 kph. He became a weapon, a massive threat for any oppositions, picking up seven wickets in the series. "Rana is an asset for the country and we all must try to take care of him," Miraz said.

New Zealand skipper Tom Latham concurred with Miraz's assessment of Rana. "I think someone who's able to run in and bowl 145-150 on a reasonably slow surface certainly shows the skill set that he has and the X-factor that he has... he's obviously a star in the making for Bangladesh," he said.



A SPIRITED START... Bangladesh captain Orpita Pal receives the player-of-the-match award after her hat-trick powered a spirited 5-5 draw against Chinese Taipei in the Women's Asian Games Qualifiers in Jakarta yesterday, marking the senior team's international debut on a positive note. Bangladesh had surged to a 3-1 lead before trailing by two goals, only to fight back in a high-scoring contest. "As a new team, we were committed to give a fight... we could not win, but we have drawn the match," Orpita said, adding that the award "was not possible without my teammates' tremendous support". Bangladesh will next face Uzbekistan today.

PHOTO: AHF



Concussion sub Amite steps up

East Zone's Amite Hasan strengthened his claim for a maiden national call-up ahead of next month's two-match Test series at home against Pakistan with a commanding display in the Bangladesh Cricket League in Sylhet yesterday. The 24-year-old, playing as a concussion substitute for Jaker Ali, resumed on 88 and went on to hit a superb 162 off 265 balls -- his 11th first-class century. Backed by Mushfiqur Rahim's 83 and Yasir Ali's unbeaten 79, East Zone amassed a 463-run first-innings total, securing a 156-run lead. Central Zone were left reeling at 82 for seven in their second innings, still trailing by 74 runs at stumps on day three, with East Zone firmly in control and closing in on victory. In the other match, North Zone secured a dominant 10-wicket win over South Zone inside three days.

PHOTO: BCB



A significant slice of flair is under threat ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with Spain's Lamine Yamal and Brazil's Estevao Willian facing injury concerns, while Germany winger Serge Gnabry has already been ruled out. Yamal picked up a hamstring injury after scoring the winner in Barcelona's 1-0 win over Celta Vigo in the LaLiga yesterday. The 18-year-old will miss the rest of the season, the club confirmed, but is expected to recover in time for the World Cup. Estevao, however, is reportedly "highly unlikely" to be fit for the start of the mega event after suffering a Grade 4 hamstring injury during Chelsea loss to Manchester United last Sunday. Gnabry, meanwhile, will miss the World Cup entirely after confirming a thigh (adductor) injury, bringing an early end to his season with Bayern Munich.

PHOTO: AFP



When goal-line tech settled the debate

The first-ever goal awarded using goal-line technology in a FIFA World Cup came in the 2014 edition. The incident occurred in the 48th minute of a Group E match between France and Honduras in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Although France's Karim Benzema's shot initially struck the post, the "GoalControl-4D" system accurately detected that Honduras goalkeeper Noel Valladares had inadvertently pushed the ball over the goal line.

** Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'The kiss before the fall.'

Italy twist fuels debate over Iran's World Cup spot

AGENCIES

Will Iran finally play the upcoming FIFA World Cup? This has emerged as one of the more pressing questions in international football in recent times, following US and Israeli military strikes earlier this year.

The prospect of Iran being replaced at the "greatest show on earth" has stirred a mix of disbelief and indifference across Italy, after a suggestion by a US envoy reignited debate over the intersection of politics and sport.

According to the Financial Times, Paolo Zampolli, a special envoy to Donald Trump, proposed that four-time champions Italy should take Iran's place at the upcoming tournament. He argued that Italy's pedigree justified inclusion, despite their failure to qualify.

The proposal was swiftly dismissed in Rome. Sports Minister Andrea Abodi described it as "impossible" and "inappropriate," while Finance Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti called it "shameful." Veteran coach Gianni De Biasi added that any vacancy would logically go to another qualified side, not one eliminated in the playoffs.

At the centre of the issue is Iran's confirmed place in the tournament.



FIFA President Gianni Infantino has made it clear that Iran will participate, reiterating that the game should remain separate from political disputes.

Still, political overtones persist. Trump himself said the Iranian team would be "welcome" but questioned whether it would be "appropriate" for them to attend, citing concerns for their "life and safety." The remarks have added to an already sensitive backdrop shaped by ongoing geopolitical tensions.

Iran, however, appears to be proceeding as planned. The World Cup, which is also being co-hosted by Mexico and Canada, gets underway on June 11 with Iran scheduled to kick off their campaign against New Zealand in Los Angeles four days later.

The idea of replacing Iran is not new. Zampolli made a similar appeal ahead of the 2022 World Cup, which FIFA ignored. Existing regulations allow the governing body discretion in exceptional circumstances, but there is no indication such measures are being considered.

In the seemingly unlikely scenario of Iran being excluded from this year's tournament, the decision on who would replace them lies in the hands of FIFA, who under Article Six of the World Cup regulations is at liberty to call up any nation it chooses to fill the vacancy.

The AFC would be expected to lobby hard for the replacement to come from Asia with the United Arab Emirates, who lost a qualifying playoff to Iraq last November, the obvious choice.

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West Bengal records 92% turnout in first phase of polling

Second phase on April 29

AGENCIES

Voting for Tamil Nadu assembly elections and the first phase of the West Bengal assembly elections concluded yesterday at 7:00pm, with an exceptionally high voter turnout.

West Bengal saw an overall voter turnout of 91.91 percent in Phase 1 of the polls, while Tamil Nadu, which voted in a single phase on April 23, saw a voter turnout of 84.29 percent.

In the 2021 WB assembly polls, which was conducted amid the Covid-19 pandemic, turnout was recorded at 82.30 percent.

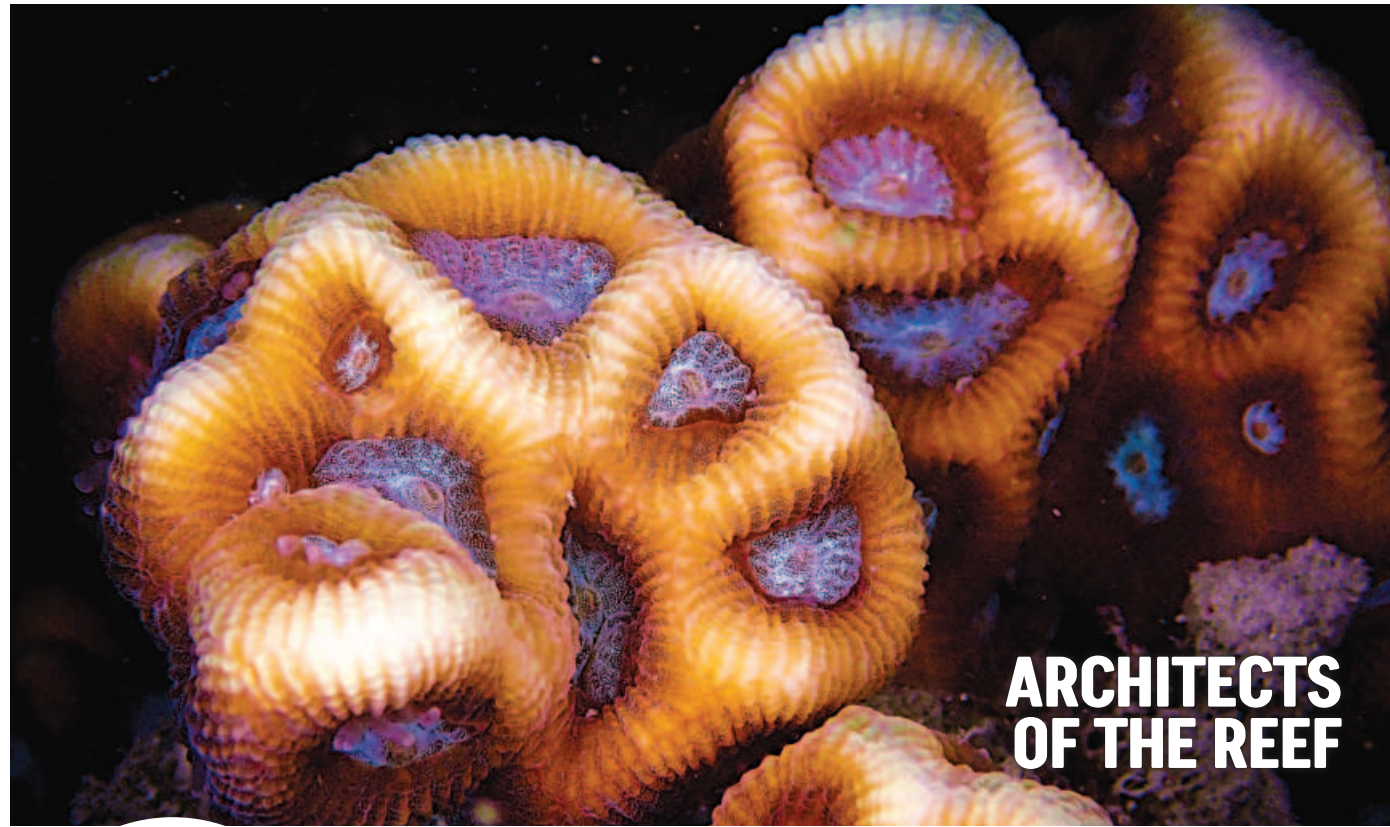
In the first phase, voting took place across a total of 152 constituencies, including key seats like Nandigram, Darjeeling, Siliguri, Cooch Behar, and Jalpaiguri.

The BJP is hoping to seize power from the Trinamool Congress (TMC) led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. It has never governed the state of roughly 100 million people and has mounted an all-out push to wrest control.

While the contest is expected to be close, the TMC, in power since 2011, is projected to retain control for a fourth term. Several opinion polls show the party maintaining an edge.

Ahead of the first round of polling, the deletion of 9.1 million names from the electoral rolls, more than 10 percent of the electorate, has drawn sharp criticism from political parties and rights groups. The revision process, known as the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), has been carried out across states and territories, with the Modi

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



ARCHITECTS OF THE REEF



A Favia-type brain coral rests on a reef in the Bay of Bengal off Saint Martin's Island, identifiable by its tightly packed yet individually walled polyps. Found in shallow reef flats, lagoons, and back reef zones, these corals build slow-growing, dome-shaped colonies that form part of the reef's structural foundation. They survive through a dual feeding strategy -- hosting symbiotic algae for photosynthesis and extending tentacles at night to capture plankton. While many species in this group are listed from Least Concern to Near Threatened by the IUCN, their future is increasingly uncertain. Corals are vital to marine ecosystems, supporting nearly a quarter of all ocean life, yet rising sea temperatures are triggering widespread bleaching, weakening reefs at an unprecedented rate.

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR

EC clears 49 for reserved seats

NCP's Monira disqualified

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday declared 49 out of 53 nomination papers valid for the reserved women's seats election in the 13th national parliament, scheduled for May 12.

Returning Officer Md Moin Uddin Khan announced at the EC auditorium that four nominations were cancelled, including that of Monira Sharmin, a retired official of a government bank and leader of National Citizen Party (NCP).

With her disqualification, one of the 50 reserved seats has fallen vacant and will later be opened for a fresh contest among all parties and alliances, EC officials said.

Assistant Returning Officer Md Monir Hossain added that under the Jatiya Sangsad (Reserved Women's Seat) Election Act, 2004, a vacant seat allows all alliances to contest.

The cleared nominations include all 36 candidates chosen by the BNP-led alliance, 12 out of 13 from the Jamaat-led alliance, and one independent candidate.

Scrutiny of nomination papers was held on Wednesday and yesterday. Appeals against the scrutiny can be filed on April 26 between 9:00am

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Don't turn away measles patients

DGHS orders hospitals, asks them to arrange extra beds if needed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hospitals have been instructed by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) to stop transferring patients with measles symptoms on account of a shortage of beds.

If necessary, hospitals must arrange additional beds, according to the notice issued on Tuesday.

Referrals will be allowed only when patients are in need of highly specialised treatment. In such instances, hospitals must follow the designated referral chain -- from upazila to district hospitals, then to medical college hospitals, and finally to specialised facilities.

The directive also warns that any deviation from these instructions will result in accountability for the head of the respective hospital.

DGHS Director (hospital) Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan confirmed the issuance of the directive to The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, another patient died of measles in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, raising this year's death toll to 39, said the DGHS.

In addition, the DGHS recorded four more deaths with measles-like symptoms during the same period, taking the number of suspected measles deaths to 194.

In the last 24 hours, 125 new confirmed cases were recorded, raising the total to 4,059. During the same period, 1,170 suspected measles cases were recorded, bringing the total suspected cases to 28,334.

Till yesterday, 18,845 patients were admitted to hospitals with measles and suspected measles cases; of them, 15,728 recovered and got discharged.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Rohingya exodus surges by 90%

They are fleeing Bangladesh, Myanmar in search of better life, says Save the Children



AFP, Dhaka

The number of Rohingya refugees fleeing Bangladesh and Myanmar by boat has increased by 90 percent compared with last year, Save the Children said yesterday, based on United Nations figures.

Many Rohingyas who escape persecution in war-torn Myanmar undertake perilous sea journeys every year in search of better living conditions, travelling on overcrowded, rickety boats often operated by trafficking networks.

Khin Maung, a member of the United Council Rohingya (UCR), an elected refugee council in

Bangladesh, said the statistics were deeply "upsetting".

He said there were awareness programmes about the risks of the journey, but that people were desperate.

"As our children see no future, no clear prospects of repatriation, and face the absence of formal education, they risk their lives," he told AFP.

More than a million Rohingyas refugees, many who fled Myanmar during a brutal military crackdown in 2017, live in vast refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar.

"Children and their families face rising insecurity and inadequate

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

Rooppur set for fuel loading on April 28

300MW expected by early Aug

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

The Rooppur nuclear power plant will finally begin operational activities with a fuel loading ceremony on April 28, marking the debut of unit-1 of the nuclear facility.

Previously, fuel loading was scheduled for April 7, but the deadline was pushed back due to a delay in obtaining the commissioning licence.

However, the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority officially granted the licence for the first unit on April 16, clearing the way for preparations.

Once fuel loading begins, the plant will undergo a series of tests before starting electricity production.

"We expect at least 300MW of electricity to be added to the national grid from unit-1 by the end of July or early August, with full-scale production expected by the end of this year or early next year," said Md Tanvir Miah, public relations

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Govt to form a cell to combat cyberbullying

Hotline, portal planned for faster support to victims

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The government has taken an initiative to establish a dedicated cell under the Prime Minister's Office to combat cyberbullying and strengthen digital safety, according to sources at the PMO.

The move, cleared in principle by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, aims to create a central mechanism to respond to online harassment, particularly on social media platforms, and to provide faster support to victims in a respectful and sensitive manner.

PMO sources said the proposed unit would be part of a broader plan to build a National Online Safety System, designed to offer a simple and accessible way for users to report cyber-related abuse.

The system is expected to include a 24-hour hotline, an online reporting portal, and trained response teams tasked with handling complaints related to cyberbullying, threats, impersonation, and the spread of private information.

Contacted by The Daily Star, an official involved in the planning said, "The idea is to make the reporting process easy and quick so that victims, especially women and young users, feel safe to come forward."

Officials said details of the structure, staffing, and launch timeline of the PMO-led cell are expected to be finalised soon.

According to sources, the PMO will provide overall policy direction and oversee coordination, while several ministries and agencies are expected to be involved

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Tigers seal 3rd straight ODI series win

Beat New Zealand 2-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Najmul Hossain Shanto struck a brilliant century before Mustafizur Rahman claimed a five-wicket haul as Bangladesh defeated New Zealand by 55 runs in the series-deciding third and final ODI to seal a 2-1 series victory at the Bir Shrestho Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Cricket Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

The win marked Bangladesh's third consecutive ODI series triumph, following home victories over Pakistan and the West Indies. It is their first such streak since August 2022 and comes after a run of four straight series defeats.

Shanto scored 105 off 119 balls -- his fourth ODI ton -- and shared a crucial 160-run partnership with Litton Das (76 off 91) for the fourth wicket after

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Najmul Hossain Shanto celebrates after notching his fourth ODI century, guiding Bangladesh to a commanding 265 for eight in the series-deciding third and final ODI against New Zealand in Chattogram yesterday. Shanto scored 105 off 119 balls and stitched a crucial 160-run stand with Litton Das to help Bangladesh recover from an early setback, before the bowlers sealed a 55-run victory -- the Tigers' biggest margin win by runs over the Black Caps in ODIs. The win also ensured Bangladesh clinched the series 2-1, marking their third consecutive ODI series triumph.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

JCD men assault two Ducusu leaders inside police station

DU CORRESPONDENT

Two Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) office-bearers were assaulted inside the Shahbagh Police Station compound last night by a group of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

The victims were identified as Ducusu Literature and Cultural Affairs Secretary Musaddiq Ali Ibne Mohammad and Social Welfare Secretary AB Zubair.

The incident occurred when Chhatra Dal activists went to the police station to file a case against Dhaka University student Abdullah Al Mahmud, accusing him of making a derogatory Facebook post about Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and his daughter Zaima Rahman.

At the same time, Abdullah, accompanied by Musaddiq, Zubair, and Ducusu's Liberation War and Democratic Movement Affairs Secretary Fatima Tasnim Zuma, arrived at the station to file a general diary citing security concerns.

Around 7:30pm, an altercation broke out between the two groups, and Chhatra Dal activists attacked Musaddiq and Zubair separately.

Later, senior Chhatra Dal leaders escorted the Ducusu leaders to safety inside the police station.

Witnesses reported that for about 20 minutes, Chhatra Dal activists chanted slogans and demanded the Ducusu leaders be brought out.

The entire time there was no police intervention. Senior Chhatra Dal leaders eventually intervened and moved their activists outside.

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