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FARMING IN HAORS

Harvest or not, heartbreak almost certain

Farmers watch Boro rot, fields submerge, prices plummet

STAR REPORT

Torrential rainfall, rising pre-monsoon water levels, lightning strikes during thunderstorms, and submerged fields have left farmers in the haors struggling to save the Boro paddy, the lifeline for millions in the region.

"Half of my paddy is submerged in the field. And the paddy I managed to harvest is rotting at home due to a lack of sunlight," said Abdur Rahim of Nakdora village in Netrokona's Kalmakanda upazila.

"Now it feels like 'harvest or not?'. Both are equally distressing," he added.

➔ Labourers refuse to work due to flooding, fear of lightning strikes

➔ PM says affected farmers will receive assistance for 3 months

Jhontu Chandra Das, a farmer from Bhandabil Haor in Sunamganj's Shalla upazila, said even farm workers are no longer interested in Nayanbhaga, a traditional system where farmers offer half the paddy to anyone who harvests it during a disaster.

The situation has worsened as excessive rainfall continues. Five rivers have crossed the pre-monsoon danger level, flooding vast swathes of low-lying areas and submerging thousands of hectares of farmland.

Low-lying crop fields in all seven haor districts -- Sunamganj, Netrokona, Moulvibazar, Kishoreganj, Habiganj, Brahmanbaria, and Sylhet -- have been affected.

Contacted about government efforts to support haor farmers, Md Moniruzzaman, director of procurement at the Directorate General of Food, said a high-level meeting was held yesterday. Food Secretary Abu Taher Md Masud Rana chaired the meeting, attended by deputy commissioners of the haor districts and officials from the Directorate General of Food.

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Ripe and semi-ripe paddy in Medar Beel, a major haor wetland in Netrokona, lie completely submerged yesterday after four days of continuous rains and runoff from Meghalaya hills triggered widespread waterlogging across the district, leaving farmers in deep uncertainty.

PHOTO: ALI AZGAR PONIR

Govt pitches charter panel, opposition seeks time

Jamaat cites 'conceptual differences'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday proposed forming a special parliamentary committee to amend the constitution in line with the July charter.

The opposition, however, said they need time to decide on joining the committee as they seek reform of the constitution.

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman said he and Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed earlier proposed forming a special committee to bring amendments to the constitution.

"We have prepared a list of 12 members,

which includes BNP, Gono Adhikar Parishad, Ganosamhati Andolan, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), and independent MPs."

Highlighting the proportion of opposition representation in the parliament, the law minister said, "In percentage terms, the opposition holds 26 percent. From their side, we are asking for five names. We have prepared a list of 12 -- seven from BNP and five from other parties. If the opposition provides five more names, we want to present the matter tomorrow [Thursday] and move forward with forming the special committee."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

74% measles patients did not get shots

Outbreak may ease by May-end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As much as 74 percent of the confirmed measles patients did not receive either of the two doses of the vaccine, while 14 percent received only one dose, government data show.

Only 12 percent of the patients were fully vaccinated, exposing serious gaps in vaccination coverage, according to data available until April 19.

Among suspected measles patients, 59 percent did not receive either dose of the vaccine, while 19 percent received only one dose.

Around 22 percent received both doses, which are administered to children at nine months and 15 months.

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Four-month-old Rafsan Gazi, who was brought to the capital's Infectious Diseases Hospital from Patuakhali after contracting measles, is undergoing treatment. Due to the increasing number of patients and a shortage of beds, he was given space on the floor of the hospital.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

4 arrested over 'links with TTP'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police has arrested four people for their alleged links with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a militant outfit based in Pakistan.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed them on a four-day remand.

The arrestees are Imran Chowdhury, 29, his brother Mostakim Chowdhury, 25, Ripon Hossain Sheikh, 28, and Abu Bakar, 25.

According to DB sources, its Ramna division held them and recovered firearms, bullets, explosives, and a drone during drives conducted in various parts of Dhaka.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, DB Chief and Additional Commissioner of Police Shafiqul Islam said the arrestees are members of an extremist outfit named "ARSA", which follows the TTP's ideology.

Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) is widely known as a Rohingya militant organisation.

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Star wins WAN-IFRA gold, silver awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star has won two prestigious honours -- a gold and a silver -- at the South Asian Digital Media Awards 2026, presented by WAN-IFRA (the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers), cementing its position among the region's most forward-thinking news organisations.

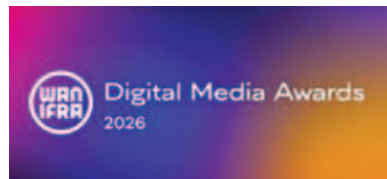
The gold went to the newspaper's investigative report, "Anatomy of BGB Shootings in Rampura", which was recognised in the "Best Use of Video" category for its powerful visual storytelling.

The silver, meanwhile, was awarded to Keeron, an EdTech and upskilling platform of The Daily Star, in the "Most Innovative Digital Product" category.

WAN-IFRA announced the results yesterday, marking a landmark moment for Bangladeshi digital journalism on the regional stage.

WAN-IFRA is the global organisation of the world's press, representing more than 3,000 media companies and 18,000 publications in over 120 countries. Its Digital Media Awards recognise publishers that lead in digital transformation and innovation,

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MY DHAKA

Dhaka's rhythm of heat and rain

RBR

A tree toppled during the recent nor'wester is being cleared away from Ramna Park.***

It was as if the heavens took offence at my last piece on Dhaka's heatwave shaming. They replied with thundering, sharp cracks like the lash of a whip, ripping the sky with electrifying jolts of lightning. Then came the rains – pouring until our scorched moods softened and we had our fill.

Kalboishakhi, our nor'wester, is an intense, fleeting storm that strikes almost without warning. It lashes the horizon as though the sky itself has fractured. This is the unpredictable rhythm of our summer month, Boishakh.

This rain relief should not be confused with the monsoon rains. Those are the incessant downpours with occasional breaks. What we witnessed was the sudden darkening of the northwest sky, heavy black clouds, and violent, localised thunderstorms with high winds and often hail. These are the pre-monsoon rehearsals, striking between March and May. And there is a certain indescribable beauty to both.

With fierce Kalboishakhi storms and hail, you will invariably hear of green mangoes taking a hit. You'll see young and old alike hurrying to collect that windfall – in every sense of the word.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Alongside this fun comes the joy of getting drenched to the core. Whenever I sense an overcast sky inviting heavy clouds, I rush to the roof as though my plants need tending. I love getting wet in the rain, and to this day I still indulge in a "brishhti te bheja" – a deliberate soaking in the downpour.

That reckless streak in me revels in the electric charge of the air. Kalboishakhi never begins as a drizzle; it falls all at once, a torrential weight, warm yet striking like cold stones against my skin. In the roar of the storm, if you dare to step outside, its splendour

is both terrifying and magnificent – you are stripped down to nothing but nerves and adrenaline.

When the chaos of the downpour subsided, I paused to appreciate the sunset over Dhaka. My mood was perfectly tuned to the storm's frequency.

I was returning from an errand, crossing Uttara's third phase, when I was met by that rare golden light of dusk – the kind that appears only after a heavy rain. Shower, when the setting sun sheepishly offers its last perfect glow. That golden light after a stormy sunset

is often called the photographer's hour. Though I spent much of my career conducting photoshoots, I was a poor photographer – I could never truly capture the divinity of that "godhuli logon", that twilight hour.

The evening's golden light, a rainbow arched across the sky, a cool breeze, and rain-drenched greenery bursting with joy – together they made last evening a gift I will not forget, but only until the next heatwave.

I stopped by the famous Uttara farmer's market and treated myself to a steaming cup of tea, a naga shingara, and onion fritters – not forgetting to buy a bag full of fresh greens. The array of shak, the leafy greens or edible leaves on the outskirts of the metro, deserves its own story.

For now, let us savour these short-overcast hours and sudden storms. Dhaka is forecast to see a wet week ahead, with heavy rain dominating most days through early May. Expect frequent thunderstorms, cooler temperatures compared to the recent heat, and high humidity.

So, keep your umbrella handy, enjoy the cooler evenings after the storms, but never forget the electrolyte drink. And let us welcome the storms as fleeting gifts – moments when Dhaka's heat loosens its grip, and the city glows in that golden twilight, reminding us that even the fiercest rains leave behind a gentler light.

74% measles patients

FROM PAGE 1
Officials of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Unicef Bangladesh and the World Health Organisation Bangladesh shared the information during a press conference at the DGHS yesterday.

DGHS arranged the press conference at its headquarters in the capital's Mohakhali to disseminate the latest information about the ongoing vaccination campaign amid the measles outbreak.

Earlier, before the authorities lowered the vaccination age to six months only for the ongoing campaigns on March 30, the DGHS said 34 percent of the patients who contracted measles were below nine months old, or the age required to get the first shot.

So far, 1.09 crore children have received the vaccine during the campaign, which is 61 percent of the total targeted children, said Pravat Chandra Biswas, director general of DGHS.

"This is a very positive development. We hope that we will come down from the peak of the outbreak very soon," he said.

Vaccination in 30 high-burden upazilas across 18 districts began on April 5, said Chiranjit Das, national professional officer (immunisation) at WHO Bangladesh.

Case reporting from these upazilas has declined sharply since April 17 and the number of cases across the country is expected to fall as the nationwide vaccination campaign continues, he said.

Asked when nationwide cases would decline, Riad Mahmud, health manager (immunisation) at UNICEF Bangladesh, said more than one crore children out of the targeted 1.8 crore have already been vaccinated, and no new infections have been reported from the 30 upazilas that have already come under vaccination.

"This gives us hope." In areas where vaccination is ongoing, it takes three to four weeks to see a visible impact.

"So, we expect the number of cases to decline sharply by the end of May," he added. The vaccination campaign in four city corporations – Dhaka South, Dhaka North, Barishal and Mymensingh – started on April 20 and will continue until May 20.

The nationwide campaign also began on April 20; it will end in city areas on May 20 and in the rest of the country on May 10.

Meanwhile, DGHS recorded one more suspected measles death in the 24 hours to 8:00am yesterday, taking the total number of suspected deaths to 227, Biswas said.

No confirmed death was reported during the time, meaning the confirmed deaths remained unchanged at 47.

In the last 24 hours, a total of 88 confirmed measles cases were recorded, taking the total confirmed cases to 4,944.

Some 1,318 suspected cases were recorded during the same time, taking the total suspected cases to 35,980.

Harvest or not, heartbreak almost certain

FROM PAGE 1
Moniruzzaman said farmers will be allowed to use private rice mills and government warehouses to dry their paddy with departmental support, after which the Directorate General of Food will procure the dried paddy directly. Millers are also being encouraged to quickly purchase paddy and process it into rice so the government can maximise procurement while sustaining mill operations.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman told parliament yesterday that the government will identify and assist haor farmers affected by heavy downpours over the next three months.

After Sunamganj-5 MP Kalim Uddin Ahmed raised the issue, Tarique said, "Based on weather reports three days ago, I instructed local administrations in three haor districts, including Sunamganj, to take preparations according to forecasts and decide what measures could be taken in case of rainfall."

The prime minister described the situation facing haor farmers as "very painful". "Even before this sitting began this morning, I spoke with the disaster management minister and instructed him that three haor districts along with some areas of Mymensingh have faced various problems due to heavy rainfall."

RIVERS SWELLING
As of yesterday afternoon, the Someshwari, Bhugai-Kangsha, and Mogra rivers in Netrokona, Manu in

Moulvibazar, and Sutang in Habiganj were flowing above the danger mark, according to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) of the Bangladesh Water Development Board.

The FFWC also forecast that the Surma and Kushiya rivers may cross the danger level in the next three days, flooding vast areas in Sunamganj, Sylhet, and Habiganj. Heavy rainfall is likely to worsen the situation in Netrokona.

With three rivers swelling in Netrokona, almost all haors – including Sonadubi, Goradoba, Angajura, Holavanga, and Boichajuri – have been inundated.

Kishoreganj's Nikli recorded the country's highest rainfall of 160mm in 24 hours till yesterday morning, while Habiganj saw 125mm, according to the FFWC and Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

Rainfall upstream in India is decreasing, with 74mm recorded in Tripura's Agartala and 68mm in Mawkrywat, Meghalaya, according to the India Meteorological Department.

Farmers in the haor region cultivated paddy on 4,55,000 hectares this Boro season, according to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

With freshly submerged croplands, 5,715 hectares are now flooded, with around half the district's paddy on the verge of damage, the DAE estimates.

Md Abu Zafur Al Munsur, deputy director for monitoring at the DAE

field service wing, said latest estimates suggest rice crops on 27,000-28,000 hectares are at risk. "The crops may not be fully damaged if the water recedes within 15 days," he added.

Asked about crop damage this season, Md Obaidur Rahman Mondol, director of the DAE field service wing, said it would take two to three days after the rain stops to assess the extent of losses.

Md Jamal Uddin, additional director for monitoring and implementation at the DAE field service wing, said 71 drier machines were being mobilised to Sunamganj as support.

According to the Bureau of Statistics, haor areas contribute nearly 20 percent of the country's total Boro production.

DEBTS, DEATHS AND FALLING PRICES

Azizul Haque, a farmer from Hakaluki Haor in Moulvibazar's Kulaura, said, "The harvested paddy is rotting on the floors as we cannot thresh or dry it. All we see is our hard-earned crop decaying. I am in huge debt for this harvest, and my family will suffer for the rest of the year."

In Nikli's Singpur area of Kishoreganj, Abdul Qadir hired labourers at Tk 1,200 per day after seeing one acre of land all-ot on Tuesday evening. But by yesterday morning, his paddy was submerged, labourers refused to work in water, and a thunderstorm alert loomed overhead.

Farmer Nur Hossain

of Majlispur in Nikli, Kishoreganj, was seen walking with an umbrella beside one of the largest threshing floors. "In favourable weather, hundreds of farmers and children would be busy threshing paddy here, but now the floors are empty. It is not just the fear of rain, but also of lightning," he said.

Alongside torrential rainfall, Kalboishakhi thunderstorms have struck different parts of the country, with lightning emerging as the deadliest hazard for farmers.

Media reports say 38 people have been killed by lightning strikes across the country this month alone, more than half of them farmers working in paddy fields.

Amid this crisis, many farmers are being forced to sell their harvested paddy at cheaper rates.

Makhon Mia of Siloni village in Inna, Kishoreganj, said prices are the lowest in years. He sold paddy at Tk 650-800 per maund (37.32kg) depending on quality, though production costs reached Tk 1,200 per maund due to higher fuel and fertiliser prices.

"While prices of everything else are rising, the value of farmers' produce is declining," he said.

[Our correspondents Sukanta Halder, Dwaha Chowdhury, Mintu Deshwara, Jaydul Islam, Tafsilul Aziz and Masuk Hridoy contributed to the report]

Most exit polls give BJP edge in West Bengal

FROM PAGE 12
year rule. Two surveys said TMC is expected to retain power. Meanwhile, one survey predicted a neck-and-neck fight between the parties.

Almost all the surveys showed very few seats for the Indian National Congress, the CPI (M) and the Indian Secular Front.

Buoyed by the survey results, the BJP, which never ruled the state, expressed confidence in forming government with a clear majority, while the TMC rejected the exit poll predictions and said it hopes to retain power with the people's mandate.

According to Matrize, a survey agency, the BJP is likely to win 146 to 161 seats, while the TMC is projected to secure 125 to 140. Other parties are expected to win 6 to 10 seats.

According to P Marq, the BJP is likely to win 150 to 175 seats, the TMC 118 to 138, and others 2 to 6 seats.

Chanakya Strategies has predicted 150 to 160 seats for the BJP, with the TMC at 130 to 140 and other parties at 2 to 6 seats.

Praja Poll gave the BJP the highest tally among the

exit polls released yesterday, projecting 178 to 208 seats, followed by the TMC with 85 to 110 seats, and others with 0 to 5 seats.

The exit poll conducted by Poll Diary projected 142 to 171 seats for the BJP, while the TMC is expected to win 99 to 127 seats. Other parties are projected to secure five to nine Assembly seats.

On the other end of the spectrum is Janmat Polls, whose data predict that the Trinamool Congress will get a thumping majority for the third straight time. The agency has predicted between 195 and 205 seats for the Mamata Banerjee-led party and 80-90 for the BJP, which is very close to the figures both parties had in the 2021 elections.

Peoples Pulse also predicted the BJP to win 95 to 110 seats and giving the TMC an outright majority of 177 to 187 seats, with other parties winning 1 to 4 seats.

Meanwhile, the JVC Exit Poll predicted a neck-and-neck battle between the duo, giving the BJP 138-159 seats and the TMC 131-152 seats.

Votes will be counted on May 4, and results will be declared the same day.

The Election Commission's contentious Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has further complicated predictions. While the TMC used the exercise – which led to the deletion of 91 lakh voters – to attack the BJP, its impact on the ground remains unclear.

Exit polls in India have a mixed record and can be inaccurate.

In 2021, several exit polls not only failed to capture the TMC's dominant showing of 215 seats in the 294-member assembly, but some also gave the BJP an outright majority. The BJP won 77 seats, well short of the 148-seat majority mark.

In every assembly polls since the TMC first came to power in 2011, the party has increased its seat tally, from 184 in 2011 to 215 in 2021. In the 2021 election, the BJP won 77 seats.

After the polling ended, Suvendu Adhikari, leader of the opposition and BJP candidate from Nandigram and Bhabanipur, expressed confidence that the party would form government with around 180 seats.

Shashi Panja, TMC leader and a former Mamata-led

cabinet member, rejected the exit poll projections.

"We've seen exit polls like this before. But when the party emerged victorious, did anyone apologise? This keeps happening," she said.

"The answer to all this will be known on May 4," she added.

TMC spokesperson Arup Chakraborty also expressed confidence that the party would win the polls.

Apart from West Bengal, assembly elections were held in three states – Assam, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu – as well as the Union Territory of Puducherry. Results will be announced on May 4.

Exit polls in these regions projected a BJP return in Assam and Puducherry. In Tamil Nadu, the DMK led alliance, headed by former chief minister MK Stalin, is predicted to return to power.

In Kerala, the Congress-led United Democratic Front is tipped to return to power after 10 years, defeating the Left Democratic Front led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Most surveys projected only a few seats for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in the state.

Govt pitches charter panel, opposition seeks time

FROM PAGE 1
Following the minister's proposal, Deputy Speaker Kayser Kamal addressed the opposition leader, "The government side has prepared a list of 12 members. From your opposition side, five names are requested. Thus, the special committee will have 17 members. Kindly provide your five names so the formation process can proceed."

Opposition Leader and Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman responded that the chief whip spoke to him, conveying greetings from Leader of the House and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

"I told him we have matters to discuss among ourselves. There are conceptual differences. We cannot give an opinion right now. We will inform later. It may not be possible today [Wednesday]."

"We want reform [of the constitution], but here it is amendment. We had differences before, and that remain. We have received and listened to the proposal, but

we will respond later. At this moment, we are not making any statement."

Thinking the opposition leader, the law minister said, "We have no objection. We will wait. We will move forward with constitutional amendments in light of the July charter. Waiting until the next session is not a problem."

Constitutional reforms or amendments remain a flashpoint between the opposition and the ruling party.

Calling the July Charter Implementation Order "a document of endless deceit and national betrayal", the treasury bench on March 31 recommended forming an all-party special parliamentary body to amend the constitution.

In response, Opposition Leader Shafiqur proposed a separate special parliamentary committee to convene the Constitution Reform Council. "But our appeal is that the committee should have an equal number of members from both sides,

so that we can present our views properly."

The lawmakers were participating in a discussion on an adjournment motion brought by the opposition leader, calling for convening the Constitution Reform Council in accordance with the July Charter Implementation Order.

Under the order, members of the 13th Parliament were expected to perform a dual role – serving as lawmakers and as members of a Constitution Reform Council – to deal with 48 constitutional provisions outlined in the July charter within 180 working days.

For this purpose, MPs were required to take two separate oaths: one as members of parliament and another as members of the council.

However, the council was not convened.

According to the order, the first session of the council should be convened in the same manner as the first session of parliament – within 30 calendar days of the election results being

declared.

However, this has not yet been done.

MPs from the BNP-led alliance refused to take oath as members of the Constitution Reform Council. Meanwhile, 77 MPs from the Jamaat-led II party alliance took both oaths.

The July National Charter was drafted by the National Commission through discussions with political parties. Of its proposals, 48 relate to the constitution. On several of the fundamental reform proposals, BNP holds differing views and issued notes of dissent. The party supports constitutional amendment according to its own position.

On the other hand, Jamaat, NCP, and other opposition parties favour implementing all the proposals of the July charter through a Constitutional Reform Council.

A referendum was held to implement the 48 constitution-related proposals and "yes" won.

Control over cattle market

FROM PAGE 1
Dagari Rony, in connection with the rivalry.

According to the complaint, Titon had recently been in dispute with them over the lease of the Bosila cattle market. Investigators and family sources said he was called to the New Market area on Tuesday for a meeting to settle the matter, and was shot dead while returning.

No arrests had been made till filing of this report, but several teams from different law enforcement agencies were working to identify and arrest those involved.

Titon's elder brother, Khondaker Saeed Akhtar Ripon, filed the case against eight to nine unidentified assailants with New Market Police Station yesterday morning, Mohammad Ayub, officer in charge of the police station, told The Daily Star.

In the complaint, Ripon said his brother was released on bail on August 13, 2024, after spending a long time in jail, and had wanted to rebuild his life through honest work.

A few days ago, Titon told Ripon that he had secured a lease schedule and hoped to earn a living through business. On April 26, he said he was in dispute with Helal, Badal, Shahjahan, and Rony over the Bosila cattle market lease.

The next day, he said he had been called for a meeting to resolve the matter and work together.

Later on Tuesday night, family members learned that Titon had been gunned down

in the New Market area.

According to police, Titon entered the underworld in the early 1990s, first as a local gang member before expanding his network. He was also involved in arms trading and faced several murder cases, including the high-profile killing of businessman Babar Elahi.

His name appeared second on the government's list of 23 top criminals in 2001. Law enforcers arrested him in the Dhaka Cantonment area in 2004. A decade later, he was sentenced to death in the Babar Elahi murder case.

Police officials said Titon, along with several other alleged top criminals listed by police, was released from jail after the fall of the Awami League government during the 2024 uprising. They said he did not appear in court afterward and was in "hiding".

Shafiqul Islam, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said at a press briefing yesterday that investigators had identified some suspects in connection with the incident.

"As you know, Titon himself was a listed top criminal. Initially, we believe the murder was linked to a dispute over control of the area."

About the names mentioned in the complaint, including Pichchi Helal and Badal, he said police were acting on the complaint filed by the plaintiff.

"There was rivalry over dominance. As you know,

Eid-ul-Azha is approaching, and there was also conflict over the cattle market. We will identify those involved and take legal action."

Contacted by The Daily Star, Titon's brother Ripon, said Titon visited his family in Jashore twice after being released from jail and stayed in touch occasionally through messaging apps.

Titon is also the brother-in-law of top criminal Sanjidul Haque Emon.

Ripon added that claims of conflict between Titon and Emon were inaccurate and intended to divert the investigation.

According to the family, Titon bought the schedule for the Bosila cattle market in the name of one of his friends. Meanwhile, Pichchi Helal allegedly secured the schedule in the name of Badal.

They said the two sides held several rounds of talks, during which Helal reportedly proposed a negotiation.

Ripon said Titon was supposed to submit the schedule for the cattle market lease yesterday.

Shimul, who is acquainted with Titon, said he was not alone at the spot and was accompanied by several men.

The family initially suspected Pichchi Helal due to the cattle market dispute and earlier rivalry over local dominance. However, they also mentioned another possible motive, saying the killing may have been linked to old enmity stemming from the murder case of Tipu,

brother of former army chief General Aziz.

Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of Ramna Division, said no CCTV cameras were found at the crime scene, but police had collected footage from nearby areas.

He said the footage showed two people directly took part in the killing, while several members of the group may have been waiting nearby on four to five motorcycles to provide backup. Police were verifying issues such as previous enmity, local dominance, and lease disputes.

Dhaka's underworld has remained active since the release of several top criminals in August 2024, with multiple killings and attacks reported amid allegations of dominance battles, extortion, property grabbing, and other criminal activities.

In January 2025, two computer shop owners, including Wahedul Hasan Dipu, president of Elephant Road Computer Baboshayee Kallyan Samity and elder brother of Pichchi Helal, were attacked with sharp weapons in the capital's Elephant Road after refusing to pay extortion money.

Titon's brother-in-law, Sanjidul Haque Emon, was made one of the main accused in that case. Sources said the attack may have been linked to a power struggle between Emon and Pichchi Helal.

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DMP launches AI system to detect traffic violations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic rule violations in Dhaka – including signal jumping, entering closed left lanes, lane violations, wrong-side driving, and illegal parking – will now be automatically detected and reported using an artificial intelligence-based system, with fines sent to offenders by post.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday launched the AI-Based Road Transport Act Violation Detection System, along with eight other software systems, at its headquarters.

Inspector General of Police Md Ali Hossain Fakir inaugurated the systems in the presence of Acting DMP Commissioner Md Sarwar and other senior officials.

Initially, the AI-based traffic monitoring system has been deployed on the stretch from Hotel

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JS RESERVED SEAT 49 candidates to be elected unopposed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday confirmed that 49 candidates are set to be elected unopposed to reserved women's seats in the 13th National Parliament, with the EC set to publish the gazette today.

Of the candidates, 36 are from the BNP-led alliance, 12 from the I party alliance led by Jamaat-e-Islami, and one is an independent.

Md Moin Uddin Khan, returning officer for the reserved seats and EC joint secretary, announced the development at the EC headquarters in Agargaon, Dhaka.

He said under the Jatiya Sangsad (Reserved Women Seats) Election Act, 2004, the election schedule was announced on April 8.

The deadline for withdrawal of candidacy

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Ongoing rainfall raises risk of dengue surge

HELEMUL ALAM

With ongoing rainfall across the country, the risk of dengue transmission is expected to rise in the coming months if authorities fail to take necessary preventive measures, experts have warned.

Data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) show that at least four dengue patients have died and 2,449 others have been hospitalised so far this year, as of April 28.

According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), light to moderate rain or thundershowers, accompanied by temporary gusty or squally winds and lightning, are likely to occur in many areas of Mymensingh, Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram and Sylhet divisions.

A few places in Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions may also experience rainfall, while moderately heavy to very heavy downpours are expected at isolated locations across Mymensingh, Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram and Sylhet divisions. This weather pattern is likely to continue until May 3, the BMD added.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



DHAKA, CTG REEL UNDER HEAVY RAINS



Office-goers, students and residents make their way through flooded streets in Dhaka and Chattogram yesterday, as heavy rain triggered widespread waterlogging, disrupting commutes and daily life across the two cities.

PHOTO:
RAJIB RAHMAN,
MEHEDI HASAN

Torrential rain submerges port city

Knee- to waist-deep water disrupts life; PM apologises to residents

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

Torrential rain, triggered by a steep pressure gradient over the North Bay, submerged low-lying areas of Chattogram for the second consecutive day yesterday, causing immense suffering to residents.

Meanwhile, an elderly woman was killed, and three others were injured when a retaining wall collapsed due to the heavy rainfall in the Shikabaha area of Karnaphuli upazila in the afternoon.

Amid the situation, during his speech in parliament yesterday, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman apologised to port city residents for the hardship caused by severe waterlogging and assured that efforts are underway to resolve the crisis.

Responding to a point of order raised by Chattogram-10 lawmaker Sayeed Al Noman, he said, "There is severe waterlogging. Naturally, it will take some time to address the issue. For this suffering, I sincerely apologise to all citizens living in Chattogram city. We are trying to resolve

this problem as quickly as possible."

The Chattogram Met Office recorded 59.6 mm of rainfall in the 24 hours until 12:00pm yesterday. Assistant Met Officer Bashir Ahmed attributed the downpour to thunderclouds over the Bay of Bengal.

Due to squally weather and pressure differences in the North Bay, maritime ports in Chattogram were advised to hoist local cautionary signal number 3. Fishing boats and trawlers were asked to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice.

Vast areas, including Prabartak Intersection, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat,

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Early morning downpour leaves parts of capital waterlogged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Intermittent rain in Dhaka and other parts of the country disrupted school and office commutes yesterday, with many areas going under ankle-to-knee-deep water during heavy morning downpours.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) yesterday forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall across all divisions over the next 96 hours, warning of temporary waterlogging in low-lying areas.

It also cautioned that landslides could occur in the hilly regions of Chattogram division due to sustained rainfall.

Although total rainfall in Dhaka since Tuesday night was not exceptionally high, the morning saw

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



FROM PRESS GALLERY



Family Cards won't strain budget: PM

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday said the government will distribute Family Cards to four crore families in phases, prioritising vulnerable households, arguing that the programme will not place significant pressure on the national budget.

"No government in the world can do this all at once. Data must be collected from everyone," he said.

He added that the government would proceed step by step, aligning budgetary allocations with

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Table US trade deal in JS: Rumeen

STAR REPORT

Independent MP Rumeen Farhana yesterday demanded that the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Bangladesh and the US, signed just days before the February 12

national election, be brought before Parliament. She said objections had been raised at the time of signing, as the agreement allegedly contained clauses contrary to Bangladesh's interests.

"Yesterday, our commerce minister met the US ambassador, who spoke about the trade agreement," she said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Establish Qur'anic law: Jamaat MP

STAR REPORT

Jamaat-e-Islami MP Mujibur Rahman yesterday called for "burying man-made laws and establishing Quranic law" in Bangladesh.

The Rajshahi-1 MP said LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir had once said he did not believe in Sharia law, but before the national election, said that no law will be passed against Sharia.

"I thank him for repenting and returning. We want Allah's law. You [BNP] have said you will not oppose Allah's law. Therefore, let us bury man-made laws and establish the law of the Quran in Bangladesh," he said.

Mujibur urged the formation of an Islamic

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Growers are currently busy bagging the diverse varieties of mangoes in their orchards across Rajshahi. The owners say this method improves the appearance of the fruit, prevents pest infestation, and eliminates the need for pesticide sprays. The photo was taken at an orchard near Kakon Road in Godagari upazila recently.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Govt hikes prices of soybean oil

STAR REPORT

The government yesterday increased the retail price of bottled soybean oil by 2 percent, from Tk 195 per litre to Tk 199, in view of the rising international price of the highly import-dependent commodity, putting consumers under further inflationary pressure.

Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir yesterday announced the new price after a meeting with edible oil traders, importers, refiners, and wholesalers at the ministry office, according to a statement from the commerce ministry.

The price of five-litre containers of soybean oil has been fixed at Tk 975, and the price of loose soybean oil was fixed at Tk 180 per litre, up from Tk 176 per litre. This decision comes as bottled soybean oil has become scarce in many parts of the country due to reduced supply resulting from a plunge in imports.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMES TRIBUNAL-2 Defence says no evidence links Inu to Kushtia killings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The defence of former minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-2 that prosecutors have failed to establish evidence linking him to the killing of six people in Kushtia.

Defence counsel Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury argued that Inu neither ordered the killings nor was present in Kushtia at the time, citing prosecution witnesses.

He also said Inu was not a member of parliament during the July uprising.

Inu, president of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, is the sole accused in a crimes against humanity case filed over the Kushtia killings linked to the July unrest.

"Only one prosecution witness claimed the killings took place on Inu's order, but could not specify when or how such an order

was given," the defence told the tribunal.

The defence began its arguments on April 2, which are ongoing. The tribunal adjourned proceedings until May 4 after granting a defence plea for more time.

In a separate development, a forensic expert testified that an audio clip of a purported conversation between former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Fazle Noor Taposh matched voice samples from authenticated sources.

According to the clip presented in court, a voice identified as Hasina's is heard giving instructions to use lethal weapons, with a response attributed to Taposh. The expert also told the tribunal that a voice in another disputed recording matched that of former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman.

Lightning strikes kill 10 in 5 dists

STAR REPORT

Ten people and more than 50 cattle were killed in lightning strikes in Patuakhali, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Barguna and Shariatpur yesterday.

In Patuakhali, Saurav Majumdar, 22, of Charganga village under Borobaishdia union, was struck by lightning and killed while tending cattle in a field in Charganga village of Rangabali upazila around 9:00am.

He was taken to Galachipa Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead, said Rangabali Police Station OC Md Jasim Uddin. Family members said he had become a father a week ago.

Locals said Zahir Uddin, 28, was killed around 1:00pm while working in a maize field in Tarikata village of Kalapara upazila.

At around 2:00pm, Setara Begum, 55, of Purba Chakamaiya village, died after being struck by lightning while going to feed her cattle.

In another incident around the same time, Khalek Hawladar, 55, of Shantipur village, was killed while returning home with cattle from a field.

Besides, in Kalapara upazila, more than 50 cattle died in lightning strikes over two days of thunderstorms, leaving over 30 farmers with heavy losses. The deaths were reported in coastal areas, including around Payra Port. Farmers said such losses were unprecedented.

Many had been preparing to sell cattle ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, but the storms dashed their hopes. The Department of Livestock has so far confirmed 29 cattle deaths involving 23 farmers.

A Kalbaishakhi storm with heavy rain and lightning hit the area on Tuesday afternoon, with reports of cattle deaths emerging in the evening. Farmers estimated losses at around Tk 6 million.

Kalapara Upazila Livestock Officer Dr Maruf Billah said the toll may rise as reports continue to

early in the morning, while Sagar was hit at a road construction site. Their bodies were later recovered locally.

Islampur Police Station OC Md Abdul Kaiyum Gazi said necessary steps are being taken.

In Mymensingh, Md Saddam Hossain, 28, of Gabragati village in Tarakanda upazila, was killed while fishing in the Rangsa River at noon. Police said an unnatural death case has been filed.

In Barguna, fisherman Al-Amin of Patharghata and farmer Nurjaman of Amtali were killed in separate lightning strikes.

Al-Amin was fishing in the Baleswar River, while Nurjaman was fishing in a waterlogged field.

Patharghata Police Station OC Md Enamul Haque and Amtali UNO Muhammad Zafar Arif Chowdhury confirmed the deaths.

The UNO said the farmer's family has been given Tk 25,000 in assistance.

In Shariatpur, Rajib Sheikh, 32, was killed while fishing in the Kirtinasha River in Naria upazila.

Naria UNO Abdul Kaiyum said Rajib died on the spot, and the administration has provided Tk 25,000 as initial assistance to the victim's family, with further support assured.

(Our Patuakhali, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, and Shariatpur correspondents contributed to this report)



come in. Upazila Nirbahi Officer Kausar Hamid said a list of affected farmers is being prepared for assistance.

In Jamalpur, two people were killed in separate lightning strikes.

The victims were Shamim, 38, a fisherman from Islampur upazila, and Sagar, 13, a labourer from Dewanganj upazila.

Shamim was struck while fishing in a river

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রেজিস্টার্ড ও প্রধান কার্যালয় স্থানান্তর

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বীমা উন্নয়ন ও নিয়ন্ত্রণ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদনক্রমে ইউনাইটেড ইনসিওরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেড এর রেজিস্টার্ড ও প্রধান কার্যালয় নিম্নলিখিত নতুন ঠিকানায় ৩ মে ২০২৬ তারিখ হতে স্থানান্তর করা হয়েছে। এতদপ্রেক্ষিতে প্রধান কার্যালয়ের টেলিফোন নম্বরসমূহও পরিবর্তন হয়েছে। তবে গুয়ের সাইট ও ইমেইল এড্রেস ও হট লাইন নম্বর অপরিবর্তিত রয়েছে। বীমা দাবী বা যে কোন বিষয়ে কোম্পানীর প্রধান কার্যালয়ের নতুন ঠিকানা ও নতুন টেলিফোন নম্বরসমূহে যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।

রেজিস্টার্ড ও প্রধান কার্যালয় এর পূর্বের ঠিকানা
ক্যামেলিয়া হাউস (২য় তলা)
২২ কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ
ঢাকা-১০০০
ফোন-০২-৪১০৬২০০১-৩, ১৮, ১৯, ২১, ২২, ২৪-২৪

রেজিস্টার্ড ও প্রধান কার্যালয় এর নতুন ঠিকানা
গুলশান সেন্টার পয়েন্ট (১২তম তলা-দক্ষিণ ব্লক)
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Renata PLC.
Corporate Headquarters: Plot # 1, Milk Vita Road
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Website: www.renata-ltd.com

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION (PSI)

Q3 disclosure on the Un-audited Financial Statements as at and for the nine months period ended 31 March 2026

This is for the kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of the Renata PLC, in its 240th Board Meeting held on Wednesday, 29 April 2026 at 2:30 pm, approved the Third Quarter (Q3) Un-Audited Financial Statements for the quarter ended 31 March 2026 in compliance with the relevant directives of BSEC and DSE. The key financial information is presented below:

Particulars	Consolidated			Standalone		
	01 Jul 2025 to 31 Mar 2026	01 Jul 2024 to 31 Mar 2026	As at 31 Mar 2026	01 Jul 2025 to 31 Mar 2026	01 Jul 2024 to 31 Mar 2026	As at 31 Mar 2026
Net Profit After Taxes (BDT in Crore)	233.90	182.94		219.57	168.19	
Earnings Per Share (EPS) in Taka	20.39	15.95		19.14	14.66	
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS) in Taka	22.40	21.76		22.21	20.16	
Net Asset Value (NAV) Per Share in Taka			320.02			314.54
			305.49			301.11

Brief explanation on significant variances between the quarterly financial statements:

Consolidated earnings per share (EPS) representing the net profit for the period has increased by 27.9% year on year. This growth was underpinned predominantly by volume growth in revenue, effective procurement of production materials, factory overhead efficiency and lower finance costs through strategic capital restructuring initiatives of the Company.

The detailed Q3 (Unaudited) Financial Statements as of 31 March 2026 are available on the Company's website: www.renata-ltd.com/financialreport

29 April 2026

Md. Jubayer Alam
Company Secretary

49 candidates

FROM PAGE 3

expired at 4:00pm yesterday, but no candidate withdrew, he added.

"As the number of nominations matched the vacant seats, all 49 were declared elected unopposed," he said.

Moin Uddin Khan said the EC has already published the list of valid candidates, and once the gazette is

issued, it will be sent to the Parliament Secretariat to arrange oath-taking.

Regarding a High Court order on National Citizen Party Joint Convener Nusrat Tabassum's nomination, he said the court directed the EC to accept and dispose of her nomination within 72 hours. "We will comply with the court's instructions," he added.

Family Cards

FROM PAGE 3

each phase of expansion.

"Based on our calculations, there is little reason for the budget to come under significant pressure," he said.

Hasnat Abdullah raised concerns over the financial scale of the programme, estimating the scheme would require Tk 1.2 lakh crore annually, rising to Tk 1.34 lakh crore when including processing costs.

"Will this create inflationary pressure?" he also asked.

Responding, the PM dismissed concerns about

inflation, stating that the programme would not involve printing money.

He said increased spending through the scheme would circulate within the rural economy, boosting local industries and employment.

PRAYER TIMING

APRIL 30

	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

Date : 29 April 2026

NOTICE OF THE BOARD MEETING

This is to notify that Roma Trading Co., Ltd. (A Liaison Office in Dhaka, Bangladesh) is going to be closed w.e.f 1st May, 2026. If any of our stakeholders has any payables or receivables with us, please let us know within three(3) months from the date of the meeting.

29th Apr, 2026

Roma Trading Co., Ltd.
Chairman & CEO : Lee Eung-Soon

STATUTORY NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
Company Matter No. 236 of 2026

An Application under Section-81(2) and 85(3) read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.

AND

IN THE MATTER OF: **Mohammad Nurul Islam** Petitioner.

Islami Ummah Corporation Limited and others. Respondents.

Take Notice that an application under Section-81(2) and 85(3) read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the above named Petitioner for condonation of delay in holding the Annual General Meetings of **Islami Ummah Corporation Limited** for the years 1995 to 2025 and relieving the Directors and officers of the Company from the liability of fine or penalty. Upon hearing of the application on 22/04/2026 Hon'ble Company Judge Mr. Justice Sikder Mahmudur Razi has been pleased to admit the said application and directed to publish this notice within 2 (two) week from date and thereafter file affidavit-in-compliance within 30 (thirty) days. If any body is interested to oppose the said application he may appear before the Hon'ble High Court Division either in person or through an Advocate. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of necessary cost.

A.K.M. Badruddoza, Senior Advocate
Alamin Center (Floor M) 25/A, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000.
Phone: 01711541141

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology
141-142, Love Road, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208
Phone: 02 8870422 (Ext.-201) Web: www.aust.edu
Ref. No: AUST/EEE & MPE/OTM/Tender-14/2025-26

TENDER INVITATION

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST) is inviting sealed bids from bona fide/ reputed organizations/ distributors/ business partners/agents for:

1. Procurement of High-end Computer for EEE dept
2. Procurement of Lab equipment (Heat Exchanger Unit) for MPE dept

The bidders must submit earnest money @ 2.5% of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of "Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology" along with their offer. Interested bidders may collect schedule of tender from the Procurement Office of AUST on all working days till May 12, 2026 by 4:00pm. The sealed offer must be submitted on May 14, 2026 (Thursday) by 2.00pm at the Treasurer Office and the tenders will be opened at 02:30pm on the same day (May 14, 2026). Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the tenders.

The AUST authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason whatsoever and is not bound to award the work order to the lowest bidder.

INNOVATION:: CREATION:: LEADERSHIP



যমুনা অয়েল কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

(বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশন এর একটি অঙ্গ প্রতিষ্ঠান)

যমুনা ভবন, আশ্রাবাদ বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা,
চট্টগ্রাম-৪১০০।

ফোন : +৮৮ ০২ ৩৩৩২০১৮১
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e-mail : info@jamunaoil.gov.bd
web : www.jamunaoil.gov.bd

Sub: PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

This is for your kind information that the Board of Directors of the company in its 546th Board Meeting held on 29 April 2026 at 4:30-6:00pm has approved the Un-Audited Financial Statements for the period 01-01-2026 to 31-03-2026-3rd Quarter & 01-07-2025 to 31-03-2026 -- Nine Months. The key comparative financial highlights are as under:

Particulars	01-07-2025 to 31-03-2026	01-07-2024 to 31-03-2025	01-01-2026 to 31-03-2026	01-01-2025 to 31-03-2025
1. Net Profit After Income Tax	2,934,199,690.00	4,046,911,484.00	766,092,315.00	1,405,845,300.00
2. Earnings Per Share (EPS)	26.57	36.65	6.94	12.73
3. Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS)	(134.34)	88.26	-	-
	31.03.2026		30.06.2025	
4. Net Asset Value (NAV)	31,059,744,743.00		30,259,847,975.00	
5. Net Asset Value (NAV) per Share	281.28		274.03	

Note:

1. The details of the 3rd Quarter and Nine Months Financial Statements of the year 2025-2026 will be available in the Company's website address www.jamunaoil.gov.bd
2. Earning per Share: Earning per share has decreased as interest on bank deposits with Sammito Islami Bank PLC for the period of 2025-2026 has not been considered/accrued; because it is presumed that interest from bank deposits with Sammito Islami Bank PLC could not be realized.
3. Cash Flow: Net operating cash flow per share (NOCFPS) decreased comparing 30.06.2025 due to decrease of credit & accruals during the period.

By order of
the Board of Directors
Md. Masudul Islam
Company Secretary

GD-966



US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump pose with Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla as they arrive ahead of a State Dinner in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on Tuesday (US time). The trip, which comes as the US approaches the 250th anniversary of its independence from Britain, is meant to celebrate the strong relationship between the two countries.

PHOTO: AFP

CONDITION FOR PAYING UN DUES US wants curbs on China, other reforms

REUTERS

The United States has set specific conditions for the release of billions of dollars it owes to the United Nations, such as more cost-cutting and moves to counter China's influence at the world body, a development news agency reported yesterday.

The United States circulated two diplomatic notes calling for nine "quick-hit" reforms in order to release more funds, independent agency Devex, which covers global development, said in the report.

It said these included overhauling the UN pension system, ending long-distance business-class travel for some senior and all mid-level professionals and further cuts in the UN's senior ranks.

It also demanded a "10% reduction in

long-standing, ineffective peacekeeping missions."

And it asked to block China from channelling tens of millions of dollars each year to a discretionary fund housed in the office of the UN secretary general, a move aimed at countering Chinese influence at the United Nations.

"These reforms will be an indication that the UN is serious about reform," Devex quoted one of the documents as saying.

The United States withdrew from dozens of UN bodies this year and cut millions of dollars in funding last year.

In January, Guterres warned that the UN faced "imminent financial collapse" due to unpaid fees, mostly owed by the United States. In February, the UN said the United States had paid about \$160 million of the more than \$4 billion it owes.

'You'd be speaking French'

King Charles roasts Trump at state dinner after urging US-UK unity in speech to Congress

AGENCIES

King Charles III gave US President Donald Trump a taste of his own medicine at a White House state dinner yesterday when he joked that without the British, Americans would be speaking French.

As the heads of state traded jokes during their dinner toasts, Charles referenced previous comments by Trump aimed at European allies he accuses of freeloading on defense since World War II.

"You recently commented, Mr President, that if it were not for the United States, European countries would be speaking German. Dare I say that, if it wasn't for us, you'd be speaking French," Charles quipped.

The king was talking about places with British and French origins in North America, where the rival colonial powers battled for control of the continent before US



independence 250 years ago.

At the Davos summit in January, Trump said that without US help in World War II, "you'd be speaking German and a little Japanese."

Earlier, King Charles told the US Congress that despite an age of uncertainty and conflict in Europe and the Middle East, the UK and the US will always be staunch allies united in defending democracy, at a time of deep divisions between the

two long-time allies over the war with Iran.

In a speech that Buckingham Palace said beforehand would not be political, Charles also made references to Trump's criticism of Nato, highlighted the importance of continued US help for Ukraine in its war with Russia, the dangers of isolationism, and even a call for the safeguarding of nature, an important issue to the king for most of his life.

Charles referred to the September 11, 2001, attacks, saying, "we answered the call together, as our people have done so for more than a century, shoulder to shoulder through two world wars, the Cold War, Afghanistan and moments that have defined our shared security today. Mr Speaker, that same unyielding resolve is needed for the defense of Ukraine, and her most courageous people."

Star wins WAN-IFRA gold, silver awards

FROM PAGE 1

particularly those that adopt digital media and mobile strategies as part of their total product offering to meet the changing ways people consume news and information today.

The award is regarded as the most prestigious recognition for publishers for their outstanding work in digital media.

This year's Digital Media Awards South Asia highlight excellence in digital innovation, creativity, and audience engagement, showcasing the industry's push to advance storytelling and tech-driven news experiences.

Prothom Alo secured gold in "Best Marketing Campaign for a News Brand" and a silver in "Best Use of Video".

Participating newsrooms competed across multiple

categories, including AI, audience engagement, data visualisation, newsletters, video, audio, digital products, and revenue strategies.

Entries were judged by digital media subject-matter experts, editors, and industry leaders based on innovation, audience impact, and journalistic excellence. All gold winners will advance to WAN-IFRA's World Digital Media Awards.

The South Asia awards ceremony will be held on June 25, 2026, in Delhi, coinciding with the Digital Media India 2026 conference.

Top-performing finalists, including the gold winners of the Digital Media Awards South Asia 2026, from 78 countries will advance to compete for the World Digital Media

Awards in each of the 12 categories, with winners to be announced at the World News Media Congress 2026 in Marseille in June, according to a press release by WAN-IFRA.

"Anatomy of BGB Shootings in Rampura" is a joint investigation by The Daily Star and Tech Global Institute that reveals how a Dhaka neighbourhood became a hotspot of state-sanctioned killings on July 19, 2024. Published on August 6, 2025, the investigation reconstructed the events of that day by analysing over 200 photos and videos captured in the Rampura area - deploying digital pattern analysis of clothing, weapon identification, and chronolocation techniques to map the movement of state forces.

Keeron aims to help students, graduates, and young professionals accelerate their careers through industry-relevant, practical online courses designed and taught by top local experts, combining recorded lessons, live sessions, mentorship, and real-world case studies to bridge the gap between traditional education and job-market skills, while building a strong learning community with tens of thousands of learners across the country.

Since its launch in 2023, Keeron has achieved significant milestones, including training over 60,000 learners, maintaining high satisfaction rates above 80 percent, and positioning itself as a scalable, career-focused learning ecosystem.

4 arrested over 'links with TTP'

FROM PAGE 1

When asked whether those arrested were linked to the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, the DB chief said they were connected to a new organisation also called ARSA.

Meanwhile, police filed a case against the four under the Anti-Terrorism Act with Kamrangirchar Police

Station. Later, the accused were produced before a Dhaka court with a seven-day remand prayer.

After the hearing, Aminul Islam Junaed, magistrate of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court, placed the arrestees on a four-day remand.

According to the case

statement, the arrestees were held from Keraniganj and Kamrangirchar on Tuesday.

During the drives, law enforcers recovered a foreign pistol, a locally made gun, 14 bullets, several bullet shells, multiple smartphones, a metal detector, a drone, drone-related equipment, fake military uniforms, and

"jihadi" books and leaflets. The FIR stated that the arrestees were operating with the "intention of preventing the Bangladesh government or any other state from carrying out its duties."

It also noted that the four had gathered equipment to "create panic among the public".

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
E/M DIVISION- 3, KURMITOLA, DHAKA.

File No- 30.31.0000.432.07.001.25/539 Date: 28.04.2026

e-Tender Notice

e-tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods:

Sl No	Name of Tender	Tender ID No	Last date & time of selling	Last date & time of closing
1	2	3	4	5
01.	Internal Electrification & relocation works of E/M installation (Ceiling fan, Air cooler & PA System) for Temporary Mosque shed at R/A, SAIA, Chattogram.	1255788	13-May-2026 17.00	14-May-2026 12.00

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no office/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP portal is required. The fees, for downloading the tender document from the national e-GP system portal, have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches. Future information and guidelines are available in national e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

নং-৩০.৩১.০০০০.৪৩২.০৭.০০১.২৫/১৯৯
তারিখ: ২৮/০৪/২০২৬ খ্রি.

(Md. Al-Mamun)
Executive Engineer (E/M)
E/M Division-3, CAAB, Dhaka.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation
Open Tender (International) for Petroleum Products

1	Ministry/Division	Energy and Mineral Resources Division.		
2	Agency	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).		
3	Procuring Entity Name	General Manager (Com. & Ops.), Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).		
4	Procuring Entity District	Chattogram, Bangladesh.		
5	Invitation for	Invitation for Open Tender (International) for import of Gasoil 0.005% 'S' (50 PPM) and Jet A-1 during "June 1 st to August 31 st , 2026".		
6	Invitation Ref. No	28.03.0000.000.045.01.0013.26.		
7	Date	30 th April, 2026		
KEY INFORMATION				
8	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
9	Source of Funds	Own Fund		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
10	Tender Package No.	PG-01 and PG-02		
11	Tender Package Name	PG-01: Invitation for Open Tender (International) for import of Gasoil 0.005% 'S' (50 PPM) and Jet A-1. PG-02: Invitation for Open Tender (International) for import of Gasoil 0.005% 'S' (50 PPM) and Jet A-1.		
12	Tender Publication Date	30/04/2026		
13	Tender Last Selling Date and time	12/05/2026; 4:00 PM (BST) (GMT+6)		
14	Tender Closing Date and time	13/05/2026; 12:30 PM (BST) (GMT+6)		
15	Tender Opening Date and time	Date: 13/05/2026 ; PG-01: 12:45 PM (BST) (GMT+6) PG-02: 01:30 PM (BST) (GMT+6)		
16	Name and Address of the Office(s)			
17	Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban (1st Floor), Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100, Bangladesh.		
	Selling Tender Document (Others)	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BTMC Bhaban, Level-10, 7-9 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh.		
	Receiving Tender Document	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban (1st Floor), Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100.		
	Opening Tender Document	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban (1st Floor), Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100.		
18	Place/Date/Time for Pre-Tender Meeting	Virtual Meeting (Zoom Platform). 06/05/2026; 12:45 PM (GMT+6)		
19	Tender Validity/ Offer Validity Period	The Offer must be valid till 21/06/2026.		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
20	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	(i) A maximum of three (03) litigation history against the tenderer(s) over a period of the last three (03) years. (ii) The tenderer(s) must have minimum 3 (Three) years' general experience in the export of petroleum products. (iii) The Tenderer(s) must have specific experience of executing at least 02 (two) contracts with a minimum value of USD 150 Million each in last three years in the supply of goods similar to the proposed goods. (iv) The Tenderer(s) must own refinery(ies) or more than 50% equity of a refinery. The processing capacity of the refinery(ies) must be at least 2.25 million metric tons per year. Or, The Tenderer(s) must satisfactorily complete the export of at least 3.75 million Metric tons of petroleum products annually for the last three years. (v) Annual turnover of the Tenderers during last 3(three) years must be equivalent to minimum US\$ 2.25 billion. (vi) The minimum amount of liquid asset or working capital facility must be US\$ 1.50 billion. (vii) The Tenderer(s) must be free from any interdictory/embargo/sanction from international organization like UNO, OPEC, WTO etc. (viii) The Tenderer(s) must comply with international safety standard and environment compliances.		
21	Brief Description of Goods	PG-01: The total quantity to be supplied is 2,387-2,909 Million Barrels (320,000-390,000 Metric Tons) of Gasoil 0.005% 'S' and 0.560-0.720 Million Barrels (70,000-90,000 Metric Tons) of Jet A-1 (+/-10% for each grade at Buyer's Option). PG-02: The total quantity to be supplied 2,238-2,536 Million Barrels (300,000-340,000 Metric Tons) of Gasoil 0.005% 'S' and 0.480-0.640 Million Barrels (60,000-80,000 Metric Tons) of Jet A-1 (+/-10% for each grade at Buyer's Option). Minimum and Maximum range of importable quantity for each package is at Buyer's option.		
22	Tender Document Price	Tender Document Price: BDT 12,000.00 / US\$ 100.00 for each package. Non-Refundable by Cash / Pay Order / Bank Draft drawn in favor of "Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation".		
23	Package No	Identification	Tender Security Amount	Completion Time
	PG-01 and PG-02	PG-01	USD 1.00 Million	01 st June - 31 st August 2026 (3 Months)
		PG-02	USD 0.70 Million	01 st June - 31 st August 2026 (3 Months)
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
24	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Mohammad Zahid Hossain		
25	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	General Manager (Commercial & Operations), BPC.		
26	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban (1st Floor), Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100, Bangladesh.		
27	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel. No: +88-02-3333-16121 Mobile: +88 01713755377/+880 1762-921229 Fax No: +88 2333320147 Email: gm_commercial@bpc.gov.bd		

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.

Mohammad Zahid Hossain
General Manager (Commercial & Operations)
Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC)

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Take steps to save haor harvest urgently

Govt must protect farmers' rights, check dyke construction anomalies

It is unacceptable that those who help sustain the country's food supply remain exposed to predictable risks year after year. Reportedly, thousands of farmers in the haor districts are facing heavy crop losses because of pre-monsoon rain, embankment breaches, labour shortages, and poor harvesting conditions. For farmers in these regions, Boro cultivation is often their only major yearly harvest and main source of income. When their ripe paddy goes under water just before harvest, they lose a whole year's livelihood, not to mention their ability to repay debts. Why are our farmers still so vulnerable to predictable seasonal threats despite repeated warnings?

For nearly a decade, our northeastern region has suffered excessive pre-monsoon rainfall and early flash floods, with the disasters of 2017 and 2022 still fresh in public memory. Weak embankments, delayed repairs, poor preparedness, labour shortages, inadequate drying and storage facilities, and limited financial protection continue to leave farmers vulnerable. The haor region produces around 20 percent of the country's rice annually, while Boro accounts for nearly 55 percent of national rice output, meaning current losses pose a serious threat to our food security.

About 65-70 percent of all Boro paddy in the haor districts has been harvested; now farmers are under pressure to finish the rest. Many farmers report that ripe paddy in their fields remains submerged, while harvesters cannot operate in waterlogged fields and labour is either scarce or costly. Some have even been forced to sell wet paddy at low prices, while others have lost everything after farming on loans. For instance, Ratan Mia from Kishoreganj's Austagram upazila lost his entire 10-acre crop to flooding.

Meanwhile, fresh embankment breaches in Sunamganj have raised serious concerns over alleged corruption and irregularities in embankment construction. Every year, large allocations are made for haor protection embankments, but allegations of substandard earthwork, mismanagement of funds, and syndicate influence persist. Locals claim that embankments are often poorly planned or left incomplete, while oversight remains weak. At a recent gathering in Sunamganj, a 10-point demand was raised that included compensation for flood-hit farmers, loan waivers, and a judicial probe into irregularities. The government must address these sincerely.

It is reassuring that the government has promised assistance for farmers affected by heavy rainfall in the next three months. Their other demands must also be taken into consideration. It must act immediately to protect both crops and farmers' livelihoods. As water levels rise, urgent mobilisation of labour and harvesting support is needed to save the remaining crops. Mobile drying units and transport assistance should also be provided. Fair procurement prices for wet or damaged paddy must be ensured to prevent exploitation by middlemen. An independent review of embankment failures and delays is crucial as well. In the long term, climate-resilient infrastructure, crop insurance, and early warning systems must be prioritised. Haor farmers must not be left to face such disasters without support.

Appoint new ACC without further delay

Leaving the graft watchdog leaderless is unacceptable

It is a matter of grave disappointment that a key statutory body like the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has been left in a state of paralysis for nearly two months. After all members of the last commission resigned "voluntarily" on March 3, merely two weeks after the newly elected BNP government took office, the ACC's crucial operations—pursuing cases, investigations, and enforcement actions—have come under significant constraint. Appointed by the interim government in December 2024 for a five-year term, that commission lasted for just over 15 months.

During this short period, however, it set a new bar for pursuing corruption cases, managing to investigate around 18 percent of the complaints it received in 2025—an institutional record since its inception in 2004. The conviction rate in disposed cases rose to 52 percent, up from the previous year's 48 percent. But due to the present leadership vacuum, all this progress now faces the risk of stalling. Decisions regarding case filings and other procedures are reportedly being delayed, effectively compromising graft prevention.

It may be recalled that a month after the last commission resigned—a decision made in "public interest," according to the then ACC chief—the Anti-Corruption Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025 issued during the interim period was allowed to expire on April 11, along with several other key ordinances. As a result, the previous 2004 ACC Act was reinstated with immediate effect, leaving the government the scope to form a search committee to find suitable candidates for the new commission. Nearly three weeks on, we have not seen any such steps from the government. Preliminary discussions on forming the search committee reportedly began shortly after the commission's dissolution, but the final nod to officially start the process has yet to come.

This raises questions regarding the BNP government's "zero tolerance" stance on corruption. Eradicating corruption was one of the core pledges of its election manifesto. Naturally, reconstituting the ACC, the country's primary body responsible for keeping high-profile, large-scale corruption in check, is a crucial first step towards achieving that goal. What's holding the government back from doing so, then? We don't see any justification for further delaying this crucial task. The government must promptly form a search committee to recruit the next commissioners so that ACC's work can continue without a hitch. The government must also ensure that it can carry out its duties as intended: independently, without undue influence. A change in government, political or otherwise, should not have any bearing on autonomous bodies like the ACC.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Adolf Hitler dies by suicide

On this day in 1945, holed up in a bunker under his headquarters in Berlin, Adolf Hitler died by suicide by swallowing a cyanide capsule and shooting himself in the head. Soon after, Germany unconditionally surrendered to the allied forces, ending Hitler's dream of a "1,000-year" reich.

More lanes or trains? Rethinking the Dhaka-Chattoogram corridor



Ahamedul Karim Chowdhury, adjunct faculty at Bangladesh Maritime University, is a maritime, logistics, and supply chain policy analyst.

AHAMEDUL KARIM CHOWDHURY

Every day, thousands of trucks carry containers, raw materials, and export goods along the Dhaka-Chattoogram highway, alongside rising passenger traffic. This corridor also connects the capital with Chattoogram Port, the gateway for most of Bangladesh's international trade. As economic activity expands, pressure on the corridor and dependence on imported fuel also rise. This route is already one of the most fuel-intensive segments of the transport network. Despite expansion to four lanes, congestion persists.

Proposals to widen the highway into a 10-lane corridor or elevated expressway reflect the scale of the problem. But expanding roads alone risks locking Bangladesh into a fossil fuel-dependent transport model. The real question is not how to accommodate more vehicles, but how to reduce reliance on them. That shift requires a decisive move toward rail. Without a shift in the transport mix, more road capacity may lead to higher fuel use and greater exposure to energy shocks. Heavy trucks remain the backbone of this corridor, but they also create the greatest energy burden by accelerating road deterioration, increasing maintenance costs, and consuming large volumes of diesel. In a global environment marked by volatile energy prices, this dependence exposes Bangladesh to recurring economic vulnerability. In this scenario, rail offers a strategic alternative.

Rail transport is significantly more energy-efficient, especially for freight. One freight train can replace roughly 40-60 heavy trucks, while moving a container using about one-fifth the fuel and emitting one-fifth as much carbon as trucks. This reduces dependence on imported diesel while easing pressure on infrastructure and foreign exchange reserves. For Bangladesh, the long-discussed Dhaka-Chattoogram chord line presents a practical opportunity to make this transition. By creating a more direct alignment between the two cities, the chord line



The aim should not be to accommodate more vehicles on the Dhaka-Chattoogram highway, but to reduce reliance on them and thus reduce fuel use.

FILE PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

would shorten travel distance, enable faster passenger services, and expand capacity for freight movement. This does not require ultra-high-speed systems like Japan's Shinkansen. A modern medium-speed railway operating at 140-160 kilometres per hour would be sufficient.

This could reduce passenger travel times to around two hours, but the greater impact would be on freight movement. Shifting even a portion of container movement from trucks to rail would reduce congestion, lower fuel consumption, and improve logistics reliability, thus creating a more balanced system where rail and road share the load.

Nevertheless, this shift must be supported by a broader reconfiguration of inland logistics. Expanding inland container depot capacity closer to industrial clusters—particularly around Narayanganj—can significantly reduce long-haul trucking. Fast-tracking projects such as Dhirasram Inland Container Depot

(ICD) or the proposed Pubail ICD would allow cargo to be consolidated and moved in bulk by rail, rather than dispersed across thousands of truck trips. Together with a chord line, these facilities could form the backbone of a more energy-efficient multimodal system.

However, infrastructure alone will not deliver these benefits unless

institutional constraints within the railway sector are addressed. One persistent challenge is the shortage of locomotives and trained locomotives, which limits effective use of existing rail capacity. As long as freight depends on spare locomotives from passenger services, a reliable rail logistics system will remain difficult.

There is, therefore, a strong case for revisiting the Railways Act, 1890, to allow regulated participation of private operators on designated corridors. Opening railway tracks to private freight operators is a practical response to capacity constraints. It would enable additional locomotive investment, improve service reliability, and introduce operational flexibility. Without such reform, even well-planned infrastructure investments—including a Dhaka-Chattoogram chord line—risk delivering only partial results. With it, Bangladesh could unlock the full potential of its rail network.

A practical way forward would be to translate this vision into a phased railway roadmap. Priority should be given to developing a Dhaka-Narayanganj-Chattoogram chord line as a modern broad-gauge corridor, creating a more direct and high-capacity rail link between Dhaka and Chattoogram. Meanwhile, institutional reform by opening access for private operators under a regulated framework should be put in place and railway-based inland logistics should be strengthened through the development of ICDs in strategic locations under public-private partnership models. Together, these steps would create an integrated rail-led system capable of shifting a substantial share of cargo away from roads, reducing fuel consumption, and strengthening long-term resilience.

Recent discussions on the proposed Teknaf-Tetulia economic corridor highlight the need for a more integrated approach to transport planning in Bangladesh. The initiative reflects a shift toward viewing corridors not merely as roads, but as systems linking logistics, industry, and regional connectivity, while emphasising sustainability. This reinforces a central point: how connectivity is designed, particularly in energy use and transport mode, will determine long-term sustainability.

Linking Matarbari deep-sea port with the Mirsarai economic zone and extending rail-based ICD development toward the northwest, such as Nilphamari, could help translate this vision into a more balanced, rail-led national logistics corridor. Globally, countries facing similar challenges are already moving in this direction. China has expanded rail corridors linking ports with inland industrial regions. India is developing its Dedicated Freight Corridor to reduce logistics costs and energy use. Across Europe, rail plays a central role in reducing transport-related emissions. These are not just transport investments; they are energy strategies.

Bangladesh now faces a similar choice. Continuing to expand highways without strengthening rail will deepen long-term dependence on fossil fuels. In contrast, investing in rail, supported by institutional reform and inland logistics development, offers a pathway toward a more resilient and energy-efficient transport system. The choice we are facing is not between a 10-lane highway or an elevated expressway; it is between more lanes or less fuel.

Our solar ambition needs skilled hands to succeed

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MOHAMMAD IFTEKHARUL ISLAM and MD. TUHIN AHMED

Bangladesh's economy remains highly susceptible to price volatility in the international energy market. This vulnerability became fairly evident when the Russia-Ukraine war broke out in 2022 and more recently, when the Iran-US conflict began in March this year. The war in the Middle East has resulted in an abnormal hike in the price of liquefied natural gas (LNG), forcing the country to seek costlier spot cargoes. This event exposed how quickly a distant war can travel through the Strait of Hormuz into domestic power shortages, industrial anxiety, and fiscal pressure. Imported LNG accounts for more than 25 percent of Bangladesh's national total gas consumption, and about 42 percent of total gas consumption goes to the power sector. And this is precisely why solar must be treated as an energy security strategy, not merely a climate aspiration.

The recent national energy policy of Bangladesh is the Renewable Energy Policy (REP) 2025 that sets a target to generate 20 percent of the country's electricity from renewable sources by 2030 and 30 percent by 2041. The policy recognises the country's dependence on natural gas and other fossil fuels and connects renewable expansion with local manufacturing capability, cost competitiveness, and human resource development. There is no lack of ambition when it comes to increasing renewable energy capacity.

Current SREDA dashboards on renewables show that Bangladesh has about 1.74 gigawatt (GW) of installed renewable capacity, accounting for about 5.24 percent of total installed energy generation capacity, of which 1.45 GW is represented by solar, consisting of solar parks, rooftop net metering, and solar home systems (SHS). Apart from solar installations, there are initiatives in solar panel exports and foreign investment in



Bangladesh needs a highly skilled workforce competent in maintaining its solar infrastructure. PHOTO: COLLECTED

solar. In June 2025, Radiant Alliance, a Bangladesh-based company, exported solar panels to the US market for the first time. In March 2025, Chinese solar manufacturer Longi revealed plans to invest in solar panel manufacturing in Bangladesh.

The government has also pushed some big rollouts on solar expansion. In December 2025, the erstwhile interim government approved 12 new private solar plants with a combined capacity of 918 MW. As part of the National Rooftop Solar Program 2025, the government aims to install 3,000 MW equivalent of solar panels on state-owned buildings, alongside

net metering reforms that now allow systems up to 100 percent of sanctioned load, compared to about 70 percent in the past. The sanctioned load is the maximum amount of power that an electricity provider authorises a consumer to use at any given time. However, so far most of such scaling only exists on paper and we are left with an uncomfortable question: who will build, install, test, service, and maintain all this capacity? This is where the bottleneck begins.

Bangladesh may be announcing a solar manufacturing and deployment push, but its training pipeline is not ready for it yet. A 2024 future-skills study on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Bangladesh found a serious shortage of skilled workers and a persistent mismatch between what graduates learn and what employers need. Around 60 percent of the study's respondents said that their technical skills needed further improvement after graduation. The same study also claimed that the National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF) is not implemented fully and the student enrolment exceeds infrastructural capacity. Furthermore, the students do not benefit from learning to operate old and obsolete machines when companies recruit for newer technologies. The graduates also ultimately struggle in the labour market due to a lack of coordination between training institutions and employers. This becomes problematic when it comes to readying a workforce to maintain the country's solar infrastructure as the sector is heavily reliant on practical know-how than just theoretical knowledge.

The REP 2025 opens doors to production-based incentives, tax exemptions, and duty or VAT cuts on certain solar components. These measures can help local industries grow, but they do not run on policy

alone. They run on technicians, supervisors, quality inspectors, electricians, operators, trainers, and after-sales service teams. Solar localisation without skills localisation is unlikely to achieve much. Meanwhile, implementation problems are already visible in reality. There are debates over rooftop solar costs, import duties on accessories, and whether the policy mix is helping adoption fast enough. Apparel sector entrepreneurs argue that import taxes increase system costs just when rooftop solar could decrease both energy vulnerability and carbon emissions. At the same time, the government wants to protect and nurture local manufacturing. However, even if tariffs are perfectly balanced, Bangladesh will still struggle unless it produces enough competent workers for a growing solar ecosystem.

The good news is that the REP 2025 already has a practical opening. It directs SREDA to support training and research, encourage renewable energy curriculum from the school level to university, and maintain a national database for designers, installers, maintenance professionals, suppliers, importers, manufacturers, and EPC companies. The database could become the backbone of certification, accountability, and labour market visibility. The conflicts around the world may calm down soon enough and shipping routes may regain normalcy too, resulting in spot LNG prices to stabilise. However, Bangladesh's skills gap will persist unless the country treats it as seriously as it treats capacity targets. A panel on a rooftop cannot secure a factory, a school, or a grid if no one is there to install it properly, certify it credibly, or repair it when it breaks down. Bangladesh needs more solar, but it needs a workforce for it even more. Energy security will not come from solar panels alone but from the skilled hands that make them work.

Fighting terrorism without losing the republic



Asif Bin Ali is a geopolitical analyst and doctoral fellow at Georgia State University in the US. He can be reached at abinal12@gsu.edu.

ASIF BIN ALI

Recently, the Police Headquarters issued a nationwide alert about possible militant attacks on key installations, including the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, public places such as Shahbagh intersection, places of worship, entertainment centres, police and army establishments, as well as armouries. Despite contradictory statements later made by Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister's Adviser on Information and Broadcasting Dr Zahed Ur Rahman on the existence of militancy in Bangladesh, the alert underscores that violent extremism has not disappeared; it has only changed form, language, and platform.

A report by The Daily Star, based on court filings and intelligence findings, gives the warning a sharper context. It says police detected communications between several alleged Neo-JMB members, and that a 16-year-old boy from Habiganj Sadar had been in regular contact with two dismissed army personnel. After the boy's arrest earlier this month, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit reportedly seized his phone and found materials that investigators believe indicate links with Neo-JMB, as well as his presence at a secret meeting at Zia Uddin. The documents describe him as an "IS ideology follower/Neo-JMB member." Officials also claim the group used online platforms and pseudonyms, with the boy allegedly even receiving bomb-making training. His mother, however, denied any militant involvement, saying he is mentally unstable. That denial warrants consideration given his age; however, one cannot dismiss the pattern.

Another report, published by the Times of Bangladesh, has also caused a stir recently. According to it, a Bangladesh Air Force warrant officer has been allegedly missing from a Chattogram base for about two months and later traced to a Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) hideout. This has apparently led to a sweeping internal probe and the detention of more than 20 people, including BAF members and non-combatants. The report cited unnamed security and intelligence sources, while the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) declined to comment. Because the investigation is ongoing, these claims must be treated carefully. But even as reported allegations, they demand careful scrutiny. If extremist recruitment has touched even a small segment of trained personnel, it is no



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

longer only a question of fringe radicalisation. It becomes an institutional security concern.

This is the point that Bangladesh keeps missing. Counterterrorism should not mean panic, media trial, or collective suspicion of religious groups. After the recent terrorism alert, a CTTC joint commissioner was right to say there is "no reason to panic." But calm is not the same as denial. Earlier assurances from the interim government sit uneasily alongside these recent warnings, suggesting that national security concerns have been overlooked for some time. In July 2025, then Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said there was "no militancy in Bangladesh at present." Around the same period, then DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali reportedly dismissed militancy as a current problem and suggested that earlier "militant drama" had been used to justify killings. Such political assurances may resonate in a polarised public sphere, but they risk obscuring the complexity of our evolving

security landscape. The concern here is not limited to one teenager or one alleged cell. The Daily Star reported in November 2025 that two Bangladeshis, Ratan Dhali and Foyzal Hossain, were killed while fighting for TTP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The Dissent, a journalism platform, has consistently produced evidence-based reports on this issue and warned citizens about the threat,

reportedly trying to join. That should end the temptation to romanticise the issue as youthful confusion, anti-Western anger, or simple religious emotion.

Bangladesh has lived through this turmoil before. On August 17, 2005, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) detonated hundreds of bombs across 63 of the country's 64 districts within about 30 minutes. That was not only an attack on public safety; it was

Moreover, Bangladesh has a traumatic history of enforced disappearances, with the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances identifying some security agencies among the main perpetrators named by victims and families. These findings matter because public trust is not a luxury; it is an essential component of the counterterrorism infrastructure.

A family that fears arbitrary detention may stay silent even when a son is being radicalised. A community that sees counterterrorism as partisan revenge will not cooperate with intelligence agencies. This is how real threats hide within the noise created by state abuse. Bangladesh, therefore, needs a firmer but more democratic counterterrorism doctrine that puts transparency and human rights at its core. The state must be uncompromising towards those who plan violence and seek to destroy the constitutional state for a utopian "Khilafat state". At the same time, it must be equally uncompromising about due process, judicial oversight, evidence-based prosecution, and protection from torture, enforced disappearance, and politically motivated cases. These are not opposing goals; they are mutually necessary for national security and for sustaining public support.

The social media and public sphere also need close attention. In recent years, pro-al Qaeda, pro-ISIS, pro-Taliban, and Neo-JMB style narratives have become more visible on social media and in some public forums. Not every conservative religious view is extremism, and the state must never criminalise belief. However, it must draw a clear line between religious expression and ideological preparation for violence. When speakers glorify armed jihad in Iraq, Syria, or Afghanistan, justify killing opponents and bombings targeting civilians, delegitimise the constitutional state, or present Bangladesh's security forces as enemies of Islam, the matter moves from opinion to incitement and recruitment.

Bangladesh's security agencies need resources, training, coordination, and public support, but they also need reform and accountability. Bangladesh has reduced the visible threat of terrorism over the years, which is a notable achievement, but low visibility does not mean no threat. Extremism often becomes quiet, reorganises, enters new platforms, and waits for moments of political confusion. To address the extremism-related national security threat, the answer is neither blind support for security agencies nor cynical dismissal of every warning. Fighting violent Islamist extremism means defending both national security and constitutional rights.

INT'L DAY AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

No more corporal punishment



Laila Khondkar is an international development worker.

LAILA KHONDKAR

A stark and disturbing reality was revealed in the preliminary findings from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2025, conducted jointly by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and UNICEF. In Bangladesh, 86 percent of children aged 1-14 experienced physical punishment in the month preceding the survey. This is not a marginal issue. It is a national crisis.

Despite a 2011 circular from the Ministry of Education banning corporal punishment in educational institutions, children continue to be beaten by teachers. Beyond schools, corporal punishment persists in homes, institutions, and workplaces with little accountability. Occasionally, the media exposes horrific incidents of violence against child domestic workers and even children in schools. But these reports capture only a fraction of the truth. Most abuse remains hidden. Corporal punishment is not limited to visible injuries. Humiliation, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, and ridicule leave scars that are often deeper and far more enduring.

The widespread social acceptance of corporal punishment indicates how violence has become normalised in child-rearing. It reinforces children's subordinate status in society and paves the way for other forms of abuse.

A 2021 report, titled "Corporal Punishment of Children: Summary of Research on Its Impact and Associations" by the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, reviewed over 300 studies linking punishment to a host of adverse outcomes. Not a single study identified any benefits. Corporal punishment is ineffective as a disciplining technique, as children only comply due to fear but do not learn anything when they are punished. Corporal punishment triggers hormonal

stress responses that can alter brain structure and function, leading to increased anxiety, depression, lower self-esteem, and higher risks of antisocial behaviour or substance abuse in adulthood. What we often dismiss as "discipline" is profound, measurable, and long-lasting harm. Research also demonstrates a troubling insight: adults frequently misjudge the force they use when hitting children. What is intended as "mild" discipline can escalate quickly into violence.

Around 70 countries worldwide have already prohibited corporal punishment in all settings, including homes. Bangladesh is not among them. This is a glaring gap in our legal framework. This must change. Bangladesh, as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, has both a legal and moral obligation to act.

"I was hit as a child, and I turned out fine" is a common statement. But this argument misses the point entirely. Many people survive harmful experiences. That does not make those experiences acceptable or beneficial. Resilience should not be used to justify harm.

Many argue that adults usually resort to hitting out of stress, anger, or frustration. Parents and teachers may need support or more resources, but that should never be a justification to hit children. With sustained investment in public education and awareness building, parents and teachers can learn constructive, respectful ways to guide children's behaviour without resorting to violence.

Politicians are usually hesitant to enact laws banning corporal punishment of children in all settings, in fear of public backlash. This is not an issue where governments can afford to wait for public opinion to shift. On the contrary, leadership must come first. Countries such

as Sweden, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Poland, and Romania have all seen a decline in public acceptance of corporal punishment following legislative action. It is possible to shift societal attitudes and individual behaviours by enacting laws, promoting positive parenting, changing social norms, and ending violent discipline in schools.

The law sends a clear, uncompromising message: hitting a child is unacceptable, everywhere and under all circumstances. Banning corporal punishment is not about criminalising parents. It is about protecting children and shifting societal norms. Evidence from countries that have enacted such bans shows no surge in prosecutions. Instead, these laws serve as powerful educational tools, encouraging healthier, non-violent relationships between adults and children.

In 2015, every country signed up to SDG target 16.2, pledging to end exploitation, trafficking, torture, and all forms of violence against children by 2030. We have less than five years to meet the commitments. Bangladesh must take proactive measures to protect children from violence. This should include enacting comprehensive legislation banning corporal punishment in all settings; strengthening enforcement of the existing ban on corporal punishment in educational institutions; investing in nationwide awareness campaigns promoting positive, non-violent parenting and teaching practices; building the capacity of parents, teachers, and service providers to interact with children without violence; and ensuring children's voices are heard and respected in shaping policies that affect them.

Ending corporal punishment is not just about protecting children from harm. It is about building a society grounded in dignity, respect, and non-violence. We must do more and bring momentum to our efforts to create a peaceful society for children. The new government should demonstrate leadership through legal reform to facilitate the social transformation process.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Carriage)
Bangladesh Railway, Kamalapur, Dhaka
www.railway.gov.bd

Memo No. BR/DCD/FY26/eGP/Advertisement-5 (Corrigendum) Date: 28 April 2026

Corrigendum Notice for e-GP Tender

The e-Tender has been invited through the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following package(s):

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package description	Tender closing/ opening date & time	
1	1234562	BR/DCD/FY26/OTM/GR-04 Procurement of 1500 Nos. CI brake block for MD-52 type bogie for Dhaka carriage depot [FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT]	As per original tender notice	30-Apr-2026 11:00 hrs
			As per corrigendum tender notice	07-May-2026 11:00 hrs

All potential and interested tenderers are requested to register in the National e-GP System and participate in the e-Tendering process.

Rasel Alam
Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Carriage)
Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka
Email: dmeconwda@railway.gov.bd

এস (২৬) (২৪৯)
GD-961

সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিভিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়
৩৫-৪২, ৪৪, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০

নং-প্রক/নোট সার্টিং/টেন্ডার-২০২৬/৭৮ তারিখঃ ২৮.০৪.২০২৬

ই-টেন্ডার নোটিশ

জাতীয় e-GP সিস্টেম পোর্টালে (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) এর মাধ্যমে নিম্নোক্ত পণ্য ক্রয়ের লক্ষ্যে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হয়েছে।

ক্র.সং.	বিবরণ	সিদ্ধান্ত
০১.	টেন্ডার আইডি	১২৬৬১৪৩
০২.	রেফারেন্স নম্বর	এসবিএল/সিএসডি/টেন্ডার/নোট সার্টিং/২০২৬/৭৮
০৩.	পণ্যের নাম	১০(দেশ) টি নোট সার্টিং মেশিন ক্রয়।
০৪.	টেন্ডার প্রকাশের তারিখ	২৮ এপ্রিল, ২০২৬, বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকায়।
০৫.	টেন্ডার শিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৪ মে, ২০২৬, বিকাল ২:৩০ ঘটিকায়।
০৬.	টেন্ডার উন্মুক্তকরণের তারিখ ও সময়	১৪ মে, ২০২৬, বিকাল ৩:৩০ ঘটিকায়।
০৭.	টেন্ডারিং পদ্ধতি	OTM

গুরুত্বপূর্ণ e-GP সিস্টেম পোর্টালে ই-টেন্ডার গ্রহণ করা হবে। সরাসরি কোন টেন্ডারের কাগজপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না। ই-টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট ফর্ম ডাউনলোডের জন্য জাতীয় e-GP সিস্টেম পোর্টালে রেজিস্ট্রার ব্যাংকের শাখার মাধ্যমে ফর্ম ফি জমা করতে হবে। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির বিস্তারিত তথ্য e-GP Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.com.bd>) এবং এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি এর ওয়েবসাইট www.sonalibank.com.bd এর Tender Board এ রয়েছে।

যোগাযোগঃ কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিভিশন, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।
ফোনঃ ০২-২২৩৩৮৪৬৪২

স্বাক্ষরিত/-
ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার

GD-963

Suchona Shely releases new folk song 'Obishasher Jontrona'

A new folk-based song titled *Obishasher Jontrona* by singer Suchona Shely has been released under the G Series label, blending themes of heartbreak and emotional struggle.

The song's lyrics and composition are by Shahazadi, with music arrangement by Jimmy Shah. Pial handled mixing and mastering, while the music video was directed by Rahat Noli with cinematography by Kabir Mahmud.

Known for her folk repertoire and wider recognition through Coke Studio Bangla, Shely has been steadily building her presence in playback and contemporary music. Her recent tracks include *Vallage Na Kene*, *Boidyaraj* and *Rup Sagore*.

Obishasher Jontrona is now available on G Series' official YouTube channel and streaming platforms.



SHAMOL MAWLA considers 'Bonolota Express' a personal victory

SHARMIN JOYA

Following the remarkable success of *Bonolota Express*, actor Shamol Mawla finds himself reflecting on a journey that has been both smooth and deeply fulfilling. The film, based on a story by the legendary Humayun Ahmed and directed by Tanim Noor, has resonated with audiences at home and across North America—an achievement Mawla describes as "very special."

"It's been a wonderful experience from the very beginning," he says. "As soon as I came on board for *Bonolota Express*, I was excited. I knew I'd be working alongside some incredibly talented actors, so I had to be even more serious about my performance."

Having previously collaborated with Tanim Noor in *Money Honey* and *Contract*, Shamol was already comfortable with the team. "It's a unit I really like. Everything from the shoot to the release was handled so smoothly. There was no pressure at any stage, which is rare. The audience has already witnessed that on the screens."

For Shamol, the film's success carries personal significance. "I've never had a film released during Eid before, so to have one that became such a hit—it means a lot. It was also my daughter's first Eid, so everything combined made it incredibly special."

He speaks particularly fondly of his role. "It was a fantastic character, and I feel lucky to have been given the opportunity. There was a lot to explore within it. Of course, how much I've managed to achieve is for the audience to decide—but the response so far has been very encouraging."

Despite praise from critics—particularly regarding his expressive screen presence—the actor remains grounded. When asked whether he feels his full potential is being utilised, he offers a measured response. "I don't really think in those terms. Everyone sees things differently. I'm easily content, and I just want to focus on doing good work."

Shamol is currently working on *Suraiya*, a psychological drama



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

directed by one of his favourite filmmakers, Robiul Alam Robi. Previously, they have collaborated in *Sincerely Yours*, *Dhaka* and *Café Desire*. "Honestly speaking, Giasuddin Selim, Sumon Anwar and Robi are my most favourite directors I have worked with in my career. Each director has a different approach, and that's what keeps things interesting. This story of *Suraiya* is quite layered, but for now, I can't reveal much about it just yet."

He also speaks warmly of his co-actors and collaborators. "It's always exciting to work with new people while continuing relationships with directors I admire. This will be my first collaboration with Nazifa Tushi, and she is a fantastic artiste. I have watched her in *Pressure Cooker*, and she's brilliant in her craft!"

Off-screen, life has taken on a new dimension. Now a father to a nine-month-old daughter, Shamol admits he is still adjusting. "It's a process. I'm discovering things as I go along."



Baishakhi concert brings Bangladeshi stars to Oklahoma

A Baishakhi Mela concert will be held in Oklahoma for the first time, bringing together the Bangladeshi diaspora to celebrate the Bengali New Year. Scheduled for May 9, the event is being organised by the Desi Youth Association of Oklahoma.

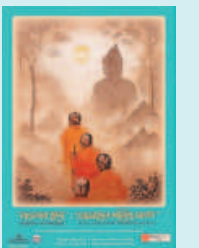
Renowned singer Samina Chowdhury and actor Zayed Khan will headline the concert, alongside performers Parvez Sazzad and Bindu Kona. The programme will feature a mix of music, entertainment, and cultural showcases aimed at creating a festive atmosphere.

Speaking about the event, Zayed Khan said celebrating Bangladeshi culture abroad is a matter of pride and expressed his excitement about engaging with expatriate audiences. Organisers expect the concert to draw strong participation from the local Bangladeshi community.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Buddha of Bengal: Our Sacred Community'

A contemplative showcase of Bengali Buddhist artistic heritage unfolds at *Buddha of Bengal: Our Sacred Community* brings together 91 works spanning sculpture, miniature, and contemporary expression, tracing a living tradition shaped by artists, students, and institutions across Bangladesh in a shared space of reflection and craft.



DATE: APRIL 28 – MAY 6, 2026
TIME: 2 PM – 8 PM
VENUE: ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA, DHANMONDI

NEWS

2 unregulated toxic chemicals

FROM PAGE 12

with hormonal balance and are linked to reproductive disorders, developmental abnormalities and cancer, the report said.

The report recommends urgent policy action, including restricting the high-risk additives in consumer products, developing chemical-specific regulations, and introducing mandatory labelling and disclosure systems.

"It would be very dangerous if we ignore the issue of highly toxic additives," said Siddika Sultana, executive director of the Environment and Social Development Organisation (ESDO).

They pose serious risks, particularly for children and women of reproductive age, but existing laws do not address this, she said.

The ESDO prepared the report as part of a global initiative led by the International Pollutants Elimination Network, which was presented by its assistant programme officer Sadmeen Sadaf Jahan at an event yesterday.

Currently, Bangladesh produces more than 3 million tonnes of plastic annually, with a domestic market valued at more than \$3 billion and an annual growth rate of approximately 20 percent.

Public and policy discussions have largely focused on visible plastic pollution.

The chemical composition of plastics, particularly the use of hazardous additives such as phthalates and bisphenols as plasticisers, remains a critical but underexplored issue.

Besides, the industry is heavily reliant on imported raw materials and chemical additives, she said, adding that around 15 shipments of Bisphenol A (BPA) were imported in 2025.

The chemicals are widely used across multiple sectors, including food packaging and plastic containers, children's toys and school supplies, thermal paper receipts, flexible PVC products and adhesives, coatings and printing inks.

Children are vulnerable to chemical exposure due to frequent contact with toys and school supplies.

Retail workers are also exposed to continuous handling of BPA-containing receipts, while communities in industrial areas are exposed through polluted water, air and food.

Citing a 2023 study by Jahangirnagar University students and teachers, she said industrial areas such as Savar and Tongi found significant concentrations of phthalates, posing ecological and carcinogenic risks.

In 2022, an ESDO study found 30

out of 47 erasers used by schoolchildren contained phthalates, she said.

A joint study by ESDO and the Wonjin Institute in 2022 analysed 39 thermal paper receipts collected from various retail outlets in Dhaka and found BPA in 67.5 of samples.

ESDO Secretary General Shahriar Hossain said the plastics sector is growing rapidly, but chemical safety governance has not kept pace.

Without urgent action, hazardous additives will continue to threaten public health, workers and the environment, he said.

People's consumption of foods exposed to different chemicals is one of the reasons behind the rise in non-communicable diseases in the country, said Tahmina Shirin, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research.

Referring to the study, she said the evidence generated in the study should be incorporated into the government's policy.

The report should serve as a wake-up call for policymakers, said ESDO Chairman Margub Morshed.

Bangladesh now has an opportunity to build a modern regulatory framework that safeguards health while supporting responsible industrial development, he added.

'Don't exploit July uprising'

FROM PAGE 12

Calling the 13th National Parliament "a historical exception," Zahir Uddin said politics was largely confined to a two-party structure in the past, but this time, the voting statistics and the composition of parliament reflect a different reality.

"For the first time, if we look at the voting data and the composition of this parliament, we cannot say where the supporters of fascism who once fled have cast their votes. The magical numbers of this election deserve research," he said.

He noted that Jamaat's independent vote share never exceeded five percent, but this time the statistics have changed.

Referring to Jamaat's past role, he added, "As the leading party of the 11 Party Alliance, Jamaat and its colleagues must remember that they opposed the great Liberation War of 1971. Even now, many of their speeches declare they want to establish Sharia law."

On the roots of political behaviour, he said, "When someone uses religion for politics, when someone tries to trade on the spirit of independence, then such parties and leaders inevitably face problems in their conduct."

Highlighting BNP's repeated leadership during national crises, Swapon said the BNP relied only on political, democratic, constitutional processes and reasoning. Appealing to the opposition, he urged, "Just as all have participated unitedly in committees, please try to remain constructive in other behaviours too."

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman said the Jamaat did not, in effect, oppose the passage of the Jatiya Muktijoddha Council bill that had established who had opposed Bangladesh's independence war in 1971.

He explained that the definition of "Bir Muktijoddha" (valiant freedom fighter) in the 2026 bill includes those who fought against the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators, namely the then Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Nezame Islami, and the auxiliary forces Al-Badr, Al-Shams, and Razakars. The law was passed in parliament with written endorsement from the National Council Party (NCP), a member of the Jamaat-led alliance.

"As a matter of law and interpretation, it is now established who opposed the 1971 war of independence, who were

involved in killings, disappearances, rapes, and in taking countless lives of Bangladeshis," Asaduzzaman said.

He also said that out of the four referendum questions, the BNP had no objection to three and a half of them. "The remaining half question," he quipped, "was half love, half deception."

He added, "During the election campaign, I heard with my own ears that someone was selling tickets to heaven."

Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain said the July mass uprising did not happen suddenly; it was the result of years of accumulated anger, movements, and resistance.

"A volcanic eruption does not occur in a single day, so the July uprising too was not born overnight," he said.

Addressing the opposition, Sakhawat said the government was showing tolerance in the interest of the country, but needless provocation was unacceptable.

He cautioned that while unity should be emphasised in parliament, statements that deepen division should not be made.

State Minister for Energy Aninda Islam Amit said the body language of opposition members sometimes frightens him.

US may tighten Iran blockade

FROM PAGE 12

and gas shipments from the Gulf — since the US and Israel launched the war two months ago, sending shockwaves through the global economy. But its own economy is also suffering.

Yesterday, the Iranian rial fell to historic lows against the dollar, while Tehran residents speaking to AFP journalists in Paris reported a sense of despair.

During a White House state dinner Tuesday, Trump told Britain's King Charles III and other guests that Iran has been "militarily defeated," and added: "Charles agrees with me even more than I do — we're never going to let that opponent have a nuclear weapon."

But an Iranian army spokesman told state TV on Tuesday that "we do not consider the war to be over," saying Tehran had "no trust in America."

"We have many cards that we have not yet used... new tools and methods of fighting based on the experiences of the past two wars, which will definitely

allow us to respond to the enemy more decisively" should the fighting resume, Amir Akraminia said in an interview.

Efforts to end the war have stalled in recent days. The latest Iranian proposal, passed along by Pakistan and studied by Trump administration officials in a meeting Monday, laid out red lines including on nuclear issues and Hormuz, according to Iran's Fars news agency.

The plan would reportedly see Tehran ease its chokehold on the strait and Washington lift its retaliatory blockade while broader negotiations continue, including over the nuclear programme.

Iranian defence ministry spokesman Reza Talei-Nik said Washington "must abandon its illegal and irrational demands".

"The United States is no longer in a position to dictate its policy to independent nations," he said, according to state TV.

Qatar — a US ally that was hit by Iranian strikes despite its role as a

mediator — warned of the possibility of a "frozen conflict" if a definitive resolution is not found.

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

Meanwhile, Hegseth sought to defend the Iran war in fiery remarks to Congress yesterday, saying it was not a quagmire and attacking Democratic lawmakers as "feckless" for criticising the unpopular conflict.

"You call it a quagmire, handing propaganda to our enemies? Shame on you for that statement," Hegseth said before the House Armed Services Committee, slamming "reckless, feckless, and defeatist" Congressional Democrats.

Brent is above the level it hit before the two sides announced a ceasefire in early April, sitting at around \$113, while West Texas Intermediate broke \$101.

42 candidates barred from SCBA polls

FROM PAGE 12

polls were two candidates for president, seven for secretary, two for treasurer, 10 for assistant secretaries, and 21 for executive members.

SCBA Senior Vice-President and a member of its election sub-committee Md Humayun Kabir Manju confirmed the development to The Daily Star yesterday.

Manju, a pro-BNP lawyer currently serving as a deputy attorney general, said that scrutiny revealed their "direct

and indirect involvement" with Awami League activities.

With the cancellations, 48 candidates remain valid to contest the election scheduled for May 13-14.

Disqualified lawyers strongly protested the move, arguing they submitted nominations individually, not on behalf of any party.

Md Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury, a veteran lawyer and disqualified presidential candidate, called the

decision "illegal and condemnable".

"This unprecedented and farcical conduct by the ad hoc committee will remain a disgraceful chapter in the 77-year history of the Supreme Court Bar Association," he said.

Incumbent SCBA Secretary Md Mahfuzur Rahman Milon confirmed the decision of not allowing pro-Awami League lawyers to contest but declined to share the resolution, calling it an internal matter.

'They're family'

FROM PAGE 12

He faces two counts of first-degree murder with a weapon, alongside other charges.

Prosecutors expect to present the case to a grand jury on May 7, with the possibility of capital punishment if convicted.

Abugharbieh, Limon's roommate and a former USF student, was charged last week with first-degree murder. Limon's remains were found on Friday, while the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office said it found additional remains over the weekend that it has not yet identified.

Limon and Bristy came to Tampa in 2024 and 2025, respectively, for higher studies at the University of South Florida. Bristy was studying chemical engineering, while Limon was studying geography, environmental science & policy.

The doctoral students disappeared on April 16. With their families still in Bangladesh, their classmates and friends stepped in to represent them during the case status hearing for the suspect.

"What you need to understand is that we Bangladeshi people live as a family here," said Abir al Hasib Shourav, a friend present in the courtroom.

"It is a lot to process. When we come here, 8,000 miles away from home, these people become our family or everything here, and we meet them at all events," another friend, Rifatul Islam, said.

"It is not acceptable. We are shocked that the place that should be our safe place — our home, our own rooms, our own kitchens — they were murdered there. I don't know what to say; there are no words for that," he added. State Attorney Suzy Lopez praised

the Bangladeshi students' presence. "It's wonderful to know their friends are embracing the two people they've lost and want to be part of this process to get justice."

Investigators said a third roommate told them that Abugharbieh used a cart to dispose of evidence, including Limon's belongings stained with blood.

Detectives later found blood traces in his bedroom and Bristy's ID cards in Limon's room. Court records also revealed Abugharbieh had asked ChatGPT about disposing of a human body days before the pair vanished.

Zamil's graduate advisor at the University of South Florida, in cooperation with the Bangladesh Student Association, has launched a GoFundMe to support the victims' families. Since the fundraiser's launch on Tuesday, over \$80K has been raised.

Torrential rain submerges

FROM PAGE 3
Kapasgola, Chawk Bazar, Bakalia, Halishahar, and Sholashahar, were inundated with knee to waist deep water. Stagnant water, often mixed with filth overflowing from roadside drains, severely disrupted daily life and vehicle movement.

Residents expressed frustration over the recurring problem. "Filthy drain water has entered my house, bringing suffering to the whole family," said Jamal Uddin from Muradpur.

Kamal Uddin of Chawk Bazar described the situation as "hellish", saying even light rain causes water to enter homes.

Around 1:00pm, Delwara Begum, 60, of the Masterhat

Police Beat area, got critically injured when a retaining wall of a plot collapsed on passers-by in Shikalbaha.

Locals rescued her and took her to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, where she later died, said Sub-Inspector Md Asheq, in charge of the CMCH Police Camp.

Karnaphuli Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shahinur Alam said the wall collapsed due to heavy rain.

During a visit to Prabantak Intersection, Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Dr Shahadat Hossain said temporary dams in canals, set up for construction work, had slowed drainage.

"Dams were placed to facilitate retaining wall

construction, but heavy rain came earlier than expected, causing water to stagnate," he said, adding that the Army and CDA had been asked to remove the obstructions. "The water level has started to recede after the dams were opened."

He said efforts have been made since he took office in 2024 to coordinate with CDA to reduce waterlogging, claiming the situation improved by nearly 50 percent last year.

Despite the mayor's assurance, citizens like Minhaj Uddin of Mehedibagh criticised the lack of long-term solutions.

"We suffer every year, but no effective steps have been taken to address the root causes," he said.

Early morning downpour leaves

FROM PAGE 3
persistent cloud cover, occasional thunder, and gusty winds.

The weather disrupted daily life, particularly for students and office-goers, as waterlogging was reported in several parts of the capital.

Rainwater accumulated on various roads and alleys across the capital, in areas including Tikatuli, Hossaini Dalan, New Market, and in front of the administrative block and emergency unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, as well as Agasadek Road and Rajarbagh.

"I had to wade through water to enter the administrative block of Dhaka Medical College Hospital this morning,"

said Anwar Hossain, a resident of Kazipara.

Traffic movement slowed in several areas, adding to commuters' suffering.

Meteorologist Bazlur Rashid told The Daily Star that the situation may persist, with intermittent rain likely throughout the day.

"The current weather pattern may continue for the next three to four days in different parts of the country," he said.

The Met Office attributed the weather to active thundercloud formation over the country and a developing low-pressure system in the Bay.

Responding to whether the situation qualifies as a

Kalbashakhi (nor'wester) – typically marked by short but intense storms – Bazlur Rashid said the current system is different.

He explained that slow-moving deep convective clouds are causing prolonged, intermittent rainfall, rather than short, intense bursts. The sky may clear temporarily before rain resumes, he added.

According to Met office data, the highest rainfall in the last 24 hours was recorded in Nikli, Kishoreganj, at 160 mm. Bhola recorded 151 mm and Feni 148 mm.

Russel Rahman, public relations officer of Dhaka South City Corporation, said their teams are working to minimise waterlogging in DSSC areas.

Table US trade deal DMP launches AI system

FROM PAGE 3
Rumeen said the ambassador highlighted several issues, including the trade imbalance between the two countries. Bangladesh exports goods to the US but does not import at the same level, resulting in a significant trade imbalance.

"This agreement was signed to address that deficit," she added.

Regarding the agreement being signed days before the election, she said, "Members of civil society and think tanks said an unelected government should not sign such an agreement."

"Unfortunately, the interim government did not heed those concerns and proceeded to sign the agreement on February 9,"

she said.

Rumeen alleged the deal includes provisions against Bangladesh's interests and should have only been signed by an elected government.

She sought additional time, saying the government could cancel the agreement within 60 days if it wished and reiterated her demand that it be placed before Parliament.

However, Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad declined her request. "I am sorry, I cannot accept this as a point of order. A point of order must relate to an ongoing matter of Parliament. You have raised a new issue. Please submit a notice, and it will be considered," he said.

FROM PAGE 3
InterContinental to Jahangir Gate, with 25 cameras installed. Authorities said it will be expanded across the capital in phases.

At present, the system can detect five types of traffic violations through camera surveillance, with more features to be added later.

The other systems launched are the Hotel Boarder Information System, Hello DMP, DMP Online Training System, DMP Residence Allocation System, DMP Leave Management System, DMP Traffic Duty Distribution Software, DMP Employee Performance Evaluation Software, and DMP Traffic News Archive.

Speaking at the event, the IGP said technology is reshaping both development and crime, with offenders using more advanced methods. "To tackle these evolving crimes, police must ensure maximum use of technology," he said.

He described the new systems as timely initiatives to strengthen modern policing. The AI-based traffic system, he said, will help identify offenders quickly, improve discipline, reduce accidents, and enhance traffic management.

He added that the Hotel Boarder Information System would improve security and guest management in residential

hotels, aiding crime prevention and intelligence work.

The "Hello DMP" platform will allow citizens to access services, lodge complaints, and seek assistance more easily, he said.

Acting DMP Commissioner Md Sarwar said the systems aim to build a modern, people-friendly police force. He noted that the traffic enforcement software, developed locally, will digitise case processing and improve enforcement.

He added that DMP plans to install 11,000 CCTV cameras and take action against violators after verifying videos submitted by citizens.

Ongoing

FROM PAGE 3
Entomologist Kabirul Bashar, a professor at Jahangirnagar University, said in Dhaka, almost every area has a Breteau Index above 20, with some areas exceeding 90 – an alarming indication of dengue risk. He warned that dengue cases this year could surpass last year's figures if immediate measures are not taken.

A Breteau Index (BI) of 20 – meaning 20 positive containers per 100 houses inspected – is a recognised public health and epidemiological threshold indicating a high likelihood of a dengue outbreak. Such levels suggest that Aedes mosquito breeding conditions are highly favourable and that vector control measures must be intensified immediately.

"With this rainfall, water will accumulate in many small and large containers. If proper breeding source management is not ensured now, the density of mosquito breeding sites will increase further," he said, referring to recent research conducted at Jahangirnagar University.

He added that mosquito density is likely to rise through May and June, while dengue cases – already appearing at a low level – are expected to increase gradually, with a possible surge in July and August.

"The situation may be worse than last year. Not only in Dhaka, but in districts outside the capital, conditions could deteriorate further," he warned.

He also noted a lack of effective interventions outside Dhaka, which could accelerate the spread of dengue in the coming months, he said.

To address the situation, he emphasised the urgent need to strengthen and reorganise local government systems and prepare them to respond effectively.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman said, "We need to focus on environmental measures – clearing breeding sites, activating early warning systems, and preparing in advance. While these measures are not perfect, they are essential. At the same time, insecticides must be applied properly, but there has been a lack of preparation in this regard," he said.

He also stressed routine mosquito control programmes.

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Establish

FROM PAGE 3
board to implement Islamic law. He proposed that madrasa-educated MPs, scholars from different schools of thought, and Ahle Hadith clerics be included in such a board to advise on introducing Islamic law in the country.

Mujibur said Awami League came to power six times, BNP five times, and Jatiya Party twice, but none of these governments implemented any law from the Quran, calling it "the most shameful and painful reality".



PUBALI BANK PLC.

REGISTERED OFFICE
26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Recommendation for Cash Dividend & Stock Dividend for the year 2025

This is to notify for all concerned that the Board of Directors of Pubali Bank PLC. in its 1515th Board Meeting held on **Wednesday, 29 April 2026** at 05.30 PM considered and approved the **Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2025** and recommended for payment of Cash Dividend & issuance of Stock Dividend for the year ended 31 December 2025 to the Shareholders as given below:

a) Cash Dividend @ 15% (Fifteen Percent)

b) Stock Dividend @ 15% (Fifteen Percent)

1. The Board also disclosed the following information from the Audited Financial Statements for the Year 2025, comparing them to those of the previous year 2024:

Particulars	2025		2024	
	Solo	Consolidated	Solo	Consolidated
i) Earnings Per Share (EPS) (Taka)	8.30	8.38	*5.86	*5.99
ii) Net Asset Value (NAV) (Taka in Crore)	6,961.20	7,069.54	5,260.59	5,358.38
iii) NAV Per Share (Taka)	53.49	54.32	*40.42	*41.17
iv) Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)(Taka)	32.12	32.04	*54.84	*54.85

*** Restated**

EPS: The significant improvement of basic EPS during the year ended 2025 Tk. 8.30 (cons. EPS Tk. 8.38) compared to same period of last year basic EPS Tk. 5.86 (Cons. EPS Tk. 5.99) mainly due to the increase of net interest/profit income, net investment income from investment in Govt. securities, commission income and other operating income.

Net Asset Value Per Share has increased compared to that of last year due to the increase of net profit after taxes during the period. Last year's NAVPS figure is adjusted by the reciprocal of the stock issue and effect of the fact considered in the financial statements retrospectively.

NOCFPS indicates a decreasing trend during the year ended 2025 Tk. 32.12 (cons. Tk. 32.04) compared to same period of last year Tk. 54.84 (Cons. Tk. 54.85). This significant changes demonstrates bank's focus on high-yield investment in trading securities, payment of outside liabilities and digital transformation.

Reasons for recommendation of stock dividend:

- Stock Dividend has been recommended to strengthen the capital base of the Bank in order to support projected business growth and to improve certain regulatory ratios.
- Stock Dividend is recommended out of profit; and
- Stock Dividend is not recommended from capital reserve or revaluation reserve or any unrealized gain or out of profit earned prior to incorporation of the Bank or through reducing paid-up capital or through doing anything so that the post dividend retained earnings become negative or a debit balance.

2. The Board also decided to hold the 43rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Pubali Bank PLC. using digital platform as per following schedule:

Day & Date	: Tuesday, 16 June 2026
Time	: 11.00 AM (Bangladesh Standard Time)
Record Date	: Wednesday, 20 May 2026

By order of the Board of Directors
sd/-
Md. Anisur Rahman
General Manager & Company Secretary

Dated: 29 April 2026
Dhaka, Bangladesh

NOTES:

- The Shareholders whose names would appear in the Register of Members of the Company (Pubali Bank PLC.) and/or in the Depository Register on the Record Date (Wednesday, 20 May 2026), will be entitled to receive the Dividends and to join the Annual General Meeting.
- The Shareholders under BO accounts are requested to update the particulars of their Bank Account (Bank & Branch Name, Account Number, Branch Routing Number), Name, signature and Mailing Address including mobile/land phone number, e-mail address etc. through Depository Participant (DP) before the 'Record Date' i.e. 20 May 2026. The folio shareholders are also requested to update their mobile no. through Share Department of Registered Office of the Bank before 'Record Date' i.e. 20 May 2026.
- The Members under BO Accounts are requested to update e-TIN in their BO Accounts through their respective Depository Participant (DP) and members under folio accounts are requested to submit e-TIN certificate to Share Department of Registered Office of the Bank before the 'Record Date' i.e. 20 May 2026. If anyone fails to update e-TIN in his/her BO/Folio accounts before the 'Record Date', disbursement of any cash dividend will be made (other than a company) after deduction of Advance Income Tax (AIT) @15% (fifteen percent) instead of 10% (ten percent) as per Income Tax Act, 2023.
- Merchant Banks and Depository Participants (DPs) are requested to provide the Company a statement with details (Shareholder Name, BO ID, Client-wise shareholding position and applicable tax rate) of their margin loan holders who hold shares of the Company as on 'Record Date' along with the Bank Account name & number, routing number etc. of the Merchant Banks & DPs within 08 June 2026 including name of the contact person otherwise dividend to be credited to the bank account of the respective shareholders.





UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA


MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL FINANCE (MPF)
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Admission Notice

For Application: mpf.finanancedu.ac.bd/admission
Application last date: May 4, 2026, **Admission test date:** May 8, 2026 (Friday) at 10:00 AM (Written) and 11:15 AM (Viva-voce).

For more information: MPF Program Office (Room 4005), 3rd Floor
MBA Building, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka
Email: mpf@du.ac.bd; Cell: +8801725288250 and +8801914379230.

বিশ্বব্যাপক, জ্ঞাননি ও বনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়

নর্দান ইলেকট্রনিক্স সিস্টেমস পাইলট প্রকল্প
(বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ব উন্নয়ন বোর্ডের একটি প্রতিষ্ঠান)

উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক (প্রশাসন ও মানব সম্পদ উন্নয়ন) এর
পত্র

প্রধান কার্যালয়: বিশ্বব্যাপক, হেতেম বা,
রাজশাহী-৬০০০
www.nesco.gov.bd

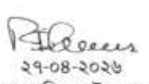
নম্বর: ২৭.২৯.০০০০.০০০.০১১.১১.০০০২.২৪.৩৪৫
তারিখ: ১৪ বৈশাখ ১৪৩৩ বঙ্গাব্দ
২৭ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিষয়: নেসকো'র সাহায্যকারী (গ্রেড-১৫) পদে চলমান নিয়োগ এ পদসংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি।

সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে অবগত করা যাচ্ছে যে, বিগত ১৫/০৪/২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখে অনুষ্ঠিত নেসকো পরিচালনা পর্ষদের ২৩১তম সভার সিদ্ধান্ত মোতাবেক নেসকো'র চলমান নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লেখিত সাহায্যকারী (গ্রেড-১৫) এর সরাসরি নিয়োগযোগ্য শূন্যপদ ২৬টি থেকে ৬৫টিতে বৃদ্ধি করা হয়েছে।

২। যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদনক্রমে এ সার্কুলার জারি করা হলো।


 ২৭-০৪-২০২৬
 মোঃ রফিকুল ইসলাম
 মহাব্যবস্থাপক (প্রশাসন ও মানব সম্পদ উন্নয়ন)

GD-965



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Home Affairs
Office of the Directorate of Personnel
Bangladesh Coast Guard Headquarters
Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

Invitation for Tender

IFT No. 44.08.2680.040.07.017.26.189 Date: 28 April 2026

e-Tender Notice

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

Ser	Tender ID	Package name	Method	Date & Time		
				Publication	Last selling	Closing and opening
1	1263505	Procurement of Pathological Reagents & Miscellaneous Items for BCG-2 [IFT No. 44.08.2680.040.07.017.26.189]	OTM	30/04/2026 at 14:00	14/05/2026 at 15:00	14/05/2026 at 16:00

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


Deputy Director (Medical)
 For Director Personnel

GD-964

ক্রোড়পত্র নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস-২০২৬

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



বাণী

যুব ও ক্রীড়া মন্ত্রণালয়ের উদ্যোগে দেশব্যাপী তৃণমূল পর্যায় থেকে শিশু-কিশোরদের ক্রীড়া প্রতিভা অন্বেষণে 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস' আয়োজিত হতে যাচ্ছে যেনে আমি অত্যন্ত আনন্দিত। বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে শিশু-কিশোরদের প্রতিভা বিকাশের জন্য ঐতিহ্যবাহী 'নতুন কুঁড়ি' অনুষ্ঠানের যে ঐতিহাসিক পটভূমি রয়েছে, তারই অনুপ্রেরণায় দেশের ক্রীড়াঙ্গনকে আরও সুসংগঠিত করার লক্ষ্যে এবার সারাদেশ থেকে খুঁজে ক্রীড়া প্রতিভা খুঁজে বের করে আনতে বর্তমান সরকারের এই নতুন প্রয়াস।

খেলাধুলা আজ কেবল নিছক বিনোদন বা অবসরে শরীরচর্চা নয়; বিশ্বজুড়ে এটি একটি সম্মানজনক ও লাভজনক পেশা হিসেবে স্বীকৃত। দেশের জনগণের কাছে আমাদের সুস্পষ্ট প্রতিশ্রুতি ছিল, আমরা ক্রীড়াকে একটি মর্যাদাপূর্ণ পেশা হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করব এবং খেলোয়াড়দের অর্থনৈতিক নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত করব। ইতোমধ্যে সরকার জনগণের কাছে দেওয়া অঙ্গীকার বাস্তবায়ন শুরু করে দিয়েছে। এরই অংশ হিসেবে শিশু-কিশোরদের মধ্য থেকে নতুন ক্রীড়া প্রতিভা অন্বেষণে শুরু হচ্ছে 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস'। এই আয়োজনের মাধ্যমে দেশব্যাপী ১২ থেকে ১৪ বছর বয়সী শিশু-কিশোরদের মধ্য থেকে সুষ্ট প্রতিভা খুঁজে বের করে তাদের জন্য একটি টেকসই ও পেশাদার প্রায়টফর্ম তৈরি করা হবে।

একটি সুস্থ, সবল ও মেধাবী প্রজন্ম গড়ে তুলতে খেলাধুলার কোনো বিকল্প নেই। বর্তমান সময়ে তরুণ সমাজকে মানসিক, সামাজিক অবক্ষয় এবং অতিরিক্ত ডিভাইস-আসক্তি থেকে নিরাপদ রাখতে ক্রীড়া চর্চা সবচেয়ে কার্যকর ভূমিকা পালন করবে বলে আমি বিশ্বাস করি। 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস' শিশু-কিশোরদের মধ্যে শৃঙ্খলা, ভ্রাতৃত্ববোধ, নেতৃত্ব এবং দলগত ঐক্যের চেতনা জাগ্রত করবে, যা হবে একটি আদর্শ ও শক্তিশালী রাষ্ট্র গঠনের মূলভিত্তি।

যেসব কিশোর-কিশোরী খেলাধুলায় নিজেদের প্রতিভার স্বাক্ষর রাখবে, তারা যেন ভবিষ্যতে কোনো অর্থনৈতিক অনিশ্চয়তায় না পড়ে এবং নিশ্চিন্তে খেলাধুলাকেই পেশা হিসেবে গ্রহণ করতে পারে, সরকার ইতোমধ্যে সে লক্ষ্যে কাজ শুরু করেছে। নির্বাচিত প্রতিভাবান খেলোয়াড়দের জন্য রাষ্ট্রীয় ক্রীড়াবৃত্তি, বাংলাদেশ ক্রীড়া শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান (বি.কে.এসপি)-এর মাধ্যমে বিশ্বমানের প্রশিক্ষণ এবং আধুনিক সুযোগ-সুবিধা নিশ্চিত করতে কার্যকর পদক্ষেপ নেওয়া হয়েছে। আমাদের লক্ষ্য সারাদেশ থেকে অন্বেষিত ক্রীড়া প্রতিভাগুলো পরিচর্যা ও প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে এমনভাবে প্রস্তুত করা, যাতে অদূর ভবিষ্যতে এই খুঁজে ক্রীড়া প্রতিভাগুলো থেকেই বিভিন্ন স্পোর্টস ইভেন্টে দেশসেরা ক্রীড়া তারকা তৈরি হয়। আমাদের পরিকল্পনা সফল হলে এই তারকারা শুধু দেশেই নয়, আন্তর্জাতিক পরিসরেও বাংলাদেশের লাল-সবুজ পতাকাকে আরও উচুতে তুলে ধরতে পারবে, ইনশাআল্লাহ।

আমি বিশ্বাস করি, সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের সমন্বিত ও আন্তরিক প্রচেষ্টায় 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস' দেশের ক্রীড়াঙ্গনে একটি টেকসই এবং যুগান্তকারী পরিবর্তন নিয়ে আসবে।

আমি 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস'-এর সর্বাঙ্গীণ সাফল্য কামনা করছি।

তারেক রহমান



ক্রীড়া হলে পেশা
পরিবার পাবে ভরসা



ক্রীড়া পরিদপ্তর



স্বপ্নের পথে, বিজয়ের সাথে

নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস-২০২৬ শুভ উদ্বোধন

প্রধান অতিথি

জনাব তারেক রহমান এমপি
মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

০২ মে ২০২৬। বিকাল ৩:০০ ঘটিকা। সিলেট জেলা স্টেডিয়াম

একই সময়ে সকল জেলায় নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস ২০২৬ এর
প্রতিযোগিতা একযোগে শুরু হবে।

১২ থেকে ১৪ বছরের কিশোর/ কিশোরীরা ফুটবল, ক্রিকেট,
কাবাডি, অ্যাথলেটিক্স, দাবা, ব্যাডমিন্টন, সাঁতার, মার্শাল আর্ট
ইভেন্টে অংশগ্রহণ করবে।

ভিজিট করুন:

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মাননীয় প্রতিমন্ত্রী
যুব ও ক্রীড়া মন্ত্রণালয়
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাণী

বাংলাদেশের প্রত্যন্ত অঞ্চলে ছড়িয়ে রয়েছে অসংখ্য কিশোর-কিশোরী, যাদের মাঝে রয়েছে অসীম ক্রীড়া প্রতিভা। তৃণমূল পর্যায় থেকে দেশের এই প্রতিভাবান ক্রীড়াবিদদের খুঁজে বের করার লক্ষ্যে যুব ও ক্রীড়া মন্ত্রণালয় গ্রহণ করেছে একটি সময়োপযোগী ও সুদূরপ্রসারী উদ্যোগ। আশির দশকের বহুল জনপ্রিয় প্রতিভা অন্বেষণ কর্মসূচি 'নতুন কুঁড়ি'র সফলতার ধারাবাহিকতায় দেশব্যাপী আয়োজিত হচ্ছে 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস' যা হবে আগামী দিনের ক্রীড়াবিদ তৈরির এক শক্তিশালী প্রায়টফর্ম।

সঠিক দিকনির্দেশনা, প্রশিক্ষণ ও সুযোগের অভাবে আমাদের ছেলেমেয়েদের প্রতিভা অনেক সময়ই অপ্রকাশিত থেকে যায়। 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস' সেই অপ্রকাশিত প্রতিভাকে তুলে আনার এক সুসংগঠিত প্রয়াস, যা তৃণমূল পর্যায় থেকে শুরু করে জাতীয় পর্যায় পর্যন্ত প্রতিযোগিতার মাধ্যমে সেরা প্রতিভাগুলোকে বিকশিত হওয়ার সুযোগ করে দেবে।

এই কর্মসূচির অন্যতম লক্ষ্য ক্রীড়াকে একটি সম্মানজনক পেশা হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠা করা। নির্বাচিত প্রতিভাবান খেলোয়াড়দের জন্য থাকবে সরকারি ক্রীড়া বৃত্তি যা তাদের আর্থিক সহায়তা নিশ্চিত করবে। পাশাপাশি বাংলাদেশ ক্রীড়া শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান (বি.কে.এসপি)-এর মাধ্যমে তাদের উন্নত প্রশিক্ষণ, শিক্ষার সুযোগ এবং সার্বিক দায়িত্ব গ্রহণ করা হবে, যাতে তারা আন্তর্জাতিক মানের ক্রীড়াবিদ হিসেবে নিজেদের গড়ে তুলতে পারে।

বর্তমান প্রেক্ষাপটে তরুণ প্রজন্মকে মানসিক ও অতিরিক্ত ডিভাইস নির্ভরতা থেকে দূরে রাখা একটি বড় চ্যালেঞ্জ। 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস' এই চ্যালেঞ্জ মোকাবেলায় একটি কার্যকর ভূমিকা পালন করবে বলে আমি দৃঢ়ভাবে বিশ্বাস করি। খেলাধুলার মাধ্যমে গড়ে উঠবে শৃঙ্খলাবোধ, দলগত চেতনা এবং ইতিবাচক মানসিকতা যা একটি সুস্থ, সচেতন ও কর্মঠ জাতি গঠনে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অবদান রাখবে।

এই উদ্যোগের মাধ্যমে দেশের ক্রীড়াঙ্গনে নতুন উদ্দীপনা সৃষ্টি হবে এবং দীর্ঘমেয়াদে আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যায়ে বাংলাদেশের অবস্থান আরো সুদৃঢ় হবে বলে আমি আশাবাদী। প্রতিভা, পরিশ্রম এবং সঠিক পৃষ্ঠপোষকতার সমন্বয়ে 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস' হয়ে উঠবে আগামী দিনের ক্রীড়া উন্নয়নের একটি মাইলফলক।

আমি বিশ্বাস করি, এই আয়োজন দেশের কিশোর-কিশোরীদের জন্য নতুন স্বপ্ন দেখার এবং সেই স্বপ্ন বাস্তবায়নের একটি অন্যতম সুযোগ তৈরি করবে। একইসাথে এটি বাংলাদেশের ক্রীড়াঙ্গনকে আরো গতিশীল, অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক এবং সম্ভাবনাময় করে তুলবে।

মোঃ আমিনুল হক



সচিব
যুব ও ক্রীড়া মন্ত্রণালয়
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস এর প্রেক্ষাপট

অমিত সম্ভাবনা এবং অফুরন্ত তরুণের দেশ আমাদের এই বাংলাদেশ। স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশের অন্তর্নিহিত ক্রীড়া সম্ভাবনাকে একটি সুনির্দিষ্ট কাঠামোর ওপর দাঁড় করিয়ে বৈশ্বিক পর্যায়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার প্রথম বীজ বপন করেছিলেন এক দূরদর্শী ক্রীড়াপ্রেমী রাষ্ট্রনায়ক, শহীদ রাষ্ট্রপতি জিয়াউর রহমান। দেশের ক্রীড়া কাঠামোর আধুনিক পুনর্নির্মাণ, দেশব্যাপী ভৌত অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন, বি.কে.এসপি প্রতিষ্ঠার যুগান্তকারী উদ্যোগ, ক্রীড়ার জন্য পৃথক মন্ত্রণালয় গঠন এবং কিংবদন্তি বঙ্গার মোহাম্মদ আলীকে ঢাকায় এনে সম্মানসূচক নাগরিকত্ব প্রদানের মধ্য দিয়ে তিনি এদেশের ক্রীড়াঙ্গনকে বিশ্বের বুকে এক অনন্য মর্যাদার আসনে উন্নীত করার সূচনা করেছিলেন।

পরবর্তীতে সেই সোনাখি ধারাবাহিকতাকে আপন দক্ষতায় আরও এগিয়ে নিয়েছেন দেশনেত্রী বেগম খালেদা জিয়া। তাঁর শাসনামলে বাংলাদেশ সাফ গেমসের মতো বড় আসর অত্যন্ত সফলভাবে আয়োজন করে এবং প্রথমবারের মতো সাফ চ্যাম্পিয়নশিপের শিরোপা অর্জন করে। দেশে নতুন ক্রীড়া প্রতিভা এবং বিশেষ করে নারী ক্রীড়াবিদদের উত্থান ও ক্ষমতায়নে তাঁর অবদান অনস্বীকার্য। ঠিক সেই সম্ভাবনাময় সময়েই, তৃণমূল পর্যায়ে প্রতিভা অন্বেষণ এবং দেশের আধুনিক ক্রিকেটের রূপকার হিসেবে নিভৃতে কাজ করে গেছেন বিশিষ্ট ক্রীড়া সংগঠক, শহীদ রাষ্ট্রপতি জিয়াউর রহমান ও দেশনেত্রী বেগম খালেদা জিয়ার কনিষ্ঠ পুত্র আরাফাত রহমান কোকা।

দীর্ঘ প্রতীক্ষার পর আজ তাঁদেরই সুযোগ্য উত্তরসূরি, অনবদ্য ক্রীড়াপ্রেমী মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী জনাব তারেক রহমানের বলিষ্ঠ নেতৃত্বে দেশের ক্রীড়াঙ্গনে এক নতুন ভোরের সূচনা হয়েছে। তাঁর সুস্পষ্ট ও সুদূরপ্রসারী নির্দেশনায় যুব ও ক্রীড়া মন্ত্রণালয় নানামুখী বৈপ্লবিক কর্ম-পরিকল্পনা গ্রহণ করেছে। খেলাধুলাকে একটি নিশ্চিত ও সম্মানজনক পেশা হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠা করা, তৃণমূল পর্যায়ের খেলোয়াড়দের জন্য 'ক্রীড়া কার্ড' ক্রীড়া ভাতার প্রবর্তন করা, দেশের ৪৯৫টি উপজেলায় মানসম্পন্ন ইনডোর স্টেডিয়াম ও ৬৪ জেলায় আধুনিক সুযোগ-সুবিধাসম্পন্ন স্পোর্টস ভিলেজ নির্মাণ এবং বিভাগীয় পর্যায়ে বি.কে.এসপির শাখা সম্প্রসারণের মতো যুগান্তকারী পদক্ষেপগুলো আজ বাস্তবে রূপ নিতে যাচ্ছে। পাশাপাশি গ্রামীণ জনপদে খেলার মাঠের প্রাথমিক ফেরাতে এবং পরিমার্জনশীলতা কমিয়ে দেশে ক্রীড়া সরঞ্জাম উৎপাদন শিল্প গড়ে তুলতেও কাজ করে যাচ্ছে।

এরই এক অবিচ্ছেদ্য অংশ হিসেবে শুরু হতে যাচ্ছে দেশব্যাপী মেধা অন্বেষণের সর্ববৃহৎ মহাযজ্ঞ 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস'। এর মাধ্যমে দেশের নিভৃত পল্লী থেকে উঠে আসবে আগামী দিনের তামিম, হামজা, সাবিনা আর জাহানারা। আমি দৃঢ়ভাবে বিশ্বাস করি, এই সুসংগঠিত উদ্যোগের মধ্য দিয়ে আমাদের তরুণ প্রজন্ম সকল নেতিবাচকতা এড়িয়ে মানসমৃদ্ধ, সুস্থ ও দায়িত্বশীল নাগরিক হিসেবে গড়ে উঠবে। ক্রীড়ার এই অদম্য শক্তিতেই বদলে যাবে আমাদের সমাজ এবং বিশ্বমঞ্চে বুক ফুলিয়ে মাথা উঁচু করে নড়াবে আমাদের প্রিয় মাতৃভূমি বাংলাদেশ।

মোঃ মাহবুব-উল আলম



পরিচালক (যুগ্মসচিব)
ক্রীড়া পরিদপ্তর
যুব ও ক্রীড়া মন্ত্রণালয়

বাস্তবায়ন পরিকল্পনা

তৃণমূল পর্যায় থেকে আগামীর বিশ্বমানের চ্যাম্পিয়ন ও আন্তর্জাতিক মানের ক্রীড়াবিদ খুঁজে বের করার সুনির্দিষ্ট লক্ষ্য নিয়ে যুব ও ক্রীড়া মন্ত্রণালয়ের সার্বিক দিকনির্দেশনায় এবং ক্রীড়া পরিদপ্তরের সরাসরি ব্যবস্থাপনায় আয়োজিত হতে যাচ্ছে দেশের সর্ববৃহৎ প্রতিভা অন্বেষণ কর্মসূচি 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস'। অত্যন্ত আনন্দের বিষয় হলো- আগামী ২ মে ২০২৬ তারিখে মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী জনাব তারেক রহমান, এমপি দেশব্যাপী এই বিশাল ও সময়োপযোগী কর্মসূচির আনুষ্ঠানিক উদ্বোধন করতে যাচ্ছেন; যা দেশের ৬৪টি জেলায় একযোগে বাস্তবায়িত হবে। এই ঐতিহাসিক ও যুগান্তকারী আয়োজনের বাস্তবায়নের অংশীদার হতে পেরে আমি অত্যন্ত গর্বিত ও আনন্দিত।

একটি দেশের ক্রীড়া কাঠামোর মূল ভিত্তি এবং প্রাথমিক হলো তার তৃণমূল পর্যায়। এই কর্মসূচির মাধ্যমে দেশব্যাপী ১২ থেকে ১৪ বছর বয়সী শিশু-কিশোরদের মধ্য থেকে ফুটবল, ক্রিকেট, কাবাডি, দাবা, মার্শাল আর্ট, ব্যাডমিন্টন, সাঁতার ও অ্যাথলেটিক্স ইভেন্টে হতে প্রতিভাবানদের বাছাই করা হবে। মেধা বাছাইয়ের এই প্রক্রিয়াকে স্বচ্ছ ও নিষ্ঠুর হতে উপজেলা পর্যায় থেকে শুরু করে জেলা, বিভাগ এবং চূড়ান্তভাবে জাতীয় পর্যায়ে প্রতিযোগিতার স্তর নির্ধারণ করা হয়েছে।

দেশের ৬৪টি জেলা এবং ৪৯৫টি উপজেলায় একই সাথে এত বিশাল একটি কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়ন করা নিয়মদেহে একটি বিশাল লজিস্টিক ও সাংগঠনিক চ্যালেঞ্জ। তবে জেলা প্রশাসক, উপজেলা নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা, যুব উন্নয়ন অধিদপ্তর এবং নিবেদিতপ্রাণ জেলা ক্রীড়া কর্মকর্তাদের নিরবচ্ছিন্ন সহযোগিতার মাধ্যমে আমরা সকল চ্যালেঞ্জ মোকাবেলা করে নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস শতভাগ বাস্তবায়ন করতে দৃঢ় প্রতিজ্ঞ। স্কুল পর্যায়ে চতুর্থ শ্রেণি থেকেই খেলাধুলাকে পাঠ্যবইয়ের সাথে বাধ্যতামূলক করার যে উদ্যোগ সরকার নিয়েছে, 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস' তার প্রথম সরাসরি ও বাস্তব প্রয়োগ। বাছাইকৃত এই প্রতিভাবান খেলোয়াড়দের সরকারি সম্পূর্ণ ব্যবস্থাপনায় দীর্ঘমেয়াদি ও উন্নত প্রশিক্ষণ, ক্রীড়া বৃত্তি এবং বি.কে.এসপিতে অন্তর্ভুক্তির মাধ্যমে ভবিষ্যতের পেশাদার ক্রীড়াবিদ হিসেবে গড়ে তোলা হবে।

এই কর্মসূচির সফল ও নিষ্ঠুর বাস্তবায়নের ওপরই নির্ভর করছে আগামী দিনে আন্তর্জাতিক স্তরে বাংলাদেশের ক্রীড়ার ভবিষ্যৎ সাফল্য। 'নতুন কুঁড়ি স্পোর্টস'-এর সাথে যুক্ত সকল পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা, প্রশিক্ষক, শিক্ষক, অভিভাবক এবং অংশগ্রহণকারী অপণিত শিশু-কিশোরদের আমি আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন ও শুভেচ্ছা জানাই। আমি আশা করি, সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের সমন্বিত, একনিষ্ঠ ও আন্তরিক প্রয়াসে এই উদ্যোগ অচিরেই দেশের সবচেয়ে সফল ও ফলপ্রসূ ক্রীড়া কর্মসূচিতে পরিণত হবে।

মোঃ মাহবুবুর রহমান

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Bangladesh women vs Sri Lanka women 2nd T20I
Live from 1:30 pm
SONY SPORTS
1,2,5

Europa League Semifinals
Live from 1:00 am (Friday)
Conference League Semifinals
Live from 1:00 am

(Friday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
IPL
Gujarat vs Bengaluru
Live from 8:00 pm

History makers settle for silver

SPORTS REPORTER

After scripting a piece of history in the country's sports, the Bangladesh women's hockey team had to settle for the runners-up trophy in the Asian Games Qualifiers after surrendering a lead to suffer a 3-1 defeat to favourites Chinese Taipei in the final at the GBK Stadium in Jakarta, Indonesia yesterday.

Bangladesh travelled to Jakarta hoping to secure a place in the upcoming Asian Games in Japan by finishing among the top four, and a second-place finish in the eight-nation tournament is a significant achievement



for the senior women's side, who were participating in an international tournament for the first time following a journey of less than five years.

The women in red and green had given Chinese Taipei a tough challenge in the pool-stage match, which ended in a thrilling 5-5 draw. However, in the final, inexperience and defensive frailties proved costly against an opponent, who had also defeated Bangladesh in the Junior (U-21) AHF Cup in Singapore in 2024.

The final proved to be a bit of a mismatch as Bangladesh lagged behind in experience despite showing some scintillating build-up play on the blue turf.

Orpita Pal gave Bangladesh a deserved lead by converting a penalty corner in the eighth minute, but a fragile backline allowed Chinese Taipei to strike back with two quick goals.

Bangladesh struggled to contain their experienced opponents during transitions and counter-attacks, conceding all three goals from such situations, with defender Neelandri Barua making costly errors in the first two.

Although Bangladesh looked comfortable in possession with crisp passing, they lacked composure inside the striking circle. A lack of variation in penalty corners also made it easier for Chinese Taipei to defend.

Chinese Taipei equalised through open play in the 17th minute when Neelandri failed to control the ball inside the circle, allowing Lai Ya-Han to set up Wang Yu-Chiu, who made no mistake.

Another defensive lapse from Neelandri in transition led to Fan Hui-Yun assisting Mao I-Hsuan, who gave Chinese Taipei the lead in the 32nd minute. Moments later, Zhu Yi-Chun struck the post, sparing Bangladesh further damage.

Kona Akther thought she had equalised in the 33rd minute during a goalmouth scramble, but the effort was disallowed. Chinese Taipei then sealed the match in the 40th minute, with Huang Yu-Ting finishing from Mao I-Hsuan's powerful strike.



The Champions League delivered a night for the ages in Paris yesterday, where reigning champions PSG edged Bayern Munich 5-4 in one of the competition's greatest ever semifinal clashes. In a breathless contest between the season's two most prolific sides, Bayern struck first through a 17th-minute penalty from Harry Kane before Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Joao Neves turned it around for PSG. Michael Olise levelled with a brilliant solo effort before Ousmane Dembele's stoppage-time penalty made it 3-2 at the break. PSG looked out of sight when Kvaratskhelia and Dembele struck twice in two minutes to make it 5-2 by the 58th minute, but Bayern roared back. Dayot Upamecano and Luis Diaz scored in a three-minute burst to cut the deficit to one, keeping the tie finely poised ahead of the return leg in Munich next week.

Madness in Paris

● With nine goals, this is the joint-highest scoring semifinal match in European Cup/Champions League history, matching Rangers 3-6 Eintracht Frankfurt (1959-60), and the highest-scoring Champions League semifinal.

"This is what happens when two teams with the same philosophy face each other, you get thunder and lightning. We can score goals, we've shown that, and we will do it at home too."

Bayern coach **Vincent Kompany**

"I've never seen such intensity, physical level and pace. We deserved to win, we deserved to draw and we deserved to lose today. It was a fantastic game -- the best match I've been in as a manager. No doubts."

PSG coach **Luis Enrique**



PHOTOS: AFP/FACEBOOK

● PSG coach Luis Enrique reached 50 Champions League wins in just 77 matches -- the fastest in the competition's history.

● PSG (43) and Bayern (42) made this the first Champions League campaign with two teams scoring 40+ goals.

● Since joining PSG last year, only Harry Kane (21) has more Champions League goal involvements than Khvicha Kvaratskhelia (13 goals, 7 assists).

● Bayern conceded five goals in Europe

for the first time since their 5-2 defeat to Ajax in the 1994-95 Champions League semifinal second leg.

● Bayern's front three -- Kane (54), Olise (20) and Diaz (26) -- have combined for 100 goals this season. All three have 10+ Champions League goal involvements in 2025-26, a first for the club.

● Michael Olise is the only player in Europe's top five leagues with 20+ goals and 20+ assists this season (20 goals, 25 assists).

42 DAYS TO GO



Oldest to find the net

The record for the oldest goalscorer in World Cup history belongs to Cameroon's legendary striker Roger Milla. He scored against Russia in the group stage of the 1994 tournament in the United States at the age of 42 years and 39 days. However, his team suffered a 6-1 defeat in that match. In the same game, Russia's striker Oleg Salenko became the only player in World Cup history to score five goals in a single match.

****Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'Hand of God or the Devil's claw?'**

Zaragoza keeper given 13-game ban

AFP, Madrid

The Spanish football federation banned Real Zaragoza goalkeeper Esteban Andrada for 13 matches on Wednesday after he punched a Huesca player in the face.

The federation's disciplinary committee said in a statement both the Argentina international and his club would also be fined, after he was first sent off and then "attacked" Huesca's Jorge Pulido in the second tier derby clash last Sunday.

Andrada was issued a 12 match ban for the punch itself, while his initial red card carries an automatic one-match ban, ruling him out for the rest of the season dealing a blow to Zaragoza's hopes in their battle to avoid relegation.

The 35-year-old, on loan from Mexican side Monterrey, shoved over Pulido and was shown a second yellow card for the incident.

Andrada then became enraged, running to hit Pulido and sparking a brawl on the pitch in stoppage time.

"The truth is I'm very, very sorry for what happened," said Andrada afterwards.

"It's not a good image for the club, for the fans, and especially not for a professional like myself. So, I'm very sorry."

Rain washes out 2nd NZ T20I



****Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'Success for New Zealand is not 'outcome based', says Kelly'**

Persistent rain forced the abandonment of the second T20I between Bangladesh and New Zealand in Chattogram yesterday without a ball being bowled. Heavy showers left the outfield unplayable, with officials, following multiple inspections, calling off the match in the afternoon. Bangladesh lead the three-match series 1-0 after winning the opener by 25 runs. The decider is scheduled for Saturday in Mirpur, while the Bangladesh Cricket Board confirmed ticket refunds for the abandoned fixture.

PHOTO: BCB

Cash surge, stricter laws for 2026 WC

AGENCIES

FIFA has significantly increased financial distributions for the 2026 World Cup while introducing a series of rule changes aimed at strengthening discipline and tackling misconduct.

● FIFA has raised the total World Cup distribution fund to \$871 million, a 15 percent increase from the previously announced \$727 million.

● Each of the 48 participating teams will receive higher financial support, with preparation funds increased from \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million and qualification payments rising from \$9 million to \$10 million.

● Additional support will include contributions toward team delegation costs and increased ticket allocations,

with total added benefits exceeding \$16 million.

● The decision follows concerns from member associations over high operational costs, including travel, taxes and logistics, particularly for a tournament spread across the United States, Canada and Mexico.

● FIFA expects the current four-year World Cup cycle, which concludes with the largest World Cup in history, to generate around \$13 billion, underlining the commercial

scale of the expanded competition.

● New rules approved for the tournament include potential red cards for players who cover their mouths during confrontations, part of efforts to combat racism.

● Players leaving the pitch in protest of refereeing decisions will also risk dismissal, while teams responsible for abandoned matches will forfeit the game.

● Yellow cards received in the group stage will be cleared after the first round and again after the quarterfinals, reducing the risk of suspensions in crucial matches.



PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Bank Asia

This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Bank Asia PLC. in its 583rd meeting held today, the 29 April 2026, at 3:30 p.m. at the Board Room of the Bank at Bank Asia Tower, 32 & 34 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, has approved the audited Financial Statements of the Bank for the year ended on 31 December 2025, and took the following decisions:

i)		8.50% Cash Dividend & 8.50% Stock Dividend			
i	Proposed Dividend for the Year Ended 31 December 2025				
27 th Annual General Meeting (AGM)		Date :	11 June 2026		
		Time :	11:00 a.m.		
		Venue :	Through Digital Platform (link will be communicated in due course)		
ii	Record date	20 May 2026			
Particulars		Solo		Consolidated	
		2025 (Taka)	2024 (Taka)	2025 (Taka)	2024 (Taka)
iv	*NAV per Share	27.47	24.83	27.42	24.80
v	**Earnings per Share (EPS)	3.19	1.88	3.18	1.95
vi	**Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS)	41.25	45.74	41.74	45.87

* NAV improved mainly due to growth in shareholders' equity, driven by higher paid-up capital, statutory reserves, and retained earnings.

** Higher operating profit led to higher net profit after tax resulted in increased Earnings per Share (EPS) compared to last year.

*** Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS) decreased mainly due to reduced cash inflows from Deposits compared to previous year.

Disclosure for recommendation of Stock Dividend:

- Stock dividend have been recommended to strengthen the capital base of the bank to support business growth,
- Stock dividend have been recommended out of the current year profit, and
- Stock dividend are not declared from the capital reserve or revaluation reserve or any unrealized gain or out of the profit earned prior to incorporation of the company or through reducing paid up capital or through doing anything so that the post dividend retained earning becomes negative or debit balance.

ii) In the same Board Meeting the Board of Directors have approved the following resolution:

PROPOSED SPECIAL RESOLUTION : The Authorized Capital of the Company will be increased from 15,000,000,000.00 (Taka one thousand five hundred crore) divided into 1,500,000,000 (one hundred fifty crore) ordinary shares of Tk. 10.00 each to Tk. 30,000,000,000.00 (Taka three thousand crore) only divided into 3,000,000,000 (three hundred crore) ordinary shares of Tk. 10.00 each subject to approval from Bangladesh Bank and the adoption of Special Resolution by the Shareholders of the Company at the General Meeting.

The Shareholders whose names will appear in the Share Register of the Company on the Record Date will be entitled to attend and vote at the 27th AGM and to the dividend declared in the same.

Dated: Dhaka
29 April 2026

Bank Asia PLC., Corporate Office
Bank Asia Tower
32 & 34, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue
Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215



'Don't exploit July uprising'

Ministers warn opposition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cabinet members yesterday slammed the opposition in parliament, cautioning all parties not to exploit the July mass uprising for personal or partisan gains.

Speaking during the debate on the motion of thanks to the president's address, they stressed that the July uprising was not a sudden event but the culmination of years of anger, movements, and resistance against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

They also called for unity, warning that attempts to politicise historic struggles would only deepen divisions.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Zahir Uddin Swapon said that until the Awami League wipes away the bloodstains of July, the debate will not be resolved.

"Likewise, until Jamaat-e-Islami takes an acceptable position on the question of the 1971 genocide, the controversy with them will continue," he said.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Chief Minister of West Bengal and Chairperson of All India Trinamool Congress, Mamata Banerjee visits her constituency during the second and final phase of West Bengal Legislative Assembly elections in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

US may tighten Iran blockade

Reports say Trump opts for squeezing Iran's economy more to force it to sign a deal

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump yesterday warned Tehran that it should "get smart soon" and capitulate to Washington's demands for tight controls on its nuclear programme, as a US naval blockade turned the screws on Iran's economy.

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth yesterday testified before Congress, but US press reports suggested Trump has already decided to reject Iran's latest proposed deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

According to the Wall Street Journal, he intends to pursue the blockade of Iranian ports until Tehran is forced to dismantle its nuclear programme.

"Iran can't get their act together... They better get smart soon," Trump posted on his social media platform, above a mocked-up picture of himself toting a rifle in front of explosions wrecking a desert fortress and the slogan: "No more Mr Nice Guy."

Iran has blockaded the strait – a vital conduit for oil

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

LIMON, BRISTY KILLINGS

'They're family'

Grieving friends pack courtroom as murder suspect denied bond

AGENCIES

A court yesterday ordered the prime suspect in the killings of two Bangladeshi PhD students to be held without bond on murder charges in a courtroom filled with friends of the victims demanding justice.

According to Tampa Bay 28, a local news outlet, Hillsborough County Judge J Logan Murphy ordered Hisham Abugharbich to have no contact with witnesses or relatives.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Most exit polls give BJP edge in West Bengal

TMC trashes surveys, says verdict will be out on May 4; 92.01% turnout in final phase

STAR REPORT

The second and final phase of voting in the West Bengal state election concluded yesterday, with most of the exit polls predicting an upset win for the BJP.

Polling was held in 142 assembly seats across five districts in the south, known as strongholds of the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

Preliminary figures from the Election Commission put the turnout at 92.01 percent. In the first phase on April 23, the turnout was 93.19 percent. Both figures are record highs for the state.

After polling ended around 6:00pm, at least four exit polls predicted the saffron party might end Mamata Banerjee-led TMC's 15-

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

ALLEGED AL TIES

42 candidates barred from SCBA polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association has cancelled the nomination papers of 42 lawyers out of 90 candidates for its upcoming election, citing their alleged affiliations with the Awami League.

The party's political activities are currently banned under the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, 2025.

Among those disqualified for SCBA

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

2 unregulated toxic chemicals in plastic pose health risk

Says ESDO report on Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A situation report has raised concerns over widespread exposure to harmful chemicals phthalates and bisphenols, putting public health at significant risk as their use remains largely unregulated in the country.

Phthalates and bisphenols are widely used to make plastics flexible and durable, but they are classified as endocrine disrupting chemicals that can interfere

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Hawkers occupy the entrance to a footbridge and the adjacent footpaths, obstructing pedestrians in the busy Farmgate area of Dhaka. The makeshift stalls, covered with blue tarpaulins, have taken over significant portions of the walkway, forcing pedestrians to use narrow gaps or the main road. The photo was taken yesterday.



ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন

নগর ভবন, রোড : ৪৬, প্রটঃ ২৩-২৬, গুলশান-২, ঢাকা।

“মশাফে নিয়মিত প্রয়োজন জনস্বার্থের অবশ্যক”

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি


“নিয়মিত প্রতিদিন জমা পানি ফেনে দিন”

সর্ব সাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশনের নিজস্ব মালিকানাধীন/আওতাধীন বিভিন্ন শপিংমল, মার্কেট ও দোকানসমূহের সম্মুখে/ফুটপাথে বিভিন্ন প্রকার মালামাল রাখায়/ফুটপাথে দখল থাকার কারণে জনস্বার্থ বিঘ্নিত হচ্ছে। এমতাবস্থায়, নিজ উদ্যোগে মালামাল অপসারণপূর্বক ফুটপাথে দখলমুক্ত করার জন্য নির্দেশনা প্রদান করা হলো।

অন্যথায় সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ পক্ষের/দোকানের ট্রেড লাইসেন্স বাতিলসহ বিদ্যমান আইন ও বিধি-বিধান অনুযায়ী যথাযথ প্রশাসনিক ও আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

কর্তৃপক্ষ

নিজ আগ্নি পরিষ্কার রাখি, সবাই মিলে সুস্থ থাকি



BERGER PAINTS BANGLADESH LIMITED

Appointment of Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director

Press Release


The Board of Directors of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited wishes to inform all stakeholders that, at its meeting held on 29 April 2026, the Board unanimously resolved to appoint Mr. Mohsin Habib Chowdhury as Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director of the Company for a period of five (5) years, effective from 01 August 2026, subject to approval by the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting 2026 and in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 1994, and other relevant laws and regulations of Bangladesh.

Mr. Mohsin Habib Chowdhury is presently serving as Chief Operating Officer & Director of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited. He joined the Company in 1995 and has since contributed significantly across various leadership roles, particularly in the areas of sales, marketing, and operational management, playing a pivotal role in the Company's sustained growth and market leadership.


The Board has also resolved, at the same meeting, to appoint Ms. Rupali Haque Chowdhury as Executive Director, BPBL Subsidiaries; Coordination Director, Joint Ventures; and Non-Executive Director, Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, effective from 01 August 2026 for a period of two (2) years, subject to applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Ms. Rupali Haque Chowdhury joined Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited on 01 July 2002 and has been serving as Managing Director since 2008, during which time she has provided strong strategic leadership, contributed to organizational excellence, and guided the Company through significant phases of expansion and transformation.

The Board of Directors places on record its deep appreciation and sincere thanks to both Mr. Mohsin Habib Chowdhury and Ms. Rupali Haque Chowdhury for their outstanding leadership, dedication, and invaluable contributions to the Company over the years, and looks forward to their continued guidance in steering Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited toward sustained growth and long-term success.



Mr. Mohsin Habib Chowdhury



Ms. Rupali Haque Chowdhury

CRISIS IN A CYLINDER

TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN

Gas cylinder prices have surged recently, hitting Tk 1,940 for a 12 kg LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) cylinder by mid-April 2026. Distributors often charge far above the official rate which is up to Tk 2,300 per cylinder in Dhaka. Industry insiders blame private syndicates and global supply strains. As

March 2026 saw 211,000 tonnes of LPG (up 38% year-on-year) handled by about 10 major private. The government, which directly supplies only about 1.33% of demand via by-product propane, plans to intervene by bulk-importing LPG to stabilize the market. In the short term, analysts say much depends on global factors as Middle East conflicts are disrupting tankers for which

back-to-back price hikes are straining household budgets. This persistent gap between policy and the marketplace is a symptom of a much larger crisis involving global warfare, a domestic currency crunch, and a supply chain that is struggling to find its footing under immense pressure.

SEE PAGE S2



ILLUSTRATION: ADRIN SARWAR



BANGLADESH'S
NO.1
FUELLING
Partner

We ensure uninterrupted energy solutions across Bangladesh. From households to the HoReCa sector, industries and the automotive segment, Fresh LP Gas is always at your doorstep, meeting your fuelling needs with superior product quality and service standards.



■ Top LPG Importer (FY: 1 July 2025 – 14 January 2026)

Scan to visit our Facebook page



Growth amid market pressures Meghna Fresh LPG Ltd

Meghna Fresh LPG Ltd, a key concern of the Meghna Group of Industries (MGI), stands at the forefront of Bangladesh's energy transition. Since its 2019 inception, the company has built extensive infrastructure, including state-of-the-art filling plants and maritime vessels, ensuring nationwide access to clean fuel. Leading this vision is the expert Abu Sayed Raza, Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), dedicated to safety, realistic pricing, and national energy security.

The Daily Star (TDS): How do you assess the current state of Bangladesh's LPG market?

Abu Sayed Raza (ASR): The market is under immense pressure due to total import dependency. Middle East conflicts and vessel shortages have pushed shipping premiums from \$120 to nearly \$400 per tonne. While recent BERC adjustments are a timely step, persistent global volatility means the risk of further price hikes remains a significant reality for the entire sector.

TDS: What explains the gap between fixed and retail prices?

ASR: The current commission structure is disconnected from operational realities. Margins fail to cover the rising costs of transport, labor, and electricity. We believe commissions should be adjusted to Tk 100 for distributors and Tk 120 for retailers. Realistic margins are essential to ensure a disciplined supply chain and eliminate the illegal overcharging.

TDS: What does Fresh LP Gas do differently to stay competitive in the market?

ASR: Our strength lies in a robust logistical backbone, featuring four filling plants and thirty road tankers. By managing our own maritime vessels, we ensure uninterrupted supply from Teknaf to Tetulia. Our cylinders follow strict American safety standards, ensuring that we prioritize consumer trust through uncompromising quality and reliability.

TDS: What is Fresh LP gas's strategy to balance growth and affordability?

ASR: We are expanding storage capacity to 20,000 metric tonnes to buffer against global shocks. However, affordability requires policy reform. We advocate for reducing the 28% cumulative tax burden by slashing import duties to 5%. Removing VAT and Advance Tax would make clean energy affordable for millions using hazardous wood.

TDS: What are the biggest operational challenges in the LPG market right now?

ASR: Beyond global freight volatility, we face domestic hurdles like the dollar crisis and delays in opening Letters of Credit (LCs). Illegal cross-filling by unauthorized syndicates poses a grave safety risk to the public. Stricter legal monitoring and more supportive credit rules are vital to maintaining a stable, safe, and reliable national energy supply for the future.

Interview conducted by Tagabun Taharim Titun



ABU SAYED RAZA

Chief Marketing Officer
Meghna Fresh LPG Ltd.



Producing 100,000 cylinders monthly, Fresh LPG combines high-precision manufacturing with a 20,000-tonne storage strategy to protect consumers from the volatility of international energy markets.

Crisis in a cylinder

FROM PAGE S1

THE GEOPOLITICAL GRIP

The primary driver of the current energy crisis in Bangladesh is not found within its borders but in the volatile shipping lanes of the Middle East and the shifting benchmarks of global commodities. As a nation that imports nearly 90 per cent of its LPG requirement, Bangladesh is uniquely vulnerable to the price of propane and butane as set by the Saudi Aramco contract price. When regional conflicts escalate, as seen in recent months, the cost of securing fuel does not just rise at the source; it balloons through the entire logistics chain. Tankers that once navigated direct routes are now forced into long, costly detours to avoid conflict zones, causing freight insurance and shipping rates to skyrocket. This "international premium" is a cost that local importers must bear even before the gas reaches the ports of Mongla or Chattogram.

Adding to this global pressure is the domestic challenge of the dollar crisis. Importers have voiced consistent concerns over the difficulty of opening Letters of Credit (LCs) at the speed required to maintain a steady supply. When the international market fluctuates rapidly, any delay in financial processing can mean the difference between a profitable shipment and a massive loss. While the central bank has occasionally eased credit rules to allow larger importers more flexibility, the underlying shortage of foreign currency means that the flow of fuel remains precarious. This creates a ripple effect where even a slight dip in the volume of imports in a single month can lead to localized shortages, which in turn fuels panic buying and price manipulation at the retail level.

THE DIVIDE BETWEEN REGULATION AND REALITY

One of the most significant points of friction in the current market is the disconnect between the price fixed by the regulator and the price paid by the average citizen. Industry reports and consumer investigations show that while the official price may be set at 1900 taka, the "street price" often hits 2300 taka or more. This discrepancy is not merely the result of greed; it is the outcome of a pricing formula that many dealers and retailers claim is fundamentally broken. According to market analysts and industry insiders, the current commission structure does not account for the rising costs of labor, electricity, and local transportation that retailers must cover. When a dealer buys a cylinder at a cheap rate that is already close to the government's cap, they have no choice but to pass the extra costs onto the consumer to remain viable.

This environment has allowed syndicates or private cartels to exert significant influence over the market. The government has deployed mobile courts and inspection teams to Chattogram and Dhaka to crack down on hoarding and overcharging. However, as noted by the Daily Star, these raids are often temporary fixes for a systemic problem. Without a more realistic pricing model that acknowledges the actual



"Setting distributor commission at least Tk 100 per 12kg cylinder and retailer commission at Tk 120 would create a more balanced, sustainable supply chain."

ABU SAYED RAZA

Chief Marketing Officer
Meghna Fresh LPG Ltd.

overhead of a retail shop in a rural area, the official price remains, in the words of one frustrated trader, a piece of fiction. The result is a market where transparency is sacrificed for survival, leaving the consumer to bear the weight of a system that is regulated on paper but unregulated in practice.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR DOMINANCE

The landscape of energy in Bangladesh has undergone a radical transformation over the last decade, shifting from state-led distribution to a market where private companies now control over 90 per cent of the supply.

While this has led to



a massive expansion of infrastructure, with over 20 licensed importers and a network of bottling plants spanning the country. It has also concentrated market power in the hands of a few major players. Companies like Omera Petroleum, United Ayyaz, Jamuna, and Meghna Fresh LPG lead the charge in sourcing fuel from international markets like China and Malaysia. While their investment has ensured that LPG reaches almost every corner of the nation, the heavy reliance on

a handful of firms means that any disruption in their operations are felt instantly across the national grid.

To counter this concentration of power and stabilise prices, the government has recently proposed a plan for the state-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation to enter the bulk import market. The intention is to use the government's purchasing power to bypass private premiums and sell gas directly to distributors at a fixed, lower rate. However, this transition is fraught with challenges. Previous attempts at bulk tenders have failed because the price quotes from international suppliers were higher than what the government was willing to pay. As long as the state-owned Eastern Refinery can only meet a tiny fraction of the national demand, the private sector remains the backbone of the industry. Leaders within the LPG Operators Association of Bangladesh have argued that instead of competing with the private sector, the government should focus on creating a more "investment-friendly" environment by reducing the heavy tax burden that currently inflates the cost of every cylinder.

REFRAMING ENERGY AS A PRIORITY

As the nation looks toward the national budget and future energy policies, there is an increasing call to view LPG not just as a commodity, but as a vital tool for nation-building and public health. For the millions of mothers in rural Bangladesh who have transitioned from traditional biomass to LPG, this fuel is a shield against respiratory diseases and a way to reclaim hours of their day previously spent gathering wood. Abu Sayed Raza, the CMO of MGI Fresh LP gas, has noted in industry discussions that the health of women and children is directly tied to the affordability of this fuel. When prices become too high, families are often forced to "fuel stack," returning to hazardous traditional stoves for part of their cooking, which undoes years of progress in indoor air quality and environmental conservation.

To safeguard this progress, a holistic reform of the tax and duty structure is essential. Currently, the cumulative taxes on LPG components are a significant portion of the retail price. Industry experts suggest that a sharp reduction in import duties, coupled with the removal of Advance Tax and VAT at the port level, could immediately lower the cost of a cylinder by several hundred taka. Such a move would be a powerful statement that the government prioritizes the health and economic stability of its citizens over short-term revenue collection. By combining tax relief with a more dynamic pricing model, one that accurately reflects the costs of both the importer and the small-scale retailer—Bangladesh can move toward a market that is both stable and fair. The goal is a future where the blue flame is not a source of financial dread, but a reliable partner in the nation's journey toward health, prosperity, and sustainable growth.

GLOBAL LPG CONSUMPTION BREAKDOWN

ADRIN SARWAR

The global LPG market has seen significant shifts recently, with total consumption reaching over 330-350 million metric tonnes (MT) annually. Unlike many other fossil fuels, LPG usage is highly diversified across residential, industrial, and specialised chemical sectors.

Sector	Global percentage share	Primary application
Residential & Domestic	44%	LPG is primarily used for cooking and water heating in areas without natural gas grid access, such as: India, China, Africa
Chemical & Petrochemical Feedstock	28%	LPG is used in Propane Dehydrogenation (PDH) plants to create propylene, a building block for plastics. The United States and China have seen a massive surge in this sector due to the expansion of shale gas and plastic manufacturing.
Industrial & Commercial	12%	For metal processing, glass manufacturing, food processing, and space heating for large warehouses LPG is used by businesses due to its lower carbon footprint.
Transport / Autogas	8%	LPG is the most widely used alternative fuel in the automotive sector, known as Autogas. Top markets are: Turkey, South Korea, Poland, and Italy.
Agriculture & Others	8%	A crucial niche sector for off-grid energy. Used for crop drying, flame weeding, and heating for poultry/livestock sheds.

SOURCE: WORLD LPG ASSOCIATION (WLPGA), INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)

LPG MARKET AT A GLANCE

- **Tk 1,940** is the official price for a **12kg** cylinder as of mid-April.
- **Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,200** is the actual price consumers are paying at the retail level.
- **211,000** tonnes of LPG arrived in March, marking a massive **38%** year-on-year increase.
- Meghna Fresh LPG, Omera Petroleum, Jamuna Spaceteck Joint Venture, United Ayyaz LPG, Petromax LPG etc lead the nation's private import market.
- Only **1.33%** of national demand is met by the government through Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC)



Securing the nation's growth with clean fuel

Omera LPG

The LPG industry serves as a cornerstone of Bangladesh's energy security, supporting millions of households and a rapidly growing industrial sector. Omera LPG COO Matheendra De Zoysa discusses navigating current market challenges and future strategic plans.

The Daily Star (TDS): How does Omera perceive the current competitive landscape in Bangladesh?

Matheendra De Zoysa (MDZ): Bangladesh's LPG industry is in crisis due to global supply shortages and the ongoing geo-political tension, which has caused major disruptions to global shipping routes. Recently, the global market experienced an unexpected price hike of \$240 per metric ton, resulting in a nearly 40% increase in local LPG prices. This volatility forces consumers to look for alternatives considering the switching cost, yet LPG will remain the most convenient and fastest mode of cooking for households. Additionally, the nation faces a severe supply gap: Bangladesh consumes 140,000-150,000 MTs monthly, but current supply averages only 90,000-110,000 MT.

TDS: Could you share Omera's current percentage split between household, commercial, and industrial users?

MDZ: Omera's current consumption split is heavily weighted toward the B2C (business-to-consumer) segment, which accounts for over 80% of sales. While the industrial and commercial sectors represent approximately 12% and 8%, respectively. Additionally, the B2B (business-to-business) segment remains promising due to ongoing natural gas supply constraints and growing expansion in the industrial sector.

TDS: What are the operational challenges in expanding the Auto-gas station network across the country?

MDZ: The rising price of fuel has led to a massive increase in the cost of logistics. As 16-ton tankers take 2-3 days for 300-400km trips to scattered AGS. Additionally, fuel accessibility has become a major hurdle. Beyond logistics, the industry faces a serious challenge regarding the unauthorized filling of consumer cylinders at auto gas stations.

TDS: What is your vision for Omera's role in Bangladesh's energy mix by 2030?

MDZ: Omera's vision is to establish itself as the pre-eminent energy corporation in Bangladesh through aggressive infrastructure development and strategic long-term investments. Omera recently acquired the French owned Totalgaz operation under its wings further strengthening the network and resource operations. The company recently launched the unique 5.5 kg "Omera Shohoj" an affordable, portable option for low-income users and students. Omera also provides rare 425 kg cylinders for bulk industrial use. Despite current market volatility and high costs, Omera remains confident in LPG's future and its commitment to ensuring a reliable national energy supply.

Interview conducted by Adrin Sarwar



MATHEENDRA DE ZOYSA

Chief Operating Officer
Omera LPG

Safety is treated as a way of life with non-negotiable standards, particularly because the highly inflammable nature of LPG means even minor deviations can result in major disasters. To ensure the highest safety standards are maintained across the entire operation the company has deployed specialised safety teams at every plant to provide 24/7 oversight.

Fresh LP Gas: Fuelling Bangladesh

Fresh LP Gas started operations in 2019 with a vision to provide uninterrupted, safe and reliable LPG solutions in Bangladesh. It established strong infrastructure with European technology, including a refilling and cylinder plant with 100,000 pcs monthly cylinder production capacity, two 2,000 MT LPG vessels and 6,000 MT LPG storage. By December 2026, storage will expand to 20,000 MT with two additional 2,000 MT vessels enhancing resilience.

Since 2019, the company has expanded across household, industrial, hotel & restaurant, and autogas segments. It ensures seamless supply to nearly 100 autogas stations and serves key industries such as textiles, garments, pharmaceuticals, ceramics, glass and steel. Continuing this growth trajectory, Meghna Fresh LPG Limited recorded the highest LPG import volume in the country in first six and a half months of FY 2025-26 (1 July 2025 to 14 January 2026), reflecting its strong market presence and operational capability.

Even during the challenging

crisis period over the past couple of months, uninterrupted LPG supply was ensured by fully utilising production and distribution capacity to serve consumers efficiently. Currently the company operates 4 refilling plants, 7 regional distribution centres, 3 direct distribution hubs and over 300 distributors nationwide, ensuring doorstep availability from Teknaf to Tetulia.

Fresh LP Gas ensures accurate cylinder weight and complies with American DOT-4BA-240 standards in cylinder production. Each cylinder undergoes stringent quality inspections and safety checks throughout production and maintenance cycles to ensure consistent reliability and safety.

"Fresh" is a reputed brand in

Bangladesh, backed by one of the leading business conglomerates, Meghna Group of Industries (MGI), which has helped Fresh LP Gas achieve notable awareness and acceptance among consumers across the country, further strengthening its credibility. Consistency in service delivery, quality assurance, safety, and strong market presence have positioned Fresh LP Gas as one of the most trusted LPG brands in Bangladesh.

With a continuous cylinder supply in the market, Fresh LP Gas is expanding into Bangladesh's untapped segment still dependent on traditional cooking fuels that are harmful to health and the environment. This initiative is driven by awareness campaigns and affordable pricing, supported from the beginning by significant subsidies on cylinder sales to encourage adoption.

With ongoing expansion and nationwide doorstep delivery at competitive pricing, growth of Fresh LP Gas is expected to continue. LPG will play a vital role in environmental balance and Bangladesh's shift toward cleaner energy.



Powering THE PEOPLE PROPELLING THE ECONOMY

Network:
Integrated Sea-River-Road Logistics

Capacity:
Highest Import Capacity in Bangladesh
500,000 MT

Range:
Widest Range of SKUs Industrial Supplies & Autogas

Fleet:
4 LPG Barges & 90+ Road Tankers

OMERA SHOHOJ SMALL SIZE BIG IMPACT

