



ROOPPUR LIGHTS UP AS POWER LOADING BEGINS

Proud to have supplied 100% rods for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant



Bangladesh enters nuclear energy era

Fuel loading begins at unit-1 of Rooppur plant today



AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh moves a step closer to achieving its long-cherished goal of generating nuclear energy this afternoon with the start of fuel loading into the reactor core of unit-1 at the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, marking the transition from the construction to the startup phase.

With this milestone, Bangladesh is poised to join a select group of a little over 30 nuclear power-producing countries and become the third South Asian country, after India and Pakistan, to generate nuclear energy.

Officials said fuel loading would be completed in less than 45 days, and the reactor core would be warmed up within three months by withdrawing neutron absorbers. Electricity will then be generated on a trial basis and fed into the national grid.

Russia's state-run TVEL Fuel Company is providing the nuclear fuel. Russia has agreed to take back the spent fuel, using its own technology. However, the final roadmap for this has yet to be finalised.

"If the commissioning progresses smoothly, we expect to add a minimum of 300 megawatts by late July or early August to the national grid. Production will then gradually increase by 10 to 15 percent, reaching the ceiling of 1,200 megawatts by late 2026 or early 2027," Md Anwar Hossain, secretary at the science and technology

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 2

LOCATION	Rooppur, Ishwardi, Pabna
CAPACITY	2,400 megawatts
UNITS	Two
REACTOR MODEL	Generation III+ VVER-1200
COST (ESTIMATED)	\$12.65 billion
FUEL TYPE	Uranium enriched to 5%
FUEL SUPPLIER	TVEL (Russia)
OPERATOR	Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC)
MAIN CONTRACTOR	JSC Atomstroyexport
LIFESPAN	60 years

Iran 'offers to end Hormuz chokehold'

Reports say; Araghchi meets Putin in Moscow, secures his support

AGENCIES

Iran has made a new proposal to the United States to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and end the war, postponing nuclear negotiations to a later stage to break the deadlock in the high-stakes talks, reports said.

The reports came as Iran's top diplomat yesterday blamed Washington for the failure of Middle East peace talks during a visit to Russia, where President Vladimir Putin promised him Moscow's support in bringing the war to a close.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was in Saint Petersburg on the fourth leg of a whirlwind diplomatic tour, having sandwiched a trip to Oman between two visits to the main mediator, Pakistan, over the past few days.

Islamabad hosted the first and only round of unsuccessful US-Iran talks, SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

LIMON-BRISTY KILLING Murder suspect 'searched AI on body disposal'

STAR REPORT

A suspect charged with killing two Bangladeshi students, Zamil Limon and Nahida Bristy, in Florida allegedly searched an artificial intelligence chatbot about disposing of a body days before the pair were last seen, according to a court filing cited by NBC News.

Hisham Abugharbieh, 26, faces a first-degree murder charge over the deaths of Limon and Bristy, both 27. Limon's body was recovered on Friday, while Bristy remains missing, although investigators believe she is dead.

In a motion filed on Saturday seeking to deny bail, the American television channel reported that prosecutors alleged Abugharbieh asked ChatGPT on April 13, "What happens if a human [is] put in a black garbage bag and thrown in a dumpster."

When the chatbot responded that the scenario sounded dangerous, he SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

DCs' proposals expose health sector ills

Cabinet Division gets over 80 suggestions ahead of conference in May

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Barguna, a southern coastal district with a population of about 10 lakh, turned into a dengue hotspot last year, recording 15 deaths and 9,534 cases -- the highest for any single district except those at divisional headquarters.

(ICU). Critically ill patients are referred to hospitals in Barishal and Dhaka, with many dying in transit, while others cannot afford ambulance transport.

The district has the necessary structure for setting up ICUs but not the equipment and necessary manpower, said Barguna Civil Surgeon Muhammad

Tangail Medical College Hospital, a 500-bed facility, began operations in 2022. It has a 10-bed ICU that remains nonfunctional due to the absence of a central oxygen supply system.

The district has come under the spotlight again this year amid a measles outbreak, as Barguna Sadar upazila recorded the highest infection rate until March.

But, none of the public hospitals, including the 250-bed General Hospital, in the district has intensive care units

Abul Fatha.

Besides, two-third of the posts for health workers at all six upazila health complexes in the district have remained vacant for long, compounding the situation.

Against the backdrop, Barguna Deputy Commissioner has proposed establishing SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

'We pledge to change the fate of the nation'

Tarique tells Jashore rally, warns against attempts to disturb stability

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday warned that no one will be allowed to disturb peace and stability in the country.

"Let us remain alert... We will not allow anyone the chance to disturb public peace or enforce a 173-day hartal," he told a public rally at the Jashore Central Eidgah Ground, organised by the district BNP.

The PM said no attempt will be allowed to mislead the country's people or hold them back through fear or propaganda. "From this rally, we pledge to change the fate of the country."

Tarique, also the BNP chairman, said his party believes in action, not just promises. "The BNP does not want to secure public support through deception

or by 'selling tickets', like other political parties.

"We want to do real work," he said, calling upon the people to work together for the country.

He said the BNP enjoys public trust and has received a mandate in the election. "The people of Bangladesh trust the BNP. That is why they gave us a mandate in the election. They have entrusted us with the responsibility to implement our commitments.

He added that a group of people does not accept this public mandate and has been delivering speeches in different places, claiming that the BNP has become a collaborator of fascism.

He urged people to consider who has actually become collaborators of fascism. The prime minister said his party SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

Anomalies found in Family Card pilot

Finance ministry advises going slow with rollout

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The finance ministry has found a host of anomalies in the pilot of the Family Card programme, as the government seeks to iron out irregularities and ensure the BNP's flagship social welfare initiative can withstand the scrutiny of development partners.

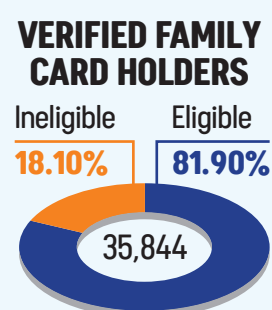
As per rules, government employees, pensioners, savings certificate holders and those already benefiting from other government social safety net programmes such as Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) programme and Food-Friendly Programme are not eligible for the Family Card.

Those with Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) cards or vehicles registered with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) are also not eligible.

In the pilot phase that began on March 10, less than a month after the new government's swearing in ceremony, 37,800 Family Cards were handed out. The finance ministry could verify the details of 35,844 of the recipients and found 6,487 cardholders (about 18 percent) to be ineligible under the criteria set for the programme.

Among them, 38 were government employees, 69 were pensioners, 174 were savings certificate holders, 5,021 had TCB cards, 709 were VWB beneficiaries and 113 were listed under the Food-Friendly Programme, according to the finance ministry findings seen by The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman addresses a public rally organised by the district unit BNP at the Jashore Eidgah ground yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PMO

Fulfil polls pledge, free journalists in prison

CPJ writes to law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) yesterday urged the government to fulfil its election pledge to withdraw politically motivated cases against journalists, and to drop charges and release Farzana Rupa, Shakil Ahmed, Mozammel Haq Babu, and Shyamal Dutta.

"All four journalists have been held for more than 18 months accused of murder which, based on our documentation, testimony from their families, and review by international counsel, no credible evidence has been presented and no charge sheet has been served," it said in a letter to Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman.

It added that the pattern of cases appeared closely tied to their reporting SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

INCEPTION TO FUEL LOADING

1961: Then Pakistan government first took initiative for a nuclear power plant in Rooppur

1962: Then Pakistan government acquired 261 acres on the Padma. Successive governments since then took initiatives to have a nuclear power plant but could not make much headway

2008: Bangladesh undertakes a project to build Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant

2010: Bangladesh and Russia sign a framework agreement

2011: Bangladesh and Russia sign an inter-governmental agreement

2013: First phase financial deal worth \$500 million signed with Russia

2008 to 2013: Bangladesh signs deals with the IAEA over nuclear safety, and security

2015: Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission and JSC Atomstroyexport sign a general contract worth \$12.65 billion



UNIT-1 OF ROOPPUR POWER PLANT

2016: Bangladesh and Russia sign loan deals worth \$11.38 billion

2016: Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority issues site licence

2017: BAERA issues construction licence for unit-1

2017: Concrete poured into unit-1 on November 30

2018: Concrete poured into unit-2 in July

2021: Reactor pressure vessel placed in unit-1

2022: Reactor pressure vessel placed in unit-2

2023: First batch of nuclear fuel arrives on September 28

2023: Nuclear fuel handed over to the power plant on October 5

2026: Plant gets commissioning licence for unit-1 on April 16

2026: Fuel is loading into the unit-1 core on April 28
Source: Official Website of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant

Shadow over future nuclear energy ambition

A little-noticed clause in Bangladesh's new US trade agreement could complicate the future of its nuclear energy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When Bangladesh signed its reciprocal trade agreement with the United States in February, headlines focused on garments and tariffs. Less noticed was a short clause in Article 4.3. It makes clear that Bangladesh shall not purchase nuclear reactors, fuel rods, or enriched uranium from any country that "jeopardises essential US interests".

No country is named. But policymakers have no doubt: it refers to Russia, which is building Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant.

The Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, with two 1,200-megawatt reactors, is expected to supply roughly a tenth of national capacity.

The first unit may start supplying power to the grid within months. Yet its operational future now hinges on a geopolitical question it was never designed to answer.

"If the agreement prevents the import of uranium or fuel rods from Russia, the nuclear plant simply cannot operate," said Professor M Tamim, a leading energy policy expert.

Officials have sought to calm concerns. Md Anwar Hossain, secretary of the science and technology ministry, said the existing project is insulated.

"Unit-1 and Unit-2 are being constructed under an international agreement following IAEA guidelines. The project utilises Russian technology and financial support, and a long-term fuel supply

agreement is already in place. Therefore, the recent trade agreement will not affect these two units," he said.

The deeper problem is structural. Dhaka has anchored its nuclear future to a supplier Washington has effectively blacklisted.

"The core of the issue lies in the reliance on Russia, which is currently a sanctioned country," Prof Tamim said.

Dhaka has anchored its nuclear future to a supplier Washington has effectively blacklisted

Existing project is insulated, says Md Anwar Hossain, secretary of science and technology ministry

Nuclear plants require continuous refuelling, with contracts for enriched uranium periodically renegotiated. Each renewal could force Bangladesh into the same dilemma: comply with Washington's conditions or face higher tariffs to its garment exports.

"This creates a situation where Bangladesh might be forced to seek US permission or exemptions for essential materials," Prof Tamim warned.

Pressed on how such constraints would

be managed, Secretary Anwar only said, "If challenges arise in the future, we will adapt our planning as necessary."

However, adjusting Bangladesh's nuclear energy policy as circumstances demand may prove far from easy.

The global nuclear market is tightly controlled by Russia's Rosatom, China's CNNC, the United States' Westinghouse, and France's Framatome. Switching suppliers mid-project is not an option. Reactors are engineered for specific fuel assemblies. Conversion costs are immense; downtime can stretch for years.

By the time Rooppur is complete, Bangladesh will have invested billions in Russian technology it may struggle to fuel beyond its initial cycle.

Prof Tamim is blunt: the US trade deal is "a very bad contract that limits sovereign decision-making."

There is, however, a narrow opening. The agreement allows exemptions for proprietary materials where no alternative supplier exists. In theory, Rosatom's fuel assemblies — designed specifically for VVER 1200 reactors — might qualify.

Prof Tamim acknowledges the possibility, cautiously. "There is some hope that proprietary technology might offer an escape clause," he said.

Future expansion raises further questions.

During his Bangladesh visit in April 2024, Rosatom Director General Alexey Likhachev said in a statement that both

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

Elation, unease at Rooppur

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *Pabna*

For residents of Rooppur, the nuclear power plant project was long seen as a pipe dream that remained unfulfilled for decades. As the plant now moves toward trial operations, a sense of excitement and uncertainty grips those living near the country's first-ever nuclear facility.

"As children, we watched that empty site with curiosity, having little grasp of what 'nuclear' truly meant. As we transitioned from childhood to middle age, we watched the geography of our homes shift, waiting for the promise to manifest," said Amirul Islam, a 65-year-old retired primary school teacher from Rooppur village.

Now, that dream is finally coming into view. The cooling towers of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (RNPP) stand tall on the once-barren shoal land. With the recent commencement of fuel loading, the plant has officially transitioned from a construction site to an operational facility.

"This is a proud moment for all of us," said Amirul Islam. "But at the same time, we are worried about our safety."

The sentiments of this retired teacher mirror the duality felt across the community.

Rafiqul Islam Mukul, a teacher at Solimpur Degree College, said, "We urge the government to ensure safety planning for local people in the event of a crisis."

He noted that most residents do not know what to do if a risk arises. "We are also worried about radioactive waste. Although we know Russia will take back the spent fuel, we have no clear idea of how that process works," Mukul added.

Speaking in this newspaper, Dr Shafiqul Islam, a professor in the nuclear

engineering department at Dhaka University, noted that the RNPP utilises advanced technology with minimal risk, while also stressing the need for a robust evacuation plan.

"Almost everyone admits to lacking a clear understanding of how nuclear technology works," Dr Shafiqul noted. "People are unaware of how to survive in the event of a radiation leak. Most do not understand radioactive waste; much of their fear is based on rumours, which creates unnecessary anxiety."

"This is a proud moment for all of us. But at the same time, we are worried about our safety."

Amirul Islam, a retired school teacher from Rooppur

He stressed that as fuel loading begins, authorities must educate locals on safety protocols, evacuation plans, and emergency medical treatment. "The fear of nuclear energy must be addressed. Modern technology is significantly safer than previous generations, but that message isn't reaching the people."

EMERGENCY RESPONSE
Soikat Ahmed, the information focal point officer at the plant, told The Daily Star that an emergency response system has already been developed inside the facility, adding that awareness programmes are being carried out for the surrounding population.

"We are working to raise awareness by organising a series of field meetings in villages surrounding the plant. We inform

residents about the safety systems and how to act during a crisis," Ahmed said, noting that these meetings occur monthly to address public concerns.

Md Khalequzzaman, deputy project director, said the plant has a sophisticated multi-tiered Emergency Response System (ERS).

"Firstly, the 300-metre restricted zone, the highest-risk area, lies fully within the project boundary wall. Beyond that, a 5km warning zone is equipped with a Local Warning System (LWS) to alert residents of atmospheric changes. In addition, a 12.5km monitoring radius is covered by 23 Automatic Environment Radiation Monitoring Systems (AERMS), providing real-time data."

Khalequzzaman added that radiation levels would be continually monitored and that immediate action would be taken if any urgency arose.

He also noted that the facility also includes a fortified underground Emergency Response Center (ERC) capable of shielding 1,200 employees, allowing them to operate the plant remotely during a threat. Two external shelters are also prepared to house an additional 1,200 people.

When asked about evacuating the general public in the event of an emergency, the deputy project director said while it is practically impossible to evacuate such a large population quickly, the authorities will ensure the highest safety and security measures. This includes providing a necessary emergency response in any critical situation as per international guidelines.

Furthermore, emergency radiation prevention pills (iodine tablets) have been stockpiled for distribution if necessary, said the information focal point officer.

How power is generated at a nuclear plant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

How nuclear energy and then electricity are produced is often feared as rocket science. The fact is that it is not that difficult to understand. It is, however, difficult to get it done safely and keep it under control.

Nuclear energy can be had in two ways. Nuclear fusion and nuclear fission.

In the case of nuclear fusion, two atoms are hammered into one, which releases a lot of energy. For example, the sun is currently fusing hydrogen atoms into helium. The energy released by this process lights up the sun and sustains life on earth. The problem is, man has not been able to reliably replicate the sun despite advancements in science and technology.

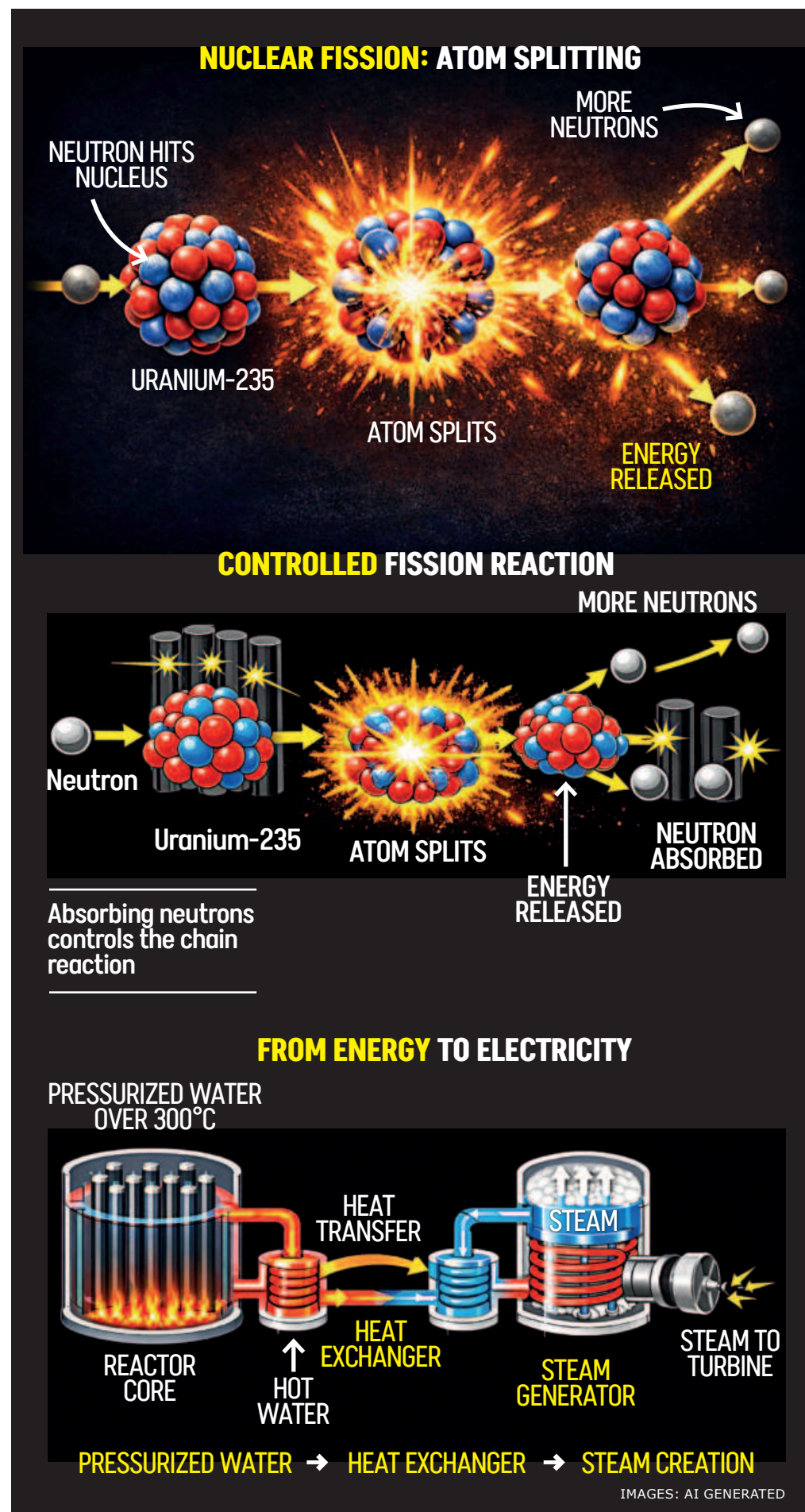
What man has been able to do, reliably and somewhat cheaply, is nuclear fission. In nuclear fission, an atom is split, which also releases energy.

The best way to do this, so far, is to hit a uranium-235 atom with a neutron, a sub-atomic particle.

When struck, the uranium-235 splits and releases a lot of energy and a few neutrons that can hit other uranium-235 atoms. If this chain reaction is not controlled, due to accidents, incidents or otherwise, bad things happen. Chernobyl or Fukushima stopped being names of places and became names of disasters.

To control this reaction, control rods with neutron absorbers are installed along with uranium fuel rods inside a reactor's core.

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IMAGES: AI GENERATED

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

PM slams attack
at White House
correspondents'
dinner

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has strongly condemned the violent attack at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner attended by President Donald Trump, First Lady Melania Trump and other top officials and business leaders.



"Strongly condemning the cowardly act of violence at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner," he shared a post on X yesterday.

He said he was relieved to learn that President Trump, the First Lady, and others were unharmed.

"We stand firmly against all forms of violence," he said.

On Saturday, a man armed with guns and knives stormed the lobby outside the event, charging towards the ballroom in a chaotic encounter with Secret Service agents as guests dived under tables at the sound of shots being fired.



Battery-run rickshaws operating illegally being towed near Mohammadpur Bus Stand in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A hundred frames,
everlasting lossBILS exhibition captures
human toll, lived realities
within urban tragedies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As you make your way through the exhibition, the first few images that catch the eye almost begin on a hopeful note, showing labourers returning home with quiet dreams and the joy of reuniting with loved ones. But that warmth swiftly fades. Beyond the opening frames, the tone shifts as over 100 photographs tell stories of grief, capturing the raw anguish of loss and the hollow stares of those left behind.

This emotional journey, titled "Still Standing: Industrial Disasters, Workers' Lives and the Cost of Forgetting in Bangladesh", showcases photographs from 10 of the country's most devastating industrial and urban disasters over the past two decades.

Starting from Friday before ending yesterday at the National Art Gallery (Gallery 5) of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, the exhibition was organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS). It featured the work of The Daily Star photographers Anisur Rahman, Amran Hossain, Rashed Sumon, Palash Khan, Prabir Das, and Rajib Raihan.

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Govt agencies rack
up Tk 629cr in
unpaid land taxes

DIPAN NANDY

Government ministries and their subordinate agencies owe more than Tk 629 crore in Land Development Tax (LDT), with the highest arrears accrued by the ministries of railways, environment, and local government.

Data from the Land Reform Board shows that arrears owed by institutions under 37 ministries stood at Tk 711.21 crore, including Tk 561.78 crore accumulated till June 2025 and an additional Tk 149.43 crore since then. Of this, around Tk 82 crore has been recovered, leaving Tk 629.14 crore unpaid.

Bangladesh Railway, under the Ministry of Railways, is the largest defaulter, owing Tk 202.25 crore.

Md Afzal Hossain, director general of BR, said, "We are making efforts to pay the outstanding land development tax. However, the allocation we receive from the Ministry of Finance is insufficient. For example, if we are required to pay Tk 100 crore in taxes, we receive only Tk 20-30 crore in allocation. That is why the backlog has accumulated."

"Bangladesh Railway is a service-oriented institution. Yet we have to pay land development tax as if we were a commercial entity. I would request the government to reconsider and reassess the land development tax, taking this issue into account," he added.

Other major defaulters include the Roads and Highways Department

(Tk 57.88 crore), Water Development Board (Tk 28.96 crore), city corporations (Tk 26.04 crore), the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Tk 16.42 crore), and the Public Works Department (Tk 16.39 crore).

The Land Reform Board has recently taken initiatives to recover the outstanding taxes, including organising a workshop in January and planning to send letters to all ministries and agencies next month. A

Bangladesh Railway is the largest defaulter, owing Tk 202.25 crore. Other major defaulters include Roads and Highways Department (Tk 57.88 crore), Water Development Board (Tk 28.96 crore), city corporations (Tk 26.04 crore), and Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Tk 16.42 crore).

draft letter has been finalised, stating that mobilising internal resources and increasing domestic revenue are essential for national development and that land development tax is a key source of government revenue.

Officials of the Land Reform Board say the overall arrears have reduced compared to previous years following various initiatives to this end. Earlier,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Bangladesh
lacks 'A-status'
NHRC to
curb tortureSays UN Special
Rapporteur Dr
Alice Edwards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Alice Edwards, the United Nations special rapporteur on torture, has said Bangladesh lacks an "A-status" National Human Rights Commission and a national preventive mechanism to combat custodial torture.

Dr Edwards said that violence in Bangladesh is deeply rooted, institutional, and long-standing.

She was speaking at a Consultation Meeting on Strengthening Prevention and Accountability Frameworks for Torture in Bangladesh held at the Hotel Holiday Inn yesterday, organised by Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST), Association for the Prevention of Torture, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims and Redress.

The special rapporteur is in Bangladesh for a week-long study visit.

She said Bangladesh has developed a strong "legal scaffolding", but the rest is missing.

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FROM PRESS GALLERY

Local govt polls
under consideration
Fakhrul tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is actively considering holding local government elections, and the process will begin swiftly once preparations are complete, said Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives Minister Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

Responding to a question from Jamaat lawmaker Zahirul Islam during a parliamentary session, the minister said authorities are working on necessary groundwork before announcing any schedule.

Answering another query from independent MP Rumcen Farhana, the minister said local government elections are conducted in phases and may take between 10 months and a year to complete across all tiers.

He said several factors must be considered

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Drive against drugs
after April 30
Says Salahuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A nationwide coordinated drive will be launched against drugs and gambling after April 30, said Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed in parliament yesterday.

He made the announcement while responding to an attention notice on urgent public importance at the parliament, chaired by Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad.

Noakhali 2 lawmaker Zainul Abidin Farroque, in his notice, said, "As night falls, wild revelry begins... shisha lounges never die down. Illegal

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Absence of MP,
ministers disrupts
JS proceedings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament's regular work was disrupted yesterday after three urgent notices under Rule 71 could not be dealt with on time due to the absence of the relevant ministers and one MP.

Rule 71 allows MPs, with the speaker's permission, to raise urgent public matters.

The sitting began at 3:05pm, five minutes late, but the notices for the home, road transport, and disaster management ministers stalled as the ministers were absent.

A notice by ruling party MP Kamruzzaman Kamrul also failed when he was not in the chamber. The discussions resumed around 4:20pm.

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RESERVED SEATS EC rejects appeal of NCP's Monira Sharmin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday rejected an appeal against the nomination of BNP-backed candidate Zeeba Amina Khan for the reserved women's seat poll to the 13th National Parliament, allowing her candidacy to stand.

At the same time, the EC upheld the returning officer's decision to cancel the nomination of National Citizen Party (NCP) candidate Monira Sharmin, ruling that she had not completed three years since resigning from government service.

The EC also dismissed an appeal filed against BNP candidate Madhabi Marma's nomination, leaving her candidacy valid.

Yesterday marked the first day of hearings on appeals against returning officers' decisions regarding nomination papers for the reserved women's seats. The hearings began at 11:00am at the EC headquarters in Agargaon and concluded at noon.

After the hearing, Election Commissioner Abdur Rahmnel SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Farmers from four Kishoreganj villages, hit by submerged croplands, form a human chain near the Kolapara railway crossing yesterday, demanding re-excavation of the old Uddeya canal to prevent waterlogging across Shukhni, Kachhuar, Chinakandi, Meyakona and other beels. They lamented the canal's lost navigability due to years of neglect. A memorandum was later submitted to local lawmaker through the Sadar UNO.

PHOTO: TAFSILUL AZIZ

Man held over rape of woman in M'singh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police on Sunday night arrested a man in connection with a case filed over the gang-rape of a woman in Mymensingh's Nandail upazila.

Police produced Helal Uddin, 55, before a Mymensingh court yesterday with a five-day remand prayer, following which the magistrate granted remand for two days to interrogate the accused, said Nandail Police Station OC Md Azharul Islam.

On Saturday, police rescued the 26-year-old victim, a mother of two, who was reportedly gang-raped in Nandail. The next day, the victim's father filed a case with Nandail Police Station, naming one person and several unnamed accused, said the OC.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said the victim, from Sunamganj, was travelling with her three-year-old daughter to her in-laws' house in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila on April 19. She lost her way and reached SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

'I was locked up and raped for days'

Female migrant worker shares harrowing ordeals faced in KSA

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

A 31-year-old Bangladeshi woman, who returned to the country from Saudi Arabia recently, made allegations of being repeatedly raped and physically abused in the Gulf country after being lured there with the promise of a domestic worker job.

The woman is currently undergoing treatment at the One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC) in Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Dr Monika Khondokar of DMCH's OCC said the victim was initially admitted to the hospital's gynaecology department on Sunday and was transferred to the OCC yesterday following her rape allegations.

"Until yesterday, she was experiencing shortness of breath, but her condition is somewhat stable now. There are injury marks on her body. We can confirm the rape allegations once we receive the forensic results," the doctor said.

According to the victim's BMET Emigration Clearance card obtained by this newspaper, she received immigration clearance on March 9 this year.

Narrating her ordeal in a video message provided to the OCC and police, the woman said she returned to Bangladesh on April 22.

She accused Md Badruzzaman, managing director of Soar Travels Limited in Dhaka's Motijheel, of sending her to the KSA under the false pretext of a domestic help visa.

"I was not given any household work SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

CAAB enhances security at all eight airports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) has enhanced security at all eight airports across the country, including Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, amid fears of potential militant attacks on important national installations.

CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal Mostafa Mahmood Siddiqi shared this information during a meeting with members of the Aviation and Tourism Journalists' Association of Bangladesh (ATJJB) at CAAB headquarters at the capital's Kurmitola yesterday.

The CAAB chairman stated that security was increased following a letter from the Police Headquarters.

He noted that as the airports are classified as key point installations, they are always under a strict security cordon; however, security has been further bolstered.

"We will keep vigilance for the next few days..." the CAAB chief said.

"I will not say under what SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Will take action over forced repatriation Expatriates' welfare minister assures Malaysia returnees

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has assured returnee migrants -- affected by the arbitrary repatriation from Malaysia -- that their demands, including compensation and the return of passports confiscated by the Malaysian companies, will be addressed.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Ariful Haque Chowdhury made the assurance when a delegation of returnees met him at the ministry yesterday.

"We demanded the return of our passports, confiscated by our former employer Mediceram, and removal of the blacklist imposed on us in Malaysia," Ibrahim Nahid, a member of the delegation, told The Daily Star.

The workers also sought zero-cost migration opportunities once the Malaysian labour market reopens.

Nahid said around 180 Bangladeshi workers were forcibly repatriated between January and March after they stopped working for Mediceram, a rubber company, over its failure to renew work permits.

The workers had gone to Malaysia in 2023, each spending about Tk 6 lakh, but faced irregular or unpaid wages. When they protested, they were allegedly repatriated under the employer's [Mediceram's] influence. SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

ATTACK ON MP'S VEHICLE Three BNP, JCD leaders expelled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrokona

Three leaders from the BNP and its student wing, Jaiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, have been expelled following an attack on a member of parliament and the vandalism of his vehicle in Netrokona district.

The action was confirmed yesterday by District JCD President Anik Mahub Chowdhury.

The incident took place in the Netrokona-5 (Purbadhala) constituency, where MP Masum Mustafa was assaulted at a filling station on Friday evening, according to party sources.

Yesterday, the disciplinary action was taken in line with party decisions. The disciplinary measures followed an internal investigation into the attack, during which Jamaat-e-Islami MP Mustafa's vehicle was also damaged.

According to a statement signed by BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, Ishtiaq Ahmed Babu, joint convener of Purbadhala upazila unit of BNP, has been expelled from all party posts, including his primary membership, over allegations of involvement in terrorism, violence, and activities against party discipline.

In a separate statement, the JCD central committee announced that Saju Ahmed, member secretary of the Purbadhala upazila unit, has been removed from his post, while former joint convener Solaiman Kabir has been expelled from primary membership on specific charges of violating organisational discipline.

Govt agencies rack Drive against drugs after April 30

FROM PAGE 3

government institutions owed more than Tk 1,000 crore in land development tax.

They also noted that dues in the current fiscal year are relatively low, and many institutions are expected to clear payments within the fiscal year ending in June. However, arrears that have accumulated over many years remain unpaid.

A senior official of the board, wishing anonymity, said, "Collecting land development tax from individuals is easier than from government institutions. Institutions

face budgetary and procedural complexities."

Unlike individuals, there is no penalty mechanism for government institutions that fail to pay land tax for three consecutive years, leading to prolonged arrears and a lack of accountability.

Contacted, Land Reform Board Chairman AJM Salahuddin Nagari said, "Ensuring timely payment of land development tax is a priority not only for us but also for the entire Ministry of Land. We issue letters twice a year, in January and May, and organise workshops to engage agencies that owe us dues."

FROM PAGE 3

shisha lounges have sprung up in residential buildings, restaurants, and cafes in elite areas of Dhaka. Despite repeated raids, they continue to operate. Some change addresses, while others run with the tacit support of certain officials. Action must be taken."

In reply, the home minister said, "As pledged in our election manifesto, we have declared zero tolerance against gambling, online gambling, and drugs. After April 30, once the parliamentary session ends, we will conduct a nationwide coordinated drive. There is no alternative to saving our youth."

On the issue of shisha bars, the minister blamed the Awami League era, saying that between 2009

and 2024, under the patronage of influential politicians, businessmen, and certain officials, illegal shisha bars and drug spots flourished in Dhaka's Gulshan, Banani, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Uttara, and Baridhara areas. Despite raids, they were reopened through the influence. At present, the Department of Narcotics Control and police are conducting regular raids. On April 16 and 20, large quantities of shisha and equipment were seized in Gulshan and other areas, he added.

Salahuddin also said intelligence surveillance has been intensified so that no one can continue illegal businesses by changing addresses or evading law enforcement.

"If evidence emerges of any individual or institution's involvement, it will be investigated seriously and legal action will follow," he warned.

"If any police member is found aiding such illegal businesses, strict punitive measures will be taken immediately," he added.

Salahuddin informed the parliament that criminals are being held during raids and brought under the law. Dhaka North City Corporation is also identifying and shutting down unlicensed establishments.

He said the current government has identified drugs as a national problem in its election manifesto. Owners of illegal shisha lounges have filed five writ petitions to keep their businesses running. The

DNC has appealed against High Court rulings in these cases, and the Appellate Division has vacated interim orders.

In a supplementary question, MP Farroque asked how many drug traders have been prosecuted since the present government took office. The home minister said he could provide the details after the lawmaker submits a formal notice for disclosure of specific numbers.

PRAYER TIMING
APRIL 28
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:20 12:45 4:45 6:29 8:00
JAMAAT 4:55 1:15 5:00 6:34 8:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Local govt polls

FROM PAGE 3

before announcing the schedule, including preparation of voter lists, procurement of election materials, religious festivals, public examinations, weather conditions, and the repair and finalisation of polling centres. Selection and training of election officials are also required.

At least 45 days are needed for pre-schedule preparations, he added.

In response to a question from Faridpur-1 MP Md Ilyas Mollah, the minister said

the interim government's Public Administration Reform Commission recommended in December 2024 the creation of two new divisions, Faridpur and Cumilla.

Under the proposal, Faridpur Division would include Faridpur, Madaripur, Rajbari, Gopalganj and Shariatpur districts, currently under Dhaka Division. The final decision will be taken by the National Implementation Committee on Administrative Reorganisation (NICAR).

শিল্প মন্ত্রণালয়
বাংলাদেশ ক্ষুদ্র ও কুটির শিল্প কর্পোরেশন (বিসিক)
নকশা কেন্দ্র

প্রশিক্ষণার্থী ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

প্রশিক্ষণের সেশন : মে-জুন ২০২৬
ভর্তির শেষ তারিখ : ১০ মে ২০২৬

কোর্সের নাম	কোর্স ফি
বাটিক প্রিন্ট	৫০০/=
স্ট্রিন প্রিন্ট	৫০০/=
ব্রক প্রিন্ট	৫০০/=
বুন শিল্প	৫০০/=
কাপড়ের পুতুল	৫০০/=
প্যাকোজিং শিল্প	৫০০/=
বাঁশজাত শিল্প	৫০০/=
মৃৎশিল্প	৫০০/=
চামড়া জাত শিল্প	১০০০/=
পাটজাত শিল্প	১০০০/=
ফ্যাশন ডিজাইন	১০০০/=

ভর্তি ফরমের সাথে জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের ফটোকপি ও দুই কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

যোগাযোগ : নকশা কেন্দ্র, বিসিক
১৩৭-১৩৮, মতিঝিল বারিভিত্তিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০
০২-২২৩৩৮৩১১২, ০১৭২৬৭০০৬৩৮

Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited (PGCL)
Office of the Project Director
Installation of Smart Pre-paid Gas Meters, SCADA & GIS at PGCL Franchise Area Project
Project Office: Nalka, Sirajganj, Bangladesh
E-mail: pdpsg.pgcl@gmail.com

Memo No. 28.18.0000.000.087.99.0007.25/172 Date: 23/04/2026

Addendum-01 (Extension of Bid Submission Deadline)

The Bid Document issued under the Specific Procurement Notice (Ref. No.: 28.18.0000.000.087.99.0007.25/160, Date: 05 March 2026) for "Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Smart Prepaid Gas Meters, Meter Calibration System, Web System (Cloud Hosting) & Automated Grievance Redress Centre with Design, Drawing, Necessary Hardware & Software" is hereby amended as follows:

Sl. No.	Description and reference	Existing	Amended As
1	The deadline for Bid Submission is (ITB 23.1)	Date: 30 April 2026 Time: 2:00 PM (BST) (UTC+6:00)	Date: 21 May 2026 Time: 2:00 PM (BST) (UTC+6:00)
2	Public Opening of Technical Parts of Bids (ITB 26.1)	Date: 30 April 2026 Time: 2:15 PM (BST) (UTC+6:00)	Date: 21 May 2026 Time: 2:15 PM (BST) (UTC+6:00)

All other terms and conditions of the Bid Document shall remain unchanged.

This Addendum-01 shall be an integral part of the Bid Document (RFB No.: BD-PGCL-PGM-GD5; Issued on: 09 March 2026).

PGPR-45/2025-2026 (3 x 4")
GD-922
Debdip Barua
Project Director

এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড
বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশন এর একটি স্বতন্ত্র প্রতিষ্ঠান
উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম।

দরপত্র স্মারক নং: ১৮-২৭.০০০০.০০৫.৩০.০৩০.২০-২১
তারিখ: ২৮/০৪/২০২৬ খ্রি।

পুন: দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। ক্রয়ের নাম: Engagement of Contractor for Handling of Bitumen Drums at Piece Rate
২। অর্জনের উদ্দেশ্য: এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড এর নিজস্ব অধিকার।

৩। দরপত্র আমানত: ৩০,০০০.০০ (ত্রিশ হাজার) টাকা "দরপত্র আমানত" হিসেবে সরকার অনুমোদিত যে কোন তফসিলভুক্ত ব্যাংক হতে পে-অর্ডার/ডিমাড ড্রাফট এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড, উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম এর অনুমোদিত দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে। কৃতকার্য দরপত্রের সাথে চুক্তি সম্পাদনের পর "দরপত্র আমানত" এর টাকা আবেদনের প্রেক্ষিতে ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে বিনা সুখে ফেরত প্রদান করা হবে।

৪। নিরাপত্তা আমানত: চুক্তি সম্পাদনের পূর্বে কৃতকার্য দরদাতা কর্তৃক এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড, উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম এর অনুমোদিত ২,০০,০০০.০০ (দুই লক্ষ) টাকা "কার্যসম্পাদন আমানত" হিসেবে সরকার অনুমোদিত যে কোন তফসিলভুক্ত ব্যাংক হতে পে-অর্ডার/ডিমাড ড্রাফট জমা দিতে হবে, যা চুক্তির মেয়াদে আবেদনের প্রেক্ষিতে বিনা সুখে ফেরত প্রদান করা হবে।

৫। দরপত্র তফসিলের মূল্য: ২,০০,০০০.০০ (দুই লক্ষ) টাকা (অফিসের কার্যক্রম)।

৬। দরপত্র তফসিলের প্রার্থীরা: বিপদ বিবরণ ও শর্তাবলী সন্নিবিষ্ট দরপত্র তফসিল নম্বর অর্ধ প্রদান পূর্বক অফিস লসকারী সময়ে আগামী ২১/০৪/২০২৬ তারিখ পর্যন্ত সকল কার্যবিবরণের বোর্ড ০৯:০০ ঘটিকা হতে ২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত কাগজ শাখা, এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড, উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম কার্যালয় হতে ত্রুটি করা যাবে।

৭। দরপত্র জমা হওয়ার তারিখ ও সময়: বিপদ বিবরণ ও শর্তাবলী সন্নিবিষ্ট দরপত্র নম্বর ১২/০৪/২০২৬ তারিখ বেলা ১৪:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড, উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম কার্যালয়ে রফিক টেকার কাছে জমা দিতে হবে।

৮। দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়: দরপত্রসমূহ আগামী ২৩/০৪/২০২৬ তারিখ বেলা ১০:০০ ঘটিকার সময় দরপত্র দাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড, উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম কার্যালয়ে খোলা হবে।

৯। দরপত্রের সন্নিবিষ্ট যোগ্যতা: দরপত্র তফসিল অনুযায়ী কোল বিপদ কো-পারামিসমুহ, ইন্টার্নাল রিজার্ভমেন্ট লিমিটেড বা এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড এ অন্তর্ভুক্ত কর্তৃক মূল্যম ০০ (ফিন) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। কোন বেসরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে প্রায় অভিজ্ঞতার সনদের বিবেচনা করা হবে না।

১০। এ বিঘ্নে কোন তথ্যাদি আবেদন সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্তৃক প্রকৌশলী অফিসার ওয়াশিংটন, ব্যবস্থাপক (ইউজনার ও সিনিয়র), মোবাইল নম্বর ০২৭৬৬০০০৪৯ এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করা যাবে।

১১। এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কাল পর্যালোচনা ব্যতীতই যে কোন অর্থায়ন সনদ দরপত্র আবেদন বা সম্পূর্ণ প্রদান বা বাতিল বিঘ্নে সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

১২। দরদাতা কর্তৃক তথ্যাদি/সনদের প্রার্থী বুল হিসেবে প্রমাণিত হলে দরপত্র সনদের বাতিল করা হবে।

Debdip Barua
Project Director
GD-929

Dead elephant found mutilated in Rangamati forest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The flesh from the legs and trunk of a 60-year-old Asian wild elephant has reportedly been removed a day after it was found dead in the Bhashannadam area of Langadu upazila in Rangamati.

The elephant died on Sunday, with the Forest Department saying it was sick and had long-standing injuries.

However, locals found the mutilated carcass yesterday morning.

Wildlife researchers have alleged negligence by the Forest Department, though officials said night conditions and heavy rain made guarding the carcass difficult.

Joyal, a member of the Elephant Response Team (ERT), told The Daily Star: "There was a storm last night. During this time, someone came at night and cut the elephant's meat. The incident may have happened around 2:00 or 3:00am."

Chittagong Hill Tracts North Forest Division Divisional Forest Officer Md Rafiquzzaman Shah said the act likely took place after the animal's companion moved away.

"Since it was inside the forest, there was no one there at night," he said. "Our people are going with a veterinary

surgeon. After the postmortem, we will identify those involved and take legal action."

Jahangirnagar University zoology professor Dr MA Aziz called the incident "unthinkable", adding, "The forest department should have regularly guarded the elephant's body."

He also said, "This incident happened due to the negligence of the local forest



workers and not taking the matter seriously. As a result, a message will be sent to the people that elephant organs are very valuable, and they can be taken."

He further criticised local behaviour towards the elephant's companion, saying video footage showed people chasing it away, which was "unacceptable".

Ensure fair prices of paddy Demand Patuakhali farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Farmers in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali staged a rally and procession yesterday demanding fair prices for paddy, dismantling of market syndicates, and protection of farmers' rights.

Organised by the Kalapara unit of Bangladesh Krishak Samity, the programme was held at Pakhmar Bazar in Nilganj union. Upazila unit president GM Mahubub presided over the rally, joined by local farmers and organisation leaders.

Speakers said farmers spend Tk 30-32 to produce a kilogramme of paddy but are forced to sell at Tk 16-18 due to middlemen and syndicates. They added that harvester owners, citing the fuel crisis, now charge Tk 16,000-18,000 to harvest one kani of land – about Tk 6,000 more than last year – pushing farmers into hardship.

Leaders urged the government to procure paddy directly from farmers, set up union-level centres, and break syndicates. They also demanded cancellation of canal and sluice gate leases to ease waterlogging and improve irrigation.

Man held over rape

FROM PAGE 4

Nandail. Four people came forward offering help, and she agreed. Later they took her to a secluded place, raped her, and left her there.

When the woman – in tears – went to Shimultoli Bazar area in Nandail the following night, a woman from a nearby area took the victim and her child to her house and provided them food and shelter for five

days, said the OC.

On information, police rescued the woman and her child on Saturday afternoon.

Later, she was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for medical tests.

Primarily, it is suspected that the woman was gang-raped, said the OC.

Drives are on to arrest the other culprits involved in the incident, he added.

I was locked up

FROM PAGE 4

there. I was kept locked in a room, where five to seven men would physically torture and rape me every day," she was heard saying.

The victim also said her husband travelled there to rescue her and bring her back, but further details of the rescue were not available.

The victim's husband said she landed in KSA on March 12. Although she was sent there on the promise of domestic work, she was initially forced to herd goats in the desert.

Unable to bear the extreme heat, she had informed him of her ordeal, prompting him to contact the travel agency.

About 10-12 days later, she was relocated to a

house. However, instead of being assigned household chores, she was brutally tortured and raped there, she alleged.

After she informed him about the abuse, the husband approached the agency again, demanding her immediate return to Bangladesh.

"The agency initially demanded Tk 1 lakh for her return ticket. After much bargaining, they agreed to Tk 53,000. My wife finally returned on April 22," he said, adding that they would file a case soon after consulting with police and lawyers.

Despite multiple attempts, Badruzzaman could not be reached over the phone for comment.

Will take action over

FROM PAGE 4

More than 50 Bangladeshis employed by Kawaguchi were similarly sent back last year.

The Migrant Welfare Network (MWN), a rights group, said the workers had planned a human chain in Dhaka yesterday but were asked by ministry officials to meet the minister instead.

While a delegation met the minister, joint secretary AZM Nurul Haque and the minister's private secretary Debojit Sinha, others

staged a silent human chain outside the ministry.

MWN said the minister assured that the Bangladeshi High Commission in Malaysia and relevant Malaysian authorities would be engaged to investigate unpaid wages and the blacklisting of abused victims.

He also pledged efforts to secure compensation for affected workers and said recruitment agencies involved would be investigated.

CAAB enhances

FROM PAGE 4

perspective police have sent us the latter. But after getting the letter, we have asked all the managers or executive directors or directors to strengthen the existing security mechanism of their airports," said the CAAB chairman.

Police Headquarters has alerted law enforcement agencies across the country to a potential threat of attacks on key installations.

The warning, contained in an "urgent and confidential" letter issued on April 23, called for heightened surveillance and stronger security measures nationwide.

Police Headquarters warned that these individuals may carry out attacks on "state important installations", including the National Parliament, Shahbagh intersection, and various places of worship. Police and army establishments, as well as entertainment centres, were also listed as potential targets.

Currently, there are eight active airports in Bangladesh, comprising

three international airports – Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet – and five domestic airports.

In addition to CAAB's own aviation security, the Armed Police Battalion (APBn), along with members of other law enforcement agencies and intelligence organisations, are responsible for security at these airports.

Absence of MP

FROM PAGE 3

Jamaat-e-Islami MP Mahubub Rahman criticised repeated delays and poor attendance, urging accountability.

Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad urged MPs to be punctual, while Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni apologised, citing a parliamentary meeting, a state programme, and accompanying the prime minister during his visit to Jashore as reasons for the absences.

The speaker reminded members that parliamentary duties must take precedence over other programmes.

A hundred frames, everlasting

FROM PAGE 3

The collection covers 10 major tragedies: the Rana Plaza collapse, the Spectrum Garments factory collapse, the Nimtoli fire, the Tazreen Fashions fire, the Sitakunda fire, the Banani FR Tower fire, the Tampaco Foils factory explosion, the Chawkbazar fire, the That's It Sportswear factory fire, and the Bailey Road Green Cozy Cottage fire.

Nabila Morshed, a student of Jagannath University, stood transfixed before a haunting image at the Rana Plaza section.

"Look at this," she said quietly. "How brutal. A young woman's anklet still hangs from her foot, with a drop of blood clinging to it. The blood on her foot almost looks like Alta

(red dye). Is a human life so cheap?"

Her words found an echo in Rajib, a fine arts student from the University of Development Alternative. Reflecting on a photograph from the FR Tower fire, he said, "I saw an image where several people were hanging, gripping each other's legs, while flames raged beside them. The desperation to survive – how powerful it is. These are our people. Because of someone's greed, because of institutional negligence, they had to leave this world."

Another photograph, from the Nimtoli fire, left numerous visitors visibly shaken. It captures a large pot of biryani, with kebabs and potatoes arranged for

– some of whom may have perished in the blaze that spread from a chemical warehouse.

According to the organisers, the exhibition aims to make visible the realities of industrial disasters, highlight the lived experiences of workers, and reinforce that a safe workplace is a fundamental right. It seeks to encourage dialogue and accountability among policymakers, factory owners, international buyers, and other stakeholders to ensure a safer, more humane, and sustainable working environment.

Ultimately, the exhibition does not just document tragedy. Rather, it demands remembrance, responsibility, and reform.

EC rejects appeal of NCP's Monira

FROM PAGE 4

Masud told reporters, "Monira Sharmin's appeal has been rejected. Her nomination remains cancelled."

Following the decision, Monira said she would challenge the ruling in the High Court.

"We will go to the High Court. I don't want women's representation in parliament and their political empowerment to become uncertain due to ambiguities in the law," she said.

On BNP candidate Zeeba Amina Khan's case, EC Masud said the appeal against her nomination was not valid as the appellant was not a candidate.

Meanwhile, an appeal had been filed with the EC challenging the nomination of BNP candidate Madhabi Marma. The EC heard the matter but dismissed the appeal. The appeal was filed

by Chandra Chakma, central joint secretary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, who alleged that Madhabi was still serving as a member of the Bandarban Hill District Council, which she claimed disqualified her from contesting.

Denying the allegation, Madhabi said she had resigned from the council on April 20.

After the hearing, Chandra Chakma told reporters, "I was told that under the law, an appeal must be filed by an aggrieved candidate, not an individual. That's why my appeal was not accepted. We will now go to the High Court."

ACCEPT NUSRAT'S NOMINATION PAPER: HC Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday ordered the Election Commission to accept the nomination paper of Nusrat Tabassum, a leader of NCP, for the reserved women's seat in the National Parliament.

The HC also issued a rule asking the EC to explain why its refusal to accept her nomination should not be declared illegal.

The bench of Justice Ahmed Sohel and Justice Fatema Anwar issued the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Nusrat Tabassum seeking its directive on the Election Commission to accept her nomination paper.

The deadline for submitting nomination papers was 4pm on April 22. However, Nusrat submitted her paper at 4:19pm. As a result, the EC did not accept her nomination for missing the deadline, Deputy Attorney General Mahfuz Bin Yousuf told The Daily Star.

Lawyers Mohammad Hossain Lipu, Zahirul Islam Musa and Md Moniruzzaman appeared for the writ petitioner during the hearing on the petition.

Bangladesh lacks 'A-status' NHRC

FROM PAGE 3

By strong scaffolding, she referred to the constitution, which bans torture, the ratification of the Convention Against Torture (CAT), and the 2013 law criminalising torture.

But what is "missing" is an NHRC that can be classified as an "A status" under the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Bangladesh's NHRC is currently "B status", which means that its independence and autonomy are hindered.

Dr Edwards said the prevention of torture involves ensuring proper safeguards in police custody.

"Someone must know you are there; you must have access to a lawyer, medical examinations, and audio-video recordings. You must be brought before a judge speedily," she continued.

"Judges are not exempt; they have obligations not to ignore torture or send people to overcrowded prisons known for violence. We need magistrates and judges to be part of this conversation," added Dr Edwards.

She stressed the need to have independent bodies to investigate instances of custodial torture.

"Investigations have to be prompt and impartial. This means they must be at 'arm's length' from the perpetrators. Torture is a unique crime. In ordinary crimes, the state acts as the protector of the victim. In cases of torture, the state is the perpetrator. This is why we need independent bodies for investigation. To put it simply, the police should not be investigating the police," said Dr Edwards.

"There is an intimate

relationship – both political and financial – and the abuse of power. I often say that torture is at the extreme end of the abuse of power," said Dr Edwards.

She called the present a "moment of great opportunity" that will "allow for democratic renewal, institutional reform, and the building of a human rights culture embedded everywhere – from the workplace and the home to the streets and your institutions."

"This period also comes with very high expectations. From my engagement with civil society and survivors, I see these expectations growing daily. It is a moment for the government and other actors to grasp this opportunity and maintain momentum," said Dr Edwards.

Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem, lawmaker for Dhaka-14, stated that the 2025 ordinance on the NHRC granted the watchdog the power to be a "national preventive mechanism", meaning that they can visit any detention centre for inspection.

He underscored that this must be brought back.

Sanjida Islam Tulee who leads Mayer Daak lamented that even after crucial evidence was obtained about commanding officers from among the security forces, they ended up leaving the country, which makes her lose hope in the current justice system.

Nid Satjipanon, the Asia-Pacific Representative for the Association for the Prevention of Torture, said in Bangladesh, good laws exist, but they don't create a

preventive effect.

"One of the drivers of why torture happens is when we have a system where we believe that we need a confession to get a case moving," he said.

Other speakers too criticised the overreliance on the confessional statements obtained under Section 164.

Lawmaker Dr Mahubul Alam, who represents Kurigram-3, said, "We have to find out why police are engaging in custodial torture. Can they operate independently, or are they given instructions to obtain evidence however they can?"

He suggested that confessions taken under Section 164 must have audio and video recordings.

Advocate Badiuzzaman Tapadar, deputy attorney general, said custodial tortures extend into judicial torture. "For example, the practice of showing a person arrested in a case minutes after they had obtained bail is an obvious example of judicial torture."

Prof Muhammad Mahubur Rahman of the Department of Law at Dhaka University said most people are not aware of their basic rights.

"For example, it is illegal for the police's Detective Branch or the Rab to keep any detainees in their custody. There are only two locations a detainee can be kept – the police station for 24 hours, following which they have to be sent to jail. This is routinely violated," said Dr Rahman.

Supreme Court lawyer Barrister Sara Hossain and former chief of the women's affair's reform commission Shireen Huq were also panel speakers.



An aerial photograph of a local fishing boat in the Iraqi Hawizeh Marsh in Maysan province, southern Iraq, after water returned due to rainfall following a long period of drought. Hawizeh is a transboundary marsh shared by Iraq and Iran. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Global military spending surges on insecurity: report

AFP, Stockholm

Global military spending reached nearly \$2.9 trillion in 2025, marking an 11th consecutive year of growth, researchers said yesterday, as insecurity and rearmament fuelled defence budgets.

The three top spenders – the United States, China and Russia – spent a combined total of \$1.48 trillion, just over half of global expenditure.

Spending rose by 2.9 percent compared with 2024, despite a reduction by the US, the world's biggest spender, according to a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Researcher Lorenzo Scarazzato told AFP the decrease from the US was more than offset by increases in Europe and Asia, as the world marked "another year of wars and increased tensions".

Scarazzato said this was also reflected in the global "military burden" – the share of worldwide GDP devoted to military spending – which reached its highest level since 2009.

"Everything points to a world that feels less secure and is spending on its military to compensate for the global landscape," he said.

The US spent \$954 billion, 7.5 percent less than in 2024, largely because no new financial military aid to Ukraine was approved. By contrast, Washington pledged a total of \$127 billion to Kyiv over the previous three years.

But the decrease is expected to be short-lived as the US Congress has approved spending of over \$1 trillion for 2026, which could rise to \$1.5 trillion in 2027 if Donald Trump's budget proposal passes.

The main driver of the global increase was Europe – including Russia and Ukraine – where spending surged 14 percent to \$864 billion.

"That is driven by two major factors. One is the ongoing war in Ukraine, and the other is the decreased US engagement with Europe," Scarazzato said.

Germany, the fourth-largest spender, raised expenditure by 24 percent in 2025 to \$114 billion.

Spain also recorded a 50 percent jump to \$40.2 billion, pushing military spending above two percent of GDP for the first time since 1994.



The ongoing war in Ukraine saw both Russia and Ukraine increase their military spending, with each recording the highest share of government spending allocated to the military.

Russia's spending rose 5.9 percent to \$190 billion, equivalent to 7.5 percent of GDP.

Ukraine meanwhile boosted spending by 20 percent to \$84.1 billion – a staggering 40 percent of GDP.

Despite persistent tensions in the Middle East, expenditure in the region rose only marginally, by 0.1 percent, to \$218 billion.

While most countries in the region increased spending, Israel and Iran actually recorded declines.

In Iran, it fell 5.6 percent to \$7.4 billion, but this was mostly due to high annual inflation of 42 percent. In nominal terms, spending actually rose. Israel's 4.9 percent drop to \$48.3 billion reflected a reduced intensity in the Gaza war, the researchers explained, while noting Israeli spending was still 97 percent higher than in 2022.

In Asia and Oceania, spending reached \$681 billion, an 8.5 percent increase from 2024 – the region's largest annual increase since 2009.

Scarazzato said the "major player" in the region was China, which has been increasing spending every year for the past three decades, and spent an estimated \$336 billion in 2025.

Japan raised military expenditure by 9.7 percent, to \$62.2 billion in 2025, equivalent to 1.4 percent of GDP – its highest share since 1958 – while Taiwan increased its spending by 14 percent to \$18.2 billion.

British royals begin 4-day US visit

AFP, Washington

Britain's King Charles III began a state visit to the United States yesterday, as transatlantic tensions simmer over the Iran war, and despite a shooting two days earlier at a dinner attended by his host, President Donald Trump.

The four-day trip by Charles and Queen Camilla is intended to honour historic ties between the two countries as the US marks its 250th anniversary.

Charles will become the first British monarch to address Congress since the late queen Elizabeth II, in 1991, while the royal couple will have tea with Trump and Melania, and attend a state dinner.

The royals will visit New York on Wednesday, touring the 9/11 memorial, before departing Thursday for Bermuda for their first visit to a British overseas territory as monarch.

Charles's visit comes at the request of the UK government and President Donald Trump, according to the palace.

"He's a friend of mine for a long time, so he's coming, and we're going to have a great time, and he represents his nation like nobody else can do it," Trump told Fox News on Sunday.

'Pretty sick guy' Trump on White House press dinner attack suspect

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that the suspect accused of trying to attack administration officials at a black-tie gala on Saturday night was a "pretty sick guy" who had been flagged to law enforcement by family members.

Trump said in TV interviews that the suspect, whom an official identified as 31-year-old Cole Tomas Allen, of Torrance, California, had posted what Trump described as an "anti-Christian" manifesto.

"He was a Christian, believer, and then he became an anti-Christian, and he had a lot of change," Trump told CBS' "60 Minutes" program. "He was probably a pretty sick guy."

In the manifesto, Allen calls himself the "Friendly Federal Assassin" and said he planned to attack Trump administration officials, prioritising them from highest-ranking to lowest, but excluding FBI Director Kash Patel, a law enforcement official told Reuters.

Allen cited Christian theology as he said he was trying to protect those harmed by the administration's policies.

"Turning the other cheek when 'someone else' is oppressed is not Christian behaviour; it is complicity in the oppressor's crimes," the manifesto read, according to the official.

The manifesto, which was sent to members of Allen's family shortly before the attack, mocked the "insane" lack of security at the Washington Hilton, where the White House Correspondents' Association dinner was held, the official added. Allen was arrested at the scene.

Officials have said the suspect fired a shotgun at a Secret Service agent at a security checkpoint in the Washington Hilton hotel before being tackled and arrested.

The suspect will be charged in federal court today with assault of a federal officer, discharging a firearm and attempting to kill a federal officer, Blanche said, adding he did not know if there was an Iran connection to the attack. Further federal indictments will be coming later, Blanche said.



Two ex-Israel PMs unite to challenge Netanyahu in polls

AFP, Jerusalem

Former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett and opposition leader Yair Lapid announced Sunday they will run on a joint list in this year's elections, in a move aimed at unseating incumbent Benjamin Netanyahu.

"I am pleased to announce that tonight, together with my friend Yair Lapid, I am taking the most Zionist and patriotic step we have ever taken for our country," Bennett said in a joint televised statement with Lapid.

"Tonight, we are uniting and founding the Beyahad (Together) party under my leadership, a party that will lead to a great victory and open a new era for our beautiful country."

During the televised statement, Lapid said: "Bennett is a right-wing politician, but an honest one, and there is trust between us."

Earlier on Sunday, Lapid, himself a former premier, had said he would join forces with Bennett.

"The move brings about the unification of the Repair Bloc, enabling all efforts to be focused on leading Israel toward the necessary repair," he wrote on X.

Bennett said that if elected, he would establish a national commission of inquiry into the failures leading up to the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack – something the current Netanyahu government has rejected.

Bennett and Lapid have been outspoken critics of Netanyahu's handling of the country's wars since that attack, with Lapid going so far as to label the recent two-week ceasefire agreed with Iran a "political disaster".

Opinion polls suggest Bennett is the candidate best placed to defeat Netanyahu in the October vote.



Smoke rises following an Israeli explosion in southern Lebanon near the border as seen from the Upper Galilee in northern Israel yesterday. Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem yesterday rejected Lebanon's planned direct negotiations with Israel, calling them a "grave sin" that will destabilise Lebanon.

PHOTO: AFP

ANTI-NARCOTICS OPS US says three killed in boat strike

AFP, Washington

The US military said Sunday that three men were killed when it struck a boat "engaged in narco-trafficking operations" in the Eastern Pacific ocean.

This latest strike – which follows dozens of similar attacks in recent months – brings the US campaign's death toll to at least 185, according to a tally compiled by AFP.

As with many previous attacks, the US military's Southern Command said on X that the boat hit was "operated by Designated Terrorist Organizations".

The US has not provided evidence that the vessels it has been striking since September are involved in drug trafficking. Legal experts and rights groups suggest the strikes could amount to extrajudicial killings because they have apparently targeted civilians who do not pose an immediate threat to US.

INTERNATIONAL

Iran leadership humiliating US
Says Germany's Merz, urges quick solution to crisis

REUTERS, Berlin

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz yesterday said Iran's leadership was humiliating the United States and getting US officials to travel to Pakistan and then leave without results, in an unusually abrupt rebuke over the conflict.

Merz also said he did not see what exit strategy the US was pursuing in the Iran war, comments that underlined deep divisions between Washington and its European Nato allies, which had already been festering over Ukraine and other issues.

"The Iranians are obviously very skilled at negotiating, or rather, very skillful at not negotiating, letting the Americans travel to Islamabad and then leave again without any result," he said during a talk to students in the town of Marsberg.

"An entire nation is being humiliated by the Iranian leadership, especially by these so-called Revolutionary Guards. And so I hope that this ends as quickly as possible," he added.

US President Donald Trump has harshly criticised Nato allies for not sending their navies to help open the Strait of Hormuz during the conflict. The waterway has remained virtually shut, causing market turmoil and unprecedented disruption in energy supplies.

Merz reiterated that Germans and Europeans were not consulted before the US and Israel started attacking Iran on February 28, and that he had conveyed his scepticism directly to Trump afterwards.

"If I had known that it would continue like this for five or six weeks and get progressively worse, I would have told him even more emphatically," Merz said, comparing it to previous US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.



A woman cycles past a sculpture at Chitgar Lake, an artificial recreational lake and park officially known as the Lake of the Martyrs of the Persian Gulf, in northwestern Tehran. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Kim reaffirms support for Russia's 'sacred' Ukraine war

AFP, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has reaffirmed Pyongyang's support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, vowing to help Moscow achieve victory in its "sacred" war, state media reported yesterday.

Pyongyang has sent missiles, munitions and thousands of troops to assist Russia in Ukraine, and analysts say Moscow is sending financial aid, military technology, food and energy to the diplomatically isolated country in return.

A string of high-level Russian officials have visited North Korea in recent days, with Defence Minister Andrey Belousov meeting Kim on Sunday, according to official statements.

North Korea "will as ever fully support the policy of the Russian Federation to defend the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and security interests", Kim told Belousov, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Kim expressed "belief that the Russian army and people would surely win a victory in the just sacred war", KCNA reported.

Both sides said their delegations had discussed deeper military ties, with Belousov saying Moscow was ready to sign a cooperation plan covering the period from 2027 to 2031.

Kim, Belousov and Russian parliamentary speaker Vyacheslav Volodin also attended the opening ceremony of a memorial complex honouring North Korean soldiers killed in Ukraine.

In a speech, Kim paid tribute to their "unrivalled bravery, mass heroism, indomitable fighting spirit and noble sacrifice", KCNA said.

He took part in a ceremony to bury the war dead, recalling their "last heroic moments" and covering the remains of a soldier with earth.

The inauguration also included a concert,

a fireworks display and an air force flyover, KCNA reported.

North Korea and Russia signed a military treaty in 2024, obligating both states to provide military assistance "without delay" in the event of an attack on the other.

The opening of the memorial coincides with the first anniversary of Moscow's recovery

taken alive and are currently in the custody of Ukrainian authorities.

In contrast with its ties with Russia, North Korea has called South Korea its "most hostile" adversary despite Seoul's efforts at engagement.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung yesterday said that it was "the destiny of both



of parts of Kursk, a region in Russia where Ukraine launched a major counteroffensive starting in mid-2024.

North Korean soldiers were deployed in the area to help beat back the Ukrainian advance. Russian President Vladimir Putin praised the "extraordinary bravery and genuine devotion" of North Korean troops in a letter to Kim that was published by KCNA.

Seoul estimates about 2,000 North Koreans have been killed in the Ukraine war.

North Korean troops are said to have been instructed to kill themselves rather than be captured in battle.

Only two North Korean soldiers have been

the South and the North to make the flowers of peace bloom".

He vowed to act "proactively" to restore trust with Pyongyang, adding: "We hope the North will trust the sincerity of our government and respond in kind."

Lee's comments marked the anniversary of the 2018 inter-Korean summit, at which Kim and South Korea's then-president Moon Jae-in memorably crossed into the other country's territory.

The summit yielded a declaration to work towards an official end to the Korean War, but was later suspended as bilateral tensions rose again.

EU extends Myanmar sanctions by a year

REUTERS, Brussels

The European Union yesterday extended its sanctions against Myanmar until at least May 2027, in an effort to maintain pressure on the country's military rulers more than five years after their coup toppled an elected government.

The measures include asset freezes, travel bans and an arms embargo for 105 individuals and 22 entities.

"The EU reiterates its strongest condemnation of the actions taken by the Myanmar military since the 2021 coup," the EU said.

It called for an end to all violence and the release of people who have been arbitrarily detained.

Earlier this month, coup leader Min Aung Hlaing was elected as president of Myanmar after an election denounced by Western governments as a sham to perpetuate military rule.

The United Nations says at least 3.6 million people have been displaced since the coup, and the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners has verified nearly 8,000 killings and close to 31,000 arrests, with more than 22,000 people remaining in detention.

Fulfil polls pledge

FROM PAGE 1 and perceived affiliations, adding the arrests, made under the previous administration, appeared to be retaliatory.

CPJ also raised serious humanitarian concerns.

It said Shyamal Dutta has documented cardiac conditions and severe sleep apnea that remain unassessed in custody; Mozammel Babu, who underwent major invasive surgery for prostate cancer in late 2023, has not received required follow-up care; and Farzana Rupa was held for two weeks in November 2024 in a "condemnation cell" reserved for death-row inmates.

In the letter, CPJ described its appeal as one made "in a spirit of constructive engagement", noting that the first months of the new administration had offered "encouraging signals on press freedom".

Citing protections under article 39 of the constitution and Bangladesh's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, CPJ urged authorities to consider dropping the charges and allowing the journalists to return to their families.

Pending that outcome, it called for immediate access to necessary medical treatment in coordination with the home ministry.

CPJ said a resolution of the cases would be received internationally as a clear signal of the reforms pledged by the government

and would strengthen goodwill surrounding Bangladesh's democratic transition.

It also expressed willingness to engage directly with the minister and proposed a visit to Dhaka later this year to discuss broader press freedom issues.

The letter was signed by Kunal Majumder, Asia-Pacific Programme Coordinator at CPJ, and copied to Attorney General Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed, and Information Minister Zahir Uddin Swapon.

Ex-owners

FROM PAGE 16

provisions will rehabilitate those who put the entire banking sector at risk with scams and bad loans.

The applicants are led by Maj (ret'd) Dr Md Rezaul Haque, former chairman and sponsor shareholder of SIBL.

Rezaul, who chaired SIBL's board until October 30, 2017, was joined by sponsor shareholders Hakim Md Yousuf Harun Bhuiyan, MD and chief mutawalli of Hamdard Laboratories Waqf, and Sultan Mahmood Chowdhury.

The other applicants are former shareholder director Afia Begum and shareholder Md Zabedul Alam Chowdhury.

Contacted, Bangladesh Bank spokesperson and Executive Director Arief Hossain Khan said the application "might have been submitted, but has not yet reached the relevant department".

The application argued that the merger initiative did not adequately consider the "distinct operational realities and financial condition of SIBL, particularly as the primary issue related to liquidity stress rather than fundamental insolvency".

The applicants said SIBL's governance was disrupted due to external influence between 2017 and 2024, when significant changes in control and management structure weakened the institutional foundation of the entity.

SIBL was under the control of the Chattogram-based business house S Alam Group, which allegedly took over the entity through coercion.

The applicants have proposed a strategic recovery roadmap and requested eight years, including a two-year grace period, to repay nearly Tk 11,000 crore owed to Bangladesh Bank at the bank rate.

SIBL was merged with First Security Islami Bank, Union Bank, Global Islami Bank, and EXIM Bank into Sommito Islami Bank. The merged entity received its licence in December last year after the government and Bangladesh Bank injected Tk 35,000 crore in capital and provided additional liquidity support.

Third Terminal opening delayed

FROM PAGE 16

ORAT, which will last between six months and a year," said Air Vice Marshal Mostafa Mahmood Siddiq, chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

"We expect to inaugurate the Third Terminal about six months after the test run begins," he said during a views-exchange meeting with members of the Aviation and Tourism Journalists' Forum of Bangladesh at the CAAB Headquarters.

Highlighting the risks of rapid transition activities, he said, "Studies by global experts show that around 74 percent of airport transitions have failed. That's why we are proceeding cautiously to avoid any disruptions after launching of the terminal."

Asked about the deal with the Japanese consortium, the CAAB chairman said, "The agreement will be fair. We will ensure everything necessary to safeguard the national interest."

Although both sides have reached consensus on several issues, some gaps still remain, he added.

After around one

and a half year's pause, Bangladesh and Japan resumed talks in March after the BNP government took office in February.

Key issues under discussion include embarkation fees, upfront payments, and revenue-sharing arrangements.

The Japanese consortium includes Japan Airport Terminal Company, Sumitomo Corporation, Nippon Koei, and Narita International Airport Corporation.

The terminal has remained non-operational since its soft launching on October 6, 2023, by then Awami League government.

On several occasions, then CAAB authorities said the terminal would be fully operational by the end of 2024.

But the terminal remained non-operational due to disagreements over management and revenue-sharing between CAAB and the Japanese consortium.

The AL government decided in principle to operate and maintain the terminal by a Japanese consortium under a public-private partnership.

The Japanese company will be responsible for the operational activities of the terminal and CAAB will be in charge of security.

The terminal, with its spectacular aesthetic design, cost over Tk 21,300 crore to build. The government contributed Tk 5,000 crore, with the rest of the amount coming from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) in the form of loans.

Upon fully-fledged operation of the terminal, HSA's annual passenger and cargo handling capacity is expected to double. The annual passenger handling capacity would be 24 million (including the old terminals).

At present, the airport can handle eight million passengers and 5,00,000 tonnes of cargo each year.

In another development, Biman, along with a second ground-handling operator, will be appointed at the Third Terminal to deliver better services and introduce competition in ground-handling.

"The second operator will be engaged from the very first day of the

terminal operations..." the CAAB boss said.

He added that the Japanese consortium, led by Sumitomo Corporation, will have the prerogative to select as a key constraint.

Outstanding dues owed to power-importing entities stand at Tk 56,000 crore, he said.

Compounding the fiscal burden, the ongoing Middle East crisis has already cost the country an additional \$2 billion in energy expenditure, forcing the government to manage its resources with extreme caution.

Reflecting on the structural woes inherited by his ministry, he said: "Every time I have taken charge of this ministry, I have had to start from a deficit - in 2001 and again now in 2026. Unnecessary projects were executed, whose financial liabilities we are now bearing."

He noted a stark mismatch between installed capacity and actual demand: while national electricity demand stands at 18,000MW, installed generation capacity was expanded to

Load shedding to ease next week

FROM PAGE 16

"A complete halt, however, is not possible at this moment," he said, citing mounting financial strain as a key constraint.

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He noted a stark mismatch between installed capacity and actual demand: while national electricity demand stands at 18,000MW, installed generation capacity was expanded to

30,000MW in previous years.

Despite the surplus capacity, raw material shortages have left many plants idle, yet the government continues to pay for their upkeep, he said, citing the Rupsha power plant in Khulna as a case in point.

The plant has been dormant for three years after a plan to supply it with Bhola gas failed to materialise.

Mahmood identified renewable energy, particularly solar, as the most viable exit from the current crisis.

The government has set a target of generating 10,000MW of solar power within five years.

"Prime Minister Tarique Rahman wants work to begin today, if possible," he said, adding that land scarcity remains the chief obstacle to large-scale solar deployment.

To address this, the government has decided to lease state-owned khas land to the private sector for solar plant construction, alongside offering tax incentives to

solar energy businesses.

The PM has already directed the preparation of a 'khas' land inventory through an inter-ministerial meeting convened for this purpose, Mahmood said.

Distancing the current administration from coercive energy policies of the past, he criticised the previous government's mandatory rooftop solar panel directive.

"The previous fascist government forced solar panels onto every multi-storey building by diktat. Panels were installed, but electricity never came from them. We want to bring people to solar energy through encouragement, not compulsion."

Mahmood also pledged that solar energy proposals rejected during the interim government's tenure would be revisited and re-evaluated.

He went on to urge the private sector to join the government in making Bangladesh a success story in renewable energy through public-private partnerships.

A worrying delay in the justice process

July uprising cases in limbo as probes progress at a snail's pace

It is deeply frustrating that nearly 21 months after the tragic events of the July uprising, investigations into most of the cases filed over the killings and violence at the time are still dragging on. According to a report by this daily, of the 1,855 cases filed, police have so far completed investigations into only 176. That means a staggering 90 percent of the cases are still stuck in the investigation phase. Officials at the Police Headquarters blame this sloth-like pace in the probe on the huge lists of accused in these cases, including "unnamed" suspects, which make the process more complicated, not to mention time-consuming.

One may recall the case-filing frenzy after the uprising that ousted the autocratic regime of the Awami League on August 5, 2024. On many occasions, media reports highlighted the dubious nature of many of the cases, with people with little to no connection with the events of July uprising getting charged with murder, attempted murder, and violence. Some were made accused simply because of their political affiliations or leanings, while others were victims of personal vendettas. This daily also reported on cases where the scenes of alleged crimes and the locations of the accused did not match.

As a result, the survivors and families of the victims seeking justice have been stuck in a prolonged wait. Meanwhile, wrongly accused individuals have been forced into a legal quagmire, enduring mental duress and financial losses. Many of them have been detained and remain in jail without bail, already being subjected to punishment without even facing trial. What's worse, the complainants of many cases have been reported to demand money from the accused with the promise of dropping their names or withdrawing the cases, a trend flagged by the police themselves. Not only is this a gross disservice to justice seekers, but it's also a blatant violation of people's right to legal protection and fair trial.

This state of affairs must not continue any longer. While we recognise the complicated nature of the July uprising cases, police investigations must pick up speed while ensuring due diligence. To this end, we suggest forming a special task force dedicated to disposing of the July uprising cases. They will be responsible for scrutinising the relevant details to separate genuine cases from the dubious ones so that the judicial process becomes smoother and less time-consuming.

The prevailing fiasco has again brought to light how weak and vulnerable to abuse our criminal justice system is. It needs a complete overhaul to plug in the loopholes that allow people to file cases without reasonable cause, make "unnamed" individuals accused in a case, and enlist a large number of people as suspects in a single case. Doing any of these creates unnecessary hassle for the law enforcement agencies as well as those who are wrongly accused, while obstructing the course of justice. A modern criminal justice system must not allow legal procedures based on flimsy accusations or prolonged pre-trial detentions without reasonable cause.

Remove ageing buses from roads

The new government must address transport sector anomalies

It is deeply frustrating that despite changes in political leadership over the past one and a half decades, Dhaka's ageing and unfit buses continue to operate on the roads with little interruption. According to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), around 30 percent of the buses and minibuses currently operating in the capital are more than 20 years old. This far exceeds their economic and operational lifespan. These vehicles are often modified with additional seats to maximise revenue, even as their mechanical condition deteriorates, raising serious concerns about passenger safety, comfort and environmental impact. They are also a frequent cause of road crashes and are highly fuel-inefficient.

Since 2010, successive governments have announced initiatives to remove unfit and outdated vehicles from Dhaka's roads. However, these efforts have repeatedly stalled due to weak enforcement, lack of political will, and consistent resistance from transport owners' and workers' associations. Following the political transition after August 2024, leadership in transport associations shifted from Awami League-affiliated figures to BNP-linked leaders. Sadly, this change in control has not translated into any meaningful improvement in the transport sector. After taking office, the interim government set a six-month deadline to remove old vehicles and promised support for new purchases, but no action followed.

Reportedly, Dhaka has around 7,000 approved buses operated by roughly 300 companies and at least 4,000 owners, but many run without valid fitness certificates or route permits. To avoid police action, owners often attach their vehicles to companies linked to influential figures. As a result, much of the system functions informally, with widespread disregard for transport regulations. Transport experts say this disorder enables large-scale informal earnings and extortion across multiple layers of the system. A Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) study published in March 2024 found that approximately Tk 1,059 crore is collected annually in extortion from privately owned buses. In such a context, any move towards order and regulation directly threatens established financial interests, thereby generating resistance to reform. This cycle must be broken.

To end the persistent anarchy in the transport sector, the new government must take urgent and effective measures. A comprehensive bus route rationalisation or franchise-based system should be introduced to bring operations under regulated, accountable frameworks. At the same time, strict enforcement of fitness standards, a phased but time-bound removal of expired buses, and transparent financing mechanisms for fleet replacement must be ensured. Replacing old and inefficient buses with modern vehicles would significantly improve urban air quality, reduce transport energy demand, and save fuel and foreign exchange at a time of energy crisis.

What fuel loading at Rooppur means for our energy future



Dr. Md. Shafiqul Islam is professor at the Department of Nuclear Engineering, University of Dhaka, and a former visiting professor at the Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA.

MD. SHAFIQUK ISLAM

The fuel loading process at the first unit of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project is scheduled to commence today, April 28, in the presence of high-level representatives from Bangladesh, Russia, and the International Atomic Energy Agency. This marks a major technological milestone for Bangladesh, as fuel loading is one of the most critical and complex stages in a power plant's operational phase, signalling the transition from construction to commissioning. On April 16, following the successful installation of hundreds of pieces of equipment and extensive non-nuclear testing at Unit-1, the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (BAERA) granted the licence required for fuel loading and pilot power generation, clearing the way for preparations.

The Rooppur project consists of two Russian-designed Generation III + VVER-1200 reactors, each with an electrical output capacity of 1,200 MWe (megawatts electrical). The project has been under construction since 2017, with technical assistance from Rosatom and financing of up to 90 percent through Russian state export credit. In the context of Bangladesh's growing energy demand, the project is poised to become a cornerstone of national energy security.

Loading fuel assemblies enriched with 3.5 percent uranium-235 into the reactor core is a highly specialised and technically demanding process. It signifies the beginning of nuclear operation. The fuel loading process is expected to take one to one-and-a-half months. After fuel loading, control rod adjustments for reactivity control, emergency core cooling systems, boric acid injection systems, turbine generator synchronisation tests, power evacuation processes, and other critical safety systems will be retested and verified before initiating a controlled fission reaction in the reactor core.

Once all the commissioning and verification activities are successfully carried out, the reactor will achieve its first "criticality," operating at just 1 percent of its approximately 3,200 MWth thermal power capacity. The plant's thermal efficiency is about 37 percent, meaning that roughly 37 percent of the reactor heat is converted into electricity. This stage represents the "birth" of the reactor. Testing

at such low thermal power ensures that any potential anomalies can be detected and managed immediately. Subsequently, the heat generated by the reactor will produce steam through steam generators to drive turbines and supply electricity to the national grid. Power generation will then be increased gradually to 5 percent, 10 percent, 15 percent, 30 percent, and beyond to verify system reliability, grid stability, and operational safety over an extended period.

This entire commissioning process, known as pilot operation, may take approximately 8 to 12 months. Successfully completing these stages is



'The Rooppur project is poised to become a cornerstone of national energy security.'

FILE PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

one of the most complex parts of the reactor construction process. Once all international safety standards are met, BAERA will grant approval for commercial operation upon review of the Final Safety Analysis Report. When the Nuclear Power Plant Company Bangladesh Limited (NPCBL) begins operating the reactor at full capacity for electricity generation, it will mark a historic milestone for Bangladesh.

Once operational, a nuclear power plant serves as a baseload plant, running 24/7 unless interrupted by major technical issues or natural disasters. Approximately every 18 months, the reactor is shut down for six to eight weeks for refuelling, during which about 25 tonnes of spent fuel

are replaced with fresh uranium fuel. Outside of this maintenance period, the plant is expected to provide continuous power over an operational lifespan of about 60 years, with the possibility of a further 10-20 years of lifetime extension.

Given the high economic stakes of any downtime and the significantly higher costs of generating equivalent power from oil, LNG, or coal, maintaining uninterrupted operation is vital. This becomes even more important as Bangladesh faces a severe energy crisis. The global energy infrastructure and supply chains are currently under pressure due to the recent conflicts involving Iran, Israel, and the United States, alongside the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The damage caused to energy facilities in Middle East, reductions in Russian gas exports to Europe, and sanctions on Iranian and Russian oil have destabilised global energy markets.

Consequently, many nations have been forced to implement fuel subsidies, rationing, and austerity

strengthen its energy security. Today, amid the US-Iran and Russia-Ukraine conflicts, the strategic importance of nuclear energy is once again gaining prominence. Furthermore, as the world increasingly moves away from fossil fuels to combat climate change, clean energy technologies are advancing rapidly. Alongside uranium-based fission and continued expansion of renewables, emerging technologies such as thorium-based reactors and deuterium-based fusion are expected to play important roles in the long-term global energy transition.

Beyond traditional large-scale plants, the industry is witnessing significant developments in modern reactors with enhanced safety features, including Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and micro-reactors. These reactors are being developed by incorporating lessons learned from the Chernobyl and Fukushima accidents. With advanced safety systems, the probability of severe accidents is significantly reduced.

SMRs typically generate 300 MWe or less, while micro-reactors produce between 1 and 10 MWe. These modular units can be factory-built and deployed quickly, and their initial investment per unit is lower compared to large reactors. Their potential applications extend beyond electricity generation to green hydrogen production, desalination, and industrial heat supply. They are increasingly viewed as viable alternatives to coal- and oil-based plants and are well-suited for providing reliable power to remote islands, mining sites, military bases, research centres, and large data centres.

Countries such as the United States, Russia, and China are leading the advancement of these technologies. Under the current energy crisis, Germany, Italy, and some other EU member states are reportedly reconsidering the deployment of modern nuclear reactors. Technology giants such as Meta, Google, and Microsoft are also exploring micro-reactor deployment opportunities to help decarbonise the growing energy demands of their data centres.

In sum, to run the reactors in a safe and secure manner, the primary focus must be on fostering a rigorous safety culture in reactor operation and maintenance. At the same time, developing a highly skilled domestic workforce is essential to reducing foreign dependency and enhancing national technical expertise. Although the reactors are significantly behind the original schedule for grid connection, a successful completion of the Rooppur project remains vital. It will surely strengthen Bangladesh's energy security, financial stability, and national resilience.

A roadmap to boost foreign direct investment

Owais Parray is country economic advisor at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bangladesh.

Kiyoshi Adachi is legal officer at United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Bangladesh.

OWAIS PARRAY and KIYOSHI ADACHI

By improving the investment policy landscape, Bangladesh can attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) to catalyse the next wave of economic structural transformation, according to a key finding in the latest UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report on the implementation of the Investment Policy Review (IPR).

While Bangladesh aspires to become a world-class manufacturing hub, the country's absolute and relative FDI performance continues to lag behind that of several regional peers, including Cambodia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, as well as averages for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)—regional groups Bangladesh aims to join.

The UNCTAD report shows that several important milestones were reached since the last IPR in 2013. These include, *inter alia*, the establishment of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), the creation and operationalisation of the Bangladesh Competition Commission,

the strengthening of the Public-Private Partnership Authority, and, more recently, the establishment of a multidisciplinary negotiators' pool who are contributing to the formulation of preferential trade and investment agreements. Moreover,

key regulatory and institutional reforms were implemented, including in labour, taxation, and intellectual property, as well as efforts to digitalise and rationalise investment facilitation platforms. The National Drug Policy was also updated to relax restrictions for foreign pharmaceutical manufacturers. Together, these reforms have contributed to improvements in the investment environment, against the backdrop of Bangladesh's transition from least developed country (LDC) status.

The IPR implementation report was prepared through a partnership between UNCTAD and UNDP under the Transformative Economic Policy Programme, with financial support from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The report notes that despite improvements, much remains to be done, describing reforms as a "work in progress." In particular, the legal and institutional framework for investment requires further strengthening, including the review and updating of the Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act of 1980. Institutional fragmentation in access to land, the need for more integrated infrastructure planning,

and capacity constraints in key institutions such as the Bangladesh Competition Commission are some of the major challenges.

FDI inflows to Bangladesh peaked at over \$1.8 billion in 2019, before declining in subsequent years amid macroeconomic pressures, foreign exchange constraints, global crises, and domestic political developments. By 2024, inflows were approximately one-third lower than 2019 levels. Preliminary data for the first three quarters of 2025, however, point to a rebound, supported mainly by reinvested earnings and intracompany loans. Despite recent volatility in flows, the inward FDI stock has remained broadly stable at around \$18 billion since 2021, reflecting the continued presence of foreign investors. Textile and garment, finance, and the power sector account for the largest shares of FDI stock, while investment is gradually diversifying towards sectors such as pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, and information and communication technologies, with the digital economy emerging as a promising frontier.

The current challenges faced by Bangladesh amid rapid changes in the global political and economic landscape call for greater engagement by both the government and the private sector to better leverage FDI as a source of development finance. The importance of FDI in this regard was underlined at the Fourth Global Conference on Financing for

Development (FID4) held in Spain's Seville last year. Cuts in official development assistance by traditional donors, a generalised slowdown in global FDI flows, and the gradual loss of preferential market access following LDC graduation underline the urgency for reforms to ensure that Bangladesh remains competitive in attracting higher levels of quality FDI aligned with strategic development objectives.

Looking ahead, the report emphasises the need for developing a national investment policy and a consolidated investment law to reinforce investor confidence and policy coherence. As Bangladesh approaches LDC graduation, proactive engagement with key investment and trading partners will be required to secure the best possible terms under ongoing negotiations of preferential trade and investment agreements. Priority sectors that can enhance competitiveness and diversification should be further nurtured, including pharmaceuticals and the digital economy. Continued reforms are also needed to address persistent bottlenecks to investment, notably in relation to access to land and infrastructure. UNCTAD and UNDP remain committed to continuing the engagement with key stakeholders in Bangladesh to support the implementation of these important reforms and to ensure that FDI contributes effectively to inclusive growth, decent jobs, and sustainable development.

OPINION

Bangladesh, the IMF-World Bank nexus, and the political economy of reform



Dr M Kabir Hassan
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M KABIR HASSAN

Bangladesh's participation in the 2026 IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, held earlier this month, presents a case study of a well-known problem in development finance: the conflict between external conditionality and local ownership of policies. Although the immediate narrative focuses on delayed funding and diplomatic manoeuvring, the more fundamental challenge is one of institutional design: how can a lower-middle-income country reconcile its need for credibility, sovereignty, and reform sequencing in a challenging international macroeconomic environment?

To begin with, the case for Bangladesh per the fundamentals of open-economy macroeconomics is obvious. As an energy importer, the country is exposed to various external shocks, especially commodity prices and geopolitical risks affecting the functionality of global supply chains. In such a situation, external disequilibria become a structural feature rather than a cyclical phenomenon.

The IMF's relatively pessimistic assessment of global economy, defined by moderate growth, elevated inflation, and geopolitical risks, accentuates Bangladesh's vulnerability. In this regard, the country faces a classic trilemma of economic policy, meaning it cannot simultaneously achieve exchange rate stability, monetary independence, and foreign capital inflows. The delayed devaluation of the exchange rate, which has been discussed in policy negotiations, is an illustration of this trilemma.

IMF conditionality and the credibility problem

The conditionality for the next tranche of the \$5.5 billion IMF loan is not merely an isolated administrative consequence but an indication of a broader credibility problem. As in any principal-agent relationship, where the former expects certain conditions to be met by the latter, the IMF (principal) needs a

commitment on the part of the Bangladesh government (agent) in terms of revenue generation and other measures, including subsidy rationalisation and fiscal discipline.

From the perspective of fiscal contract theory, fiscal capacity would be guaranteed in a credible social contract, where the benefits of tax collection are obvious for taxpayers. However, a credible social contract cannot develop under the circumstances of persistent tax exemptions, as seen in Bangladesh. As a result, the lack of endogenous revenue—money generated within the economy—forces the country to continue relying on international assistance and the accompanying conditionality.

Furthermore, the change in the government raises questions related to dynamic inconsistency, an economic concept describing a situation in which a decision-maker's preferences change over time, making earlier choices inconsistent with later ones. Since the new government was not responsible for developing the initial IMF package, dynamic consistency implies that renegotiations would require a credible substitute, complete with benchmarks and deadlines, thus providing for additional delays for both parties involved.

The key issue here is whether Bangladesh should stick to the existing programme, or bargain for a more appropriate one from the perspective of its politics.

From the perspective of political economy analysis, ownership of a reform programme is absolutely necessary for its success. Experience shows that foreign-imposed reforms tend to fail if local interests are not committed to them. Sometimes, a harsher new programme may improve compliance if the interests of all political forces involved are aligned.

However, a new agreement could involve greater scrutiny and more severe structural targets, thus leaving Bangladesh with less flexibility for policymaking. Ideally, it

is important to start with the signalling approach, showing intentions to pursue reforms through early visible steps, especially in terms of revenue administration and energy prices.

The financial sector: Institutional weaknesses and reform sequencing

Given the presence of non-performing loans (NPLs), there is another classical problem associated with the financial sector that relates to the weaknesses of governance and moral hazard.

The problems associated with the banking sector can be explained through the soft budget constraint approach—the tendency

of social welfare-minded governments to bail out failing banks. When institutions expect certain implicit guarantees, excessive riskiness arises and the asset quality worsens. Hence, it is important to implement reforms at the legislative level and to have effective tools of enforcement. Importantly, foreign organisations require having a plan to address the issue, rather than solving it immediately, as this task is impossible. It shows the significance of sequencing reform measures.

programmatically conforming to the national goals, especially those of the current government's manifesto. A strategic opportunity exists here. According to the theory of development finance, complementarities between public expenditure and institution-building are very significant. Aligning itself with the developmental activities of the World Bank can be useful for Bangladesh, as this will enable the use of concessional finance and increase the country's growth capacity. Notably, the recommendation to diversify finance through capital market instruments such as bonds and sukuk (Shariah-compliant financial instruments) is interesting since, from a portfolio management point of view,

responding to conditions rather than influencing them. The current approach suggests moving away from the reactive stance towards strategic negotiation.

From a game theory point of view, it marks a transition from the passive to the strategic equilibrium point. By offering comprehensive reform strategies, complete with institution-specific roles and schedules, the country can bring about a change in the bargaining scenario.

In addition to finance, programmes (such as that of the IMF) have an important signalling function. Within international capital markets, programmes provide signals of policy commitment, thus decreasing risk. This means that the lack of a functioning programme will have spillover effects and may constrain the country from accessing further financial assistance, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

The function of signalling may be understood from the perspective of reputation theory. Countries that comply with programmes build up reputation capital, which decreases the cost of borrowing and provides access to more funds. Non-compliance has the reverse effect.

In evaluating the results of the Spring Meetings, one should not simply focus on potential financial benefits. Instead, they serve as an indicator of Bangladesh's governance capacity to craft and implement meaningful reforms when exposed to international public opinion.

In order to advance, the following steps are necessary: i) implementing credible fiscal reform by improving tax administration to increase revenue-generating capacity; ii) reforming the financial sector by dealing with governance shortcomings and implementing effective measures to ensure accountability; and iii) effectively utilising development partnerships by making use of complementarities between IMF stabilisation programmes and World Bank development finance.

However, the problem at hand is not technical but institutional. The effectiveness of Bangladesh's interactions with the IMF and World Bank will hinge on the ability to convert policy promises into credible actions. In that regard, the upcoming period may be viewed not so much as a negotiation process but as a test of governance capacity.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

of social welfare-minded governments to bail out failing banks. When institutions expect certain implicit guarantees, excessive riskiness arises and the asset quality worsens. Hence, it is important to implement reforms at the legislative level and to have effective tools of enforcement. Importantly, foreign organisations require having a plan to address the issue, rather than solving it immediately, as this task is impossible. It shows the significance of sequencing reform measures.

The World Bank: Complementarities and strategic conformity

Unlike the IMF, which concentrates on macroeconomic stability, the World Bank works in the domain of development financing, funding long-term projects. This recent involvement shows the possibility of

the use of one instrument makes the system more vulnerable.

Recent improvements in forex reserves, inflation, and stability in monetary policy are positive signals. Yet, analytically, these are not sufficient indicators of stability. IMF's emphasis on revenue indicates that the focus is more on fundamentals than on signals. This is because macroeconomic stability entails a combination of policies that must complement each other. Without sufficient fiscal capacity, monetary tightening will be incapable of stabilising the macroeconomy, especially during adverse external conditions.

Negotiation strategy: From reactive to strategic engagement

Bangladesh has always been reactive during its dealings with various multilateral bodies,

TRIBUTE

Remembering Raghu Rai and the light he left behind



Amirul Rajiv
is an art historian, curator, and
co-founder of Duniyadari Archive.

AMIRUL RAJIV

February, 2016. India was in turmoil. Across universities, protests erupted over the tragic suicide of Dalit student Rohith Vemula. The streets were filled with voices demanding dignity and justice. At India Gate in Delhi, Rohith's mother sat in a protest, surrounded by students and heavily guarded by police. We were in Delhi at that time. We arrived at the protest site with Raghu Rai, cameras hung from our shoulders. The air was tense and charged. Raghu Rai, with his tall stature, draped in a robe of sort, stepped out of the car. His presence alone shifted something in the air. The police parted slightly, making way.

We had barely enough space to stand. Journalists pressed in from all sides. Ahead of us stood the renowned filmmaker Anand Patwardhan, camera in hand. "Anand, can we get a little space?" Raghu asked. A narrow opening appeared. He stepped forward. We were not there for over a minute. He took a few frames. Then he turned to us and said quietly, "Let's go. It's not safe to stay." We walked a short distance and stopped in front

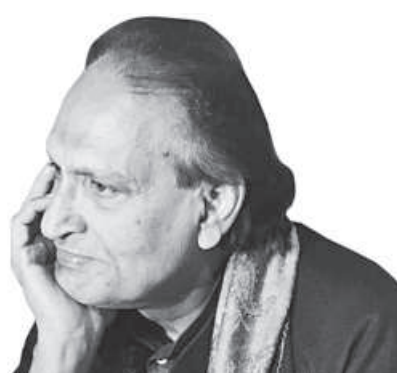
of a small ice cream shop. There, he showed us the images—me, Naim, and Prem Kumar. It was astonishing. In that chaos and urgency, he had captured light, form, and emotion with a precision that felt almost otherworldly. A fleeting moment, transformed into something timeless. Raghu Rai was, in every sense of the word, a magician of light and composition.

For over 50 years, he shaped a visual language that defined the Indian subcontinent. From war to ritual and suffering to beauty, his lens revealed the poetry within the everyday life. Through him, the lives of millions became part of a shared visual history.

He was born on December 18, 1942, in Jhang, Punjab, now in Pakistan. The youngest in his family, he was first guided toward engineering, even working briefly as a civil engineer in Delhi. But the calling of photography came through his elder brother, S. Paul. In 1962, he began learning, quietly and instinctively. By 1965, he joined *The Statesman* as a chief photographer, where

his signature style of bold, intimate, and high-contrast images began to emerge.

Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971 became a turning point in this photographic journey. Through his images of refugees, of war and surrender, he captured history with an honesty that resonated across the world. Those photographs brought him a much-deserved international recognition. He was awarded India's Padma Shri in 1972. Decades



Raghu Rai (December 18, 1942 - April 26, 2026)
PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV

later, in 2012, Bangladesh honoured him with the Friends of Liberation War Award.

In 1971, the legendary Henri Cartier-Bresson, after seeing his work, invited him to join Magnum Photos, an international photographic cooperative. By 1977, Raghu Rai became a full member. From there, his journey expanded to *India Today*, global publications

and a number of books. His photograph of a buried child from the Bhopal gas tragedy became one of the most haunting symbols of industrial disaster in modern history. He captured not just events but essence: of people, cities, rituals, and silences. He published more than 50 books that carry his vision.

I first interviewed him in 2004. We spoke about the intellectual void in Bangladesh left by the violence during the Liberation War. I was drawing parallels between this and state-sponsored violence on the Naxalite movement in India. Our conversation grew intense. He did not easily accept simplifications. He thought there was violence from both sides and considered the Naxalites terrorists and expressed that their movement could have been less violent. Yet, in the end, we agreed that both incidents left behind a deep emptiness that echoed across generations, especially in the 70s.

In 2016, I visited him again at his photography school in Gurgaon. He had arranged fish for us. Smiling, he said, "I know Bengalis love fish and conversation." When we arrived, he was watering plants and speaking softly to a dying tree. He seemed genuinely distressed, telling the gardener it needed care, and that it could still be saved. His connection to life extended beyond humans. He had gathered rare plants from across India, nurturing them with his own hands. He even published several books on trees.

Once asked him how he saw Bangladesh after the Liberation War. He paused, then said, "Look, when it comes to wrongdoing, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh—we are all the

same. So many years after independence, we are still careless towards nature, towards life. Democracy has too often become a tool for corruption. I cannot give you a satisfying answer."

Whenever he came to Dhaka, he would rise early and go out to photograph. He preferred the outskirts, the quieter edges of the city, where he could mingle with ordinary people. As he had grown older, I would instinctively reach out to support him on uneven streets and roads. He, however, would burst out laughing. Gesturing me to watch, he would leap across potholes with ease and say, "I can still climb trees...can you keep up with me?"

He was deeply devoted to his guru and held an unshakable faith in the creative and spiritual power within human beings. One of his most famous sayings, long displayed on Magnum's website, was: "The picture comes from God."

Like his world-renowned photographs, he too seemed to fade into an eternal mystery. For many of us, it was his images that gave us the courage to step into photography—both as a discipline and as a profession. Through his work, he left behind a new visual language, one that will continue to shape how we see life, aesthetics, and spirituality of this region for generations to come.

What remains are his images, a language of light, through which we continue to see ourselves.

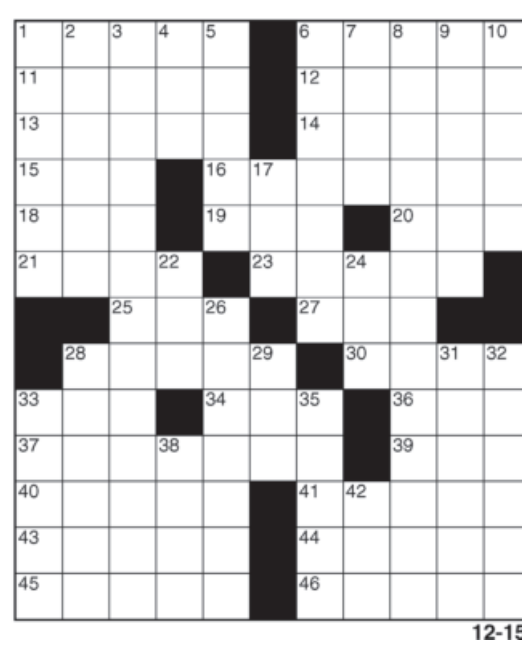
The eyes may have closed, but what it has seen and shown, will be luminous and live within us. May your onward path be lit with grace and golden light, maestro!

ACROSS

- 1 "Wheel of Fortune" name
6 Croc's cousin
11 Island ring
12 Skip a ceremony
13 Fashion
14 Drinks
15 Plop down
16 Planned
18 "The Name of the Rose" author
19 "Platoon" setting
20 Diet no-no
21 Postmark part
23 Accords
25 Laugh sound
27 "Well, that's obvious!"
28 First known asteroid

- 30 Porgy's love
33 Pussy foot
34 "... the season ..."
36 Misery
37 Pain reliever
39 World Cup cry
40 Get naked
41 Lyricist's concern
43 Puzzle out
44 Not rented out
45 At a close
46 Pascal of "The Last of Us"
DOWN
1 Got fresh with
2 Ancient Greek region
3 #1 song by Three Dog Night
4 Completely

- 5 Designer Calvin
6 Fumes
7 Loads
8 #1 song by the Carpenters
9 Verdi works
10 Stopwatch button
17 Afternoon break
22 Anvil's place
24 New reporter
26 Entered anew
28 Ohio city
29 Confession topic
31 Fuse together
32 Handles
33 Out of fashion
35 Assure
38 Seedy bar
42 Undivided



SUNDAY'S ANSWERS



CROSSWORD BY
THOMAS JOSEPH

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

REVIEW

MICHAEL
captures the
magic, but
hesitates to
confront the man

SHABABA IQBAL

For as long as I can remember, Michael Jackson has been part of my life — a love that took root before I was old enough to understand why. I would scream at the sight of him on our television screen, blow kisses at the set, and watch in awe as he danced. No one moved like him: effortless yet electric, smooth as butter. That feeling never left me. To this day, I find myself disappearing down rabbit holes of his interviews and music videos, marvelling all over again — and cornering anyone within earshot with facts about him they almost certainly did not ask for. So yes, I came to *Michael* as a devoted fan — and for the most part, it gave me plenty to hold onto.

At the heart of the film is Jaafar Jackson. To say he embodies his legendary uncle would be an understatement. He doesn't merely play Michael Jackson — he channels him, and watching him, I found myself forgetting, more than once, that I wasn't watching the man himself. The mercurial grace, the quiet intensity, the almost otherworldly charisma that made the King of Pop impossible to look away

from — it is all there. It is a portrayal that will be talked about for years.

Alongside him, Juliano Valdi is a genuine find. As the young Michael, he captures something rare and nearly impossible to manufacture — the flicker of an extraordinary talent before it fully knows what it is. For all its dazzle and



spectacle, the film never lets you forget that beneath it all was a boy who grew up too fast, in circumstances that would have broken most — and who channelled all of it, somehow, into something the world had never seen before.

The screenplay centres on the fraught

relationship between Michael and his father — Joe Jackson, played with coiled, watchful menace by Colman Domingo — while tracing the rise of a solo career that would redefine popular music. The film finds flashes of tenderness, among them Michael's well-documented love for animals — a detail I have always found deeply touching, rendered here not as eccentricity but as the logical retreat of a man for whom fame had made ordinary human warmth nearly inaccessible. These moments reveal what the film is capable of when it trusts its subject.

The trouble is that it too rarely does. As an estate-approved production that underwent costly reshoots under legal constraint, *Michael* was perhaps never positioned to fully interrogate the man it celebrates — and that limitation is palpable in almost every scene. The film moves briskly from milestone to milestone, skimming the surface of a rich mythology rather than truly excavating it. A scene in which Joe beats Michael in front of his siblings should be shattering; instead it functions mostly as exposition — something to be gotten

through en route to the fun stuff. There is no curiosity about why the Jackson 5 connected with audiences, or what a prepubescent boy singing love songs to adoring crowds said about the world that made him famous. More telling still, it hardly pauses to explore the true cost of such singular greatness: the demons that fuelled the genius, or what it felt like to be that person, in that body, under that kind of unrelenting scrutiny. The result feels closer to a lavish greatest hits package than a genuine character study.

Ultimately, the admiration at its core is unmistakable — and that is what saves it. For all that it leaves unexplored, *Michael* is never less than watchable, never less than exhilarating. It gave me what I came for — the music, the moves, the man — and in those moments, my heart was full, even if the more complicated truths remained just out of reach. It closes with three words that feel like both a relief and a challenge: his story continues. Michael Jackson's life was simply too vast, contradictory, and extraordinary to fit inside one film — and this one, for all its flaws, at least has the good sense to know it.

Two Bangladeshi films
to screen at Delhi Int'l
Film Festival

Two films produced by Impress Telefilm are set to be screened at the upcoming Delhi International Film Festival in India's capital. The films are *Manusher Bagan*, directed by Nurul Alam Atique, and *Neelpodmo*, directed by Towfique Elahi.

At the festival, *Manusher Bagan* will be screened on May 5 at 11:53am local time, while *Neelpodmo* will be shown on May 6 at 6:15pm local time.

Manusher Bagan is built around the lives of people from different sections of society. The film stars Prosun Azad, Manoj Kumar, Jyotika Jyoti, Swagata, Munira Mithu, Mahmud Alam, Dipanwita Martin and Orchita Sporschia, among others. The film is also set for a theatrical release in Bangladesh soon.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?



'Mon Boshe Na Shohore'

Kureghor, fronted by Tashrif Khan, brings a textured sonic journey where folk roots meet contemporary resonance. The performance moves through urban longing and quiet rebellion, crafting an intimate soundscape that mirrors the city's unease while offering moments of lyrical stillness and emotional release for listeners.

Date: Thursday | April 30, 2026
Time: 7:30 pm-9 pm
Venue: Jatra Biroti

NEWS

Muggers in disguise killed the customs
official, says Rab

FROM PAGE 16

Karwan Bazar, Wing Commander MZM Entekhab Chowdhury, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, said all five arrestees — Md Sohag, Ismail Hossain Jony, Imran Hossain Hridoy, Rahat Hossain Jewel and Sujon — are active members of an organised mugging gang.

They were arrested in separate drives in Cumilla.

Four of the arrestees gave confessional statements before a Cumilla court yesterday, while another accused was placed on a three-day remand, said Investigation Officer Titu Kumar Nath of Cumilla Sadar South Police Station.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Abida Sultana Moli recorded the statements of four accused — Hridoy, Sohag, Sujon and Jewel — and granted a three-day remand for Jony.

Rab said Bullet was returning to Cumilla from Chattogram after a training programme.

At around 8:45am on April 25, Moynamati Highway Police recovered his body beside a hotel in the Kotbari area on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Multiple injury marks were found on the body.

Rab said it launched an investigation immediately after the body was recovered and intensified surveillance, leading to the arrests.

During preliminary interrogation, the suspects said they belonged to an

organised gang that mainly targeted long distance passengers. They would lure travellers into CNG run auto-rickshaws and later rob them at knifepoint.

Rab also said the vehicle used in the killing belonged to the gang, and the driver, along with three others inside, were habitual criminals.

The Rab official said Bullet, who was travelling by bus, did not get off at his scheduled stoppage at Paduar Bazar on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Instead, he travelled about 5.8 kilometres further to Jhagurjhuli. Investigators believe he may have fallen asleep on the bus.

He fell victim to the gang when he took a CNG-run auto-rickshaw to return from Jhagurjhuli towards Paduar Bazar, also known as Jangalia Bus Stand.

During the drives, Rab recovered and seized weapons and vehicles allegedly used in the crime, including a CNG-run auto-rickshaw, a machete, a hammer and other items.

Rab also said the suspects have multiple cases filed against them at different police stations on various charges, including theft, robbery and drug-related offences.

Bullet Bairagi served as an assistant revenue officer at the Customs, Excise and VAT Commissionerate in Cumilla's Bibir Bazar Land Port.

The day his body was recovered, his mother Nilima Bairagi filed a murder

case with Cumilla Sadar South Model Police Station against unidentified individuals.

Yesterday marked the first birthday of Bullet's only son, Ayyay Bairagi. The day, however, was overshadowed by grief following the killing.

On Sunday morning, after legal formalities, the body was taken to his village home in Tungipara, Gopalganj, where he was buried following funeral rites.

Before that, colleagues paid their last respects at his workplace. The atmosphere at the customs office was heavy with grief as coworkers bid farewell with flowers.

Bullet's mother alleged that it was a planned murder and demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Cumilla Customs, Excise and VAT Commissioner Abdul Mannan Sardar said Bullet had joined the 44th basic training programme in Chattogram on April 11.

After completing the training, he left for Cumilla by bus from Alankar intersection at around 11:00pm on April 24.

He remained in regular contact with his family during the journey. His last call came at 2:25am, when he informed them that he had reached the Tomsom Bridge intersection in Cumilla city.

Murder suspect 'searched AI on body disposal'

FROM PAGE 1

Prosecutors said in their filing that allegedly followed up with, "How would they find out."

According to the filing, a roommate told investigators he saw Abugharbieh moving cardboard boxes to a compactor dumpster at their apartment complex on April 17.

A subsequent search of the dumpster recovered items belonging to Limon, including his student ID and credit cards, the filing stated.

DNA found on a grey T-shirt was likely Limon's, while genetic material on a kitchen mat matched Bristy, prosecutors said.

Sheriff's investigators later found Limon's remains in a heavy-duty trash bag. An autopsy indicated he died from "multiple sharp force injuries".

Members of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office marine and dive teams [searched] the area around the Howard Frankland Bridge in Tampa, Florida, on Friday.

Human remains were found Sunday (local time) during the search for Bristy, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office said, but the remains have not been identified, NBC News reported.

SCBA bars AL lawyers from May polls

FROM PAGE 16

leadership to hold the meeting to decide on barring pro-AL lawyers from contesting the election, as the party's activities are banned.

Accordingly, the meeting was held, and the decision was made based on the opinions of general members, he said.

Lawyers who were supporters of Sammilita Ainjibi Samannay Parishad or Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad, backed by the AL, and who held positions in those bodies, will not be permitted to run in the SCBA polls under the decision, he said.

Mahfuzur added that the decision will be communicated to the SCBA election commission, led by former High Court Justice Miftah Uddin Choudhury, to take necessary measures.

He said the bar election will be free and fair. Lawyers backed by BNP, Jamaat, and other political parties can participate. More than 8,000 lawyers are registered as voters.

The two-day polls will be held to elect leaders to 14 executive posts of

the SCBA, including president and secretary, for the next year, as per a previous decision of its incumbent executive body.

The last SCBA election was held in March 2024 and was highly controversial. Pro-BNP lawyers won four key posts, including that of president, while AL-backed candidates secured 10 other posts, including that of secretary.

Vote counting was halted for a day following an altercation, allegedly triggered by interference from a group of outsiders on behalf of a candidate. The outsiders attacked some lawyers present at the polling centre in the SCBA auditorium, where the votes were scheduled to be counted.

Talking to this correspondent, lawyer Shah Monjurul Hoque, member of Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad, who was elected secretary of the SCBA in that election, said that preventing pro-Liberation lawyers from taking part in the polls is an illegal, arbitrary, and undemocratic decision.

"During the 15 years of Awami League

rule, there were no major disturbances in the Supreme Court Bar Association elections. Some irregularities occurred only in the final year due to the actions of lawyers Ruhul Quddus Kazal and Nahid Sultana Juthi. Excluding the pro-Liberation forces from the election is condemnable."

Following the toppling of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5, 2024, pro-AL lawyer leaders stopped attending the SCBA proceedings.

On August 18, 2024, a section of SC lawyers formed an interim executive committee of the SCBA, with pro-BNP lawyers AM Mahub Uddin Khokon and Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, now the attorney general, as its president and secretary respectively for the 2024-25 session.

Ruhul Quddus, however, refused to discharge the responsibilities as the committee's secretary, as he had been elected to the same post several times earlier.

SCBA Assistant Secretary Mahfuzur was later given the charge.

Delhi names new envoy to Dhaka

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a non-Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer being named to the role, and the move comes as New Delhi seeks to reset ties with Dhaka.

Trivedi will replace IFS officer Pranay Verma, who is moving to Brussels as India's envoy to the European Union and the Kingdom of Belgium.

A former railway minister (2011-2012) and union minister of state for health and family welfare (2009-2011) under former prime minister Manmohan Singh's cabinet, Trivedi served as an MP from 2009 to 2019, representing the Barrakpore constituency in West Bengal for the All India Trinamool Congress. He joined the BJP in 2021.

Ties between New Delhi and Dhaka were strained after former prime

minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India in August 2024 following weeks of widespread student-led protests against her Awami League government.

In April, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman visited New Delhi, marking the first high-level bilateral engagement hosted by India since the Awami League government was ousted.

Diplomatic sources said it is surprising to see India, for the first time, has appointed a politician as a high commissioner to Bangladesh.

"It is rare that India makes political appointments to such posts. Even if it does, the appointees have careers in diplomacy," a diplomatic source said.

When asked, Prof Sreeradha Datta, who teaches international affairs at O.P. Jindal Global University, thinks this decision could emerge out of

India's willingness to improve political relationships with the BNP as a party.

India is viewed as having a strong relationship with the Awami League but has faced criticism for that, especially during the Awami League regime.

Prof Datta noted that Trivedi speaks Bangla fluently, though he is not Bangalee, and is well versed in Bangladesh's politics.

"This does not mean that the career diplomats are not knowledgeable about it. But I think the Indian government is thinking differently on ways of improving relations with Bangladesh. I would say that's good.

"Trivedi might be considered to understand the sensitivities in the relations better and then handle them accordingly."



রূপপুর থেকে রূপান্তর

রূপপুর পারমাণবিক বিদ্যুৎকেন্দ্র

টেকসই • নিরাপদ • সাশ্রয়ী • পরিবেশবান্ধব



আপনি জানেন কি?

রূপপুর পারমাণবিক বিদ্যুৎকেন্দ্রের commissioning কার্যক্রম আন্তর্জাতিক পরমাণু শক্তি সংস্থার (IAEA) guideline অনুযায়ী ধাপে ধাপে সম্পন্ন করা হচ্ছে। ইউনিট-১ এর সকল পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষা সফলভাবে সম্পন্ন হওয়ার পর fuel loading-এর জন্য ইউনিট-১ সম্পূর্ণভাবে প্রস্তুত, যা Physical Start-Up পর্যায়ের সূচনা নির্দেশ করে।

Fuel load করার পর নিয়ন্ত্রিত মাত্রায় পারমাণবিক চেইন রিঅ্যাকশন ঘটানোর প্রস্তুতি নেওয়া হয়।

এ পর্যায়ের সকল পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার পর রিঅ্যাক্টরের পাওয়ার পর্যায়ে ৩ শতাংশ, ৫ শতাংশ, ১০ শতাংশ, ২০ শতাংশ এবং ৩০ শতাংশ পর্যন্ত বৃদ্ধি করা হয়।

রিঅ্যাক্টরের পাওয়ার ৩০-৩৫ শতাংশ ক্ষমতায় পৌঁছালে জাতীয় গ্রিডে প্রথমবার বিদ্যুৎ সংযোগ করা সম্ভব হবে। আগামী আগস্ট মাসের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে প্রায় ৩০০ মেগাওয়াট বিদ্যুৎ গ্রিডে যুক্ত হবে। সকল পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষা সফলভাবে সম্পন্ন হলে জানুয়ারি ২০২৭ এর মধ্যে ১০০% বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন করা যাবে বলে আশা করা যাচ্ছে।



জেনারেশন থ্রি প্লাস প্রযুক্তির VVER-1200 রিঅ্যাক্টরটি 'defense-in-depth' নীতির উপর ভিত্তি করে পাঁচ স্তরের নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থা নিশ্চিত করে নির্মিত।



Passive safety systems গুলো মানব হস্তক্ষেপ ছাড়াই ২৪/৭ নিরবচ্ছিন্নভাবে রিঅ্যাক্টর-কে ঠাড়া রেখে নিরাপত্তা প্রদানে সক্ষম।



নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত করতে আন্তর্জাতিক পরমাণু শক্তি সংস্থা (IAEA) এবং বাংলাদেশ পরমাণু শক্তি নিয়ন্ত্রণ কর্তৃপক্ষ (BAERA) এর নীতিমালা অনুসরণ করা হয়।



■ ৮ মাত্রার ভূমিকম্প সহনশীল এবং বন্যার ঝুঁকি বিবেচনা করে সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠ হতে ১৯.১৫ মিটার উচ্চতায় স্থাপিত।

■ বায়ুদূষণজনিত ক্ষয়ক্ষতির ঝুঁকি নেই-তেজস্ক্রিয় বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনার জন্য আধুনিক Radioactive Waste Management System স্থাপন করা হয়েছে।

■ ১৫ মিমি দৈর্ঘ্য, ৭.৬ মিমি ব্যাস এবং ৪.৫ গ্রাম ওজনের ৯টি ইউরেনিয়াম প্যালেট থেকে উৎপন্ন বিদ্যুৎ ৩৫০ কিলোগ্রাম জ্বালানি তেল বা ৩৬০ ঘনমিটার প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস বা ৪০০ কেজি কয়লা থেকে উৎপাদিত বিদ্যুতের সমান।

■ জরুরি পরিস্থিতি মোকাবেলার জন্য on-site এবং off-site পর্যায়ে বিকিরণ পর্যবেক্ষণ ব্যবস্থা, জরুরি যোগাযোগ কাঠামো এবং প্রশিক্ষিত জনবল প্রস্তুত রাখা হয়েছে।

৫ স্তরের নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থা

- ফুয়েল প্যালেট: বিকিরণ ফুয়েল প্যালেটের ভিতরে ধরে রাখে।
- ফুয়েল ক্ল্যাডিং: রেডিওঅ্যাকটিভ লিকেজ প্রতিরোধ করে।
- রিঅ্যাক্টর প্রেসার ভেসেল: শক্তিশালী স্টিল কনটেইনার, যার ভেতরে নিয়ন্ত্রিত চেইন রিঅ্যাকশন ঘটে থাকে।
- প্রাইমারি কনটেইনমেন্ট ওয়াল: রিইনফোর্সড কংক্রিট দ্বারা নির্মিত ১.২ মিটার পুরু দেয়াল, যা বিকিরণ বাইরে যেতে বাধা দেয়।
- সেকেন্ডারি কনটেইনমেন্ট ওয়াল: ০.৫ মিটার পুরু দেয়াল, যা অতিরিক্ত সুরক্ষা নিশ্চিত করে।



Bangladesh enters nuclear energy era

FROM PAGE 1
ministry, told The Daily Star.

Md Zahedul Hasan, managing director of the Nuclear Power Plant Company of Bangladesh Ltd (NPCBL), said, "We must navigate a challenging test phase during commissioning. Tests will be conducted at various stages to prepare the Final Safety Analysis Report."

This pilot operation will take between six months and a year. "During this time, engineers will monitor synchronisation, turbine generator functions, and the efficacy of emergency support systems," he said.

While this initial output serves as a critical trial of the plant's capabilities, full commercial operations will follow only after the successful completion of rigorous commissioning protocols, Zahedul said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency will monitor the process, directly supervised by the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority, he added.

Located on the bank of the Padma river in Ishwardi, the \$12.65 billion plant is the single largest infrastructure investment in Bangladesh's history. It consists of two units with two generation-III+ VVER-1,200 reactors built with Russia's financial and technical assistance.

Once both units become fully operational, the plant will generate 2,400MW, accounting for around 10 percent of the country's installed electricity generation capacity.

Unit-1 was slated for completion in 2022, but it faced delays due to several factors, including soil stabilisation issues, the Covid-19 pandemic, setbacks in grid line construction, and logistical disruptions caused by the Russia-Ukraine war.

Consequently, the total cost rose to Tk 1,38,685 crore from Tk 1,13,089 crore. The addition of 10 new project

components, the depreciation of taka, and revised costs for maintenance and advisory services also contributed to this cost overrun.

According to officials, unit-2 is nearing completion and is expected to start commercial operation in 2028.

At present, Bangladesh has an installed generation capacity of 28,919MW from 136 power plants, including government, non-government, and imported sources. However, over 95 percent of this capacity relies on fossil fuels, of which 70 percent is imported.

Despite having high capacity on paper, the country often struggles to meet daily demand of under 18,000MW due to fuel shortages, a problem compounded by the US-Israel war on Iran. Experts say the demand could exceed 30,000MW by 2030.

"We are heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels. In the current global context, we are unable to secure sufficient fuel to operate most plants, which has severely hampered power generation," said Md Zahurul Islam, member (Planning and Development) at Bangladesh Power Development Board.

The addition of nuclear power to the national grid is expected to resolve this crisis by providing a stable, "base-load" power which is not subject to the volatility of global fossil fuel prices.

To transmit the electricity, the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh has built five new grid lines. Of them, three lines spanning 370 kilometres from Rooppur to Gopalganj, Bogura, and Baghabari are already complete.

Md Delwar Hossain, chief engineer of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh, said the lines have failovers and are ready to transmit power. The price of electricity per unit has not been finalised, but the NPCBL expects it to be cheaper than

coal-generated power.

SAFETY MEASURES

Built in line with post-Fukushima safety standards, the plant features passive safety systems and self-cooling for 72 hours without human intervention.

It has a "core catcher", a safety vessel designed to contain molten fuel in the unlikely event of a core meltdown. Besides, there are "double-containment" reinforced concrete layers to prevent radiation leaks and protect against external impacts.

Prof M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser to the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, voiced concern over both safety and operational costs. Past incidents in the energy sector were caused by negligence and substandard practices, yet accountability was never ensured, he said.

Initially, officials projected that power would be generated at Tk 6 per unit, but now estimates suggest the cost could climb to Tk 12 per unit, Prof Shamsul said. "If that is the case, then the very justification for taking such risks – cheap electricity – collapses," he said.

Shawkat Akbar, who served as the project director from 2008 to 2024, said that as the plant transitions from the construction to the operational phase, focus now should be on building a nuclear culture that prioritises safety and security above all other organisational goals.

"During the construction period, our priority was industrial safety; but as we begin the physical startup, we must focus on nuclear safety," he said.

Project officials said 56 licensed Bangladeshi engineers will work alongside Russian experts after passing the required examinations and demonstrating their competence. Around 1,100 local personnel will be engaged at the site, with more engineers and technicians in the pipeline.

Shadow over future nuclear energy ambition

FROM PAGE 2
sides were starting the discussion of new projects.

Bangladesh expressed a "strong interest" in the construction of two more power units at Rooppur NPP site, he said, adding that the possibility of constructing a multi-purpose high power research reactor was also being reviewed.

But after signing the trade deal with the US, if Bangladesh pursues additional units now, the agreement could restrict its choice of suppliers.

If Russian and Chinese options are

effectively excluded, the economics shift. Western vendors are costlier, financing terms are less favourable, and delivery timelines are historically uneven.

A constitutional issue regarding the deal also lingers. Whether the US trade agreement requires parliamentary ratification – or could be rejected – remains unclear. Given its long-term implications for Bangladesh's energy sovereignty, the absence of legislative scrutiny would be contentious.

Bangladesh, a country of 170 million people, suffers chronic

electricity shortages that hamper industrialisation and depress living standards. While it is trying to industrialise and reduce reliance on costly fossil fuel imports, restricting access to cheaper suppliers will raise the cost of that transition.

For now, as Prof Tamim suggests, the approach is to "wait and watch how these diplomatic and legal constraints affect existing and future nuclear projects".

The current units may be safe. The future of the programme is far less certain.

'We pledge to change the fate of the nation'

FROM PAGE 1
has clearly taken a position in favour of prosecuting those involved in the killings during the July-August mass uprising. "But we saw some people saying that after August 5, they would pardon everyone."

He said those who speak loudly in public are the same people who travelled far from Dhaka to meet a collaborator of fascism but could not explain the meeting when confronted by locals.

Additionally, Tarique said, "Our [the ruling BNP's] priority is education for mothers and sisters, healthcare for children, vaccines for them, jobs for unemployed youth, support for farmers, and ensuring medical services for all."

He also mentioned plans to expand education, healthcare services, and job creation across the country.

Tarique said the BNP has signed the July Charter with political parties and will fully implement it in parliament, and urged vigilance against those trying to "create confusion".

"Some groups tried to mislead people during different periods of history, including in 1971, 1986, and 2009," he said, alleging that the same quarters are again attempting to create confusion in 2026.

Earlier in the morning, he

addressed a gathering on the bank of the historic Ulashi Canal after inaugurating its re-excavation work in Jashore's Sharsha upazila of Jashore.

There, he said, "Some individuals and political parties are now trying to divert the referendum in a different direction and confuse the people."

He added that such elements were seeking to create disorder in the country, which could obstruct the government's development programmes and harm public welfare.

LPG CARDS FOR WOMEN, FREE EDUCATION UP TO DEGREE LEVEL
At the Eidgah ground rally, Tarique Rahman said the government will introduce LPG cards for women alongside the existing family card programme to ease cooking-related hardships.

"Our mothers and sisters face difficulties every day. They struggle to manage food for their families. They also have to cook, and for that they need gas or firewood. This creates problems."

Considering this hardship, he said the government decided two days ago to introduce LPG cards for women.

"Half of Bangladesh's population is women. If they remain behind, the country cannot move forward.

That is why we want to make women economically self-reliant."

Tarique also referred to previous initiatives by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, saying she had made girls' education free up to the school level and later up to the intermediate level.

"We [the BNP government] have decided that girls' education will be made free up to degree level. We will also provide stipends for those who achieve good results."

OTHER PROGRAMMES

The PM unveiled the foundation plaque of a 500-bed Jashore Medical College Hospital building at Harinar Beel in the Chachra area in the afternoon, reiterating his government's goal to improve and expand access to healthcare services.

Later in the afternoon, Tarique Rahman visited the historic Jashore Institute Public Library, where he said the government has taken a plan to encourage reading habits among children, keep them away from excessive mobile phone use, and reduce their dependence on digital devices.

"We want to develop the habit of reading books. We want to bring children away from mobile phones and into playgrounds and books. This is our plan."

DCs' proposals expose health sector ills

FROM PAGE 1
an ICU at the general hospital, along with ensuring adequate manpower and medicine supply at medical facilities.

The is one of the proposals put forward by DCs to the cabinet division ahead of the Deputy Commissioners' Conference scheduled for May 3-6.

The cabinet division has received more than 80 health-related proposals from deputy commissioners and divisional commissioners across the country, The Daily Star has learnt from people informed about the proposals.

These proposals highlight the chronic problems of the country's healthcare system, particularly in rural areas, where hospitals exist but lack doctors or nurses, and where equipment is available, there are no trained personnel to operate it.

Even where facilities are in place, essential medicines and ambulances are lacking, leaving people unable to access the healthcare services they need.

The proposals include expanding hospital capacity, providing manpower, introducing water ambulances and supplying medical equipment in rural areas where shortages of the essential resources are hindering access to basic healthcare.

Take the case of the Tangail Medical College Hospital, a 500-bed facility that started operation in 2022. The facility has a 10-Bed ICU wing but was never functional due to the absence of a central oxygen supply system.

The hospital was supplied with a catheterisation lab but it cannot be used for treating heart patients because of a shortage of trained personnel, said its director Abdul Kuddus.

The warranty period for the machine has expired without being used once, he said, adding that some parts of the machine are not functioning now.

Typically, a 500-bed hospital requires more than 750 manpower, but 200 people are now working at Tangail Medical College Hospital against 322 sanctioned posts.

Patients face further hardship as the hospital does not have any ambulances, forcing them to rely on private services.

Against this backdrop, the Tangail DC has proposed installing a central oxygen supply system, deploying required manpower and providing at least two ambulances so the hospital can deliver essential services.

In another proposal, the Tangail DC sought manpower support for the 250-bed General Hospital, where 44 doctors are currently working against 178 posts. Besides, only 13 sanitation workers are employed.

Barishal DC sought water ambulances, along with drivers and fuel for three upazilas that are surrounded by rivers: Muladi, Hija and Mehendiganj.

Pirojpur DC also proposed introducing a water ambulance for Nesarabad, Nazirpur, Bhandaria and Mathbaria upazilas.

Madan Upazila Health Complex in Netrokona District was upgraded to a 50-bed hospital from a 31-bed facility over a decade ago. However, no new building was constructed, leaving the authorities to operate the hospital in a congested old structure, said Netrokona Civil Surgeon Golam Mawla.

The Netrokona deputy commissioner has proposed rehabilitation of the hospital building, deployment of necessary manpower and procurement of at least two ambulances for each upazila health complex.

The government built a 20-bed Trauma Centre near Bahubal Upazila Health Complex, located approximately 200 metres from the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in 2023, but the specialised facility remained unused for three years due to a lack of manpower.

No post for manpower for the hospital has been created even though they have sent letters to the higher-ups on several occasions, said Abdullah Maruf Faruque, Bahubal upazila health and family planning officer.

Besides, there is no budget allocation for the hospital, so the facility remained unused, he said yesterday.

In this situation, the Habiganj deputy commissioner has proposed taking steps to recruit the necessary manpower to make the hospital functional.

Thakurgaon deputy commissioner has proposed the establishment of a 100-bed specialised children's hospital in the district.

The 250-bed Thakurgaon District General Hospital currently has a 40-bed paediatric ward, but on average, 180-200 child patients are admitted every day, he said.

The Magura DC has proposed formulating a policy to set and standardise medical test fees at

diagnostic centres across all districts of the country.

The Rangamati DC has proposed formulating a coordinated deployment policy to ensure healthcare services for the people of the three hill districts.

Most upazila health complexes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban) are located in remote areas.

As a result, it is difficult to post doctors, nurses and midwives there, and even when they are posted, they do not tend to stay for long, he added.

Non-utilisation of many existing healthcare facilities and equipment is a very common phenomenon in the health sector, said Prof Shafiq Nahin Shimul, director of the Institute of Health Economics at the University of Dhaka.

"It is causing a double loss." On one hand, the money spent on building facilities or procuring equipment remains idle; on the other, people are not receiving services, he said.

"This is a management problem," he said, adding that the government should revise its management approach.

For example, it can sign contracts with third parties to operate these facilities, given the overall manpower shortage in the sector.

Asked about the reasons, he said many facilities are built and equipment procured based on political considerations and the financial interests of vested groups rather than need-based allocation.

"This malpractice must be stopped, and the government must ensure need-based allocation when building facilities or purchasing equipment," he added.

Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan, director (hospitals) at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said the main issue behind the ICU crisis is the shortage of skilled manpower.

"We are working on how this can be mitigated. We have discussed providing short-term training to health workers to activate existing ICUs," he told The Daily Star on Monday.

Asked about non-functional medical facilities, he said many were built without proper planning, particularly 21 trauma centres. "We are now working on how to make those facilities functional."

in a pressurised condition. Water in our kitchen pot boils at 100 degrees Celsius. But since the water inside the reactor is pressurised, it does not boil, even when its temperature is over 300 degrees Celsius.

This hot water is then used for boiling water in another chamber and creating steam, which turns a turbine connected to an electricity generator.

A generator is just a fancy electric motor. The basic principle of a generator is the same as the electric motor used in most households to pump water to the roof-top tank. The generator just works in reverse. Instead of using electricity to turn a shaft, in a generator the shaft turns to produce electricity.

Iran 'offers to end Hormuz chokehold'

FROM PAGE 1
and Araghchi's visit had fanned hopes for fresh negotiations over the weekend, until US President Donald Trump scrapped a planned trip by his envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

"The US approaches caused the previous round of negotiations, despite progress, to fail to reach its goals because of the excessive demands," Araghchi said yesterday.

After nixing his emissaries' trip, Trump told Fox News that if Iran wanted talks, "they can call us" – though he has said the cancellation does not signal a return to hostilities.

Following their meeting, Putin and Araghchi both voiced their commitment to the two countries' "strategic relationship".

Araghchi said the war with the US and Israel had shown the world "Iran's true power" and the stability of its governing system.

In a sign that back-channel diplomatic efforts were ongoing, the Fars news agency said Iran had passed "written messages" to the Americans via Pakistan spelling out red lines, including nuclear issues and the Strait of Hormuz.

US media outlet Axios – citing a US official and two other sources – reported that Iran had sent a new proposal to end the war centred on reopening Hormuz and ending a US naval blockade there, with nuclear negotiations postponed.

An unnamed US official and two other sources familiar with the matter told the outlet that Araghchi mentioned the plan during back-to-back visits to Islamabad, informing the Pakistani, Egyptian, Turkish,

and Qatari mediators that Iran's leadership has no internal consensus on how to address Washington's nuclear demands.

The US has insisted that Iran dismantle its nuclear program and hand over all of its enriched uranium.

According to the Axios report, the proposal, which was delivered to the White House via Pakistani intermediaries, reportedly focuses on extending the ceasefire or even ending the war, as well as lifting the US blockade of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint accounting for 20 percent of the world's seaborne oil trade. Nuclear talks would not start until the blockade is lifted, according to the reported plan.

According to Al-Mayadeen, Tehran has floated a three-stage framework: end the hostilities and secure binding guarantees against renewed attacks on Iran and Lebanon; establish a new legal regime for managing the Strait of Hormuz in coordination with Oman; and, in the third stage, address the nuclear issue.

According to media reports, Iran has insisted on guarantees of US non-aggression, lifting all the sanctions, control over the Strait of Hormuz, and recognition of Iran's right to nuclear enrichment, dismissing US and Israeli accusations that it is seeking to acquire a nuclear weapon.

Iranian state news agency IRNA cited the report without denying it.

Meanwhile, the head of the UN's maritime agency yesterday rejected the idea of imposing fees on ships passing through the strait.

"There's no legal basis for the introduction of any tax, any customs, or any fees for on straits for international navigation," IMO

secretary-general Arsenio Dominguez said at a press conference.

Trump, meanwhile, was expected to hold a meeting with his top national security advisers later yesterday to discuss the stalled talks and how to proceed, Axios and ABC News reported.

Trump is facing domestic pressure to find an off-ramp as fuel prices rise, with midterm elections due in November and polls showing the war is unpopular among Americans.

However, contrary to the reports, Iran's Revolutionary Guards have said they have no intention of easing their market-rattling chokehold.

Ebrahim Azizi, head of the national security commission in Iran's parliament, told state television yesterday that a proposed law for managing the strait would make the Islamic republic's armed forces the overseeing authority, with financial gains from the waterway to be paid in Iranian rial.

Gulf states are also suffering from the strait's closure after absorbing weeks of Iranian drone and missile barrages that shut their skies and damaged their vital oil and gas infrastructure during the war.

Yesterday, the United Nations Security Council convened a Bahrain-initiated session in which dozens of countries jointly called for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz fully.

France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot told the Security Council that Iran must be ready to make "major concessions" in talks to end the crisis.

"There can be no lasting solution to this crisis unless the Iranian regime agrees to major concessions and a radical shift in its stance," he said.

How power is generated at a nuclear plant

FROM PAGE 2

The idea is: they absorb most of the neutrons generated by the splitting of atoms before they can hit other atoms.

Uranium is found in mines but most of it is uranium-238 which is not useful for fission. Only 0.72 percent of the mined uranium is uranium-235 that can take part in fission. To use it as a fuel in a reactor, the mined uranium has to be enriched, in the case of Rooppur power plant, to the level of just under 5 percent.

The uranium fuel is made into pellets and then put into rods.

"The nuclear fuel pellet is stacked inside corrosion-resistant metal tubes [Zirconium alloy tubes], called fuel

rods... A fuel rod of unit-1 contains approximately 350 to 380 pellets, with a total fuel column height of roughly 3.73 metres within a fuel rod that is roughly 3.93 to 4.0 meters long with a 9.1mm outer diameter," said Mohammad Shawkat Akbar, former chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission.

The fuel mass inside the reactor alone can weigh over 80 tonnes.

Once all the fuel is loaded inside the reactor core, the control rods, the ones that absorb the neutrons, are partially withdrawn so that the chain reaction can proceed and heat is generated.

This energy is used to heat up water. In the case of the Rooppur plant, the energy is used to heat water

while implementing the programme and stricter vetting when selecting beneficiaries, The Daily Star has learnt from people involved with the proceedings.

The finance ministry's observations are in line with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which advised against rushing the implementation and duplication.

At the meetings held on the sidelines of the WB-IMF Spring Meetings in Washington DC earlier this month, the WB advised rolling out the Family Card programme first in districts identified by its poverty map as having the highest number of poor people, The Daily Star has learnt from people with direct knowledge of the discussions.

It also recommended creating a proper database and coordinating with other programmes to ensure that the truly poor benefit from the monthly Tk 2,500 cash support.

"During the pilot phase, there were some minor errors, but they are very few – not even 1 percent," Khosru told reporters yesterday after the meeting at his office in the Secretariat.


About 37,000 people had already been included in the pilot project, Khosru said.

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২৩ এপ্রিল ২০২৬

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

কর অঞ্চল-দিনাজপুর এর অধিক্ষেত্রাধীন দিনাজপুর, ঠাকুরগাঁও ও পঞ্চগড় জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দাদের মধ্য হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত বিভিন্ন পদে মোট ১২২ জন জনবল নিয়োগ করার জন্য ৩ মে ২০২৬ তারিখ হতে অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত পূর্ণাঙ্গ বিজ্ঞপ্তি দেখার জন্য কর অঞ্চল-দিনাজপুর এর ওয়েবসাইট ভিজিট করুন অথবা নিম্নোক্ত কিউআর কোডটি স্ক্যান করুন।



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

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Divisional Electrical Engineer
Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka

e-Tender Notice No. 54.01.0000.212.07.267.25-26/10 Date: 27.04.2026

Invitation for e-Tender

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 No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Description of works	Tender document last selling date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time
1	1263353	54.01.2600.212.05.001.25.1.72	Supply & installation of LED light for improvement of under gear lighting facilities at BG Wash pit with other related works under SSAFE/E/DA.	10-May-2026 13:00	10-May-2026 14:00
2	1263461	54.01.2600.212.05.001.25.1.36	Refilling of existing Fire extinguishers under Dhaka Division.	10-May-2026 13:00	10-May-2026 14:00
3	1263461	54.01.2600.212.05.001.25.2.11	Supply of Emergency tools for Dhaka Division.	10-May-2026 13:00	10-May-2026 14:00

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

S(26)246
GD-930

Shaker Ahmed
Divisional Electrical Engineer
Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka

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নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	বিভাগ/মন্ত্রালয়	: বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ/বিদ্যুৎ, জ্বালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রালয়।		
২	এজেন্সি	: বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ (বিআরপিএল)।		
৩	নিলাম দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম, ঠিকানা ও যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	: প্রকৌশলী পাপন দাস, তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী (অপারেশন ও মেইনটেন্যান্স), প্রধান কার্যালয়, বিআরপিএল, আইইবি ভবন (৯ম তলা), ৮/এ, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০। ফোনঃ +৮৮০২-৫৫১২০৪১০ ই-মেইলঃ papon.das@brpowergen.gov.bd		
৪	নিলাম দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	: BRPL/SPP/AUC-01/2025-26 তারিখ: ২৮/০৪/২০২৬খ্রিঃ।		
৫	নিলাম দরপত্রের নাম	: শ্রীপুর ১৬০ মেঃওঃ এইচএফও ডিভিকবিদ্যুৎ বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্রের আগামী ০২ বছরে ৫০০.০০ কিলোলিটার used lube oil নিলামে বিক্রয়করণ।		
৬	বিক্রয় পদ্ধতি	: উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র নিলাম।		
৭	নিলাম দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রচারের তারিখ	: ২৮/০৪/২০২৬খ্রিঃ।		
৮	নিলাম দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয় শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়	: ২৮/০৪/২০২৬খ্রিঃ, সকাল ৯:০০ ঘটিকা।		
৯	নিলাম দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	: ১৩/০৫/২০২৬খ্রিঃ, বিকাল ৪:০০ ঘটিকা। (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়)		
১০	নিলাম দরপত্র দাখিলের সময়সীমা ও স্থান	: ২৮/০৪/২০২৬খ্রিঃ সকাল ৯:০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১৪/০৫/২০২৬খ্রিঃ, দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়)। স্থানঃ তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী (অপারেশন ও মেইনটেন্যান্স) এর দপ্তর, প্রধান কার্যালয়, বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ, আইইবি ভবন (৯ম তলা), ৮/এ, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০।		
১১	নিলাম দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	: ১৪/০৫/২০২৬খ্রিঃ, দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা।		
১২	নিলাম দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	: কনফারেন্স রুম, প্রধান কার্যালয়, বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ, আইইবি ভবন (৯ম তলা), ৮/এ, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০।		
১৩	নিলাম দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়কারী অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	: (১) নির্বাহী পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব) এর দপ্তর, প্রধান কার্যালয়, বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ, আইইবি ভবন (৯ম তলা), ৮/এ, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০।		
১৪	মালামালের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণীঃ			
ক্রঃ নং	মালামালের বিবরণ	মালামালের অবস্থান ও ঠিকানা	পরিমাণ (লিঃ)	
০১	Used Lube Oil (২ বছরের জন্য)	শ্রীপুর ১৬০ মেঃওঃ এইচএফও ডিভিকবিদ্যুৎ বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্র, কড্ডা, পাজীপুর।	৫,০০,০০০.০০	
১৫	নিলাম দরপত্র দলিল সংগ্রহের পদ্ধতি	বাংলাদেশের যে কোন সিভিল ব্যাংক হতে 'বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ' এর অনুকূলে ৫০০.০০ (পাঁচশত) টাকার অফেরতযোগ্য ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার এবং প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাকে নির্বাহী পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব), বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ এর বরাবর আবেদনপত্র জমা প্রদান করে উল্লিখিত সময়ের মধ্যে প্রধান কার্যালয় হতে দরপত্র দলিল সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।		
১৬	নিলাম দরপত্র নিলামত	উক্ত মূল্যের ৩% টাকা 'বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ' এর অনুকূলে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন সিভিল ব্যাংক হতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার এর মাধ্যমে দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে। অন্যথায় প্রাপ্ত দরপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল হিসেবে গণ্য হবে।		
১৭	বিশেষ নির্দেশিকা	(১) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন/সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিলের অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে। (২) নিলাম দরপত্র সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল তথ্য নিলাম দরপত্র দলিলে সন্নিবেশিত আছে।		

(৪ কলাম x ৬ ইঞ্চি)

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স্মারক নং-২২.০২.০০০০.০৪০.১৪.০০৯.২৫-২১

বিশ্ব পরিবেশ দিবস ২০২৬ উদযাপন উপলক্ষে প্রকল্প প্রস্তাব প্রতিযোগিতা

এতদ্বারা সকলের অবাধিতর জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বিশ্ব পরিবেশ দিবস, ২০২৬ উদযাপন উপলক্ষে পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণ ও দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণে প্রকল্প প্রস্তাব বিধিমালা অনুযায়ী প্রতিযোগিতার আয়োজন করা হয়েছে। প্রকল্প প্রস্তাবের বিজ্ঞপ্তি ও টেন্ডার প্রবেশ অধিদপ্তরের ওয়েবসাইট www.doc.gov.bd-এ পাওয়া যাবে। আগ্রহী প্রতিযোগীদের আগামী ১০ মে ২০২৬ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে নির্ধারিত ফরম/টেন্ডার প্রকল্প প্রস্তাব নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারী বরাবর দাখিল এবং সফটকপি azimenv@gmail.com-এ প্রেরণের জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে। সেরা/শ্রেষ্ঠ ০৫ (পাঁচ) প্রকল্প প্রস্তাব নির্বাচিত করা হবে এবং পুরস্কার প্রদান করা হবে। বিজয়ী প্রতিযোগীদের নাম পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তরের ওয়েবসাইটে প্রকাশ করা হবে।

মোহাম্মদ হাসান হাফিজুর রহমান
পরিচালক (পরিচালনা)
আহ্বায়ক
"পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণ ও দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণে প্রকল্প প্রস্তাব আহ্বান" সম্পর্কিত কমিটি
ফোনঃ ০২-২২৩৩৭৫০৫৭

GD-931

Rajshahi City Corporation
Engineering Department
Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi
rajshahi.portal.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.12.0000.006.14.037.26.400 Date: 26.04.2026

e-Tender Notice
(IFT: 15/2025-26)

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

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of works	Tender document last selling time and date
1	1265262	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road and RCC Drain in Ward No.10, 14, 15 & 16 (Rest Part).	12:30pm on 18-May-2026
2	1265424	Development works of Muhammadpur Tikapara Jame Mosque.	

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

রাসিক/জন্ম-১১/৫(২০২৫-২৬)
তারিখ-২৭/০৪/২৬
৪X৩

Md. Mahamudur Rahman
Executive Engineer (Dev-1)
Rajshahi City Corporation
Cell Phone: 01717136233
E-mail: sen.rcc@gmail.com

GD-926

কুমিল্লা রপ্তানী প্রক্রিয়াকরণ এলাকা
কুমিল্লা ইপিজেড মেডিকেল সেন্টার
বিমান বন্দর এলাকা, কুমিল্লা-৩৫০০।

সূত্র: ০৩.০৬.১৯৩৩.৩৩৫.১১.০১৬.০৬.০২৬ তারিখ: ২০ এপ্রিল, ২০২৬

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

কুমিল্লা ইপিজেড মেডিকেল সেন্টারের নিয়োগে শূন্য পদে লোকবল নিয়োগের জন্য বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও বেতন স্কেল	পদের সংখ্যা	সর্বোচ্চ বয়সসীমা (১৭.০৫.২০২৬ তারিখে)	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
০১	প্রধান চিকিৎসা কর্মকর্তা (চুক্তিভিত্তিক) বেতন আন্দোলন সাসপেন্ডেড	০১ (এক)	৫০ বৎসর তবে অভিজ্ঞ প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে বয়স শিথিলযোগ্য	এফসিপিএস/এমপিএইচ ডিগ্রিধারী হতে হবে। সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে অন্যান্য ডিগ্রি/ট্রেনিং থাকা বাঞ্ছনীয়। চিকিৎসা পেশায় অধিকতর অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন ও প্রশাসনিক কাজে দক্ষ/অভিজ্ঞ প্রার্থীদের নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে অগ্রাধিকার প্রদান করা হবে।

শর্তাবলী:

- সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত চাকরির আবেদন ফরমে দরখাস্ত আগামী ১৭.০৫.২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে সদস্য সচিব, কুমিল্লা ইপিজেড মেডিকেল সেন্টার ট্রাষ্টি বোর্ড, কুমিল্লা ইপিজেড, কুমিল্লা-৩৫০০, বরাবরে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে পৌঁছাতে হবে। উল্লিখিত তারিখের পর ডাকযোগে কিংবা অন্য কোন উপায়ে প্রেরিত দরখাস্ত গ্রহণ করা হবে না। অত্র অফিসে সরাসরি কোন দরখাস্ত গ্রহণ করা হবে না। উল্লিখিত তারিখের পর প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্রসমূহ বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। আবেদনের নমুনা বেপঞ্জর এর ওয়েবসাইট: www.hepza.gov.bd থেকে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে।
- বয়স নির্ধারণের ক্ষেত্রে এস এস সি বা সমমানের সার্টিফিকেটের ভিত্তিতে বয়স নির্ধারণ করা হবে। বয়স প্রমানের জন্য এফিডেভিট গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।
- অসম্পূর্ণ, দুটিপূর্ণ এবং বিলম্বে প্রাপ্ত আবেদন কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। প্রাথমিক বাছাই এর পর কর্তৃপক্ষের বিবেচনায় কেবলমাত্র উপযুক্ত প্রার্থীগণকে লিখিত বা মৌখিক পরীক্ষার কার্ড ইস্যু করতে বাধ্য থাকবে না। দরখাস্তের সূচনা দাখিলকৃত কোন দরখাস্তের খামের উপরের মাঝখানে প্রার্থীর পদের নাম ও নিজ জেলার নাম উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
- চাকরির প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।
- Comilla EPZ MCTB এর অনুকূলে যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হতে উক্ত পদের জন্য ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকার MICR পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রফট (অফেরতযোগ্য) দরখাস্তের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। দরখাস্তের সাথে নিম্নলিখিত কাগজপত্রাদি দাখিল করতে হবে:
 - ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড অফিসার কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদপত্র।
 - ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড অফিসার কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত সদ্য তোলা তিন কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি।
 - ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড অফিসার কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র।
 - ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড অফিসার কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সত্যায়িত জাতীয়তা সনদপত্রের কপি/ন্যাশনাল আইডি কার্ডের কপি।
 - স্থানীয় ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ চেয়ারম্যান/সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ওয়ার্ড কমিশনার/পৌরসভার পৌর মেয়র কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্র।
 - অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র।
- কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ প্রদর্শন ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরখাস্ত গ্রহণ বা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন এবং এ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রচারের কারণে কর্তৃপক্ষ নিয়োগ প্রদান করতে কিংবা লিখিত অথবা মৌখিক পরীক্ষার কার্ড ইস্যু করতে বাধ্য থাকবে না। দরখাস্তের সূচনা দাখিলকৃত কোন কাগজপত্র ফেরত দেয়া হবে না। নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়ায় কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- কোন তদবির বা সুপারিশ প্রার্থীর অযোগ্যতা বলে বিবেচিত হবে। প্রার্থীকে লিখিত/মৌখিক পরীক্ষার অংশ গ্রহণের জন্য কোন টিএ/ডিএ দেয়া হবে না।

(মো: ফেরদৌসুর রহমান)
অতিরিক্ত নির্বাহী পরিচালক (শির্ষ সম্পর্ক), কুমিল্লা ইপিজেড
সদস্য সচিব, কুমিল্লা ইপিজেড মেডিকেল সেন্টার ট্রাষ্টি বোর্ড

GD-924

Jagannath University
Office of the Director of Planning, Development & Works
Phone: 02226640015
E-mail: director@pdw.jnu.ac.bd

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl	Tender/Proposal ID, Reference No & name of works	Tender/Propoal publication date and time	Tender/Proposal Document last selling/downloading date and time	Last Date and Time for Tender/Propoal Security submission	Tender/Propoal Closing Date and Time
1	Tender ID: 1263689 Ref: JnU/P&D(Diary & Calendar Printing)/049/2009/096 Procurement of printing and supply of Diary, Desk and Wall calendar for Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100.	26-Apr-2026 10:00 AM	10-May-2026 15:00 PM	11-May-2026 14:00 PM	11-May-2026 15:00 PM

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. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@www.eprocure.gov.bd).

(Sayed Ahmed)
Director (In Charge)
Planning, Development & Works Office

GD-923

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office Of The Principle
Sher-E-Bangla Regional Cooperative Institute
Kashipur, Barishal.

Reference No: 47.61.0000.000.491.28.0001.24.300, Date: 27 April 2026

e-Gp Tender Notice 02/2025-2026 (OTM)

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

Sl No.	e-GP Tender ID	Invitation Reference No.	Description of works	Last Selling Date and	Closing and Opening Date
1	1265437	CZU/Barishal/Memo-03/Revenue/20-01-26/2025-26	Sand filling work of Hostel Building north and east side low land at Cooperative Zonal Institute, Barishal.	06/05/2026 11:00	06/05/2026 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-GP-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copys will be accepted. To submit e-GP-Tenders, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Held Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Mohammad Khorsheed Alam
Principle
Sher-E-Bangla Regional Cooperative Institute
Kashipur, Barishal.

GD-928

Breaking into investment banking in the US

SYEDA ADIBA ARIF

Taosif Amin Khan began his career in commercial banking in Bangladesh before moving into investment banking in the United States after completing his MBA there. He started at a leading full-service investment bank and now works at one of the largest independent advisory firms.

For Bangladeshi professionals hoping to make a similar move, his experience offers a practical look at what investment banking involves, how MBA recruitment works, and what it takes to build a sustainable career in a demanding industry.

What investment banking involves

Investment banking is broadly about advising companies on major corporate finance decisions and helping execute high-stakes transactions. This can include raising capital through equity or debt, advising on mergers and acquisitions, and supporting strategic matters such as shareholder-related transactions and engagements.

"From a work point of view, investment banking isn't fundamentally different from other client-facing banking roles, because a lot of it is still client and relationship management," Taosif said.

The work spans business development, relationship management, investor outreach and transaction execution. In everyday terms, bankers stay close to clients, understand their businesses and industries, share market updates, and identify opportunities where the bank can help. For analysts and associates, much of the workload involves building presentation decks and carrying out the detailed analysis behind them.

Once a bank is selected for a transaction, the work moves into execution. Bankers coordinate with internal teams, accountants, lawyers and regulators to draft contracts, manage workstreams and complete the deal.

Taosif said the value of investment bankers lies not only in technical advice, but also in market access and judgement. Bankers can bring a wider universe of investors and buyers to the table, provide underwriting capabilities many companies do not have in-house, and support negotiations in ways that can help clients achieve stronger outcomes.

Life inside investment banking

Investment bankers usually work in coverage groups, product groups or a combination of both. Coverage groups focus on specific industries, such as healthcare, technology or consumer goods, across the full range of banking products. Product groups specialise in particular transactions, such as equity capital markets, debt capital markets or mergers and acquisitions, across different industries. These teams work together, drawing on each other's expertise.

"Being in investment banking gives exceptional exposure and a very steep learning curve," Taosif said. "I get to partner with companies at the edge of innovation, work with top management of Fortune 500 companies, and be part of conversations that are crucial for these companies' financial futures."



The trade-off is intensity. Investment banking can involve demanding periods, unpredictable schedules and a high level of pressure. Given the nature of the work, Taosif believes discipline is essential.

"Knowing how to use time well and how to balance priorities are important differentiators in having a sustainable long-term career," he said.

The industry is also highly competitive and fast-moving, requiring teams to collaborate closely and make decisions quickly. "In many ways, it mimics competitive sports, where the intensity of working closely toward a common goal makes success particularly energising," Taosif said.

How to make the move from Bangladesh
Taosif began his career in Bangladesh at HSBC. He said much of that experience proved useful in investment banking.

"The knowledge from banking in general, reading financial statements, gaining industry knowledge, managing seniors, peers and juniors, working with lawyers, clients and stakeholders — a lot of these were highly transferable," he said.

His CFA qualification also helped him perform well in technical interviews, although he does not see it as a prerequisite for entering the industry.

Taosif later completed his MBA at the University of Virginia Darden School of Business. For those hoping to break into investment banking through an MBA, he said the first step is choosing a school with a strong record of placing students into the industry.

In his view, MBA programmes for investment banking broadly fall into three categories: core targets, semi-targets and non-targets. NYU Stern, Wharton, Columbia Business School, Chicago Booth, Darden, Cornell Johnson, Dartmouth Tuck and UCLA Anderson are often considered core target schools in the US. Attending a target school can significantly increase access to alumni

support and interview opportunities.

"The most reliable way to identify true feeders is to speak to students and recent recruits, study placement patterns and garner insights from Wall Street Oasis, GMAT Club, etc.," Taosif said.

Once enrolled in an MBA programme, the investment banking recruitment process is usually structured and often supported by the school's finance club and career services team. These groups help candidates prepare through résumé reviews, technical practice, coffee chats and networking events with bankers.

The final round of recruitment is often known as "Superday", when candidates are assessed on behavioural qualities and technical competence. Successful candidates secure internships, which can lead to return offers depending on performance.

Taosif believes Bangladeshi candidates should also speak to others from Bangladesh who have already made the move. Such conversations can provide practical advice grounded in the Bangladeshi context and help candidates frame their local work experience more effectively.

"There can sometimes be a tendency among Bangladeshi candidates to understate their experiences," Taosif said. "In a competitive process like this, it is important to clearly and confidently articulate your achievements, seek support when needed, and make the most of your network."

What it takes to thrive

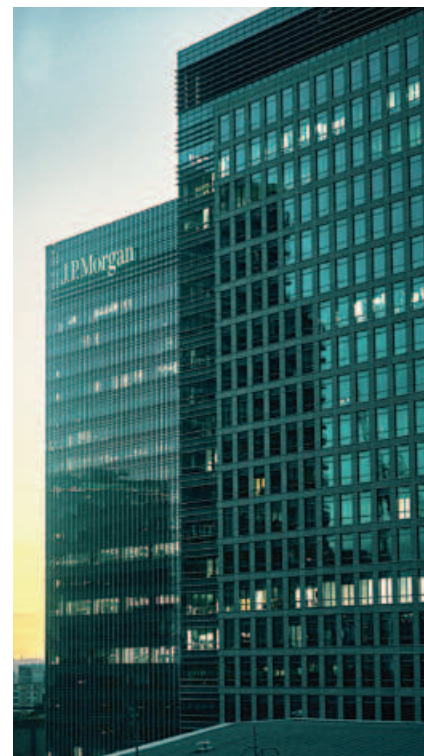
A strong work ethic, technical ability, analytical skill and interpersonal confidence are all important in investment banking. But Taosif places particular emphasis on organisation.

Given the workload, bankers need to reduce wasted time, plan ahead and prepare for the next day. They also need to anticipate what might go wrong and build contingencies accordingly.

Attitude matters too. "You can either choose to dwell on how demanding the lifestyle is, or you can choose to accept that the role comes with challenges and focus on managing it well," he said. "The one thing I'm very strict about is this: whenever you get a pocket of free time, use it intentionally — if I'm free by 6pm, I will go home, make a plan, or do something productive."

Advice for aspiring investment bankers
Taosif's main advice is to pressure-test your motivation before pursuing investment banking. Candidates should ask themselves whether they understand what investment bankers do, whether they can see themselves enjoying the work, how much effort they are willing to put into their careers, and how the role fits into their long-term goals.

While much of the preparation happens during business school, he said it helps to build technical skills in advance, particularly in presentations and spreadsheets. Candidates should also strengthen their financial knowledge and market awareness through regular reading and exposure to resources such as Wall Street Oasis, The Wall Street Journal and The Economist. He also



recommended watching *The Big Short* and reading *Liar's Poker*.

As a final piece of advice, Taosif said candidates should pursue investment banking for the right reasons and be honest about what motivates them.

"Whether the job feels draining or energising depends on you," he said. "If you thrive in a fast-paced competitive environment, the work can actually feel quite exciting and it can be a highly engaging career."

Syeda Adiba Arif is the Head of Talent, OE & Inclusion - APMEA Central at BAT. She completed her Bachelor's in Business Administration from IBA, University of Dhaka, and her Master's in Data Science & Analytics from East West University.

Meta to cut 10% of workforce as it redirects spending towards AI

NEXT STEP DESK

Meta is planning to cut approximately 10% of its global workforce, amounting to around 8,000 employees, as the company moves to reduce costs and redirect investment towards artificial intelligence.

According to an internal memo sent to staff last week and reported by Bloomberg, the cuts will begin on May 20.

Meta will also leave 6,000 currently open roles unfilled. Chief people officer Janelle Gale told employees: "We're doing this as part of our continued effort to run the company more efficiently and to allow us to offset the other investments we're making. This is not an easy tradeoff and it will mean letting go of people who have made meaningful contributions to Meta during their time here."

The announcement follows years of heavy spending on the metaverse, a bet that has largely failed to generate the returns the company anticipated. Meta has simultaneously had to make significant investments in AI infrastructure and products to keep pace with rivals, including a ground-up overhaul of its AI assistant platform launched earlier this month.



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

LinkedIn CEO Ryan Roslansky steps down after six years

NEXT STEP DESK

Ryan Roslansky has stepped down as chief executive of LinkedIn after six years leading the world's largest professional networking platform, with chief operating officer Dan Shapero assuming the role immediately.

Roslansky joined LinkedIn in 2009 as one of then-chief executive Jeff Weiner's first hires, and spent more than a decade working across nearly every part of the business before taking the top job in June 2020, at the height of pandemic-era labour market upheaval.

He inherited a platform with 700 million members and roughly \$8 billion in annual revenue. He leaves with 1.3 billion members and more than \$17 billion in revenue. That growth coincided with a significant shift in the platform's



Dan Shapero (left) with Ryan Roslansky (right). IMAGE: LINKEDIN

character, as LinkedIn evolved from a jobs board and professional directory into a social network where executives regularly share personal essays, career

advice, and opinion—a transformation that has attracted both loyal users and widespread mockery in equal measure.

Roslansky also holds the title of executive vice president at Microsoft, which acquired LinkedIn in 2016. In a post on the platform, he indicated that his role within Microsoft is expanding, with Shapero now reporting directly to him. The transition therefore marks a change in operational leadership rather than a full departure from the company's orbit.

Shapero, who has served as LinkedIn's chief operating officer, takes over a platform navigating significant uncertainty in the jobs market, including a roughly 20% decline in hiring since 2022 and ongoing questions about the long-term impact of artificial intelligence on employment.

OpenAI releases GPT-5.5 in move towards AI superapp

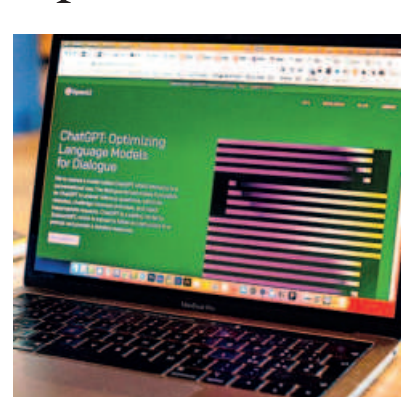


IMAGE: UNSPLASH

NEXT STEP DESK

OpenAI has released GPT-5.5, its newest AI model, describing it as the company's most capable and intuitive model to date and a step towards its stated goal of building an AI superapp that consolidates its core products into a single unified service. OpenAI co-founder and president Greg Brockman said the release was an additional step towards building a superapp — a multi-purpose, unified programme combining ChatGPT, Codex, and an AI browser into one service primarily aimed at enterprise customers, reports TechCrunch.

OpenAI released its previous model, GPT-5.4, only last month, with prior releases in December and November. According to OpenAI, GPT-5.5 is designed for a broad array of applications, including agentic coding, enterprise knowledge work, mathematics, and scientific research.

GPT-5.5 is available to Plus, Pro, Business, and Enterprise users in ChatGPT, while a GPT-5.5 Pro tier is rolling out to Pro, Business, and Enterprise subscribers. OpenAI's published benchmark data shows the model outperforming recent models from rivals including Google and Anthropic across a range of evaluations.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

University of Asia Pacific

Admin Officer, Office of the Registrar

Deadline: April 30

Eligibility:

Master's degree from a reputed university, with prior experience in the administration of university ranking-related activities.

Minimum experience: 1-3 years



Nuvista Pharma PLC

Executive, Central Brand Management

Deadline: May 2

Eligibility:

M. Pharm/ B. Pharm (5-year professional degree) from any reputed university.

Minimum experience: 2 years



International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Protection Manager, PROL

Deadline: May 3

Eligibility:

Master of Social Science in Development Studies, Gender Studies, Psychology, Anthropology, Social work, or Bachelor of Law, any other related field.

Minimum experience: 2-5 years



US Embassy Dhaka

Program Management Specialist

Deadline: May 6

Eligibility:

Bachelor's degree, or international equivalent, in public administration, business management or business administration, economics or finance.

Minimum experience: 3-5 years



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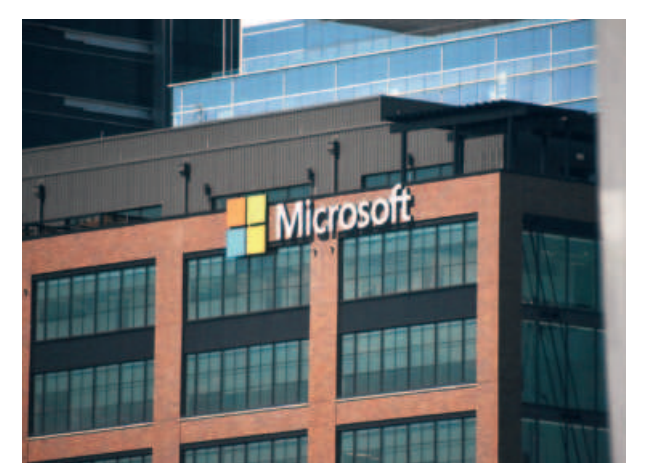


IMAGE: UNSPLASH

Microsoft offers voluntary retirement to over 8000 employees

NEXT STEP DESK

Microsoft has offered voluntary retirement buyouts to a portion of its US workforce for the first time in its 51-year history, in a move that would allow the company to reduce headcount without resorting to compulsory redundancies. According to an internal memo reported by CNBC and Bloomberg, employees are eligible for the programme if the sum of their age and years of service at Microsoft totals 70 or more. Under that formula, a 52-year-old employee with 18 years at the company would qualify.

With an estimated 125,000 US employees as of last June, the buyout programme could affect up to 7% of that workforce, equating to approximately 8,750 people. The voluntary redundancy programme follows several rounds of compulsory job cuts in recent years, including the loss of 9,000 roles last summer. By offering a buyout, Microsoft can reduce its US headcount without the reputational and operational disruption that accompanies mass layoffs.

Hridoy delivers, so does middle-order

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Chattogram

When the target is 180 plus and Bangladesh require 106 from the last 10 overs, optimism is usually in short supply. But in Chattogram yesterday, Tawhid Hridoy turned the tide with a composed and calculated innings, stitching together crucial partnerships with Parvez Hossain Emon and Shamim Hossain Patwari to guide Bangladesh to their highest successful T20I chase at home against New Zealand in the first match of the three-match series.

Hridoy walked in under pressure after Litton Das had fallen and the required rate had climbed above 10. The situation worsened when Tanzid Tamim departed in the following over. However, Hridoy immediately seized the initiative, launching Ish Sodhi over midwicket -- a shot that has become his signature against spin -- to shift momentum.



In earlier chases, Hridoy's efforts often came in vain. His career-best 83 against Ireland last November, for instance, ended in a 39-run defeat while chasing 181. This time, however, he found the support he needed as Bangladesh completed the chase with two overs to spare.

The partnership with Emon proved pivotal. The duo added 57 runs from just 28 deliveries at a run rate of 12.21 -- Bangladesh's fastest fourth-wicket scoring rate in successful chases over the past three years. Emon's brisk 28 helped steady the innings and allowed Hridoy to build with greater freedom.

"The middle order is a position where you have to hit boundaries while also building the innings," Hridoy said at the post-match press conference following his unbeaten 51 off 27 deliveries.

"What I felt was that when Emon started attacking, it made things much easier for me. I felt the game was firmly in our hands, so I didn't need to take as many risks. Definitely, credit goes to both Emon and Patwari (Shamim) as they finished the game really well," he added.

If Emon helped regain control, Shamim ensured there was no slip thereafter. The fifth-wicket stand between Hridoy and Shamim came at a blistering rate of 15.47 -- the highest for Bangladesh in successful chases in the last three years. Shamim hammered 31 off just 13 balls, including a remarkable six struck straight over the wicketkeeper's head.

"Number five or six is such a position that you would get fifty just one or two days. If anyone is scoring fifty from number six, that means the team was on the back foot that day. I think what Shamim did today, his impact was bigger than a fifty," Hridoy said on contributions of the middle order.

"He plays shots that very few batsmen in our team can execute. At number six, you need a player who can hit the ball anywhere at any time. The six he hit, very few of us can hit a shot like that. So definitely, I pray that he continues to deliver good performances consistently," Hridoy said as he shone with a fifty, finding solid partners in crime.

TEARS OF RESOLVE and an unlikely success

RAMIN TALUKDAR

Wearing red and green, standing tall, listening to the national anthem at the GBK Hockey Field in Jakarta, the moment suddenly feels heavier than ever before. For one member of the Bangladesh women's hockey team, it is almost surreal.

Not long ago, hockey was not even part of their vocabulary, and even in their wildest dreams, they could not have imagined that one day they would stand on an international stage wearing the national jersey; let alone thinking of taking part in Women's Asian Games qualifying tournament.

In a sport they barely knew before stepping into BKSP, this was their first senior international tournament, and they made it unforgettable. Holding off Chinese Taipei and defeating Uzbekistan and Hong Kong, they secured a place in the semifinals and sealed their Asian Games ticket.

It marks the beginning of a story that, until recently, barely conceivable. Yet the backstory behind this achievement is even more extraordinary.

In a country where women's hockey has no active league and limited structure, a group of young girls has rewritten possibility through sheer will and determination.

Fourteen of the 16 squad members are from BKSP. They joined in 2020 as seventh-grade students and now stand at the threshold of their HSC exams. For six years, they have lived under one roof, trained on the same field, and



grown with one shared dream.

Their roots lie mainly in northern Bangladesh -- Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Rajshahi -- while others come from Habiganj, Kishoreganj, and Netrokona. Most arrived at BKSP dreaming of football or cricket; hockey was something entirely off the radar.

Coach Zahid Hossain Raju says many of them were guided toward hockey due to limited opportunities in the sport nationwide. The residential setup at BKSP became their biggest strength, shaping them over six relentless years.

Take Sharika Safa Rimon. She came for football trials but found hockey instead. The choice was practical at first -- less

competition, more opportunity. But what began as convenience slowly turned into passion.

The youngest of five siblings, Sharika was encouraged by her elder sister,

Mamoni Akter. "I had never even seen hockey before," she said. "But now when I step onto the field, it feels like I was born for this game."

Riya from Jhenaidah carries a different struggle. Poverty once pushed her toward leaving sport behind for marriage. But she stayed, and went on to become player of the match, proving her place when her family wanted her to return home.

Riya aside, Tanni Khatun -- still in ninth grade -- also earned player-of-the-match honours, as did captain Orpita Pal. The coach has set one clear direction for them: no marriage for the next four to five years -- only education and the national jersey.

In a country where cricket and football dominate fame and fortune, why choose hockey? Rimon's answer is simple: "When you truly love something, success follows."

Coach Raju noted that improved financial incentives for national players from new government have begun changing perceptions, encouraging families to support their daughters.

Since 2020, Raju has led both boys' and girls' teams at BKSP single-handedly. But it is the girls who, he says, leave the deepest impression with their resilience and fight.

Ironically, this team was never meant to be here. A postponed U-21 tournament opened the door, and financial support from the National Sports Council (NSC) made participation possible. From that unexpected chance, they earned their Asian Games ticket.

After reaching the semifinals, Sharika called her father -- only to find he already knew. Her laughter carried the joy of something far bigger than victory.

Still, challenges remain. Many such success stories in other sports have faded into obscurity due to neglect.

Bangladesh has no regular women's hockey league. Competitive exposure is limited, and opportunities are rare. As they prepare for the Asian Games, both coach and players share a single hope: a domestic league. Coach Raju, dares to dream of having a franchise-based league like India or Malaysia.

These girls carry an unbreakable courage, and when tears well up during the national anthem, they are not of weakness but of resolve, one that now must be matched by the authorities.

Paris set for fireworks as PSG host Bayern

STAR SPORTS DESK

A mouthwatering showdown awaits in Paris tonight as reigning champions PSG host Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal, with two of Europe's most potent attacks set to collide.

● PSG and Bayern are no strangers, having met 15 times in the competition, including in each of the last nine seasons.

● Bayern have dominated the fixture, winning the last five meetings -- the longest winning streak by any team against PSG in major European competition. They also won 2-1 in Paris in this season's league phase, with Luis Diaz scoring twice before being sent off.

● PSG's nine defeats to Bayern are their most against any opponent in the competition.

● Goals are almost guaranteed. PSG and Bayern are joint top scorers this season with 38 goals each, while Bayern average 3.2 goals per game -- the highest followed by PSG's 2.7.

● Harry Kane leads Bayern's charge, with 12 goals -- the most



by an English player in a single European Cup/Champions League campaign. He has scored in each of his last four knockout matches.

● For PSG, Vitinha could dictate play if fit. His 1,370 completed passes are the most in a single Champions League season since 2003-04, and he has registered 100+ passes in eight games, second only to Xavi's nine for Barcelona in 2010-11.

● With six goals and three assists, a goal or assist would make Diaz the third Bayern player to reach 10+ goal involvements this season, alongside Kane (13) and Michael

Olise (10) -- a first for the club in a single campaign.

● On the touchline, PSG boss Luis Enrique is one win away from becoming the fastest manager to 50 Champions League victories (currently 49 in 76 games), with Pep Guardiola holding the record (50 in 80).

● Bayern coach Vincent Kompany has won both of his meetings with Enrique's PSG (1-0 in November 2024 and 2-1 in November 2025), and another victory would give him the most wins by any manager against the Spaniard in the competition (3).

44 DAYS TO GO



Italy's 44-year wait for glory

Italy hold the record for the longest gap between two World Cup titles. After winning their second crown in 1938, the Azzurri had to wait 44 years before lifting the trophy again in 1982. Argentina rank second on this list, with a 36-year gap between their 1986 and 2022 triumphs.

****Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'Argentina's 2002 early exit and Beckham's redemption'**



'I always prefer batting at three'

After a run of 13 innings without a fifty, Bangladesh batter **Najmul Hossain Shanto** looked in his element in the recently concluded ODI series against New Zealand, breaking the drought with a half-century in the second ODI in Mirpur before following it up with a commanding fourth ODI ton in the decider in Chattogram. Across those two innings, he first showed patience under pressure and then took control with a more assertive approach. Shanto spoke about navigating that lean phase, whether stepping away from captaincy influenced his batting and more, in an exclusive interview with **The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi**. The excerpts follow:

The Daily Star (DS): Reflecting on the New Zealand ODIs overall, how uplifting was the team's performance and your own?

Najmul Hossain Shanto (NHS): As a team, we did well, and that's a positive. We've been playing good cricket for the last three series, so it's crucial to keep this momentum going. I think the team bonding is great right now, and everyone is trying to contribute together. On a personal level, I desperately needed these two

innings. I hadn't scored big runs in a while. So, from that perspective, I'd say it was a good series for me.

DS: Who did you turn to for guidance during that lean phase?

NHS: Actually, I had been working on my game for the last few months. I always work on my batting with Sohail [Islam] sir. I spent the last few months working with him, focusing on both technical and mental aspects. After putting in that work, I felt a bit more confident.

DS: What specific adjustments were you working through at the time?

NHS: No, it wasn't anything major. Like I said, I was focusing more on technique. I was dealing with a technical issue -- well, I wouldn't call it a problem, just something I was struggling with. Mentally, I am generally a positive person. Even when I wasn't scoring runs, I feel my approach and mindset remained positive. But of course, when the runs aren't coming, a bit of nervousness or a different feeling creeps in. However, I believe I held up well in that regard. My main focus over the last few months was really on resolving that technical aspect.

DS: Has stepping down from the captaincy affected your batting in any way?

NHS: Honestly, whether I am captain or not doesn't matter to me at all. As long as I am scoring runs, that is what matters.

DS: You also had a few sessions with Tamim Iqbal. How did that shape your game?

NHS: Before the BPL (Bangladesh Premier League), I was working on a specific shot. I felt Tamim bhai would be the best person to consult because he played that shot very successfully throughout his career. I wanted to learn from his real-life experience and understand how he executed it. I invited him, and he beautifully explained the whole process to me. He also spent two days with me indoors, generously giving his time. I benefited a lot from that, and I'm still working on it.

DS: How disappointing was it to be retired hurt for cramps in the second ODI?

NHS: It was absolutely disappointing because I should have finished the game, which would have ensured a comfortable win. As a professional cricketer, we shouldn't complain too much about things beyond our control. The heat was what it was. Before

the series started, we had a very good fitness camp... But due to my running restrictions, I had to adapt.

DS: How mature does the pace unit look to you now?

NHS: Every single pace bowler... to operate the way they did in this heat and in these conditions shows they deserve all the credit. They played a massive role in us winning the series.

DS: You batted at number four in the last two ODIs. Looking ahead, where do you see your batting role, particularly with the World Cup approaching?

NHS: That's a call for the coach, management, and captain to make. Personally, I always prefer batting at number three, and I've had success there in the past. But ultimately, I will be prepared to play wherever the team management, coach, and captain ask me to.

****Read the full interview on The Daily Star website, where Shanto also elaborates on his shot selection and tempo in the decider, adapting to challenging Chattogram conditions, and his approach to adjusting against different bowlers.**



SCBA bars AL lawyers from May polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association has decided not to allow pro-Awami League lawyers to contest its upcoming annual election, scheduled for May 13 and 14, citing the ban on the party's activities under the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, 2025.

The decision came at an extraordinary general meeting of the SCBA members at its South Hall on Sunday afternoon.

SCBA Senior Vice-President Humayun Kabir Manju, a pro-BNP lawyer, presided over the meeting, where around 300 lawyers were present.

Most of the meeting's attendees were supporters of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, SCBA sources said.

SCBA Secretary Mahfuzur Rahman Milon, who conducted the meeting, told The Daily Star yesterday that around 100 members had earlier requested the bar

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Tawhid Hridoy and Shamim Hossain celebrate with a fist bump during their decisive unbeaten partnership as Bangladesh pulled off their highest successful T20I chase at home, beating New Zealand by six wickets with two overs to spare in the three-match series opener in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

Muggers in disguise killed the customs official, says Rab

STAR REPORT

They lay in wait near a bus stop in Cumilla after midnight, posing as a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver and passengers, watching for a lone traveller.



When customs official Bullet Bairagi got off a bus late on April 24, investigators said, they had found their target. Offering him a ride, they persuaded him to board the vehicle. He had little reason to suspect the journey would end in violence.

Once the auto-rickshaw headed towards a secluded area, the gang attempted to rob him. A scuffle broke out as he resisted, during which they threw him from the moving vehicle onto the footpath beside Irish Hill Hotel in Kotbari, causing severe head injuries. He died on the spot from excessive bleeding, investigators said.

The Rapid Action Battalion disclosed the details yesterday after arresting five suspects in connection with the killing.

At a press conference at the Rab Media Centre in Cumilla, the police said they had arrested five suspects in connection with the killing. At a press conference at the Rab Media Centre in Cumilla, the police said they had arrested five suspects in connection with the killing.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Delhi names new envoy to Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India has named Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Dinesh Trivedi as its next high commissioner to Bangladesh.



Dinesh Trivedi

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs made the announcement yesterday, stating that the 75-year-old veteran politician is expected to assume his new role shortly.

The appointment is a rare instance of a former

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Ex-owners seek to reclaim SIBL

STAR REPORT

Five sponsor shareholders and former directors of Social Islami Bank PLC (SIBL) have applied to Bangladesh Bank to regain control of the Shariah-based lender, which was merged with four others into a single state-owned entity under the Bank Resolution Ordinance, 2025.

The application, submitted yesterday and seen by The Daily Star, cites section 18(ka) of the Bank Resolution Act, 2026, which allows former owners

to reclaim merged banks.

Parliament passed the act by amending the ordinance just over two weeks ago, enabling former owners to regain control by paying 7.5 percent upfront of the government or Bangladesh Bank's injected funds.

The remaining 92.5 percent is repayable within two years at 10 percent simple interest, according to the amended law.

The amendment has drawn sharp criticism. Critics say the new

SEE PAGE 7 COL 8

Load shedding to ease next week Energy minister says full solution still distant

UNB

Power outages will not cease immediately but will ease considerably from next week, said Energy Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood yesterday.

At present, load shedding stands at 1,200 to 1,500 megawatts, which will drop to 800 to 900MW next week, he said at the 'Fourth Bangladesh-China Renewable Energy Forum' organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

Third Terminal opening delayed to early 2027

Biman won't have monopoly over ground handling

RASHIDUL HASAN

People will have to wait until early next year to use the Third Terminal at the Dhaka airport, as the authorities are yet to reach an agreement with a Japanese consortium and complete Operation Readiness and Airport Transfer (ORAT).

"The signing of the agreement will take at least three months from now. This will be followed by a test run called

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

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লিগ্যাল এইড ন্যায়বিচার নাগরিকের দোরগোড়ায়

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মোঃ আসাদুজ্জামান

আইনের সমান অধিকার একজন নাগরিকের অন্যতম মৌলিক অধিকার হলেও সমাজের নানা বৈষম্য ও বাস্তব সীমাবদ্ধতা প্রায়ই সেই অধিকার পাওয়ার পথে অন্তরায় হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। এই বৈষম্যের দেয়াল ভেঙে ন্যায়পরায়ণতা নিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে রাষ্ট্রের অন্যতম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হাতিয়ার হিসেবে লিগ্যাল এইড কার্যক্রম আজ এক নতুন মাত্রা অর্জন করেছে। এটি আজ শুধু একটি নীতিগত ধারণা নয়, বরং ন্যায়বিচারকে সাধারণ মানুষের দোরগোড়ায় পৌঁছে দেওয়ার এক বাস্তব ও শক্তিশালী মাধ্যম।

শুধু আর্থিক অসম্মততার কারণে কেউ যেন আইনের আশ্রয় লাভ থেকে বঞ্চিত না হন, এই উদ্দেশ্যে গাঢ়তায় প্রথম গভীরভাবে অনুশীলন করেছিলেন তৎকালীন প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা। বঙ্গবন্ধু জিয়া। তাঁরই সুদূর নেতৃত্বে ১৯৯৪ সালের ৬ জানুয়ারি সরকারি প্রজ্ঞাপনের মাধ্যমে 'লিগ্যাল এইড ফান্ড' গঠিত হয় এবং দরিদ্র ও অসহায় বিচারপ্রার্থীদের জন্য রাষ্ট্রীয়ভাবে আইন সহায়তা প্রদানের ঐতিহাসিক পথচলা শুরু হয়। পরে 'আইনগত সহায়তা প্রদান আইন, ২০০০' প্রণয়নের মাধ্যমে এই কার্যক্রম একটি সুসংগঠিত প্রতিষ্ঠানিক ভিত্তি লাভ করে।

জনগণের সাংবিধানিক অধিকার সমুদ্র তরিতে বর্তমান গণতান্ত্রিক সরকারের প্রধানমন্ত্রী তারেক রহমানের নেতৃত্বে আইনগত সহায়তা কার্যক্রমে আরও কার্যকর, গতিশীল ও জনমুখী করার লক্ষ্যে বিভিন্ন গুরুত্বপূর্ণ পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। এই প্রেক্ষাপটে ৯ এপ্রিল জাতীয় সংসদে 'আইনগত সহায়তা প্রদান (সংশোধন) আইন, ২০২৬' শীর্ষক বিল পাস হয়েছে। এ আইনের মাধ্যমে জাতীয় আইনগত সহায়তা প্রদান সংক্রমে 'বাংলাদেশ আইনগত সহায়তা অধিদপ্তর'—এ উদ্ভীত করা হয়েছে। এই রূপান্তরের ফলে লিগ্যাল এইড কার্যক্রমে যেমন নজিরবিহীন গতি সঞ্চার হয়েছে, তেমনই এর কার্যপরিধি ও সক্ষমতাও বহুগুণ বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে।

বর্তমান সরকার ন্যায়পরায়ণতার অগ্রযাত্রায় জুলাই যোদ্ধা ও জুলাই গণ—অভ্যুত্থানে শহীদ পরিবারের সঙ্গী এবং গুম হওয়া ব্যক্তি ও তাঁদের পরিবারের আইনগত অধিকার সুরক্ষায় বিশেষ গুরুত্ব প্রদান করেছে। আর্থিক সীমাবদ্ধতা যেন তাঁদের ন্যায়বিচার পাওয়ার পথে বাধা না হয়, সে লক্ষ্যে সরকার তাঁদের আইনগত সহায়তা পাওয়ার বিকল্প নীতিমালায় অন্তর্ভুক্ত করেছে। আজ লিগ্যাল এইড কার্যক্রম মূল্যবোধ আইন সহায়তার মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ নেই; বরং এটি বিকল্প বিরোধ নিষ্পত্তির মাধ্যমে একটি মানবিক ও কার্যকর মাধ্যম হিসেবে আত্মপ্রকাশ করেছে। মধ্যস্থতার মাধ্যমে সম্পাদিত চুক্তিকে 'ডিক্রি' মর্যাদা প্রদান করে ন্যায়বিচার প্রাপ্তিকে আরও সহজ করা হয়েছে। এর ফলে দেশের প্রান্তিক জনগোষ্ঠী, বিশেষ করে নারী, শিশু, অক্ষম ও আর্থিকভাবে অসম্মত মানুষ সরকারি খরচে এই সুবিধা গ্রহণ করতে পারছেন।

একটি পারিবারিক বিরোধ, যা সহজেই দীর্ঘমেয়াদি মামলায় রূপ নিতে পারত—তা সময়, অর্থ ও মানসিক চাপের ভারে জর্জরিত হওয়ার আগেই লিগ্যাল এইড কার্যক্রম ইতিমধ্যে ২০টি জেলায় চলমান। ডিক্রি প্রক্রিয়ায় প্রাপ্তিকর্ম ও হেল্পলাইন সেবা সম্প্রসারণের মাধ্যমে প্রত্যন্ত অঞ্চলের মানুষের দোরগোড়ায় ন্যায়বিচার পৌঁছে দেওয়ার পাশাপাশি বাজেট ও জনবল বৃদ্ধির মাধ্যমে অধিবন্দিতকে আরও শক্তিশালী করা হবে। 'সবার আগে বাংলাদেশ'—এই অঙ্গীকার সামনে রেখে একটি ন্যায়তান্ত্রিক ও অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক সমাজ গঠনে আমাদের এই অগ্রযাত্রা নিরন্তর অব্যাহত থাকবে।

বিনামূল্যে আইন সেবা: সাফল্যের নবদিগন্ত

একনজরে সাফল্য (প্রতিটা থেকে এক পর্যন্ত)	আইন সেবায় নতুন অধ্যায় (সংশোধিত আইন ২০২৬)
সহায়তা দেওয়া মামলা: ৪,৬২,৬৪৩টি	আইনি সহায়তা নিষ্পত্তি করা মামলা: ২,৩৩,৬৫৫টি
আইনি পরামর্শ সেবা: ৫,৬৩,৫৮২ জন	হেল্পলাইন তথ্যসেবা: ২,০১,৫৭৭ জন
আইনি সহায়তার উপকারভোগী: ১৪,৩৭,৭৩৬ জন	কারাবন্দী সুবিধাভোগী: ১,৩৭,৯৩৭ জন
নারী- ৬,৫৭,৩৩৪ জন	পুরুষ- ৭,০৪,৮৬৩ জন
শিশু- ৭৫,৪৩৩ জন	তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ- ৭৪ জন
অধিদপ্তর প্রতিষ্ঠা	৭টি বিরোধের ক্ষেত্রে মধ্যস্থতার উদ্যোগ
পারিবারিক বিরোধ, বাড়িভাড়া, বন্টন মামলা, অধিগ্রহণ ও প্রজাস্বত্ব, অকৃষি প্রজাস্বত্ব, পিতা-মাতার ভরণপোষণ ও মৌতুক নিয়ন্ত্রণ	
অধিসার নিয়োগ	বিশেষ মধ্যস্থতাকারী নিয়োগ
জুডিসিয়াল সার্ভিস থেকে অধিসার নিয়োগ	অনন্যপ্রাপ্ত জেলা জজ ও অতিরিক্ত আইনজীবী
মুদ্রিত কাগজ	মধ্যস্থতা চুক্তি আদালতের সার্বভৌম মতো কার্যকর
পরিষিদ্ধি	জুলাইযোদ্ধা, গুমের শিকার ও প্রবাসীরা পাবনে সহায়তা
ডিক্রি প্রক্রিয়া	যুক্ত হয়েছে অনলাইন মধ্যস্থতা
হেল্পলাইন	১৬৬৬৯৯

আপন ঠিকানায় ফিরলেন বিদেশিনী

লিগ্যাল এইডের আশ্রয়

মো. জুলহাস উদ্দিন

প্রেমের টানে সিলেটের ফেঞ্চুগুজে ছুটে এসেছেন সারতিনাছ। সুদূর ইন্দোনেশিয়ার জাকার্তার বাসিন্দা তিনি। এর আগে ভাগ্যের অমেষণে তিনি গিয়েছিলেন কাতার। সেখানেই পরিচয় বাংলাদেশের সিলেটের ফেঞ্চুগুজ উপজেলার ফরিদপুরের স্থায়ী বাসিন্দা শিপন আহমেদের সঙ্গে। সেই পরিচয় রূপ নেয় প্রণয়। ভালোবাসার টানে নিজের দেশ ও পরিবার ছেড়ে গত বছর বাংলাদেশে চলে আসেন এই ইন্দোনেশীয় নারী। ২০২৫ সালের ১ জুলাই স্থায়ী রীতিতে (মৌখিকভাবে) শিপনের সঙ্গে তাঁর বিয়ে হয়। কিন্তু সূতের সেই সন্দের স্থায়ী হয়নি। আট মাস কাটতে না কাটতেই গত ১৭ ফেব্রুয়ারি শিপন বিত্তীয় বিয়ে করলে ভেঙে পড়ে সারতিনাছের সাজানো স্বপ্ন।

ভাষা না—জানা এক ভিনদেশি নারীর অসহায়ত্বের গল্পটি শুরু হয় সেখানে থেকেই। গত ১৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি কপড়া-বিবাদের একপর্যায়ে স্বামী যখন ছেড়ে বেড়িয়ে আসেন তিনি। বাসে করে চলে আসেন সিলেট শহরে। ভাষা বলতে পারেন কেবল ইন্দোনেশীয় আর আরবি। হাতের মুঠোফোনেই একেবারে সারা দিন বিভিন্ন দপ্তরে ঘুরে অবেশেই আদালত পুলিশের মাধ্যমে তিনি বিকল্প সড়কে পৌঁছান পৌছান সিলেট জেলা লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসে।

সারতিনাছের এই চরম অসহায়ত্ব দেখে জেলা লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসার তাঁকে তৎক্ষণিক মহিলা ও শিশু-কিশোরী হেল্পলাইনের নিরাপত্তা পরিদপ্তর (সেক ফো), বাগবাড়ী, সিলেটে আশ্রয়ের ব্যবস্থা করেন। শুরু হয় তাঁর আইনি ও কূটনৈতিক অধিকার আদায়ের লড়াই। আদালতের নির্দেশে এবং প্রবেশন অফিসার মো. তমির হোসেন চৌধুরীর মাধ্যমে ১৯ ফেব্রুয়ারি যোগাযোগ করা হয় ডাকার ইন্দোনেশীয় বিত্তীয় বিয়ে করলে ভেঙে পড়ে সারতিনাছের সাজানো স্বপ্ন।



সম্প্রতি সিলেট কার্যালয়ে বাংলাদেশ ও ইন্দোনেশিয়ার নাগরিকের মধ্যে সমঝোতা। ছবি: ডিবিএলএ

সঙ্গে কথা বলেন। ২০ ফেব্রুয়ারি শুক্রবার ছুটির দিন হওয়া সত্ত্বেও লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসের বিশেষ তৎপরতার দূতাবাসের দুজন প্রতিনিধিদের কাছে তাঁকে তৎপরতার দূতাবাসের মাধ্যমে বিদেশি নারীর আইনগত সহায়তা নিশ্চিত করা হয়।

শেষ পর্যন্ত লিগ্যাল এইডের মধ্যস্থতায় বিয়াট একটি মানবিক পরিণতি পায়। ২২ ফেব্রুয়ারি দূতাবাসের প্রতিনিধি ও শিপনের পরিবারের উপস্থিতিতে একটি আপসনামা স্বাক্ষরিত হয়। সেনমোহর ও যাতায়াত খরচ বাবদ ১ লাখ ৫০ হাজার টাকা সারতিনাছকে দেওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত হয়। পরে শিপনের আর্থিক অবস্থা বিবেচনা করে ২০ হাজার টাকা মতুফও করা হয়। যে ভালোবাসা তাঁকে নিঃশব্দ করে পথে বসিয়েছিল, লিগ্যাল এইডের হস্তক্ষেপে অন্তত সেই ভিনদেশি নারী ফিরে পেলেন তাঁর মানবিক মর্যাদা ও দেশে ফেরার পথে। এই মানবিক উদ্যোগের জন্য ইন্দোনেশীয় দূতাবাস কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ করেছে।

লেখক: জেলা লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসার (সিনিয়র সিভিল জজ), সিলেট।

মানসিক ভারসাম্যহীন কারাবন্দী ফিরে পেলেন স্বজন

মুসরাত জাহান জিনিয়া

উত্তম কুমার (৪০) মানসিকভাবে কিছুটা অসুস্থ। মাকেমথোই ঘর ছেড়ে নিরুদ্দেশ হয়ে যাওয়া ছিল তাঁর রোগ। পরিবার শিকল দিয়ে বেঁধেও তাঁকে আটকে রাখতে পারত না। তখনই এক ভোরে ঘর ছেড়ে বের হয়ে পথ ভুলে সীমান্ত পেরিয়ে চুপে চুপে ভারতের। সেখান থেকেই শুরু হয় তাঁর স্বজনরা দীর্ঘ এক অধ্যায়। ভারতীয় সীমান্তরক্ষী বাহিনীর হাতে মার খেয়ে বর্ডার গার্ড বাংলাদেশে (বিজিবি) হয়ে যখন পুলিশের কাছে পৌঁছান, তখন তিনি নিজের নাম-ঠিকানাও ঠিকমতো বলতে পারছিলেন না।

পুলিশের কাছে সেওয়া অসংলগ্ন তথ্যের ভিত্তিতে তাঁর বিরুদ্ধে ১৯৭৩ সালের পাসপোর্ট আইনভঙ্গের অভিযোগে তাঁকে কারাগারে পাঠানো হয়। নবিতের তাঁর ঠিকানা লেখা হয় ভারতের। কিন্তু মাস তিনেক পর আদালতে এসে তিনি হঠাৎ নিজেকে বাংলাদেশি নাগরিক বলে দাবি করেন। তাঁর কোনো আইনজীবী ছিল না, ছিল না পরিচয় প্রমাণের উপায়। আদালত বিষয়টি আমলে নিয়ে জেলা লিগ্যাল এইড অফিস, কুমিল্লাকে আইনি সহায়তার নির্দেশ দেন।

লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসের পালে লিগ্যাল এইডের আর্থিক ও মানসিক ভারসাম্যহীন কারাবন্দী ফিরে পেলেন স্বজন।

২০২৫ সালের ২২ ডিসেম্বর উত্তমের পরিবারের জন্য ছিল এক উৎসবের দিন। লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসের স্টেটায় উত্তমের স্বজনদের কারাগারে পৌঁছান। সীমিতদিনের 'নির্দেশ' সন্তোকে ফিরে পেয়ে আবেগে আশুত হয়ে পড়েন মা। বর্তমানে উত্তম তাঁর পরিবারের সঙ্গে নিজ বাড়িতে রয়েছেন। শুধু একটি আইনি সংস্থা নয়, লিগ্যাল এইড এভাবে হিম্মত মানুষের আশ্রয়ের ব্যবস্থা করেছে।

লেখক: জেলা লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসার (সিনিয়র সিভিল জজ), কুমিল্লা।

বিরোধ মিটিয়ে এক হলেন তিন ভাই

সাইমুন আল ইসলাম

নেত্রকোণায় একই খালয় ভাত খেয়ে বড় হওয়া তিন ভাই—মো. আমিনুল ইসলাম, মো. মজদুল আমিন ও মো. আবদুল করিম। কিন্তু বাবার রেখে যাওয়া ২৪ শতাব্দে জমি যেন তাঁদের মাকুষের মধ্যে তুলে বিয়েছিল চীনের মহাভারত। পৈতৃক ভিটার সীমানা নিয়ে বিরোধ এমন পর্যায় পৌঁছেছিল যে সম্পর্কের তিক্ততা গড়ায় আদালত পর্যন্ত। বড় ভাই আমিনুল ইসলাম নিজের দুই ভাই ও ভাতিকা মো. ইলিয়াস হোসেন জয়ের বিরুদ্ধে 'জমি অপরাধ' অভিযোগে মামলা করে। ২০২৩-এ মামলা করেন।

মামলাটি গত বছরের ২০ জুলাই আদালতের নির্দেশে বিকল্প বিরোধ নিষ্পত্তির জন্য নেত্রকোণা জেলা লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসে আসেন। শুরুতেই দুই পক্ষ ছিল অমত। সাপেক্ষে সম্পর্ক তৈরি হওয়া এই তিন ভাইকে এক টেবিলে বসানো ছিল এক বিশাল চ্যালেঞ্জ। তবু বাবার ঠিকার মেনে করিয়ে দেওয়া হয়— জমির চেয়ে রক্তের সম্পর্কের মূল্য অনেক বেশি।

হয়, বিশেষজ্ঞ কমিশনারের মাধ্যমে জমি মেপে ঘরবাড়ি যে অবস্থায় আছে, সে অনুযায়ী ন্যায্য বন্টন হবে। মাকুষের আশ্রয় ও কিছু ভুল-বোঝাবুঝি তৈরি হলেও দুই যাদু লিগ্যাল এইড কর্তৃপক্ষ। পক্ষপাতি পরিষদে আসেন এবং স্থায়ী পরিষদমাণ্ডের উপস্থিতিতে গত ৯ মার্চ সেরেজমিনে জমি পরিমাপ করে সীমানা চিহ্নিত করা হয়।

গত ৩০ মার্চ ২০২৬ লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসে এসে তিন ভাই যখন হাটুসে আপসনামায় সই করেন। দীর্ঘদিনের বৈরিতা তখন গুলায় মিশে যায়। আদালতের কাঠগড়ায় দাঁড়িয়ে নয়, বরং লিগ্যাল এইডের মধ্যস্থতায় কয়েক সপ্তকে পারিবারিক বিরোধের অঙ্গন ঘটে। এটি কেবল একটি মামলা নিষ্পত্তি নয়, এটি ভেঙে যাওয়া একটি পরিবারকে জোড়া দেওয়ার গল্প।

সব মিটিয়ে এই ঘটনাগুলো প্রমাণ করে, লিগ্যাল এইড কেবল আইনি সহায়তা নয়, বরং সাধারণ মানুষের দোরগোড়ায় ন্যায়বিচার ও মানবিক মর্যাদা পৌঁছে দেওয়ার এক বাস্তব।

লেখক: জেলা লিগ্যাল এইড অফিসার (সিনিয়র সিভিল জজ), নেত্রকোণা।