



BSRM
THE ONLY STEEL FACTORY IN BANGLADESH TO RECEIVE THE
GREEN FACTORY AWARD 2025



SHAH CEMENT
BANGLADESH'S
NO. 1 CEMENT BRAND

Dhaka-Sylhet road and rail upgrade soon

Says Tarique, inaugurates Notun Kuri Sports

BSS, Sylhet

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday said the government will soon begin work to upgrade road and rail connectivity on the Dhaka-Sylhet route, aiming to ease travel and boost regional economic activity.

At a civic rally on Sylhet City Corporation's Nagar Bhaban premises, he noted that the highway's poor condition forces travellers to spend nearly 10 hours on the journey.

"This suffering has been caused due to the broken condition of the highway at different places," he said.

Tarique recalled promising to develop the highway during his election campaign. He said discussions with the relevant ministry revealed that work had stalled due



SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



The sluggish pace of development work by Dhaka North City Corporation, including sewerage upgrades on Paris Road in the capital's Mirpur-11, continues to drag on, causing prolonged suffering to everyday commuters, especially schoolchildren and office-goers. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

MEASLES OUTBREAK 'Interim govt ignored Unicef warning'

Reports Science magazine, says changed vaccine procurement policy behind crisis

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh's worsening measles epidemic followed the interim government's decision to halt vaccine procurement through Unicef and switch to an open tender system, despite warnings that the move could disrupt routine immunisation and trigger an outbreak, according to a Science.org report published on Thursday.

Since mid-March, the country has reported more than 32,000 suspected measles infections and over 250 suspected deaths, mostly among children, it said.

Bangladesh had long relied on Unicef to supply measles-rubella vaccines, funded mainly by Gavi with government contributions. Children receive two MR doses at 9 and 15 months, while nationwide campaigns are held every four years to maintain 95 percent coverage.

But in September 2025, the interim government led by Prof Muhammad Yunus stopped vaccine procurement through Unicef and shifted to open tendering. Unicef strongly opposed the change.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

\$3b expected by June from dev partners

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh is expecting \$3 billion in budget support by the middle of June from five multilateral and bilateral lenders, including the World Bank, in what would provide a sigh of relief to the government from the financial pressure triggered by the Middle East war.

About \$1.2 billion is expected from the WB, \$1 billion from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), \$500 million from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), \$250 million from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and \$100 million from the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID). The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

The development comes after a government study estimated that an additional \$4 billion is needed in emergency budget support between May and June to plug the unexpected higher outlays for fuel and fertiliser imports for the war.

Letters were sent to development partners earlier this month seeking assistance and all responded positively, finance ministry officials said on the condition of anonymity as they are not authorised to speak with media.

"As a strategy, I don't see anything wrong with it," said Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

He, however, cautioned that the borrowing terms -- particularly interest rates and repayment periods -- must be carefully considered to ensure debt servicing remains sustainable.

In the IMF's latest debt sustainability analysis, Bangladesh's outstanding debt has already moved from low risk to moderate risk.

Some of the planned loans appear relatively stringent in terms of interest rates, though the long repayment periods provide some relief,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

About \$1.2 billion is expected from the WB, \$1 billion from ADB, \$500 million from JICA, \$250 million from AIIB and \$100 million from the OPEC Fund.

Mothers left to choose between home and work

7m jobs within reach, but childcare gaps keep mid-career women sidelined

NILIMA JAHAN

Feroza Ahmed's (not her real name) professional life once revolved around high-stakes dealings with major advertisers. As a senior executive at a leading media house, she worked long hours -- often until 9:00pm -- ensuring precision in every advertising placement.

After more than 11 years in the industry, she was on the verge of becoming an assistant manager. "I was supposed to be promoted. But when the management learnt that I was pregnant and would go on leave, they didn't give me promotion."

The job became unmanageable after she gave birth to her second child.

She said, "I can leave one child with my relatives, but I can't impose two on them..."

Feroza did not return to work after her second maternity leave.

Her exit from the media house was not planned. The management never offered her any flexibility at work. "I ran the whole department from home during the Covid pandemic, but no hybrid or part-time arrangement was considered for me when I needed it the most," she said.

When she resigned, there was no attempt to retain her. Instead, her boss warned: "Once you resign, you

HURDLES FACED BY WOMEN PROFESSIONALS



Flexible work arrangements largely absent



No reliable support systems at home, work



Lack of knowledge about disability care leaves mothers as sole caregivers



Employers' bias affects women at recruitment stage

couldn't sleep. I would wake up from nightmares."

She doubts whether she will ever be able to return to work, even if she can manage her time. "Who will hire me again? If I try to return to the industry, will anyone take me?" she asked.

Feroza's story reflects a broader pattern of mid-career exits in Bangladesh's workforce, where experienced women leave formal employment after motherhood due to structural barriers and caregiving responsibilities.

Despite long years of experience and proven performance, many women are unable to return to work after childbirth owing to the absence of flexible work arrangements and reliable support systems at home and at work.

A recent BRAC analysis found that nearly 75 percent of the 1,200 mid-career women who applied for employment in a BRAC programme had previously quit jobs due to domestic responsibilities (38.8 percent) or motherhood (36 percent).

The "motherhood penalty" is intensified by a major care burden gap. A 2021 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) time use survey found that married women

won't be able to come back."

At home, she didn't get the support she needed. "My husband told me that if I could manage everything alone, I could retain the job; otherwise, I shouldn't."

The transition took a heavy toll on her. "I was slipping into depression. I

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

PHD STUDENTS' MURDER Florida police finally identify Bristy's body

STAR REPORT

Authorities in Florida have identified the body of Bangladeshi PhD student Nahida Sultana Bristy, who had been missing since April 16.

G o l a m Mortoza, minister (press) at the Bangladesh Embassy in the United States, told The Daily Star via WhatsApp that Florida police had contacted Bristy's brother to confirm the identification.

The family has requested that her body be sent back to Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, DC, in coordination with the Bangladesh Consulate in Miami, has begun repatriation procedures, he added.

Bristy and Zamil Ahmed Limon, both 27-year-old PhD students from Bangladesh, went missing on April 16. Limon was last seen at an off-campus complex where he shared an apartment with murder suspect Hisham Abugharbieh and another roommate.

Detectives used cellphone location data and license plate reader records to track Abugharbieh's car and Limon's phone to a bridge where Limon's body was found on April 24. Prosecutors said the body had multiple stab wounds and



SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

'Ready for talks or war'

Says Iran after Trump rebuffed its new proposals for peace

US-EU rift widens over US troops' withdrawal from Germany

Trump says US Navy acting like 'pirates' in the Gulf

Khamenei calls for economic battle to 'disappoint' enemies

AGENCIES

Iran said yesterday that it was up to the United States whether to pursue a negotiated settlement or to return to open war, but that Tehran was ready for either outcome.

"Now the ball is in the United States' court to choose the path of diplomacy or the continuation of a confrontational approach," deputy foreign minister Kazem Gharibabadi told diplomats in Tehran, according to state broadcaster IRIB.

"Iran, with the aim of securing its national interests and security, is prepared for both paths," he said.

His comment came after a senior Iranian military officer said renewed fighting with the US was "likely", hours after President Donald Trump said he was not satisfied with an Iranian negotiating proposal.

Iran delivered the new draft to mediator Pakistan on Thursday evening, state media reported. An Iranian official confirmed that it proposed reopening shipping in

the Strait of Hormuz and ending the US blockade, while leaving talks on its nuclear programme for later.

The war, launched by the United States and Israel in late February, has been on hold since April 8, after one failed round of peace talks in Pakistan.

"They want to make a deal, but ... I'm not satisfied with it," Trump told reporters at the White House, adding that Iran's leadership was "very disjointed" and split into "two or three groups".

"They're asking for things that I can't agree to," he said, noting that negotiations by phone were continuing.

Earlier, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tehran was ready to pursue diplomacy if the US changed its "excessive approach, threatening rhetoric and provocative actions."

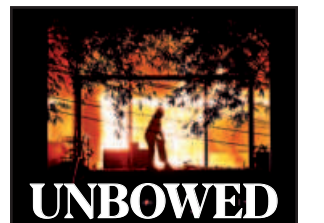
Iran has activated air defences and is planning a wide response if attacked, having assessed a short, intensive US strike

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted the southern Lebanese village of Mayfadoun in the Nabatieh district yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



On the occasion of **WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY** (May 3), which this year centres on the theme "Shaping a Future at Peace",

The Daily Star continues its exhibition on the brutal attack on its Dhaka office on December 18, 2025.

We invite you to walk through these scarred spaces, bear witness to what was endured, and stand with the truth that refused to burn. The exhibition will remain open from May 4 to May 15 (11:00 am to 8:00 pm) at The Daily Star Centre.