



Fund crunch squeezes free meds for poor

Diabetes, hypertension patients suffer

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Mihura Begum, a 35-year-old homemaker, recently visited Keraniganj Upazila Health Complex in Dhaka for a routine diabetes check-up, expecting to get her monthly supply of free medicines from the facility's Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Corner.

After completing her tests, she was given just a single strip of medicine. "They used to provide medicines for the entire month. This time, they gave me only one strip, saying there is a shortage," said Mihura, a resident of Boalkhali village in the upazila.

"The strip will last only five days. I spent Tk 100 on rickshaw fare. It will be difficult for me to buy the rest of the medicine."

Moslem Uddin, a hypertension patient from Bamansur village, faced a similar situation.

"I used to get medicines for a month. Now they give me medicines for

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PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

An elderly farmer is drying paddy on the bridge over Mohashing river in Joykolosh area of Sylhet-Sunamganj highway as the sun comes through after days of rain. With most fields and drying grounds still waterlogged, farmers are being forced to use any available space to save their harvest. The photo was taken yesterday.

Will not step down: Mamata

Clashes, vandalism reported in West Bengal

STAR REPORT

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday said she had "not been defeated" and would not resign, a day after results showed her party lost heavily to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Her statement came as local media reported sporadic incidents of violence, vandalism, and territorial assertion in several districts of the state.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP defeated Mamata's Trinamool Congress (TMC), which has ruled West Bengal since 2011, securing more than two-thirds of the 294 seats when votes were counted on Monday.

The BJP has never ruled West Bengal, a populous eastern state bordering Bangladesh, and its victory is seen as

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20 percent higher revenue target for next year

NBR will have to collect Tk 6,04,000cr

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is working out an ambitious revenue target for the next fiscal year with a 20.07 percent increase from this financial year's revised budget, aiming to raise the tax-GDP ratio that fell to 6.8 percent last year.

Every year, the finance ministry sets large targets for the National Board of Revenue (NBR), but they are missed by wide margins.

This time, measures are being planned to narrow the gap as much as possible, including introducing a single VAT rate and reducing tax exemptions.

The NBR's revenue collection target for fiscal 2026-27 is expected to be Tk 6,04,000 crore.

To meet the current fiscal year's Tk 5,03,000 crore target, the NBR must collect over 36 percent more than last year, though revenue grew only 12.4 percent in the first eight months.

If the trend continues, collections will need to rise nearly 40 percent to meet next year's goal.

Steps planned by the government to increase collection include replacing multiple VAT rates with a single one. Exemptions under the Tax Expenditure Policy and Management Framework will also be reduced.

The other measures include identifying areas of tax evasion, rationalising VAT collection and structure, and implementing short-term action plans based on a task force report.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladesh drilling deep in hunt for gas

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh has embarked on its deepest-ever gas exploration at the Titas field, as the government seeks to unlock untapped reserves far below previously drilled levels and alleviate mounting pressure on its energy supply.

The new well, Titas-31, is being drilled to a planned depth of 5,600 metres, pushing beyond the country's historical drilling limits and targeting deeper hydrocarbon-bearing layers that have remained unexplored.

The drilling, which began on April 19, is expected to take about 210 days to complete. So far, 22 percent of the drilling has been completed, according to officials.

Drilling on the Bakhraabad-II in Cumilla, another deep well, is planned to a depth of 4,360 metres with the same rig.

The two wells are part of a single project with a combined estimated cost of Tk 798 crore, scheduled for completion by December 2027.

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'Ceasefire still holds, but ready for combat'

Says US as Trump urges Tehran to surrender; UAE reports attacks for a second day

US top gen says forces ready to resume major combat ops

Iranian FM heads to China for talks

World leaders pressure Iran as ceasefire on brink

Iran's maritime control to include sections of UAE coastline

AGENCIES

US forces are ready to resume combat operations against Iran if ordered, Washington's top military officer said yesterday, as the Pentagon threatened a "devastating" response to Iranian attacks on commercial shipping in the Hormuz strait.

The warnings came after Iran's powerful chief negotiator said Tehran "had not even started yet" in the crucial trade route, after a spate

of attacks by both sides on Monday threatened to reignite the Middle East war.

Iran fired missiles and drones at US forces and UAE territory, including an energy facility, while Washington said it hit six Iranian boats it said threatened commercial shipping, in the sharpest escalation since a nearly month-long truce.

US Central Command "and the rest of the joint force remain ready to resume major combat operations

against Iran if ordered to do so," General Dan Caine told reporters.

"No adversary should mistake our current restraint with a lack of resolve."

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth said the US was "not looking for a fight" in the strait but vowed that Iranian attacks would "face overwhelming and devastating American firepower."

"Right now the ceasefire certainly holds, but we're going to be watching

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Anti-torture laws without real safeguards are not enough

P8



Hollow promises, dying district leagues

P15

যথাসময়ে ট্রেড লাইসেন্স গ্রহণ ও নবায়ন করণ, নিরবচ্ছিন্ন নাগরিক সেবা প্রদান নিশ্চিত করণ

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

Dhaka South City Corporation

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের আওতাধীন সম্মানিত হোল্ডিং মালিকগণ/ ব্যবসায়ীদের সদয় অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, নিরবচ্ছিন্নভাবে নাগরিক সেবা প্রদান নিশ্চিতকরণ এবং রাজস্ব আদায়ের বৃহত্তর স্বার্থে বকেয়া হোল্ডিং ট্যাক্স প্রদানের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো, অন্যথায় সংশ্লিষ্ট বকেয়াধারী হোল্ডিং মালিকগণের বিরুদ্ধে বিধি মোতাবেক জরিমানা আরোপ ও ফ্রেক কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করা হবে।

এছাড়াও অত্র কর্পোরেশনের আওতাধীন এলাকায় বিদ্যমান সকল ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে ট্রেড লাইসেন্স গ্রহণ ও মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স নবায়ন এবং সঠিক পরিমাপ অনুযায়ী সাইনবোর্ড কর (বিজ্ঞাপন কর) প্রদান করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। অন্যথায় সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানের বিরুদ্ধে স্থানীয় সরকার (সিটি কর্পোরেশন) আইন, ২০০৯ অনুযায়ী যথাযথ আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

কর্তৃপক্ষ

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/২৩৬/২০২৫-২০২৬

সময়মতো পৌরকর পরিশোধ করণ, জরিমানা ও ফ্রেক কার্যক্রম এড়িয়ে চলুন

‘শরীয়াহভিত্তিক ও নিরাপদ সরকারি বিনিয়োগে অংশ নিতে আপনার ব্যাংক/ফাইন্যান্স কোম্পানিতে যোগাযোগ করুন আজই।’

৮ম বাংলাদেশ সরকার বিনিয়োগ সুকুক

(CIBRR-1 Socio-Economic Development Sukuk)

প্রকল্প: ‘পল্লী সড়কে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সেতু নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত)’ প্রকল্প।

ইস্যু পরিমাণ: ৫,৯০০ কোটি টাকা

মেয়াদ: ০৭ বছর

বার্ষিক ১০.৪০% ভাড়া (মুনাফা) হার

ছয় মাস অন্তর মুনাফা বিতরণ

সুকুকের ধরন: ইজারা সুকুক

সর্বনিম্ন বিনিয়োগ সীমা: ১০,০০০ টাকা

✓ সকল নিবাসী ও অনিবাসী ব্যক্তি ও প্রতিষ্ঠান সুকুকে বিনিয়োগ করতে পারবে।

✓ যে কোনো ব্যাংক বা ফাইন্যান্স কোম্পানিতে গ্রাহকের রক্ষিত হিসাবের মাধ্যমে সুকুকে বিনিয়োগ করা যাবে।

✓ ১ম বারের মতো বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিজস্ব সফটওয়্যার Shariah Securities Module (SSM) এ অকশন সম্পাদিত হবে।

✓ নতুন বিনিয়োগকারীগণকে তাদের সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যাংকের সাথে যোগাযোগ করতঃ অকশন তারিখের পূর্বে SSM এ Sukuk Investor (SI) ID খোলার কাজ সম্পন্ন করতে হবে।

✓ তবে যারা ইতোমধ্যে সুকুকে বিনিয়োগ করেছেন তাদের জন্য SIID খোলার প্রয়োজন নেই।

অকশনে অংশগ্রহণের সময়সীমা : ১৩ মে, ২০২৬ সকাল ১০.০০টা থেকে বিকাল ৩:০০টা পর্যন্ত।

FAQ: bb.org.bd/en/index.php/financialactivity/govsecmrkt/index

Sukuk Prospectus: bb.org.bd/en/index.php/monetaryactivity/prospectus_sukuk

ইসলামিক সিকিউরিটিজ সেকশন, ডেট ম্যানেজমেন্ট ডিপার্টমেন্ট, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক।

প্রয়োজনে: +৮৮-০২-৫৫৬৬৫০০১-৬/২০৫০৯, ২০৫১০, ২২৪৬৪

GD-1027

39 top cops transferred

STAR REPORT

In a major reshuffle in the police department, the government yesterday transferred a total of 39 top police officers, including nine deputy inspectors general (DIGs) and 23 superintendents of police (SPs).

The home ministry issued separate notifications, signed by its Deputy Secretary Md Tausif Ahmed, in this regard.

All the transferred officers have been instructed to join their new stations as early as possible, added the notification.

Sylhet range DIG Md Mushfequr Rahman has been transferred to the police headquarters (PHQ) as DIG, while Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) Commissioner Md Zillur Rahman was made the Sylhet range DIG.

DIG of Special Branch (SB) Md Fayezul Kabir was transferred to the RMP as its commissioner.

Barishal Metropolitan Police (BMP) Commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam was posted to the Tourist Police as its DIG, and DIG of PHQ Md Ashik Sayeed was made the BMP commissioner.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Thick black smoke billows as a truck is torched by agitated locals in Rajshahi's Puthiya upazila yesterday after a tailor, Akkas Ali, was struck and killed by the vehicle while crossing the Dhaka-Rajshahi Highway. Locals blocked the highway for around two hours, during which this truck, along with another, was set ablaze. Police later arrived and brought the situation under control.

Bangladesh drilling deep in hunt for gas

FROM PAGE 1

The deep drilling programme is critical at a time when domestic gas output is struggling to keep pace with demand, forcing Bangladesh to increasingly rely on imported liquefied natural gas, which now accounts for around 35 percent of total supply.

The country's current gas supply is around 2,600-2,700 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) against the demand of more than 3,800 mmcf, while the country is supplying around 950 mmcf from processed LNG, Petrobangla data shows.

"If successful, the wells could significantly add to the country's gas reserves," said Md Abdul Jalil Pramanik, managing director of Bangladesh Gas Fields Company.

The actual volume will be confirmed only after drilling and testing are completed, he said, adding that they expect about 2 trillion cubic feet (TCF) to be added to the national reserve.

Discovered in 1962, the Titas field is the country's first and largest gas field, with an initial proven reserve of 7.34 TCF of gas.

About 5.6 TCF has already been extracted, and the field is currently

producing around 330 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) from 22 active wells, contributing around 20 percent of total gas supply from domestic fields.

Despite its long production history, officials believe deeper layers beneath Titas may still hold significant volumes of gas.

"Usually, there is a possibility of huge gas resources in deeper formations -- this drilling will take us closer to the source rock," Pramanik said.

Bangladesh's previous drilling record stood at 4,977 metres, achieved at Fenchuganj-1 between 1985 and 1988.

Most of the country's roughly 70 wells fall within depths of 3,000 to 3,500 metres, reflecting longstanding technical limitations.

A research article of the Bangladesh Journal of Geology published in 1984 advised deep drilling up to 5 kilometres in the Titas structure, Md Mahamudul Nawab, the project director, told reporters visiting the site.

"But we don't know why it took so much time. There was a lack of technological support as well as initiative from policymakers."

The new deep-drilling initiative is expected to overcome the constraints

using advanced equipment and technology.

A high-capacity drilling rig operated by China's state-owned CNPC Chuanqing Drilling Engineering Company has been deployed for the project, he added.

Engineers involved say drilling beyond 3,750 metres will enter high-pressure zones, requiring advanced safety systems.

To manage the risk, a blowout preventer with a capacity of 15,000 PSI is being used, which is significantly higher than the previously used 10,000 PSI standard.

So far, Bangladesh has discovered 29.74 TCF of gas in 29 gas fields, of which 21.78 TCF has already been consumed, leaving around 7.97 TCF in remaining reserves. The country consumes about 1 TCF every year.

Since 2019, Bangladesh's local gas production has dropped sharply, reflecting the depletion of mature fields and limited new exploration.

Annual output declined from 965 billion cubic feet (bcf) in fiscal 2018-19 to around 640 bcf in fiscal 2024-25, highlighting a sustained fall in domestic supply.

Fund crunch squeezes free meds for poor

FROM PAGE 1

I will have to buy the rest from a pharmacy. This facility gave me some relief, but the [medicine] shortage has put me in trouble," said 70-year-old Moslem, who has been receiving services at the NCD Corner since February 2023.

Thousands of patients across Bangladesh are in a similar bind. NCD corners -- dedicated points at every upazila health complex where health workers check blood pressure and blood sugar and dispense five types of free medicines -- are running short of supplies due to a funding crunch.

As of March, 9.18 lakh patients with hypertension and 7.31 lakh diabetic patients were registered at these corners. Of them, 58 percent of hypertension patients and 28 percent of diabetic patients have their conditions under control, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The DGHS launched the NCD corner programme in 2018 and now runs the services at 416 upazila health complexes and 30 district hospitals.

Though the health directorate does not have exact figures on how many NCD corners are affected, information collected from eight upazila health complexes in different districts shows that most are struggling with shortages. This correspondent learnt from health officials that at least 25 such facilities are unable to provide a month's supply of medicines to patients.

In a letter to the health ministry on March 16, the DGHS sought Tk 100 crore in emergency funding, mentioning that its stocks would be exhausted in 60 days. Since then, 50 days have passed but the request has yet to be fulfilled, said officials.

Health officials warn that the disruption may raise out-of-pocket costs for poor patients, forcing many to discontinue treatment. It may also undo years of progress by increasing the risk of life-threatening complications due to interrupted medication.

Talking to The Daily Star on April 23, Prof Halimur Rashid, director (disease control) of the DGHS, said the suspension of a sectoral programme is behind the current crisis at NCD corners.

"I cannot say exactly how many NCD corners are facing a shortage of medicines, but there is definitely a problem," he said, adding that chances are low that the DGHS will receive the Tk 100 crore allocation as requested.

He further said the government is likely to increase funds for hospitals in the next budget, instead of providing block allocations, so that they can procure medicines on their own from July.

Asked if the situation might

worsen, Halimur downplayed its gravity. He said around 70 percent of patients with hypertension and diabetes already buy medicines on their own, and the disruption in NCD corner services would push that figure up by at most 5 percent.

When contacted on April 22, Health Secretary Qamruzzaman Chowdhury said, "We will certainly take steps to mitigate the crisis if there is any."

A PROGRAMME UNDER STRAIN
Hypertension and diabetes are among the most prevalent non-communicable diseases in Bangladesh, accounting for over 70 percent of all deaths.

In 2018, the DGHS launched a

shortages began emerging at the NCD corners in early 2025. An allocation of Tk 100 crore in August last year provided temporary relief, but the crisis resurfaced after the programme was excluded from projects approved in November last year, and no regular revenue budget was allocated for medicine procurement.

The shortage of diabetes testing strips is particularly acute, with no procurement in the past two years.

SITUATION ON THE GROUND
This correspondent contacted officials of eight upazila health complexes, six of which reported shortages.

Officials from Shailkupa (Jhenaidah), Zakiganj (Sylhet), Banaripara (Barishal), Boalkhali (Chattogram), and Lauhajang (Munshiganj) confirmed supply problems, while those from Akhaura (Brahmanbaria) and Badarganj (Rangpur) reported adequate stocks.

In Keraniganj, 2,781 hypertension and 2,724 diabetic patients are registered with the upazila health complex, and 130-190 patients visit it every day.

Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Abdul Mokaddesh said they are currently providing medicines for only 10 days instead of a full month due to shortages.

He warned that if the supply disruption continues, there could be a fall in the blood pressure control rate of 56 percent among treated patients.

"We don't know when we will receive fresh supplies," he said on April 20.

A DGHS official involved in the programme said health complexes in Sylhet, Chattogram, and Barishal divisions are facing significant shortages of medicines. Patient numbers are higher in these divisions compared to others because NCD corners were launched there at an early stage of the programme.

Prof Sohel Reza Choudhury, the head of Epidemiology and Research at the National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute, warned that supplies in most upazilas will run out within a month.

The National Heart Foundation provides technical support, drug forecasting, training for health workers and application-management assistance to 327 NCD corners across 47 districts under Bangladesh Hypertension Control Initiative.

"We have urged the health authorities to provide another block allocation immediately," he told this newspaper on April 22, adding that the disruption will hit low-income patients the hardest and jeopardise Bangladesh's target of achieving hypertension control in 65 percent of patients.

World leaders yesterday urged Tehran to return to diplomacy after renewed strikes in the region pushed the ceasefire to the brink.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz called on Iran to "return to the negotiating table and stop holding the region and the world hostage", echoing similar appeals from French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

20 percent higher revenue target for next year

FROM PAGE 1

The NBR has already introduced some measures to boost revenue, such as making online filing of returns mandatory for individual taxpayers, which is expected to increase income tax collection.

The use of the ASYCUDA system data has been made mandatory for customs and income tax departments, enabling better information exchange and verification. This will make tax assessment and collection more transparent and efficient.

Additionally, with Tk 1,000 crore in World Bank funding, the "Strengthening Domestic Revenue Mobilisation" project has been launched to fully digitise NBR operations.

VAT registration thresholds have been lowered: the listing limit from Tk 50 lakh to Tk 30 lakh, and the registration limit from Tk 50 lakh to Tk 2.5 lakh.

Currently, 13 percent of government revenue comes from non-NBR taxes and non-tax revenue.

For the next fiscal year, the non-NBR tax target is expected to be set at Tk 25,000 crore, up from Tk 20,000 crore this year, though only Tk 5,786 crore was collected in the first eight months.

Non-tax revenue has performed better, with Tk 40,000 crore collected against a Tk 65,000 crore target. Next year's target is likely to be Tk 66,000 crore.

Bangladesh's tax-to-GDP ratio remains among the lowest globally. The government plans to raise the ratio to 9.2 percent in the next fiscal year.

The target was 8.6 percent in the revised budget for this fiscal year. Last fiscal year, the ratio stood at 6.8 percent. The focus in the upcoming budget

will be on expanding the scope of income tax and VAT, said NBR Chairman Abdur Rahman Khan.

There are about 1.28 crore income taxpayers but fewer than 800,000 VAT payers. Significant legal changes will be made to increase VAT collection, Khan said.

He noted that the 15 percent VAT rate has not yet been effectively implemented, though work has begun to establish it as a standard, especially for marginal SMEs facing compliance issues.

If sufficient data is available, a fixed VAT system may be introduced for new and small entrepreneurs.

Digitisation will be prioritised to reduce tax evasion.

Globally, tax management is being improved through product tracking and tracing. Bangladesh plans to introduce this system first for tobacco products, ensuring each product is recorded at the factory.

Citizens will be able to scan items with smartphones to verify VAT payment. Whistleblowers will be rewarded and offenders fined. This system will gradually extend to other products, the NBR chief said.

He emphasised that the main goal is to expand the tax and VAT base. Non-filers will be identified through automated systems.

Among the 1.28 crore TIN holders, those with unnecessary registrations or no taxable income will be deregistered, and deceased persons' TINs will be closed.

E-return systems will automatically identify non-filers and issue notices, reducing disparities between regular taxpayers and non-filers.

"The key question is how realistic the revenue target is and what measures are needed to achieve it," said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM).

He noted that NBR sets ambitious targets every year but rarely implements structural reforms.

Without major reforms, such goals cannot be achieved, Raihan said.

While discussions and research on tax reform have been ongoing, initiatives such as dividing NBR into policymaking and implementation bodies have stalled, Raihan said.

The government's next steps remain unclear, he said, adding that a strong commitment to reform is essential.

In practice, the lack of reform leads to increased pressure on existing taxpayers and greater reliance on indirect taxes, such as higher import duties and surcharges.

"These are not sustainable solutions."

As a solution, he called for major restructuring of the tax system, including bringing untapped taxpayers into the net and reducing tax evasion.

Tax exemptions, which amount to five to six percent of GDP, must be reduced to achieve desired revenue levels.

He further emphasised the need for a single VAT rate, simplification of existing laws and reform of the income tax structure.

However, resistance from the business community remains a challenge.

"Strong political will is crucial; otherwise, the economy risks falling into a low-level equilibrium trap where ambitious targets are set but remain unattainable," Raihan added.

🔍

Funding gap disrupts NCD services in many upazilas

🔍

At least 26 upazilas are rationing medicine due to shortage

🔍

Tk 100 crore sought for procuring medicine in mid-March

🔍

Gains in hypertension, diabetes control at risk

programme to establish NCD corners at upazila health complexes. Staffed by a three-member team, including a medical officer, each corner provides five types of medicines free of cost. Initially introduced in four upazilas in Sylhet, the programme has since expanded to 416 upazila health complexes and 30 district hospitals.

In a report published in September last year, the World Health Organisation (WHO) praised the programme for "demonstrating a strong and scalable impact in improving hypertension management and control".

Between October 2018 and June 2024, 56 percent of 5.17 lakh treated patients achieved blood pressure control at the implementing facilities, said the Global Report on Hypertension 2025.

The programme was previously operated under the Non-Communicable Disease Control (NCDC) programme, a component of the Fourth Health, Population, and Nutrition Sector Programme (HPNSP), which expired in June 2024.

In March last year, the interim government scrapped the proposed Fifth HPNSP, deciding instead to take up projects to complete unfinished work under the previous programme.

In the absence of the programme and any new project, medicine

‘Ceasefire still holds, but ready for combat’

even begun yet," he said in a social media post.

US President Donald Trump, meanwhile, dismissed Iran's military capability and said Tehran "should wave the white flag of surrender". Speaking in the Oval Office, Trump said Iran privately wanted a deal despite its public rhetoric.

Several merchant vessels in the Gulf reported explosions or fires on Monday, while an oil port in the UAE, which hosts a major US military base, was hit by Iranian missiles.

Despite the clashes, Denmark's freight giant Maersk yesterday said that one of its ships had successfully sailed through the Strait of Hormuz under US escort.

Iran's military had threatened to attack any US forces that approached or entered the trade route.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said peace talks were

progressing with Pakistan's mediation and warned the US and UAE against being drawn into a "quagmire". He was travelling to Beijing yesterday for talks with his Chinese counterpart, according to his ministry.

Iranian authorities also released a map showing an expanded maritime area they claimed was under Iranian control, extending beyond the strait to include parts of the UAE coastline, including Fujairah and Khorfakkan on the Gulf of Oman.

World leaders yesterday urged Tehran to return to diplomacy after renewed strikes in the region pushed the ceasefire to the brink.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz called on Iran to "return to the negotiating table and stop holding the region and the world hostage", echoing similar appeals from French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

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PM stresses transparency in spending public money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday stressed the need to ensure transparency and accountability in public spending and the implementation of government projects.

He said public funds are used to serve people, and it must be ensured that the money is spent properly and the objectives of government projects are achieved, according to a press release from the Prime Minister's Office.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



A Mro woman with her children digs into the rocky bed of the Matamuhuri River in Shindu Mukh Para of Alikadam upazila in Bandarban recently to collect drinking water. Heavy rains have muddied most sources, forcing families in the community to carve basins in the stone where filtered water seeps through -- a stark sign of the ongoing shortage of clean water.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Recognition gaps, social bias keep Harijans marginalised

Speakers at seminar call for equal rights, dignity for them



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of constitutional recognition remains one of the most pressing challenges for the Harijan community, as around 1.6 million people still lack a clear legal identity despite having national ID cards and voting rights, speakers said at a seminar yesterday.

Harijans are neither recognised as indigenous nor as a distinct community, limiting their access to state benefits and services, they said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Sujan, Noor get bail from HC in multiple cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained former Awami League ministers Md Nurul Islam Sujan and Asaduzzaman Noor were granted bail in three separate cases and one case, respectively, by the High Court yesterday.

However, the court refused to grant bail to Asaduzzaman Noor in a murder case and to senior journalist Mozammel Babu in an extortion case.

The bench of Justice KM Zahid Sarwar and Justice Sheikh Abu Taher delivered the verdicts after hearing five separate bail petitions filed by Sujan, Noor, and Babu over the past year and earlier this year, citing health issues and long periods in jail.

Sujan's lawyer SM Abul Hossain said there is no legal bar to his release if the state does not file an appeal before the Appellate

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

BNP eyes long-overdue overhaul of affiliate bodies

Most committees expired, some for over a decade; Tarique asks for shortlist of candidates

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Prime Minister and BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman has instructed senior party leaders to prepare a list of potential candidates for key posts in the party's associated and affiliated bodies.

Party sources said committees in 10 of the BNP's 11 affiliated bodies have already expired, some by more than a decade, creating pressure for a long overdue restructuring.

Among the major associate and affiliated bodies, the committees of Chhatra Dal, Jubo Dal, Swechchhasebak Dal, Krishak Dal, Mohila Dal, Muktijoddha Dal, Sramik Dal, Tanti Dal, Matsyajeebi Dal and Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha have all exceeded their official terms.

BNP leaders said the issue has become more urgent as several leaders of these bodies are now

serving either in the government or as members of parliament, limiting their ability to remain actively involved in organisational work.

Wishing anonymity, a BNP standing committee member, who is also a minister, said, "Two or three affiliated bodies will get new leadership first. After that, others

Committees of Chhatra Dal, Jubo Dal, Swechchhasebak Dal, Krishak Dal, Mohila Dal, Muktijoddha Dal, Sramik Dal, Tanti Dal, Matsyajeebi Dal and Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha have all exceeded their official terms.



For instance, Swechchhasebak Dal president SM Jilani is now a lawmaker, while its general secretary Razib Ahsan is serving as state minister for shipping.

The Swechchhasebak Dal committee, formed on September 4, 2022, completed its term last year.

will be reorganised gradually. All decisions will be taken by BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman."

He also said those who are now in government or serving as MPs are expected to step aside from organisational posts.

"This will allow others to get

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4

'Can't sit and wait for India on Teesta' Says Khalilur ahead of China visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will not wait for a Teesta water-sharing deal with India, calling it a matter of "life and death" for river communities, and is instead turning to China to discuss development projects in the region, said Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman yesterday.

Ahead of his official visit to Beijing, Khalilur told the media the Teesta project would "definitely" be on the agenda.

Asked if Dhaka still hoped for the long-stalled agreement -- especially after the BJP's rise in West Bengal -- he replied, "Look, a government has not



SEE PAGE 13 COL 3

Govt to review private univ laws with stakeholders

Says education minister at APUB event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will review the legal and regulatory framework for private universities in consultation with stakeholders, rather than taking

A committee will examine the Private University Act and related frameworks from 1992, 2010, 2022 and 2025, along with current demands from the sector.

top-down decisions, said Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon yesterday.

He said a committee will examine the Private University Act and related frameworks from 1992, 2010, 2022 and 2025, along with current demands from the sector.

"We will sit, sort it out, and then announce it. If needed, we will go to parliament," he said at a views-exchange meeting held by the Association

SEE PAGE 13 COL 7

75 journos harassed in April: HRSS

22 people killed in mob violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 75 journalists faced harassment and abuse in 40 incidents across the country in April, according to the monthly report of Human Rights Support Society (HRSS).

According to the report released yesterday, 22 people died and 39 were injured in 44 incidents of mob violence, alongside six deaths and 533 injuries in 98 incidents linked to political violence.

The findings were compiled from 16 national media outlets and HRSS's own data.

Of the journalists targeted, 42 were injured, 17 assaulted, and 10 threatened. Additionally, three were detained, and five were accused in four separate cases.

Mob violence incidents remained frequent, often triggered by allegations of theft, robbery, snatching, and blasphemy.

While political violence saw a slight decrease from March -- during which 18 deaths and 912 injuries were recorded in 113 incidents -- the HRSS described the situation as still alarming.

Internal BNP conflicts accounted for the highest 40 clashes, leaving four dead and 247 injured. Clashes between BNP and Jamaat resulted in 113 injuries, while BNP-Awami League confrontations left 58 injured. Other violence stemmed from inter-party conflicts, extortion, and struggles for dominance.

294 women and girls faced violence, including 68 rape cases and 79 instances of sexual harassment, while domestic violence claimed 64 women's lives.

In 13 separate attacks on political activists, six people were killed and 32 injured, while 37 sustained bullet wounds. The report also noted widespread vandalism, arson, and looting.

Law enforcers reportedly obstructed seven public meetings and rallies, leading to 49 injuries and two detentions. Interference with freedom of expression also rose, with 23 people detained and nine cases filed, primarily over social media posts.

The report highlighted a concerning situation for women and children. In April, 294 women and girls faced violence, including 68 rape cases and 79 instances of sexual harassment, while domestic violence claimed 64 women's lives.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Vehicles struggle through thick mud at the Boalia canal stretch of the Shimna-Brahmanbaria road, where delays in a key bridge project have left approaches nearly impassable. The section regularly traps traffic, causing long jams and severe suffering for commuters between Brahmanbaria town and Bijoy Nagar upazila. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

Ambulance carrying injured man fired upon in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An ambulance carrying a man shot in Khulna came under gunfire while transporting him to Dhaka early yesterday.

The injured -- Raju Hawlader, 38, of Shipyard area -- is accused in multiple cases, including murder and robbery, with several arrest warrants against him, police said.

He had sustained a gunshot wound to the abdomen in Labanchara on Monday and was admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital. As his condition worsened, doctors decided to transfer him to Dhaka.

Around 12:30am, when the ambulance crossed Khan Jahan Ali Bridge and reached Kudir Bottola in Rupsha upazila, unidentified assailants opened fire.

Driver Md Faruk said bullets hit the vehicle, prompting him to rush to a nearby police station for safety.

Katakhal Highway Police Station OC Md Zafar Ahmed confirmed they were informed of the incident and provided security to ensure safe passage.

Labanchara Police Station OC Syed Mosharef Hossain told The Daily Star, "We are not sure who shot him or when. We learnt about the matter later through various sources."

He added that Raju faces at least four cases, including two for robbery and two for murder, with arrest warrants issued. "I am not aware of the attack on the ambulance," the OC said.



A trader transports straw on a nosimon to sell to markets and cattle farms during the harvest season. Farmers also earn extra income by selling straw on the side. Each bundle of straw is sold at Tk 3-4. The photo was taken on Bypass Road in Khulna city yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

SHAPLA CRACKDOWN Parties demand fresh probe, justice marking 13th anniv

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political and student organisations observed the 13th anniversary of the killings during a Hefajat-e-Islam rally at Shapla Chattar in the capital's Motijheel on May 5, 2013, through discussions, photo exhibitions, and human chains yesterday.



Opposition Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman issued a statement demanding an independent, neutral, and credible probe commission to uncover the truth behind the "horrific massacre".

He called for the facts to be revealed and for exemplary punishment of those responsible.

"This is a sorrowful and shameful chapter in the country's history. The brutal operation against the 'Tawhidi' people that day deeply shook the nation's conscience and went against humanity, justice, and democratic values," he said.

He also expressed regret that no fair and acceptable trial has taken place even after so many years, stressing the need to ensure accountability and prevent such incidents in the future.

Khelafat Majlis Ameer and Hefajat e-Islam Bangladesh Joint Secretary General Mamunul

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4

Recognition gaps, social bias keep

FROM PAGE 3

Organised by Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB) at a city hotel, the seminar presented findings from a research project titled "Hazardous Sanitation Labour: Connecting the Past, Present and Future of Manual Scavenging in Bangladesh".

Presenting the keynote, Ruhi Naz, programme manager at RIB, said sanitation workers -- particularly from the Harijan community -- are routinely exposed to life-threatening conditions, including toxic gases, lack of protective equipment, and unsafe entry into septic tanks and sewer systems.

These risks are worsened by limited access to healthcare, social protection, and alternative livelihood opportunities, she said.

The study examines the lived realities of manual scavengers in Satkhira, Khulna, Rangpur, and Nilphamari, showing how colonial

legacies, infrastructure systems, and deep-rooted discrimination continue to shape their lives.

It identifies housing insecurity, health risks, educational barriers, job insecurity, and family well-being as major challenges.

According to the findings, community members demand dignity and equal citizenship rather than just material support.

They also seek permanent housing, secure land ownership, and protection from forced eviction. Many young people want alternative, dignified livelihoods, although government jobs remain the most stable option.

Antar Bhaskar, a member of the Harijan community, highlighted severe housing problems across the country, saying many families live in overcrowded and unsafe conditions with poor sanitation and limited facilities.

He noted that despite cleaning cities, they live in unhealthy environments and often face sudden eviction from government land without rehabilitation.

Sanjay Bhaskar from Rangpur called for mainstream recognition of the Harijan community, saying there is significant untapped talent in education, sports, and other sectors, but a lack of opportunities holds them back.

Uttam Kumar Bhakta, president of the Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement, said wage discrimination remains a major issue. Salaries vary widely -- around Tk 24,000 per month in Dhaka, compared to about Tk 2,400 in Rangpur and as low as Tk 1,200 in Srimangal.

He called for a standardised pay scale and better benefits.

Bijon Kanti Sarker, special assistant to the prime minister, mentioned corrupt practices such

as ghost labour in DCC and urged the Harijan community to move beyond traditional practices and adapt to changing demands.

Sanjida Islam Tulee, a reserved-seat lawmaker, said internal conflict within the community is also a challenge.

She assured that she would raise the issue of improving the lives of Harijans with the prime minister.

Dr Sally Cawood, lecturer of economic geography at Lancaster University, stressed the need for a holistic approach to improve the lives of Harijan people.

The session was chaired by Prof MM Akash, a board member of RIB.

Hameeda Hussain, vice chairperson of RIB; Alsana Binte Amin of NETZ Bangladesh; Kartik Ram Rauth of Harijan Oikyo Porishad, Khulna; and Dalit rights activist Kailash Chandro Rabidas also spoke.

PM stresses transparency in spending

FROM PAGE 3

The prime minister also emphasised the need to conduct performance audits alongside compliance audits to assess whether public funds are being used effectively.

He made the remarks when Bangladesh's

Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Md Nurul Islam presented 38 compliance and performance audit reports to him.

The audit reports cover 17 ministries and divisions, as well as various directorates, offices, institutions, and projects under them.

During the

presentation, the CAG apprised the prime minister of the issues highlighted in the reports and the reform measures taken by the audit and accounts department.

Officials concerned said compliance audits examine whether financial rules and

procedures are followed in government offices, agencies, and projects.

Performance audits, on the other hand, assess whether the objectives of government projects and activities have been achieved and whether public funds have been used effectively.

75 journos harassed

FROM PAGE 3

In the labour sector, 80 incidents left 13 workers dead and 116 injured. Furthermore, 64 workers died in workplace accidents

attributed to unsafe conditions.

"The human rights situation in Bangladesh is becoming increasingly sensitive in the context

of recent political realities and public safety concerns," said HRSS Executive Director Ejazul Islam.

He warned that

continued harassment of journalists, mob violence, and restrictions on freedom of expression could further deteriorate the situation.



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

S/N	Tender ID	Tender name	Package No.	Tender publication date and time	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender closing & opening date and time
01.	1266830	Procurement of Transport Service on Monthly Rental Basis	14.39.0000.00 0.012.07.0003 23.164 (T) Date: 26.04.2026	06-May-2026 Time: 10:00 (AM)	20-May-2026 Time: 17:00(PM)	21-May-2026 Time: 17:00 (PM)

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

(Signed)
Md. Golam Sarowar
General Manager (Admin & Procurement)
Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited

GD-1025



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General Manager



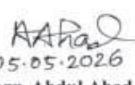
Engineering Office
University of Chittagong
Chittagong-4331, Bangladesh
Phone: PABX-02334460788 (extn-4231)
E-mail: ce.engroff@cu.ac.bd

Re-Tender Notice
This is an online tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted on the National e-GP Portal System (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tenders, please register on the e-GP system portal. E-Tender has been invited on E-GP system portal by Office of Chief Engineer, University of Chittagong, Chittagong for procurement of following.

SL	e-Tender ID & Package No.	Package Description
01	ID-1268871, CE-e-GP(OTM)-153/CUCE-2719/EDU-RAB/2025-26	OTM-153/CUCE-2719/EDU-RAB/2025-26 Construction Work of 06 (Six) Storied Annex Building for Jamal Nazrul Islam Research Center of Mathematical and Physical Sciences at the University of Chittagong.

e-Tender details can be downloaded from as stated above on e-GP system portal for purpose. The fees for downloading e-tender documents from the National e-GP system portal should be deposited online through any registered bank. The e-tenders will be accepted on the e-GP system portal within the specified date and time. Accepted tenders will be opened as per the date and time displayed online.

More information and guidance is available at the National e-GP Portal System and the e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


05.05.2026
Engr. Abdul Ahad
Chief Engineer (I/C)
University of Chittagong
Chittagong, Bangladesh.

GD-1031



Janata Bank PLC.
Head Office
IT Procurement, Security, Compliance and Maintenance Department
110, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000
Tel: +02223356514 Website: www.jb.com.bd

Invitation for e-Tender
e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Invitation Reference No.	Tender description	Tender closing date & time
1	1269421	JB/IT-Proc-37/OTM/PPS3/Managed Call Centre/2026	Tender for Procurement of Managed Call Centre Service for Janata Bank PLC.	21/05/2026 03:30pm
2	1269648	JB/ITPSCMD/IT-Proc-81/Antivirus/2026	Tender for Procurement of Kaspersky Next EDR Optimum for Janata Bank PLC.	21/05/2026 12:00pm
3	1270718	JB/IT-Proc-43/Staff/2026 College/ Wifi/LAN/OTM/2026	Procurement of Hardware, Installation & AMC for Wi-Fi coverage area extension and LAN setup at Janata Bank Staff College, Dhaka.	19/05/2026 12:00pm

These are online tenders, 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 (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal and e-GP help desk (Email: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

S/d
Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain
Deputy General Manager

GD-1028



e-Tender Notice (OTM Goods)

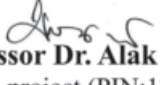
Ref: CU/HEAT/GES/PIN-12368/Gen-41
Date: 05/05/2026
e-Tenders are invited in the e-GP portal system by the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Chittagong, for the procurement of the following items:

Sl. No.	APP ID, Tender ID, Package No.	Package Description	Type of Tender	Location of Work	Online Tender Notice Publication date	Online Tender Closing/ Opening Date & Time
01	220779, 1269586, CU/12368/G4	Procurement and installation of ICT items for the Dept. of Geography and Environmental Studies, CU	NCT, OTM	Dept. of Geography and Env. Studies, University of Chittagong, Chattogram-4331	04-MAY-2026 17:10	25-MAY-2026 15:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted on the National e-GP portal, and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit an e-Tender, please register on the e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

e-Tender details can be downloaded from the e-GP system as stated above. The fees for the e-Tender documents from the e-GP system must be deposited online through any registered bank. e-Tenders will be accepted within the date and time stated, and accepted tenders will be opened online immediately.

Further information and guidelines are available on the national e-GP portal system and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


Professor Dr. Alak Paul
SPM, HEAT Sub-project (PIN:12368)
Dept. of Geography & Environmental Studies
University of Chittagong, Chattogram-4331.

GD-1024

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Date: 05 May 2026

Re e-Tender Notice

Subject: Procurement of Stationary & Printing Items.

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of goods mentioned below:

e-Tender ID No	Description of goods	Last Selling Date and Time	Opening Date and Time
1268943	Procurement of Stationary & Printing Items	11-May-2026 16:00	12-May-2026 14:00

- This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in 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 document from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branch.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

05-05-2026

Nahida Barik
Secretary

ফোন : 02223382119

GD-1044

ইমেইল : secretary@bfidc.gov.bd

From Rights to Reality: Advancing Justice and Action for All Women and Girls in Bangladesh

A roundtable was organized on March 9, 2026, by Bangladesh National Gender Working Group (BNGWG) in partnership with Plan International Bangladesh and The Daily Star, marking Women's Day 2026 under the theme "Rights, Justice, Action for all women and girls." This discussion created a space for deeper reflection on the current realities faced by women in Bangladesh. Participants explored the gap between progress and practice, assessing women's position in leadership and political representation, while identifying key barriers that continue to limit meaningful participation. The dialogue also emphasised the need for collective actions, bringing together civil society representatives, development partners, and gender experts to chart a way forward.

**DR. TANIA HAQUE**
Professor
Department of Women and Gender Studies

In Bangladesh's political sphere, women's participation often remains visible but not always meaningful, as involvement in movements does not consistently translate into sustained leadership roles. Social norms and policy approaches still tend to view women as passive participants rather than active decision-makers, creating a gap between representation and real influence. Strengthening women's political leadership requires early support from families and an education system that promotes leadership skills, critical thinking, and broader exposure beyond academic achievement. At the same time, fostering a more respectful and inclusive political culture is essential, with greater emphasis on positive behaviour and communication among leaders. Encouraging shared responsibilities within households can also support this shift, helping build mutual respect and balance. A combined focus on capacity, mindset, and inclusion can help ensure more meaningful and effective participation of women in politics.

**BANASREE MITRA NEOGI**
Director - Rights & Governance
Manusher Jonno Foundation

Women's influence on policy and government decision-making remains limited. Despite a long history of activism and visible progress in education, health, and economic participation, structural and cultural barriers persist. Male-dominated political culture reduces the space for women to participate in politics from the grassroots to the national level. Hesitations originated from male dominated social and structural barriers further restricts women's voices, even when awareness of injustice exists. Political rights, rooted in broader social, economic, and cultural contexts, continue to be constrained. Women's participation is not growing at all in the parliament, suggesting systemic gaps. To ensure women's progress from grassroots to leadership roles, strengthening democratic processes within parties and creating supportive environments are needed. Promoting rights-based awareness can support more active engagement. A more inclusive approach, supported by institutions, can help women contribute more effectively to governance and justice.

**TASAFFY M HOSSAIN**
Founder and Managing Director
Bonhishikha

Three major areas around which women's participation in public life revolves are access, opportunity, and representation. Across all three, a substantial gap persists between legal provisions and their actual implementation. Although policies mandate measures such as 33% women's leadership in political parties, targets remain



**MD SANAUUL HAQUE MONDAL**
Assistant Professor,
Department of Social Relations
East West University

Bangladesh's governance system reflects notable progress in gender-sensitive policies, with constitutional provisions, national frameworks, and international commitments in place to protect women's rights. Women's representation has also increased across national and local institutions, indicating positive movement in visibility. However, greater focus is needed to translate these commitments into practice. Meaningful participation in decision-making remains limited, and increased numbers have not always ensured stronger influence. Gender considerations are present in policy areas such as climate change, food security, education, and local development, but implementation requires strengthening. Institutional efforts towards socio-economic empowerment continue, though often focused more on numerical inclusion than substantive participation. Political engagement largely remains symbolic, with limited impact despite increased reserved seats. Overall, while policy frameworks appear moderately gender-responsive, a significant gap persists between commitments and real-world outcomes.

**ROWSHON AKHTER URMEE**
Gender Specialist
Oxfam

Women's participation in politics remains limited despite representing nearly half of the voters, with less than 4% candidates in recent elections and very few elected in direct seats. Political party gatekeeping remains a major barrier, with some parties nominating no women at all and others relying on familial or network-based access rather than merit. Violence and intimidation further discourage participation, as women candidates face bullying, smear campaigns, and gendered attacks. Additionally, entrenched patriarchal norms confine women to reserved seats, limiting their role in mainstream, competitive politics and reinforcing stereotypes. These interconnected barriers continue to

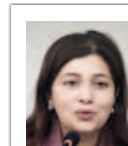
and participation often exist only on paper, and despite NGO efforts to promote inclusion, institutional frameworks remain insufficient. Even with mandated female membership percentages, nominations remain low, with only 2.33% of women elected to Parliament. Reserved seats ensure visibility, but mainstream inclusion is still limited. Institutionalising women's participation is urgently needed to secure meaningful representation and influence.

**SHAHMINA ISHA MANNAN**
Gender and Policy Consultant
FBCCI, CWCCI, and Cape

Politics is often viewed negatively, causing many to distance themselves, yet this masks the deeper issue of systematic exclusion. At the grassroots level, women hold reserved seats in Union Parishads, but numerical representation has not translated into meaningful participation. Many women members remain unaware of their political rights and responsibilities, and are excluded from decision-making processes such as budgeting and planning. Strengthening awareness and capacity at this level is essential. The justice system also faces challenges, including limited resources, case backlogs, and delays that can hinder timely redress, particularly in cases affecting women. Improving accessibility, responsiveness, and accountability within police and judicial institutions remains crucial. Greater coordination among political parties, local government, and state institutions can help ensure more inclusive participation. Expanding training opportunities, addressing institutional biases, and strengthening accountability mechanisms can create a more enabling environment for women's meaningful political engagement.

**QUAZI BABY**
CEO
Participatory Development Action Program (PDAP)

Harassment and abuse in digital spaces are rising, with many women experiencing online threats, sexualised images, and intimidation. This abuse extends beyond the internet, directly affecting women's safety in daily life and fostering fear of offline violence. Women in public life are particularly vulnerable, with some forced to resign due to persistent threats. In urban areas, limited awareness of online abuse and cyber hygiene remains a challenge, while rural areas face even greater difficulties due to lower awareness and restricted access to digital resources. Ensuring digital safety also requires addressing social stigma and traditional norms that discourage women from using the internet. Schools and NGOs can support safe online practices through cyber clubs and peer learning. Globally, fewer than 40% of countries have laws against cyber harassment, leaving 1.8 billion women and girls without legal protection.

**ANIKA TAHSIN KHAN**
National Gender Consultant
GIZ

Political exclusion of women has deep historical roots and cannot be explained by a single factor. While attention often focuses on intersecting identities, such as youth or persons with disabilities, exclusion affects women as a whole. Recent elections highlighted the political power of gender narratives, with women's empowerment driving campaigns and high voter turnout, including in rural areas.

Yet meaningful participation in leadership and governance remains limited, and women are frequently sidelined in decision-making. Even after decades of work by international organisations, persistent biases continue, with institutional practices framing women as exceptions rather than equals. The key issue is not merely how exclusion occurs, but why it endures. Rural women, despite significant capability and labour, face additional social and economic barriers restricting their political voice and representation.

**RASHEDA AKTER**
Technical Manager
- Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
Save the Children

Years of work on women's rights provided some reassurance that progress, though slow, was underway. Yet the anti-discrimination movement of 2024, the 2026 election, and the surrounding public discourse on women's rights, leadership, and even clothing created a sense that hard-won gains had suddenly been pushed back. Gender-related discussions are being widely shared across digital platforms without accountability. Such narratives normalise harassment and reinforce violence against women. Incidents of domestic abuse and attacks on women in public spaces illustrate the consequences of this environment. Discussions alone are not enough. Women's rights must be recognised and institutionalised through accountable systems—from the highest levels of the state to families, institutions, and schools, ensuring women's representation, mobility, safety, and equal agency in society.

**SANJIDA AHMED**
Gender, Diversity, Inclusion & Protection Advisor
Plan International

Patriarchal attitudes are deeply rooted, and awareness programmes alone rarely bring lasting change. Legal frameworks, therefore, remain an important tool, as the presence of law and enforcement can create accountability and deterrence. While Bangladesh has laws addressing violence against women and child marriage, gaps remain in addressing sexual harassment and political violence against women. Institutional protection mechanisms are also essential, particularly within government and political institutions, where gender focal points could monitor and respond to such issues. Online spaces present another growing concern, as women frequently face bullying and harassment on digital platforms. Safe reporting systems that ensure privacy and confidentiality are critical. Alongside legal reforms, gender-sensitive security protocols, capacity building, and inclusive political cultures with clear codes of conduct are necessary, supported through collaboration between political actors and civil society.

**KHANDOKER SHOHEL RANA**
Advocacy and Communications Coordinator
Sightsavers

Gender budgeting in Bangladesh has the past two fiscal years, with fewer ministries and departments allocating gender-focused funds. Leadership in BCS administration shows a downward trend in women's recruitment, and political participation reflects a focus on representative presence rather than rights, equality, or equity. At the local level, elected women members often lack

information or training to perform their roles effectively, highlighting the need for a functional political ecosystem. Media representation is limited, with few women in leadership or reporting positions, and coverage of women's issues often focuses on human-interest narratives rather than rights violations. Civil society policies exist, but gaps remain in implementation and accountability. Collaboration among development partners and organisations is essential to advance women's representation, rights, and meaningful participation across governance, media, and society.

**KOHINOOR YEASMIN**
Co-chair of BNGWG and CEO of TARANGO

Women have stepped forward, and progress is visible through short-, medium-, and long-term strategies, yet scaling up remains a challenge. At the grassroots and policy levels, elected women members in union councils are often uninformed, even when given supervisory responsibilities, lacking knowledge of budgets, projects, or expenditures. Questions raised by these women are frequently dismissed, leaving them politically excluded despite empowerment efforts. Young women and adolescent girls are showing courage, learning self-protection and leadership, but families must be informed to ensure safe participation. Coordinated efforts with organisations such as Plan International, Save the Children, and CARE, along with a clear roadmap, are essential to advancing women's rights and meaningful political and social participation.

**KAMRUN NAHAR**
Chair, Bangladesh National Gender Working Group (BNGWG)
National Gender Expert Senior Consultant, GIZ

The long history of the women's movement demands committed action to learn from the past and drive strong, sustainable systemic change. In government institutions, women's issues are often confined to the Directorate of Women's Affairs, highlighting gaps in independence, capacity, and inter-agency coordination. Political frameworks remain incomplete, with workplace harassment and bullying affecting women leaders and insufficient policies or monitoring to ensure equal participation and protection. Accountability is essential, with development agendas needing continuous consolidation and follow-up through a core committee to monitor implementation effectively. The media, civil society, NGOs, and government must collaborate to promote women's leadership, enhance visibility, and ensure coordinated action. Only unified, collective efforts can deliver meaningful, lasting reform.

**TANJIM FERDOUS**
Head of Strategic Partnerships
The Daily Star (Moderator of the Session)

Entrenched social norms, systemic barriers, and weak accountability mechanisms continue to hinder women's full participation in politics and equitable access to justice in Bangladesh. This roundtable convened civil society actors, development partners, and youth leaders to critically examine these challenges, identify emerging opportunities, and develop practical, actionable strategies to advance women's empowerment and promote inclusive, gender-responsive governance across institutions and communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen enforcement and accountability of existing gender-responsive laws and political commitments to ensure meaningful implementation
- Institutionalise women's political participation through fair nominations and merit-based leadership pathways
- Invest in leadership development through education, capacity-building, and grassroots training for women and girls
- Transform patriarchal norms by promoting behavioural change, engaging men, and encouraging shared domestic responsibilities
- Ensure safety and protection for women in politics and public life, including addressing online harassment and political violence
- Foster coordinated action among government, political parties, civil society, and media to drive sustained gender equality and accountability

unmet due to weak enforcement and lack of accountability. Even recent commitments to increase women's nominations fell short, highlighting persistent gaps. Progress requires more than policy alone; accessibility must be ensured, opportunities expanded, capacities built, and entrenched societal mindsets challenged. Women leaders are active and capable, yet social barriers often limit them, constraining their meaningful participation. Immediate priorities include strengthening safety and security through legal frameworks and sensitisation, alongside systemic reforms in governance, education, and workplaces to ensure inclusive, accountable, and sustainable advancement.

restrict meaningful participation, underscoring the urgent need for critical reflection and targeted action to ensure genuine political justice.

**TASNUVA AHMED**
CEO and Managing Director
Cloud Convoy

At a recent investment summit, major political parties showcased women's participation on paper, yet during elections, these women were not nominated, exposing the gap between policy and practice. Political hierarchies remain male-dominated, making it difficult for women to raise their voices or gain acceptance. Access

Restore NHRC’s functionality

Enact a law that ensures its operational and financial independence

For years, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has remained ineffective and powerless, issuing muted statements in response to even the worst human rights violations in the country. With the promulgation of the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance in 2025, there was hope that the new commission would be much more powerful, and bring the state and its security forces to account. That hope became uncertain when the ordinance was repealed and the faulty National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009 was reinstated during the first session of the 13th parliament. This move by the BNP government not only made the commission defunct—with the commissioners appointed under the ordinance during the interim government’s tenure now unofficially dismissed—but also raised concerns about the possibility of investigations of human rights violations by state agencies themselves. As pointed out by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Dr Alice Edwards, in an interview with *The Daily Star*, under this law, the NHRC cannot “investigate disciplined forces.” As a result, state-sanctioned human rights abuses could continue to occur with impunity.

It is largely because of such constraints that the NHRC has never earned the UN-accredited Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions A-status, unlike some of our neighbours. It has consistently failed in terms of displaying political, operational, and financial independence. When the government can influence the selection process of its commissioners, as is the case under the existing 2009 act, institutional independence is inevitably compromised. Revival of the old law thus enhances the risk of partisan appointments. Besides, the 2025 ordinance ensured full financial autonomy for the organisation. Without this, effective functioning in terms of both investigation and compensation becomes difficult, as experienced by past commissions.

The government justified the repeal and reinstatement saying there were flaws in the 2025 ordinance. But it has failed to answer why the ordinance could not be amended and improved instead of being repealed and replaced by a weaker, older law. The law minister, in an interview with this daily last month, said that a new law would be enacted after further scrutiny and verification. Alice Edwards also mentioned similar commitments she had received from the government. However, what remains uncertain is whether a future human rights commission law or an amendment to the 2009 act will ensure full operational and financial independence of the NHRC. Our concerns mirror those of the special rapporteur. The uncertainty surrounding legislation also raises concerns about accountability for any abuses committed during this legal vacuum.

The NHRC was non-functional for 15 months after the fall of the Awami League regime in 2024, as political appointees of the time left their posts. The interim government appointed five commissioners on February 5, 2026. But in less than three months, they too had to leave, although without official notice. In the meantime, according to a Human Rights Support Society report, there have been 39 custodial deaths in the first three months of this year. A defunct NHRC cannot investigate these or any other human rights abuses. Therefore, we urge the government to quickly present a law ensuring the NHRC’s independence and restoring its functionality.

Improve health services in the hills

Remote areas must be prioritised in countering measles

The ongoing measles crisis has exposed myriad gaps in our public healthcare infrastructure, especially in the most remote regions. One such case involves Bandarban’s Alikadam upazila where, as per a report by this daily, at least five children have died of measles-like symptoms since the beginning of this month. Tens of others have also been suffering severely from similar symptoms. The number of cases is also increasing, with 86 cases reported between April 25 and 30 alone.

Unfortunately, proper medical treatment remains inaccessible for most families in these hilly areas. The affected—most of them children—are being treated either at the upazila health complex or at a temporary medical camp set up at Bidyamoni Government Primary School near the remote Powa Muhuri Doripara area. Some critical cases are referred to Cox’s Bazar Medical College Hospital. The temporary camp is being operated by a volunteer team consisting of youth from the Mro community, along with students from various universities and colleges, working jointly with the local administration. However, due to the lack of electricity, only primary care is being provided at the camp, and all patients are being referred directly to the upazila health complex.

Meanwhile, given the recent rainy weather, and with the nearest medical services being miles away and costing thousands of taka, many families are having to stay at home and opt for homemade herbal treatments. Owing to their remote location, health workers rarely visit them to provide routine vaccination. Many of these families are also not fully aware of the seriousness of measles symptoms.

By now, it is an established fact that the measles outbreak has worsened due to vaccination-related missteps by the interim government. However, the outbreak has also exposed our persistently poor preparedness: despite its experience of the Covid pandemic, the health sector still struggles to respond effectively to sudden crises. That many in remote areas are still having to resort to traditional healing practices, or remain generally unaware of the danger of measles, is largely an institutional failure.

It is vital that proper medical treatment is made accessible across the country, both in terms of covering cost and distance. This means not only adding new health facilities and strengthening existing ones, but also deploying temporary health workers to address the measles situation in remote areas. The ongoing vaccination campaign is commendable, especially as it is reaching remote communities, but it is crucial that health services in rural and remote areas are strengthened to treat more severe measles cases, so that no more children die preventable deaths.

Anti-torture laws without real safeguards are not enough



Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury is a former judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, who authored the landmark 16th Amendment judgment. He also served as chairman of the National Human Rights Commission and the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

MOYEENUL ISLAM CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh does not suffer from a shortage of solemn words against torture. Article 35(5) of the constitution prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The country has long been a party to the Convention against Torture, has enacted the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013, acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), and joined the Convention on Enforced Disappearance. The legal vocabulary is impressive. The institutional reality, however, is not. The state signing such treaties while leaving police stations, prisons, remand rooms, and intelligence cells effectively unmonitored has not defeated torture; it has only moved it from the text of law to the shadows of power.

The recent National Consultation on the Prevention of Torture and the Implementation held in Dhaka on April 25-26 should, therefore, be read less as a ceremonial event and more as an indictment of our unfinished statehood. The presence of UN Special Rapporteur Alice Jill Edwards in Dhaka underlined an uncomfortable truth: Bangladesh’s problem is not merely the occasional excess of individual officers. It is a system in which coercion has too often been treated as an investigative method, a disciplinary shortcut, a tool of political control, and a populist substitute for justice.

Torture persists because it serves bureaucratic convenience. When investigators are poorly trained, under-resourced, exposed to political pressure, and judged by confessions extracted rather than by evidence they uncover, violence becomes administratively rational. It is quicker to beat a statement out of a suspect than to reconstruct a crime from witnesses, forensic evidence, surveillance records, and lawful questioning. It is easier to frighten a family into silence than to defend a case in court. It is more convenient to call a custodial death an “accident”, “illness”, or “suicide” than to admit that the state has failed to protect the life and dignity of those in its custody.

This is why the 2013 Act, despite its moral force, has remained painfully underused. The first known conviction under the law in the Ishtiaque Hossain

Jonny case was rightly celebrated. Still, the fact that this case was exceptional even after years of custodial torture allegations exposes the weakness of the surrounding architecture. A torture law within the same institutional culture it seeks to restrain cannot be expected to transform that culture. Without independent investigation, witness protection, medical documentation, judicial vigilance and protection against reprisals, the law risks becoming a monument to good intentions rather than an instrument of accountability.



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

OPCAT changes the question. It is not satisfied with punishment after abuse. It demands prevention. That means Bangladesh must establish a national preventive mechanism which will have the authority, resources and independence to enter all places where people are deprived of liberty, without prior notice and without fear of obstruction. Such places must include police stations, prisons, remand rooms, immigration detention, psychiatric institutions, juvenile facilities, and any informal spaces used by intelligence or security agencies. A preventive mechanism that cannot reach the most dangerous rooms will be nothing more than a public relations office.

Of course, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) cannot perform this task unless it is rebuilt. Bangladesh’s continued B status in the GANHRI accreditation system is not a technical embarrassment; it is an indication that the commission

has lacked the independence, appointment process, budgetary control, and investigative powers expected of a credible national institution. A commission that cannot independently investigate allegations against law enforcement agencies cannot meaningfully protect people from their abuse. The government should stop treating A status as an international image problem and start treating it as a domestic rule of law problem.

No reform will be credible if it avoids the legacy of special forces and political policing. Bangladesh has repeatedly learned that elite units created in the name of public security can become machinery for fear when command responsibility, transparent oversight and prosecutorial independence are absent. Rebranding an abusive institution is not reform. Dissolution without accountability is not reform either. The test is whether files are opened, commanders questioned,

and towards rapport-based, evidence-based interviewing. This is not softness towards crime. It is professionalism. Torture produces false confessions, contaminates evidence, destroys public trust and allows real offenders to escape behind cases built on fear. Proper interviewing, forensic capacity, audio-visual recording of interrogation, prompt access to counsel, medical examination after arrest, notification to family and early judicial oversight are not luxuries; they are the infrastructure of justice.

Judges have a central role here. Every remand order should be treated as a site of constitutional responsibility, not a procedural formality. Courts must ask where the detainee was held, whether counsel was present, if there are injuries, whether the medical examination was independent, and whether any statement was obtained through coercion. Prosecutors must also refuse tainted evidence. Magistrates must not operate as clerks of custody. The judiciary cannot condemn torture in principle while allowing its products (coerced confessions and other tainted evidence) to be used in practice.

Enforced disappearance, custodial torture, extrajudicial killing, and false implication do not belong in separate moral categories. They are connected techniques of unaccountable power. A justice process that isolates them into disconnected files will miss the pattern. Survivors do not need another round of symbolic sympathy. They need disclosure, rehabilitation, compensation, prosecution and guarantees that the same agencies will not reinvent the same practices under new names.

Bangladesh now faces a stark choice. It can convert its treaty accessions into real institutional redesign, or it can continue the familiar cycle of speeches, committees, promises and denial. The first path requires political courage: disclosing detention spaces, empowering independent monitors, protecting complainants, prosecuting officials, reforming police law, changing interrogation culture and accepting scrutiny as a safeguard rather than an insult. The second path is easier, and it is precisely why torture survives.

The measure of democratic renewal is not whether the state can speak the language of human rights in conferences. It is whether a poor detainee, an opposition activist, a suspect in an ordinary criminal case, a prisoner, a protester, or a person with no influence at all can enter state custody and come out alive, unharmed and with dignity intact. Until that is secured, Bangladesh’s promise of reform will remain conditional, fragile and morally incomplete.

The illusion of education reform



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MD REZA E RABBI

There is a particular condition that afflicts policymakers in developing democracies, and Bangladesh’s education sector establishment has a textbook example for it. A video was recently circulated on social media showing the education minister stepping out of a car in a village, a microphone clipped to his collar, and posing a question to a group of schoolchildren with theatrical flair: “There will be no more cheating in exams. You are studying properly, aren’t you?”

When a minister’s primary talking point—at field visits, board meetings, and education seminars—is exam hall discipline, what does that tell us about the ceiling of our ambitions?

The fact that the minister considers plagiarism prevention a selling point announces, loudly and without irony, that we have set the bar for reform at administrative adequacy. The minister’s agenda reads like a checklist of procedural anxieties: preventing cheating in exam halls, drafting new legislation to criminalise digital fraud in examinations, and overhauling how answer scripts are evaluated and marked. These are not unimportant matters, but obsessing over how strictly we mark a test tells us nothing about whether the test is worth taking. Criminalising digital cheating does not produce a single curious, capable, or

creative mind.

Compare this with what policymakers in high-performing education systems actually discuss. In Finland, South Korea, or Singapore, the national conversation in education circles revolves around cultivating creativity, building research capacity, redesigning curricula to address

a front-page headline and gives the impression of a country going digital overnight. But no one can photograph the improving quality of a lesson.

The new policy announcements popping up in recent months—mandatory third languages and vocational training—follow exactly this pattern. They are presented as forward-thinking reforms, but without the foundational structural work that any serious curricular overhaul requires: teacher retraining at scale, assessment reform, coherent implementation frameworks, and a willingness to sit with complexity for years before results arrive.

The tablets would be distributed; whether teachers could use them, whether the curriculum would be

When a party comes to power with a five-year mandate, its core incentive is to produce visible wins before the next ballot. A shiny new school building can be photographed. Distributing devices to thousands of students generates a front-page headline and gives the impression of a country going digital overnight. But no one can photograph the improving quality of a lesson.

21st-century skills, and preparing students for labour markets that will look radically different in 20 years. Bangladesh, meanwhile, remains imprisoned in a conversation about exam centres and grade sheets. And this is not simply our minister’s personal failing. It is a structural one, rooted in how our political economy works.

When a party comes to power with a five-year mandate, its core incentive is to produce visible wins before the next ballot. A shiny new school building can be photographed. Distributing devices to thousands of students generates

compatible with digital learning, whether students in those schools even would have reliable electricity—these questions often dissolve into the background. The GPA-5 count swells year on year, pass rates reach improbable heights, and yet we continue producing graduates who are uncompetitive in the global workforce.

The real tragedy is that the reforms which could actually matter are obvious and achievable. Teacher dignity is one of them. In countries where education works, the teaching profession carries social prestige and

financial security. In Bangladesh, we have systematically undermined both. A teacher who is poorly paid, professionally unsupported, and socially marginalised is not going to transform classrooms no matter how many syllabi we redesign above their heads.

The curriculum problem is similarly neglected. We live in an era of rapid technological disruption, where artificial intelligence is reshaping white-collar work, where the skills that will matter most to today’s schoolchildren are adaptability, critical reasoning, and comfort with ambiguity. Instead, our curriculum asks students to remember, reproduce, perform at narrow cognitive tasks under timed pressure. The result is young people who are literate on paper but practically unprepared for the world ahead.

Our policymakers know this. The problem is that fixing it takes a decade, requires political courage, and none of it promises an easy win. It requires a government to trust that doing the right, unglamorous thing today will matter enormously to a generation of children who cannot yet vote. We must be clear about what we are asking for: the boring, difficult, unphotographable work of building a real education system.

A nation’s true development is measured by the depth of its people’s thinking. Our ministers can choose to be remembered as the generation that fixed exam hall conduct, or as the generation that finally decided to build something that lasts. So far, they are choosing the wrong thing to be proud of.

A longer version of this article is available on our website.

What BJP's win in West Bengal means for Bangladesh



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JANNATUL NAYM PICAL

The rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in West Bengal is more than just another electoral outcome. It represents a deeper structural shift along India's eastern frontier, one that carries significant implications for Bangladesh. For years, West Bengal operated as a quiet counterbalance within India's federal framework, at times slowing or reshaping decisions emerging from New Delhi. That moderating layer is now eroding. With BJP in control both at the centre and in Kolkata, India's eastern policy is poised to become more centralised, ideologically cohesive, and administratively decisive. For Dhaka, this signals a transition from dealing with a fragmented system to confronting a far more unified—though less accommodating—neighbour.

This shift creates a dual reality. Greater alignment within India may reduce the inconsistencies that once complicated bilateral engagement. But it also removes the informal cushions Bangladesh often relied on: those moments when state-level resistance could delay, dilute or deflect central policies. What now emerges instead is a more predictable yet more rigid framework of engagement.

The impact will be especially pronounced in water diplomacy as the long-delayed Teesta water-sharing agreement continues to symbolise the limitations of past negotiations. When India's then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh travelled to Dhaka in 2011, the agreement was on the verge of conclusion before it was blocked by Mamata Banerjee. With that obstacle now removed, there could be a narrow opening for renewed talks.

However, the political arithmetic within West Bengal complicates this optimism.

BJP's strong support in northern districts, where the Teesta flows, means that any agreement will have to account for local electoral pressures. To add to that, competing agricultural demands, India's broader river management strategies, and the fragile ecology of the delta continue to tilt the balance. While administrative coherence may accelerate negotiations, it does not ensure equitable outcomes. Bangladesh will need to push harder for basin-wide frameworks, credible data-sharing, and enforceable safeguards.

On the border, changes are likely to be swift and visible. A more synchronised Indian approach is expected to tighten surveillance, complete fencing, and strengthen coordination between agencies such as the Border Security Force (BSF). This transition from a loosely managed frontier to a more securitised one may reduce illicit movement, but it will also disrupt informal economies that sustain millions on both sides.

More concerning is the potential human cost. Bangladeshi civilian killings along the border, long a source of tension, could increase under a stricter enforcement regime. Without meaningful accountability and restraint, greater control may deepen grievances rather than resolve them, turning the border into a site of recurring humanitarian concern.

Politically, too, a striking parallel is emerging across the frontier. In Bangladesh's recent parliamentary election in February, Jamaat-e-Islami strengthened its position in border constituencies, while the BJP has now also consolidated its influence in adjacent districts on the Indian side. This convergence points to a broader shift: communities historically linked by language and culture

are increasingly gravitating towards religious identity-driven politics. Thus, the border, once defined by interdependence, now risks hardening into a line of polarisation.

It is also worth noting here the recent developments in another neighbouring Indian state, Assam, under Himanta Biswa Sarma. Over the past year, he has not only sharpened anti-Bangladesh rhetoric but also openly described controversial

may involve individuals brought from other parts of India, and suggested that strained bilateral ties make these practices easier to carry out. The scale is significant. According to Bangladesh authorities, at least 2,436 people—including Indian nationals and the Rohingya—were pushed into Bangladesh between May and December in 2025.

While these practices have so far been largely associated with Assam, the BJP's

complexity. A BJP-led West Bengal is likely to push forward infrastructure, industrial expansion, and improved connectivity with India's northeast. While Bangladesh may benefit from enhanced transit and energy cooperation, these gains come with trade-offs. The formalisation of economic flows threatens informal cross-border livelihoods, and a more competitive West Bengal could challenge Bangladeshi exports in sectors like textiles and jute. Economic engagement, therefore, requires careful calibration rather than automatic optimism.

Cultural and political sensitivities are also set to intensify. A more assertive Indian stance on minority issues in Bangladesh, amplified through political and media channels, could strain relations further, particularly as Islamist-leaning forces gain visibility within Bangladesh. In this environment, narratives and perceptions may prove as consequential as policy decisions themselves.

There is also a broader strategic layer to consider. As India consolidates its eastern flank, it is likely to view Bangladesh's external engagements—particularly with China—through a more security-conscious lens. This could narrow Dhaka's room for manoeuvre, even as it seeks to balance economic opportunities with geopolitical realities.

Against this backdrop, traditional diplomacy alone will not suffice. Bangladesh must adjust to a more centralised and ideologically assertive India by strengthening technical negotiations, investing in data-driven policymaking, and diversifying its strategic engagements. The fundamental challenges such as water security, border governance, and economic resilience remain the same, but the context in which they must be addressed is likely to grow more complex and more political. Navigating this new terrain will require clarity, discipline, and strategic resolve from Dhaka.

In a region shaped by climate stress and shifting geopolitical currents, cooperation remains essential. However, it must be anchored in a clear-eyed defence of Bangladesh's interests, rather than assumptions inherited from a different political moment.



India's ruling BJP supporters celebrate as early trends show their party leading in the West Bengal state assembly election results, outside the party's regional office in Kolkata, India on May 4, 2026.

PHOTO: REUTERS

border practices operating outside formal diplomatic channels. In public remarks, he outlined so-called "pushback" operations, where individuals labelled as "illegal Bangladeshis" are detained and forced across the border without completing formal deportation procedures. He also acknowledged the lack of coordination with Dhaka, and indicated that such actions

control of West Bengal raises the possibility of their wider application. From now on, border districts in West Bengal may increasingly see stricter enforcement and a rise in such "push-in" incidents, expanding what was once a region-specific approach into a broader pattern along India's eastern frontier.

Economic dynamics add another layer of

Can we ease dollar dependency without risking stability?



Dr M Kabir Hassan is professor of finance and Moffett chair at the University of New Orleans in the US.

M KABIR HASSAN

The current structure of the global monetary system, long characterised by the hegemony of the US dollar, reveals several signs of fracture. In the case of Bangladesh, a trade-oriented, remittance-dependent nation in transition, the consequences of de-dollarisation attempts cannot be overlooked.

Empirical data confirms the ongoing trend. According to figures released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the US dollar's share of foreign currency reserves decreased from roughly 71 percent in 1999 to around 57 percent by the end of 2025, the lowest level recorded in the last 30 years. Central banks' gold reserves are increasing rapidly; in 2025, the amount of gold held by central banks exceeded the total of US treasury securities on their balance sheets for the first time.

Moreover, the practice of using economic sanctions to impose a political agenda has only reinforced countries' efforts to find alternatives. For example, the proportion of BRICS transactions in local currencies by Russia has reached 90 percent since the

country invaded Ukraine in 2022. Meanwhile, the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), the Chinese counterpart of SWIFT, connects over 5,000 banking institutions across 190 countries.

Still, it would be inappropriate to say that the days of the US dollar are numbered. The currency maintains its dominance in foreign exchange markets, is used in around half of all international trade transactions, and has the deepest capital markets globally.

Bangladesh's dependency on the US dollar is evident in several respects. Almost all export revenues are denominated in dollars; in FY2025, they totalled \$39.35 billion of RMG exports alone. The country has attracted unprecedented remittance flows (\$30.33 billion in FY2025), mostly received in dollar terms. Forex reserves are also primarily held in US dollars, amounting to \$35 billion as of February 2026.

There are risks inherent in this reliance. Tighter monetary policy in the US results in depreciation of the taka against the dollar, higher import costs, and inflation,

as seen in 2022-2024 when the taka's value against the dollar fell from 86 to 121 and even further. Thus, Bangladesh was affected when Western sanctions on Russia made repayment of the \$12 billion loan for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project through SWIFT impossible. Bangladesh is not merely a passive observer here. As early as in April 2023, Dhaka and Moscow decided to settle the Rooppur loan payments—the first instalment amounting to about \$318 million—in Chinese yuan via the CIPS.

Soon afterwards, Bangladesh Bank included the yuan in its RTGS system and considered joining CIPS. Further, in mid-2023, Bangladesh and India reached an agreement to settle their bilateral trade in rupees and taka using a nostro-vostro model. Subsequently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a new currency swap programme for 2024-27, with a dedicated rupee swap window of 250 billion rupees—the facility available to Bangladesh.

Though the amounts are small, these transactions have significant implications as they indicate that Bangladesh's policymakers now see currency diversification as strategic.

Engaging in a strategic de-dollarisation process offers the country multiple benefits. First, there is a significant reduction in transaction costs. In light of an import cost of \$14 billion annually from India, when the dollar is used as the medium, the extra banking cost is high. Settling in rupees or yuan could eliminate a level of conversion, thus reducing banking fees and mitigating

the risk of exchange rate changes.

Second, de-dollarisation serves as a means to hedge against fluctuations in the dollar's value. It will therefore reduce dependency on dollar value fluctuations beyond Bangladesh's control.

Third, de-dollarisation could create opportunities for new financing mechanisms. For instance, by targeting the BRICS New Development Bank's lending portfolio in local currencies, which is set to rise to 30 percent by this year, Bangladesh could gain access to credit lines in currencies other than the US dollar.

However, the country should adopt a realistic view of de-dollarisation. China's capital controls limit its capability as a global reserve currency. In line with former World Bank lead economist Dr Zahid Hussain's analysis, Bangladesh's \$12 billion-plus trade deficit settled in rupees could be irrelevant unless Indians accept the taka. This is unlikely, since Indian exporters have little incentive to accept payment made in taka.

Additionally, there are issues regarding export markets. Over 80 percent of the country's RMG exports go to the EU and US markets, which deal with the US dollar.

In geopolitical terms, it is worth noting that Bangladesh is participating in a \$5.5 billion loan programme of the IMF. Therefore, the country should avoid anything that is viewed as destabilising the global dollar financial system. An example is the incident where US sanctions on NIKIMT led to a near-disruption of the yuan payment agreement in 2023.

Bangladesh does not have to take a side in the currency war. Instead, it needs a practical approach to diversifying its forex reserves. To do so, Bangladesh Bank should establish a reserve diversification policy under which holdings of the yuan, gold, and possibly even euros could increase over time, along with the development of an institutional arrangement for managing reserves across multiple currencies. The government needs to facilitate bilateral currency settlement arrangements with both India and China, and ultimately with all ASEAN countries, and to develop the relevant payment architecture to facilitate these transactions. Export diversification is essential as around 80 percent of our exports go to dollar-denominated regions. Expansion of our trade in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where local currency settlements are increasingly feasible, will help us both financially and commercially.

Lastly, participation in multilateral talks on designing payment mechanisms, such as the BRICS and Saarc dialogues, or in ASEAN discussions, is critical to ensuring our involvement in the international trade rulemaking process. The process of de-dollarisation is neither a revolution nor an illusion. This is a long-term and gradual process, one that will take decades to be realised. What Bangladesh needs to do now is build the capability to navigate this new world order. It has taken the initial steps. Now comes the part on whether the country will proceed with purpose or simply flow with the tide.

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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APRIL 28 ANSWERS

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12-16

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION
PIECES TO

dsopinion@gmail.com

MET GALA 2026 turns red carpet into spectacle of fashion and art

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The Met Gala 2026 unfolded in full spectacle mode, with the red carpet transforming into a high-energy showcase of bold fashion, headline-making moments, and viral-worthy arrivals. As always, the night blurred the line between entertainment and style, bringing out some of the biggest names in the industry. With this year's theme Costume Art and dress code Fashion Is Art, celebrities embraced dramatic, statement looks that felt straight out of an exhibition. From sculptural silhouettes to theatrical detailing, the message was clear—go big or go home.



Karan Johar in regal splendour



Madonna's gothic grandeur



Katy Perry: Mirror mystique

A-list stars including Beyoncé, Madonna, Nicole Kidman, Bad Bunny, Heidi Klum, and Katy Perry turned up in standout ensembles. Beyoncé's return after a decade was one of the night's biggest highlights. The co-chair arrived late but commanded attention in a dramatic bejeweled skeleton gown, layered with a feathered coat and a striking headpiece. Nicole Kidman opted for timeless elegance in a red Chanel column dress with feathered cuffs, while Serena Williams stood out in a black crystal Swarovski gown with a bold, sculptural neckline. Bad Bunny took a theatrical, time-bending approach, arriving as an aged version of himself. With a walking cane, white hair, and hyper-realistic prosthetic makeup, his transformation became one of the most talked-about moments of



Beyoncé crowned in crystals

PHOTOS: REUTERS AND AFP



Doja Cat sculpted in latex

the night. The look aligned closely with the Costume Art theme, reflecting the exhibition's focus on aging and evolving physical identity. Doja Cat, part of the host committee, also grabbed attention in a draped latex gown by Saint Laurent. The design balanced a modest neckline with a daring thigh high slit that extended to the waist. On the Bollywood front, Karan Johar and Manish Malhotra made appearances, while regulars like Priyanka Chopra and Deepika Padukone were notably absent this year. Johar, however, made a strong impression with his debut look. Titled *Framed in Eternity*, Karan Johar's outfit featured a structured, power-shouldered vintage jacket paired with a sweeping, hand-painted cape stretching nearly six feet. He completed

the look with multi gemstone jewellery from his label Tyaani. Johar revealed that his look was inspired by legendary Indian painter Raja Ravi Varma, calling the reference deeply personal. He noted that Varma's ability to capture emotion through art mirrors his own approach to storytelling in cinema. Beyond the glamour, the Met Gala remains a major fundraiser for the Costume Institute. This year, it raised a record \$42 million, up from \$31 million in 2025, according to the museum's CEO Max Hollein.



Heidi Klum: Living sculpture

The accompanying exhibition further reinforces the theme by placing high fashion alongside iconic artworks. Pieces like a Saint Laurent design are displayed next to Irises by Vincent van Gogh, while a John Galliano gown for Maison Margiela is paired with an antique sculpture—highlighting the seamless dialogue between fashion and art.

Multi-generational cast unites in Eid telefilm 'Zohra Begumer Icchapotro'

A new telefilm bringing together performers from four generations has wrapped filming in Dhaka. Titled *Zohra Begumer Icchapotro*, the project is directed by Arif Khan.

The ensemble cast includes veteran and



contemporary stars such as Ferdousi Majumdar, Afzal Hossain, Mamunur Rashid, Tauquir Ahmed, Deepa Khandakar, Rawnak Hasan and Zakia Bari Mamo. A notable aspect of the telefilm is that the story and screenplay have been written by Tauquir Ahmed, marking his return to writing for television after a long hiatus. The telefilm also marks a significant return to television for Ferdousi Majumdar, which the director described as one of the project's highlights. It is expected to be one of the major attractions of Channel i's Eid-ul Azha lineup.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Let's Vibe: Own Your Story'

Some of the country's most popular contemporary acts share one stage in *Let's Vibe: Own Your Story*. Habib Wahid, Fuad & Friends, Pritom Hasan, Firoze Jong, Ankan Kumar, and Vintage Theory drive a high-energy set built on familiar hits and live performance, shaping an evening of collective sound and crowd-led momentum.



Date: Saturday | May 9, 2026
Time: 5 pm – 10 pm
Venue: Courtside, Madani Avenue

NEWS

Trade deal with US cannot be scrapped

FROM PAGE 16
on Reciprocal Trade, known as ART, but inherited it from the previous interim administration. The deal, he added, contains provisions for amendment should any clause prove harmful to Bangladesh's interests, which he described as a built-in "self-correcting element". The reassurances came a day after a Prothom Alo report found a sharp imbalance in the 32-page agreement's language. It stated that of 179 instances of the word "shall", which carries mandatory legal weight, "Bangladesh shall" appears 131 times. "US shall" appears just six times. The word "will", which signals discretionary rather than binding action, appears just three times throughout the document. Speaking to the media after meeting Lynch separately at the foreign ministry, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman did not dispute

the figures but urged a comparative reading. Mentioning that Bangladesh accepted 131 "shall" obligations, he said Indonesia agreed to 231 such obligations in its deal with the US. Welcoming discussions on the deal, he said, "We are not the only country to sign a deal. Other countries have done this too." "When you read Bangladesh's agreement, read it alongside Indonesia's, Vietnam's, Cambodia's -- then you will understand it better," he added. Khalilur also pointed to the reciprocal tariff outcome the deal had delivered. Bangladesh secured a reciprocal tariff rate of 19 percent, one percentage point lower than Vietnam's 20 percent. "Compare Bangladesh's agreement with the deals signed by others. You will realise what rate we received...; what purchase commitments we made versus others," he said.

Muktadir also spoke about the US's investigation into alleged forced labour and overcapacity. The investigation involving 60 countries, including Bangladesh, focuses on whether these countries failed to impose and effectively enforce a ban on the import of goods produced with forced labour and whether it impacted US commerce. The minister said that Dhaka has sought clarification before formally responding on the matter. "We have clearly conveyed that it would have been more positive if such an investigation had not been initiated under the existing agreement." Rejecting claims of overcapacity and dumping, Muktadir stressed that Bangladesh imports most of its goods under strict international compliance, leaving no scope for labour law violations or child labour. Exports, particularly ready-made garments, are also produced in the same way.

Some may have been complicit in crimes

FROM PAGE 16
recent initiatives taken by several ministries and departments. Principal Information Officer Syed Abdal Ahmed was also present at the briefing. The adviser, who holds the rank of a state minister, said some journalists are currently in custody on specific murder charges, while what occurred in July amounted to crimes against humanity -- a systematic pattern that Sheikh Hasina had established long ago through actions such as enforced disappearances. "Even before taking office, I had maintained that accusing the journalists of such activities [specific murders] was a mistake," he said. Zahed said that during the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials following

World War II, those who built narratives that facilitated killings were also tried and brought to justice. Regarding journalists facing similar charges who have not yet been arrested, he said the government would take appropriate measures. He also said that the prime minister assured leaders of the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh that the government would do as much as possible in collaboration with the judiciary regarding the cases against journalists, as it cannot unilaterally interfere in judicial processes. Zahed also said the government has taken an initiative to introduce electric buses to reduce fuel consumption, adding that the service will initially be launched for students.

"There remains concern over the situation in the Middle East and conditions could deteriorate at any time.... However, Bangladesh currently has sufficient fuel oil reserves. "In the future, we will have to move towards electricity, and the duties on electric buses for students will be zero." Regarding local government elections, he said the polls are expected to begin towards the end of this year and may take around 10 months to one year to complete. He added that the government has no plan to abolish the upazila parishad. "Under Section 25 of the law, a Member of Parliament serves as an adviser to the upazila parishad and should therefore have an office there."

58 killings tied to Shapla Chattar

FROM PAGE 16
command responsibility. "From the head of government to force chiefs and police commissioners, many may be involved." He stated that deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina would be the principal accused, adding, "We have found her involvement, along with others." Asked about sacked army officer and former director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre Ziaul Ahsan, Aminul said Ziaul was directly involved and present at the scene. The investigation, being pursued as a crimes against humanity case, is at its final stage. Families of all identified victims have been interviewed, and evidence has been collected for each killing. "We are not going beyond what the investigation has established," Aminul said, responding to questions about higher casualty figures previously claimed in political statements. The probe has examined the role of law enforcement agencies, ruling party activists, and the government.

"Certainly, law enforcement, the Awami League, and the government are within the scope," Aminul said. He added that former IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun had initially been considered an accused, but investigators later received information that he was abroad at the time, which is being verified. Replying to another query, Aminul said the prosecution believes the incident may constitute crimes against humanity, citing elements of a "systematic and widespread attack" and "targeted killings" against a specific group. On March 12, the ICT issued arrest warrants for Hasina, former home minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, former IGP Hasan Mahmud Khandaker, former DMP commissioner Benazir Ahmed, and Gonojagoron Mancha spokesperson Imran H Sarker over the killings. Meanwhile, prosecution witness Shafiqul Islam, a madrasa principal and imam in Purbachal, yesterday completed his testimony before ICT-1. He described his enforced

disappearance after being abducted in 2022 in a case involving 17 individuals, including former top officials and army officers, linked to a Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) cell allegedly operated under the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab). Shafiqul said he was picked up from Dhaka's Mohammadpur on January 13, 2022, and spent 38 days in secret detention at Rab-1 headquarters before being taken to Nilphamari. There, Rab showed him arrested in a false case, from which he secured bail after 16 months. He recalled a Rab member telling him in Nilphamari, "Were you in Rab-1? No one returns from there! Allah has saved you and that's why you have come here." With the help of investigators, he later identified the detention centre on the Rab-1 premises, noting he heard azaan, vehicles, trains, and aircraft during his confinement. Shafiqul claimed he was subjected to enforced disappearance and torture for speaking out against the Awami League over the killing of Hefazat supporters and demanding justice.

Rohingya youth held over TTP link

FROM PAGE 16
through social media and WhatsApp to carry out militant activities at home and abroad," the case statement read. Investigators believe the group is run by two TTP leaders, with objectives including disrupting internal security, supporting terrorist activities, and inciting the Rohingya community through propaganda. Teknaf police filed a case over Mahmudullah's arrest under the Anti-Terrorism Act yesterday. Mahmudullah was produced before a Cox's Bazar court, which sent him to jail, Sub-Inspector Shuvo Mitra Talukder, the investigation officer, told The Daily Star. Cox's Bazar Additional Superintendent of Police Mohammad Wahidur Rahman said, "He was arrested based on intelligence regarding his suspected links to TTP."

During preliminary interrogation, Mahmudullah confessed to maintaining contact with TTP members, according to the case statement. Case documents note that his phone contained images and messages shared by the group, allegedly intended to incite militant activities. He also admitted to disseminating such content inside Rohingya camps with associates. Investigators suspect Mahmudullah may have links to the student wing of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and possibly its armed wing. Reports of Bangladeshi individuals joining TTP surfaced last year. Intelligence officials said at least a dozen people have left Bangladesh to join the group, with three killed while fighting alongside TTP operatives.

Special Branch's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Intelligence (CTTI) unit confirmed that on September 26 last year, two Bangladeshi youths -- Ratan Dhali, 29, and Foyzal Hossain, 22 -- were killed by Pakistani security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Earlier, on April 27 last year, another Bangladeshi, Ahmed Jubair alias Juboraj, was also killed in similar circumstances. Officials further said they have identified an active network inside Bangladesh recruiting individuals for TTP. On April 29, police detectives arrested four men -- Imran Chowdhury, 29, his brother Mostakim Chowdhury, 25, Ripon Hossain Sheikh, 28, and Abu Bakar, 25 -- with firearms, bullets, explosives, and a drone during drives in Dhaka for alleged TTP links.

Govt plans polls to local bodies within a year

FROM PAGE 16
force's modernisation. Talking to reporters after the discussion, defence adviser Shamsul said DCs have been instructed to make the armed forces more people-oriented. He mentioned that the requirements, work procedures, and plans of the forces were shared with the DCs by the respective chiefs. On foreign affairs, Shama Obaed Islam, state minister for the foreign ministry, stated that Bangladesh's foreign policy will remain unchanged regardless of which government comes

to power in West Bengal, India. She emphasised that Indian polls are its internal matter. Meanwhile, Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury urged the DCs to discharge their duties with honesty, integrity, and dedication in all spheres, keeping in mind their responsibilities towards the people, society, and state. The DCs work as an effective bridge between the executive branch of the state and the common people, he said. The chief justice made the remark while presiding over a "Courtesy Meeting and Special

Direction-Giving Session with all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners of the country" at the Supreme Court auditorium on the occasion of the DC conference yesterday afternoon, according to an SC press release. The four-day DC conference, which began on Sunday, held eight sessions covering 14 ministries and divisions on its third day, yesterday. On the final day, today, nine sessions involving 10 ministries and divisions will take place. The conference will conclude with a dinner hosted by the prime minister.

39 top cops transferred

FROM PAGE 2
Additional Commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) SN Md Nazrul Islam has been transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) as its DIG while CID DIG Md Abul Bashar Talukder was made the DMP additional commissioner.
Sana Shaminur Rahman, another additional commissioner of the DMP, has been posted to the CID as its DIG, and the current CID DIG, Mohammad Shamsul Haque, was made the additional commissioner of the DMP.
Besides, Dr Shahedul Akbar Khan, a former deputy secretary who returned to the police department, has been made the special superintendent (special SP) of SB, while the current SP at the 13th Armed Police Battalion (APBn), Dr Eliza Sharmin, was posted to the PHQ as its SP Training Reserve (TR).
Deputy Commissioner (DC) of the DMP Md Maksuder Rahman

and APBn SP Kazi Akhtarul Alam have been transferred to the SB as its special SP, and DMP DC Md Morshed Alam and Mohammad Ahaduzzaman Miah have been posted to the Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) as its DC.
Besides, Additional Superintendent of Police of the APBn and newly promoted supernumerary SP Sajedur Rahman has been posted to the DMP as its additional DC.
Meanwhile, 23 SPs were also transferred.
Panchagarh SP Md Rabiul Islam has been posted to the River Police as its SP, while SP Mizanur Rahman, at the 2nd APBn in Mymensingh's Muktagachha, has been made the Panchagarh SP.
Bandarban SP Md Abdur Rahman was transferred to the Rangpur Metropolitan Police (RpMP) as its DC, while special SP of SB Md Wahabul Islam Khandker has been made Bandarban SP.

Joypurhat SP Mina Mahmuda was posted to the DMP as its DC, while SP Shahnaz Begum, attached to the office of the DIG, Dhaka range, has been made Joypurhat SP.
Pabna SP Md Anwar Zahid has been transferred to the SB as its special SP, while SB Special SP Md Sufi Ullah has been made Pabna SP.
Nilphamari SP Sheikh Zahidul Islam was transferred to the DMP as its DC, while current Industrial Police SP Md Farhad Hossain Khan was made Nilphamari SP.
Narail SP Mohammad Al Mamun Sikder was transferred to the Tourist Police as its SP, while DMP DC Mallik Ahsan Uddin Sami was posted to Narail as its SP.
Satkhira SP Md Arefin Jewel has been posted to the APBn as its SP, while Abu Saleh Md Ashraful Alam, SP of the Bangladesh Police Academy in Rajshahi's Sharda, has been made Satkhira SP.

‘Drug dealers’ hack Rab men

FROM PAGE 16
Journalists Union, whose home is near the spot, said the Boalia Khal area has long been a hot spot for drug dealers and gangs.
“Clashes between the groups are frequent, and locals are often too afraid to speak out,” he told The Daily Star.
Lt Col HM Sajjad Hossain, commanding officer of Rab-11, said multiple drug spots were being operated in the area.
“As part of our zero-tolerance stance against drugs, we were gathering intelligence. The attackers, sensing our presence, organised and launched the assault,” he said.
Following the incident, additional Rab and police

personnel conducted drives in nearby areas, but no arrests were confirmed.
In another incident yesterday, policemen in Rugganj came under attack after arresting a suspect in the Chonpara Rehabilitation Centre area.
The incident occurred around 5:00am when a team from Rugganj Police Station went to arrest Shamim Mia, a Jubo Dal leader, in connection with an arms case.
Officer-in-Charge AHM Salauddin said family members and associates of the accused obstructed the police and attacked them, freeing the arrestee.
At least seven police

personnel, including the OC, were injured.
During the incident, the attackers also snatched a wireless set and two mobile phones from police. The wireless set was later recovered.
Shamim is the senior joint general secretary of Rugganj upazila Jubo Dal. He is accused of drug trade, among other crimes, in the Chonpara area following the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, 2024.
Later in the day, central Jubo Dal issued a press release expelling him from the organisation.
“Leaders and activists at all levels have been instructed to

sever organisational ties with him,” the statement said, also urging law enforcement agencies to take necessary legal action.
Following the attack, a joint drive by police and Rab led to the detention of at least 12 people, including Shamim's wife.
Police filed a case against them in connection with assaulting law enforcers and obstruction.
Mehedi Islam, senior assistant superintendent of police (Narayanganj circle-C), said Shamim was arrested at his home, but managed to escape after his associates confined the officers.
“Efforts are underway to re-arrest him.”

Will not step down: Mamata

FROM PAGE 1
political milestone, with the party now controlling almost all states in eastern India.
The TMC tally fell to 80 seats from 215, with Mamata herself losing her seat.
Mamata alleged that about 100 seats were “forcibly taken” from her party and accused the Election Commission of bias, but did not provide evidence.
“I will not resign, I did not lose... officially, through the Election Commission, they [the BJP] can defeat us, but morally, we won the election,” she told a news briefing.
West Bengal's Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Agarwal termed the allegations “baseless”.
BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari, who defeated Mamata in her Bhabanipur stronghold, said his party was moving towards forming a government, outlining a governance agenda centred on development, administrative stability, and restoration of law and order.
Under the Constitution, the state's governor can seek Mamata's resignation or wait for her term to expire, after which newly elected lawmakers will be sworn in, and the process of forming a new government will begin.
Mamata's term is set to end on Thursday.
A defeated candidate in an Indian state election can challenge the result in court on grounds including corrupt practices, improper acceptance or rejection of nominations or votes, candidate disqualification, or non-compliance with election laws affecting the outcome.
Mamata did not say whether she would go to court.
Meanwhile, the standoff has raised concerns over public safety and social cohesion. Although there are no confirmed reports of large-scale communal violence, localised tensions, uncertainty, and sporadic clashes have created a fragile atmosphere in some areas.
Regions such as Murshidabad, parts of North Bengal, and several districts in South Bengal have also witnessed confrontations linked to victory processions, along with reports of party office takeovers and targeted intimidation.
Modi yesterday called for restraint and adherence to democratic norms, emphasising the need to maintain peace in the post-election period.
Some media reported that Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to visit the state soon to assess the situation.

2 weeks on, accused still

FROM PAGE 16
to clean his room. As soon as she entered the room, he raped her.
The FIR further said that when the child cried out, he threatened to beat her and expel her from the madrasa.
The child was allegedly raped on four or five more occasions in a room adjacent to the mosque's veranda and also in classrooms, the FIR read.
On April 18, when the mother suddenly noticed physical changes in the child, she took her to a local diagnostic centre for a check-up. There, the doctor discovered that the child was in her third term of pregnancy.
Madan Police Station's Sub-Inspector Akhtaruzzaman, who is also the investigation officer in the case, said, “After the child was examined, the family filed a case against the teacher. Police also officially conducted another examination at the Netrokona 250-Bed Hospital and reconfirmed the pregnancy.”
He added that police conducted raids at various locations until 3:00am on Monday, and the drive to arrest the accused is still on.
Meanwhile, the video of accused Sagor protesting his innocence has been widely

circulated on social media since yesterday morning.
In the 5.4-minute video, he said, “What has gone viral about me on social media and has been published in various newspapers and television channels -- I am in no way involved in what is being alleged against me using my photo. I have no knowledge of this matter at all.”
“... If I am falsely accused and labeled as the offender even before the investigation, the real criminal will escape punishment. If necessary, a [DNA] test should be done to identify the actual father of this child.”
Sagor could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts, as his phone was found switched off.
Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, the victim's mother alleged that when she went to the accused's family seeking justice before filing a case, they instead verbally abused her and threatened to force the family out of the area if a case was filed. “His family and local elders even tried arbitration and offered a settlement of Tk 2.20 lakh. But we refused and filed the case.”
DOCTOR GETTING THREATS
In another development, Dr Saima Akhtar, who conducted

the tests on the child and discovered the pregnancy, is reportedly being harassed in various ways, including receiving rape threats.
During a Facebook live yesterday, she said, “Since I gave a statement to a private television channel about this matter two days ago, I have been harassed in various ways. I'm being cyberbullied.... It has become unbearable and I am traumatised. People are demanding my certificates and documents related to my medical practice. I am also being threatened with rape and career destruction... I don't know what I will do... I have even had harmful thoughts about dying [by suicide].”
Contacted, Md Tariqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Madan Police Station, said they hoped to arrest the accused soon.
“We have seen the video of the accused on social media and have sent the link and other information to the relevant authorities to help detect his whereabouts. We have also seen the doctor's video where she said she was being threatened. I personally contacted her and told her we were ready to offer due protection. I even told her she can come to the station to file a complaint if she feels it necessary.”



Dhaka North City Corporation
Waste Management Department
Office of the Additional Chief Waste Management Officer
Plot No: 23-26, Road No: 46
Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212
www.dncc.gov.bd

Memo No: 46.10.0000.047.07.94.26- 97

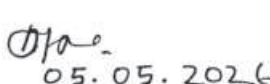
Date: 05 May, 2026

e-Tender notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of:

SN	Tender ID/ Ref. No.	Name of the Works	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1.	Tender ID: 1270419 Ref. No. 46.10.0000.047.07.94.26	Waste cleaning works and related services of Zone-1 (Ward: 1) & Zone 6 (Ward: 51, 52, 53, 54) in Dhaka North City Corporation	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM
2.	Tender ID: 1270501, Ref. No. 46.10.0000.047.07.94.26	Waste cleaning works and related services of Zone-3 (Ward: 21) & Zone 10 (Ward: 37, 38, 41, 42) in Dhaka North City Corporation	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM
3.	Tender ID: 1270688 Ref. No. 46.10.0000.047.07.94.26	Waste cleaning works and related services of Zone-03 (Ward 24 & 25) in Dhaka North City Corporation	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM
4.	Tender ID: 1270947 Ref. No. 46.10.0000.047.07.94.26	Waste cleaning works and related services of Zone-7 (Ward No: 47, 48, 49, 50) & Zone-8 (Ward No: 44, 45, 46) in Dhaka North City Corporation	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM
5.	Tender ID: 1271061, Ref. No. 46.10.0000.047.07.94.26	Waste cleaning works and related services of Zone -3 (Ward 19 & 20) in Dhaka North City Corporation	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM
6.	Tender ID: 1271141 Ref. No. 46.10.0000.047.07.94.26	Waste cleaning works and related services of Zone-01 (Ward 17), Zone-03 (Ward: 18) & Zone 9 (Ward- 39, 40, 43) in Dhaka North City Corporation	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM	Date: 02 June, 2026 Time: 11:30 AM

This is an online Tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, do registration in the National e-GP System Portal.



Md. Arifur Rahman
Additional Chief Waste Management Officer
Dhaka North City Corporation
Mail: adcwmo@dncc.gov.bd

GD-1034



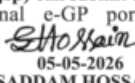
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Site Office: Office of the Plant Manager, Sonagazi 75MW Solar Power Plant,
Purbo Baro Dholi, Charchandia, Sonagazi, Feni.
Mob: 01766690640, E-mail: mohammad.kamruzzaman@egcb.com.bd, Web: egcb.gov.bd

Ref: 27.27.2666.000.000.08.0001.24.227

Date: 05.05.2026

Sl No	e-Tender ID	Invitation Ref. No.	Tender Description	Publication Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
01.	1253080	27.27.2666.000.000.08.0001.24.227 Date: 05/05/2026	Procurement of Uniform & Liveries for Sonagazi 75 MW Solar Power Plant, EGB PLC.	05/05/2026 Time:10.00	19/05/2026 Time:12.00

For detailed information please visit the following links:
For SI No: (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/resources/common/ViewTender.jsp?id=1253080&h=f>)
This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal. Only registered tenderer in the national e-GP system (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/Index.jsp>) can submit the tender. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



SADDAM HOSSAIN
Deputy Manager (HR/Admin)
Sonagazi 75MW Solar Power Plant
Electricity Generation Bangladesh PLC.

05-05-2026



Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited
(A Company of Petrobangla)
Head Office: Nalka, Sirajganj.

E-Tender Notice

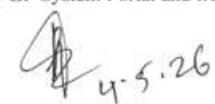
Ref. No: 28.18.0000.000.066.47.0001.26/CP/358
Date: 04/05/2026
E-Tender has been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) on dated 06/05/2026 for procurement of following works:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of the Works	Last Selling (date & time)	Closing and Opening (date & time)
1266620	28.18.0000.000.066.47.0001.26/CP	Supply & Installation of Transformer Rectifier Set & Repair of Ground Bed at Rajshahi City College CP Station and Supply & Installation of Test Point Post Facilities at Rajshahi Gas Network.	18-May-2026, 16:00 pm	19-May-2026, 12:00 pm

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

PGPR-48/2025-2026 (3 x 4")

GD-1033



(Engr. Md. Shahjahan Al Mamun)
General Manager (Operation)
Pashchimanchal Gas Company Ltd.

04-5-26



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কর কমিশনারের কার্যালয়
কর অঞ্চল- ৬, চট্টগ্রাম
অস্থায়ী কার্যালয় : বনানী কমপ্লেক্স (লেভেল-৭)
৯৪২/এ, শেখ মুজিব রোড, আগ্রাবাদ বানিজ্যিক এলাকা, চট্টগ্রাম-৪১০০।
www.tax6.chattogram.gov.bd

নথি নং- কঅ-৬/চট্ট/কককা/নিয়োগ/২০২৫-২০২৬/৩৭২

তারিখঃ ১৭ বৈশাখ, ১৪৩৩ বঙ্গাব্দ
৩০ এপ্রিল, ২০২৬ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়, অভ্যন্তরীণ সম্পদ বিভাগ, কর-১ শাখা, ঢাকার নথি নং-০৮.০০.০০০০.০০০.০৩৭.১১.০০০১.২৪.১৪৫; তারিখ : ২৭/০৫/২০২৫খ্রি. এবং নথি নং-০৮.০০.০০০০.০০০.০৩৭.১১.০০০১.২৪.১৫৬; তারিখ : ৩০/০৪/২০২৬খ্রি. মূলে প্রাপ্ত ছাড়পত্রের ভিত্তিতে কর কমিশনার, কর অঞ্চল-৬, চট্টগ্রাম এর অধীনে গ্রেড-১৩ হতে গ্রেড-২০ পর্যন্ত বিভিন্ন পদে মোট ১২৬ (একশত ছাব্বিশ) জন জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে চট্টগ্রাম জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দাগণের নিকট হতে অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত পূর্ণাঙ্গ বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি দেখার জন্য কর অঞ্চল-৬, চট্টগ্রাম এর ওয়েবসাইট www.tax6.chattogram.gov.bd ভিজিট করুন অথবা নিম্নোক্ত কিউআর কোডটি স্ক্যান করুন। অনলাইন (Online) ব্যতীত কোন আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

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(১)	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	০১টি
(২)	ব্যক্তিগত সহকারী	০৪টি
(৩)	প্রধান সহকারী	২২টি
(৪)	উচ্চমান সহকারী	২২টি
(৫)	সীটমুদ্রাফরিক-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	২৩টি
(৬)	অফিস সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাফরিক	২৭টি
(৭)	অফিস সহায়ক	২৭টি



(মোঃ বাহাদুর আলম)
উপ কর কমিশনার
সদর দপ্তর (প্রশাসন)
ও
সদস্য সচিব
বিভাগীয় নিয়োগ কমিটি, কর অঞ্চল-৬, চট্টগ্রাম
ই-মেইল : hqctg6@gmail.com

GD-1016



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কর কমিশনারের কার্যালয়
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তারিখঃ ১৭ বৈশাখ, ১৪৩৩ বঙ্গাব্দ
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(মোঃ বাহাদুর আলম)
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ই-মেইল : taxctg5@gmail.com

GD-1015

Asus bets on AI PCs as Bangladesh market enters ‘high growth’ phase

Peter Chang, General Manager, Asia Pacific, Consumer Business at Asus, speaks to The Daily Star about the company’s latest AI PC lineup, Bangladesh’s growth potential, component price pressures, and why he believes AI PCs are more than a marketing trend.

ZARIF FAIAZ

Asus is looking to strengthen its position in Bangladesh as the global PC industry shifts towards AI-enabled devices. Following the launch of its latest AI PC lineup, Peter Chang, General Manager, Asia Pacific, Consumer Business at Asus, said the company sees Bangladesh as a high-potential market, driven by low PC penetration, a young consumer base, and growing interest in new technologies. In an interview with The Daily Star, Chang discussed Asus’s plans to bring AI features into mainstream laptops, the challenges of rising memory and storage costs, and the company’s ambition to become the country’s leading computer vendor.

The Daily Star: Asus has launched a new lineup of devices in Bangladesh. What is new for consumers?

Peter Chang: We have launched a new generation of AI PCs, covering the Zenbook series, Zenbook Duo, Zenbook S, Zenbook, and Vivobook series. AI is a very popular trend right now. Many people are using AI to support their work. We believe the AI PC category is still at a growing stage. By introducing these latest technologies in Bangladesh, we want users here to experience what AI PCs can offer.

TDS: Do you have market data showing that AI PCs are growing in demand in Bangladesh?

PC: If we look at the Asia Pacific or the global market, under the broader definition of AI PCs, penetration is already around 30 to 40 percent. We expect it could reach more than 60 percent by the end of this year. Most laptops will come with AI-capable CPUs inside. That is the broad definition of an AI PC.

TDS: AI PCs are often seen as premium products. What is Asus’s pricing strategy for a market like Bangladesh?

PC: It is true that when AI PCs were first launched, they came



Peter Chang.

IMAGE: ASUS

at higher price points. But since last year, we have already started introducing AI into our mainstream devices. That is why we also launched products in the Vivobook series, which is our mainstream lineup. This shift is already happening. We are trying to bring AI solutions to more mainstream price points.

TDS: Do you think AI PCs are now an industry-wide trend?

PC: Yes. Whether it is silicon vendors or Microsoft, everyone is trying to push this category into the market. I think AI will become another important use case for computers. In the past, the internet changed the way people used computers. Now, with AI, we are entering a different scenario.

TDS: Some consumers argue that AI PCs are more of a marketing strategy than a genuine hardware upgrade. How do you respond to that?

PC: For sure, it is not just a marketing thing. Even in Bangladesh, many people are starting to use AI solutions

such as ChatGPT or Gemini. As long as end-user behaviour changes, this cannot remain just a marketing topic. Something is actually happening. Of course, we also need to help users understand the benefits. If we only define an AI PC by the hardware inside the device, users may not immediately feel the difference. After all, with cloud services, they can already use some AI solutions. So what we are working on is understanding users’ needs in this new AI era. We are looking at how we can redesign devices, integrate AI into vendor solutions, and improve the user experience. AI PC demand is still at a very early stage. The devices we see now may not yet be fully optimised. So this will be a continuous evolution, and we will keep developing.

TDS: What is Asus’s vision for on-device AI, especially when many AI tools still depend on cloud connectivity?

PC: On-device AI will definitely happen. But at this moment, the industry is still trying to predict

how it will evolve. The interesting thing about AI is that even when people make predictions, many of them are not accurate. For Windows devices and laptops, different vendors are still thinking about different solutions. It is not yet very concrete. But this is something everyone is looking at, and we hope there will be continuous development.

TDS: AI is increasing the demand for memory, while the industry is facing RAM and SSD shortages. How is Asus responding?

PC: It is true that the industry is facing shortages and price increases for RAM and SSDs. Asus also has to face this. But we have a strong supply chain management and procurement team, so we are still able to secure RAM supply. That said, we also need to deal with price increases.

We are looking at how to combine this with our product roadmap and minimise the impact. With new products, some price increases may still happen.

A third of all new websites since 2022 are AI-generated, study finds

NEXT STEP DESK

A major new study drawing on data from the Internet Archive has found that roughly one in three websites created since 2022 was generated by AI, marking what researchers describe as one of the most rapid transformations in the history of the internet. The paper, titled ‘The impact of AI-generated text on the internet’ and co-authored by researchers from Stanford, Imperial College London, and the Internet Archive, found that by mid-2025, approximately 35% of newly published websites were classified as AI-generated or AI-assisted, up from zero before the

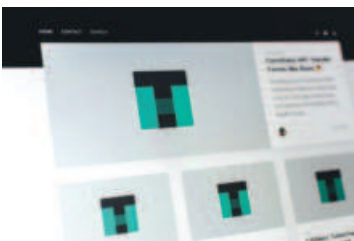


IMAGE: UNSPLASH

launch of ChatGPT in late 2022.

The researchers tested six widely held theories about the effects of AI-generated text on the web, including whether it was producing more disinformation, creating a homogenised writing style, or producing text with lower factual accuracy. Contrary

to expectations, the study found that only two of the six hypotheses held up. AI-generated content was making the internet less semantically diverse and notably more positive in tone overall, but was not causing a measurable increase in verifiably false statements and was not reducing the rate at which websites cite their sources.

The researchers said they are working with the Internet Archive to turn the study into a continuous monitoring tool rather than a static snapshot, and plan to add more granularity by examining which categories of websites are most affected and how impacts differ by language.

Meta acquires humanoid robotics firm Assured Robot Intelligence



IMAGE: REUTERS

NEXT STEP DESK

Meta has purchased Assured Robot Intelligence, a startup focused on teaching humanoid machines to anticipate and react to human behaviour, as per reports from several tech news outlets. The financial details of the acquisition remain private. The small firm’s entire group, including its two founders, will move into Meta’s Superintelligence Labs, the division responsible for advanced artificial intelligence research, states a report by TechCrunch on the matter.

Both founders bring substantial robotics experience. Xiaolong Wang spent time on chip design at Nvidia and later taught at the University of California, San Diego. Lerrel Pinto held a faculty position at New York University and previously helped launch Fauna Robotics, a startup making child-sized humanoid robots that Amazon absorbed last month. Meta signalled that the acquisition would strengthen its ability to design models for full-body robot control and self-supervised learning.

Anthropic finalising \$1.5bn joint venture with Wall Street firms: report

NEXT STEP DESK

Anthropic is finalising a joint venture worth approximately \$1.5 billion with Blackstone, Goldman Sachs, and a handful of other Wall Street firms to sell artificial intelligence tools to private-equity-backed companies, the Wall Street Journal recently reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

Anthropic, Blackstone, and Hellman & Friedman are anchoring the deal, each expected to invest roughly \$300 million, the report said. Goldman Sachs is also set to be a founding investor, putting in around \$150 million. An announcement could come within this week, the cited sources shared. The venture aims to market AI capabilities to companies owned by private equity firms, though further details on the structure were not disclosed.



It’s Musk vs Altman, and the future of AI at stake

The feud that built AI’s biggest lawsuit, explained



NEXT STEP DESK

The years-long public war between Elon Musk and Sam Altman has entered its most consequential phase, with a federal trial now underway in Oakland, California, that could reshape the structure and leadership of OpenAI and carry significant implications for the future of artificial intelligence.

Altman and Musk co-founded OpenAI in 2015 alongside several other Silicon Valley figures. The company was launched as a non-profit with the stated goal of advancing artificial intelligence in a way that was most likely to benefit humanity, unconstrained by financial return. Disagreements arose between the pair over the company’s direction in subsequent years, with Musk exiting in 2018 and providing no further financing. Following Musk’s departure, OpenAI launched ChatGPT, secured billions in investment from Microsoft, and restructured towards a commercial hybrid model that retained a non-profit parent alongside a for-profit arm.

Musk filed the lawsuit against OpenAI, Altman, and president Greg Brockman in 2024, arguing that the company had broken from its original commitment to remaining a non-profit and that Altman had betrayed both him and the founding objective by turning it into a for-profit entity. Musk is seeking over \$134 billion in damages, funds which,

if awarded, would go to OpenAI’s non-profit arm rather than to him personally. He is also pushing for Altman and Brockman to be removed from their positions and for the company to revert to its non-profit structure. Microsoft is also named as a defendant, with Musk alleging the company helped transform OpenAI into what he describes as a “get-rich-quick scheme.” Microsoft has denied the claims.

OpenAI has called the lawsuit “baseless” and accused Musk of a “campaign of harassment,” stating on a dedicated webpage that he was motivated by “jealousy, regret for walking away from OpenAI and a desire to derail a competing AI company.” The company also said that Musk had in the past supported a for-profit entity as the next phase for OpenAI.

The trial began last week Monday, with jury selection taking place on the first day and opening statements beginning on Tuesday. Both Musk and Altman are expected to testify, spending at least six hours each on the stand. Brockman and Microsoft chief executive Satya Nadella have also been named in a list of witnesses who may be called. The trial is expected to last approximately three weeks. The case carries significant financial stakes for OpenAI, with potential damages and reputational costs that could complicate its push towards artificial general intelligence and its anticipated initial public offering later this year.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

BRAC

- Policy Analyst, Advocacy for Social Change

Deadline: May 9

Eligibility:

🔗 Bachelor’s degree in Social Science, Development Studies, Public Administration, Public Policy, Economics, or any other relevant discipline.

Minimum experience: 3 years



Standard

Chartered Bank

- Assistant Manager, Processing Operations (Import)

Deadline: May 10

Eligibility:

🔗 University graduate or above with prior working experience in Trade Operations.

Minimum experience: 3 years



Square Textiles PLC.

- Executive, Legal Affairs

Deadline: May 10

Eligibility:

🔗 LL.B (Hons.) and LL.M degree with membership of the Bangladesh Bar Council.

Minimum experience: 2-5 years



Healthcare

harmaceuticals Ltd.

- Sr. Officer/Sr. Executive, Production

Deadline: May 20

Eligibility:

🔗 B. Pharm/M. Pharm in Pharmacy from a reputed university, with prior experience in the pharmaceutical industry.

Minimum experience: 3-5 years



FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.

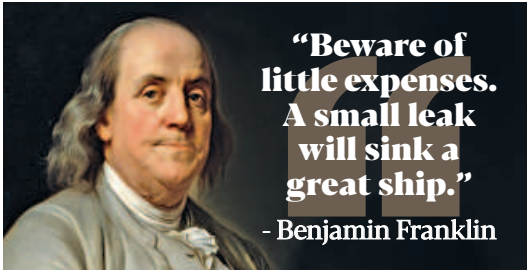


IMAGE: REUTERS

SoftBank eyes \$100 bln IPO for robotics unit: report

NEXT STEP DESK

SoftBank is reportedly preparing to establish a new robotics-focused company aimed at automating the construction of data centres, while also laying the groundwork for a potential initial public offering (IPO) valued at up to \$100 billion. According to reports by the Financial Times and the Wall Street Journal, the Japanese conglomerate is developing a business called Roze AI. The unit is expected to focus on improving the efficiency of data centre construction in the United States, including through the use of autonomous robots to assist in building server facilities.

The Wall Street Journal reported that SoftBank is already considering an IPO for the venture, with some executives targeting a listing as early as the second half of 2026. The Financial Times reported that the prospective valuation could reach \$100 billion, and some individuals within SoftBank have raised concerns about the proposed valuation and the proposed timeline for the public listing. SoftBank has previously backed a range of technology ventures with mixed outcomes, including Zume, an AI-focused food delivery startup that ceased operations in 2023 after significant investment.

Man arrested over rape of teenager

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

Police yesterday arrested a man in a case filed for raping a 17-year-old girl and recording the video of the incident in Jhenaidah. Saurav Kumar Nitai, 22, was held after the victim's mother filed a case with Kotchandpur Police Station on Monday. Police said around 11:00pm on March 25, Saurav forcibly took the victim to a mahogany garden near her house and raped her. Inspector (Investigation) Ansarul Haque told The Daily Star the case was filed under the Rape and Pornography Act. Police arrested the accused and sent him to court yesterday morning. The victim was sent to a hospital for medical examination.

Flash floods submerge 372 hectares of cropland

MASUK HRIDOY, Brahmanbaria

Flash floods have inundated around 372 hectares of boro paddy fields in the haor regions of Brahmanbaria, affecting at least 1,000 farmers, with Nasirnagar upazila bearing the brunt of the damage. Triggered by several days of heavy rainfall, water levels in the haors rose sharply, submerging low-lying fields almost overnight. Mature crops in Medir Haor and surrounding wetlands went under water before many farmers could harvest them. Official estimates put the submerged area at 372 hectares, though farmers say the actual losses are higher. A brief spell of clear weather yesterday prompted a frantic harvesting effort. Farmers rushed to their fields at dawn, cutting



PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

paddy while standing in waist-to chest deep water. However, an acute shortage of labourers slowed progress. Nasir Mia, a farmer from Sonatola village, said he spent Tk 2 lakh cultivating 25 bighas this season. "Seven to eight bighas are now completely submerged. The

water is neck-deep, so there's no way to harvest. By the time it recedes, everything will be lost," he said. Fazar Ali, another farmer, faces similar losses. "I took loans to cultivate. Now I cannot even harvest the crop. I'm worried about how I will repay the debt and support my family," he said.

According to the upazila agriculture office, about 11,000 hectares were cultivated with boro paddy in Nasirnagar this season. While nearly 70 percent has already been harvested, the remaining crops are now at risk, with around 305 hectares still submerged. Dr Mostafa Imran Hossain, deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in Brahmanbaria, said farmers in Nasirnagar have suffered the most. Alongside boro paddy, about 100 hectares of Aus seedbeds, maize, sesame, and vegetables have also been damaged. "Lists of affected farmers are being prepared. They will be prioritised for government incentives, relief support, and paddy procurement programmes," he said.

Sujan, Noor get bail ‘Can’t sit and wait for India on Teesta’

FROM PAGE 3 Division and if the apex court does not stay the High Court order. Sujan was arrested on September 16, 2024. The three cases against Sujan were filed with Jatrabari Police Station in Dhaka and in Panchagarh on separate murder charges after the political changeover on August 5, 2024. His lawyer said there is no specific allegation against him. Two cases were filed against Noor at the Nilphamari Police Station. He was arrested on September 15, 2024. He is

accused of the killing of Siddique Ali by running him over with a car and of the 2013 killing of local BNP leader Golam Rabbani, said Deputy Attorney General Syed Shajia Sharmin. The HC granted Noor bail in the Rabbani murder case but denied bail in the Siddique Ali killing case, she said, adding that the court earlier granted him bail on May 4 in a case related to the July uprising. As Noor was not granted bail in the Siddique Ali murder case, he cannot be released from jail, the DAG said.

FROM PAGE 3 yet been formed in West Bengal, and what they think or what they will do is for them to say. It is not my job to read their minds." He added, "We hope that the agreement reached at that time can be considered again under the current circumstances. But we cannot just sit and wait for that. We have our own work to do." In September 2011, water resource ministers of both countries reached a consensus on the Teesta deal, expected to be signed during then Indian prime

minister Manmohan Singh's Dhaka visit. It was blocked by opposition from then West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee. With the deal stalled, Bangladesh launched the "Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project," later seeking Chinese assistance during Sheikh Hasina's 2019 Beijing trip. Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman yesterday flew to China on a three-day visit, the first since the BNP government took office.

He will meet Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss trade, investment, and funding. Bangladesh will seek low-interest loans, extended repayment periods, and new investments. A foreign ministry official said, "There have not been major Chinese investments in Bangladesh. The Chinese side was slow in taking up new initiatives since the events after the July uprising. Now that there's a new political government, China is revamping its activities."

On Monday, China's foreign ministry spokesperson said Beijing attaches great importance to ties with Bangladesh and hopes to enhance political trust, deepen cooperation, and promote Belt and Road projects. The spokesperson described the two countries as "friends, close neighbours and comprehensive strategic cooperative partners," noting that relations have steadily progressed over five decades on the basis of mutual respect and equality.

He said private universities have expanded access to higher education, but policy and administrative barriers limit their potential. Despite receiving no government grants, they pay taxes and VAT, which increases tuition fees and pressurises students, he added. APUB proposed dividing private universities into profit-making and non-profit categories, with tax and VAT exemptions for non-profit institutions. It also proposed forming endowment funds to support meritorious and underprivileged students

and student-led innovation, said Sabur. The association called for a more supportive UGC, with file disposal within 30 days and automatic approval within 45 days. It suggested a KPI and ranking system based on research, innovation and graduate employment rates. On cross border education, APUB urged encouraging international collaboration while ensuring quality. UGC Chairman Mamun Ahmed said the commission is open to criticism and aims to work with all universities. He said there should be no demarcation between private and public universities, as all universities and students fall under the UGC's responsibility. Prime Minister's Education Adviser Mahadi Amin said the government believes there should be no VAT on higher education at higher universities. Private universities can help turn brain drain into brain circulation by engaging expatriate academics, he added. North South University VC Prof Abdul Hannan Chowdhury called for a dedicated student visa process to attract foreign students and easier access to foreign research grants. He said NSU lost over Tk 20 crore in research funding due to approval complications under the Public Procurement Rules 2025. Prof Hannan also called for student loans and PhD approval based on faculty strength, not university type. East West University VC Shams Rahman said private universities should have representation in the UGC.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Power Division
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
Admin-3 Section
www.powerdivision.gov.bd

No. 27.00.0000.043.07.042.25
Date: 05.05.2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited through the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of:

SL No.	Tender ID	Description	Tender Publish Date	Tender Closing Date
1.	1266821, GR-03	Procurement of Computer Consumables	05-May-2026 16:00	18-May-2026 14:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted through National e-GP Portal. No hard copy will be accepted. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited through any registered branch of enlisted banks. Further information and guidelines are available on the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Size: DG-1315/7025(5x3)


Md. Masudur Rahman
Senior Assistant Secretary
Power Division
Ph: 02223390024
E-mail:admin-3@pd.gov.bd

GD-1020

Parties demand

FROM PAGE 4 Haque described the incident as a "massacre" and claimed the July uprising was built on the foundation laid by the events of 2013. He made the remarks while inaugurating a photography exhibition organised by Bangladesh Khelafat Chhatra Majlis at the Nalinikanta Bhattacharya Exhibition Gallery of the National Museum in Shahbagh. He alleged that sections of the media and intellectuals validated the crackdown. He reiterated the demand for an independent probe commission and called for punishment of those responsible. He also demanded that "responsible media outlets also be put on trial". Elsewhere, Hefajat-e-Islam's Baridhara Zone held a memorial and prayer session for the May 5 victims. The prayer was led by Abdul

Hamid Madhupuri, central naye-b e-ameer of Hefajat. The National Citizen Party also organised a discussion titled "From Shapla Mass Killing to July" at its Bangla Motor office yesterday. At the event, NCP lawmaker Akhter Hossen demanded justice and recognition of the victims of Shapla Chattar killings as martyrs, accusing the Awami League government of a decade-long cover-up and silencing victims' families. He also urged strict accountability, democratic reforms, and an end to extremism. In the afternoon, Islami Chhatra Shibir held a human chain at Shapla Chattar. Meanwhile, International Crimes Tribunal Chief Prosecutor Aminul Islam said investigators have so far identified 58 deaths linked to the Shapla Chattar crackdown across four districts.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (HED)
MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
F-14/F-1, AGARGAON, SHER-E-BANGLA NAGAR, DHAKA.
www.hed.gov.bd

Memo No. 45.02.0000.000.006.07.0086-26-95
Dated : 05/05/26

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, details are given below:

Sl No.	Tender ID No	Package No	Description of Work	Last Date & Time of Selling Tender Document	Tender Closing date & Time
1.	1268906	GD-43/DPP (GOB)-HED	Procurement of Furniture for Kaptai 50 Bed Upazila Health Complex (UzHC) in Rangamati District.	17.05.2026 11.00	17.05.2026 13.00
2.	1268907	GD-45/DPP (GOB)-HED	Procurement of Furniture for Belachani 50 Bed Upazila Health Complex (UzHC) in Rangamati District.	17.05.2026 11.00	17.05.2026 13.00
3.	1268908	GD-55/DPP (GOB)-HED	Procurement of Furniture for Boraigram 50 Bed Upazila Health complex (UzHC) in Natore District.	17.05.2026 11.00	17.05.2026 13.00

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


Brigadier General
Mir Sarwar Hossain Chowdhury, afwc, psc
Chief Engineer
e-mail: hedhq@yahoo.com

GD-1022

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Senior Superintendent
Chattogram Central Jail

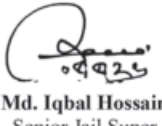
Memo No. 58.04.1500.111.04.028.26-
Date: 05-05-2026

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal.

SL. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Publishing date Closing date
1	1260227	Tender/Schedule -ka/pakage-1	30-Apr-2026 23:00:00, 17-May-2026 13:30:00
2	1262049	Tender/Schedule -ka/pakage-2	30-Apr-2026 23:00:00, 17-May-2026 13:30:00
3	1262051	Tender/Schedule-ka/pakage-3	30-Apr-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
4	1262052	Tender/Schedule-ka/pakage-4	30-Apr-2026 23:00:00, 17-May-2026 13:30:00
5	1262061	Tender/Schedule-ka/pakage-5	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
6	1262062	Tender/Schedule-kha/pakage-1	30-Apr-2026 23:00:00, 17-May-2026 13:30:00
7	1262063	Tender/Schedule -kha/pakage-2	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
8	1262065	Tender/Schedule-kha/pakage-3	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
9	1262066	Tender/Schedule-kha/pakage-4	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
10	1262067	Tender/Schedule-kha/pakage-5	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
11	1262068	Tender/Schedule-Ga/pakage-1	04-May-2026 14:00:00, 17-May-2026 13:30:00
12	1262069	Tender/Schedule-Ga/pakage-2	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
13	1262070	Tender/Schedule-Ga/pakage-3	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
14	1262072	Tender/Schedule-Ga/pakage-4	04-May-2026 14:00:00, 17-May-2026 13:30:00
15	1262073	Tender/Schedule-Ga/pakage-5	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
16	1262074	Tender/Schedule-Ga/pakage-6	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00
17	1262076	Tender/Schedule-Gha/pakage-1	30-Apr-2026 23:00:00, 17-May-2026 13:30:00
18	1262077	Tender/Schedule-Gha/pakage-2	03-May-2026 23:00:00, 14-May-2026 13:30:00

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Md. Iqbal Hossain
Senior Jail Super
Chattogram Central Jail

GD-1019

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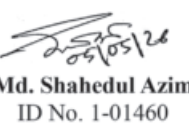
e-Tender Notice

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

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Reference No.	Description of goods/works	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Opening date and time
1	ID-1270436	EE-GRL-34 (FY:2025-26)	27.11.0000.304.26.225.26, Date: 05/05/2026	Supply of 50KVA 6.35/0.23KV Single Phase Distribution Transformer	24-May-2026, 17:00	25-May-2026 14:00	25-May-2026 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered 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). For more details please contract to the PE's Support Desk (01768015538).

বিস্তার/জন-১১৫৬(২)/০৫/০৫/২৬


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

GD-1030

LAW VISION

South Asian approaches to refugee protection

SAKHAWAT SAJJAT SEJAN AND
MD. RAHUL HASAN JOY

The South Asian region continues to be an epicentre of the displacement crisis and refugee movement. Most of the crises experienced by South Asia have somehow become protracted due to the arbitrary administrative practices, executive discretion and the absence of an adequate refugee regulation framework. As all the South Asian countries except Afghanistan never acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention, these countries follow a mercy-based approach instead of a rights-based transparent legal protection mechanism.

For example, Bangladesh is hosting 1.2 million Rohingya refugees after the 2017 influx with 'Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN)' status. It is thought that this different title is given to them to avoid responsibility under international refugee law. Scholars around the world have sometimes called it a 'hosting without rights' practice, where the refugees are being warehoused in camps following a containment-oriented protection approach. Bangladesh has had a similar experience with the Bihari refugees following the 1971 War and the Rohingya refugees after 1991.

In contrast, India took a 'differentiated and exclusionary' approach with refugees from different countries receiving different treatment based on various factors. For instance, it warmly welcomed the refugees from Tibet and Sri Lanka, allowing them to continue educational and religious activities in the country quite graciously. On the contrary, the same did not happen with refugees from Afghanistan or Myanmar.

Here, Pakistan has once again followed a similar path by giving

protection to Afghan refugees but not quite reaching the international standards. Avoiding the formal approaches, the country attempted to create a National Database and Registration Authority for giving Proof of Registration card (a temporary documentation) to the Afghan refugees following a genealogical verification procedure. For instant protection, it may sound ideal, but in the long run, it resulted in underfunded humanitarian assistance, leaving the vulnerable population to administrative and social harassment.

Next, Nepal gave protection to the Nepali-speaking Bhutanese Lhotsampa refugees through strict encampment from the 1980s to the 1990s. With repatriation resisted by Bhutan and local integration foreclosed by Nepal, the Lhotsampas existed in a legal limbo, reflecting the failures or vacuum of the regional protection mechanism.

All of these examples show us the impact of the absence of a regional framework in South Asia for the protection of refugees. This has resulted in a state-centric, interest-driven policy by South Asian states. South Asian countries could have taken lessons from regional frameworks like the OAU Refugee Convention 1969 by the African Union, Cartagena Declaration 1985 by Latin America and Temporary Protection Directive 2001 by the European Union. All of these protection frameworks introduced their own humanitarian approaches of refugee protection to deal with mass influx, burden sharing and cultural sensitivities.

As a result, South Asian countries were not successful in adopting the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organisation's broad

refugee definition and South Asian Declaration on Refugees and Migratory Movements 2004. SAARC Eminent Person Group in coordination with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees endeavored to create refugee governance via model national law in South Asia through Colombo Consultation (1995), Delhi Consultation (1996) and Dhaka Consultation (1997), but it gradually failed to materialise into a concrete regional protection mechanism. This transformed the missed South Asian protection regime into a muddled mechanism.

To make this dysfunctional and muddled mechanism work, South Asia requires a multi-layered strategy that incorporates normative framework with institutional enforcement. From a practical point of view considering SAARC's failure, immediate and substantive action through its channel will neither be feasible nor fruitful. Hence, The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) might play a significant role. A South Asian Refugee Commission might be established under the BIMSTEC framework in the spirit of stability and peace enshrined in article 1(7) of the new charter. This commission may draw inspiration from the African instance, especially the institutional setting of introducing Commission on the Problem of Refugees in Africa before adopting a protection framework. The above-mentioned commission worked as an advisory and technical body for incorporating OAU Refugee Convention 1969.

The South Asian Refugee Commission may also function in a similar order in formulating policy, establishing regional coordination and progressively guiding the

development of a regional framework. This commission will be formed with the representation of refugee dealing forums of different states, Bangladesh's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Officials or other equivalent bodies of other South Asian countries alongside the delegation of ministry of foreign affairs.

A refugee protection charter may be formulated coinciding with AALCO's Bangkok Principles' broad definition of refugees including climate induced refugees. This charter shall be supplemented by model national laws of the respective South Asian countries. In this regard, a comparative model notably the 'Turkish Law on Foreigner and International Protection' may be followed. After Syrian refugee crisis, Turkey being a non-signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention has set a benchmark by enacting a national law for refugee protection to handle mass influx of refugees. South Asian countries resemble the non-signatory nature of Turkey and hence a national law may be adopted considering the similarity in challenges. Moreover, the region has administrative capacity to eliminate the culture of adhocism; it needs the political will to handle the refugees not as a burden but as a shared responsibility. Lastly by institutionalising a technical and ministerial RRRRC-informed commission under the BIMSTEC and domesticating of protection standards following the Turkish Model, South Asia may finally replace its practice of selective altruism towards refugee protection.

The writers are Assistant Professor and Lecturer, respectively, at the Department of Law, University of Information Technology and Sciences (UTIS).



LAW LETTER

Symbolic reforms or substantive changes?

'Reform' was a magic word pronounced innumerable times during the interim government's time, yet the actual efficacy, urgency, and process of bringing those reforms still remain a matter of debate. When reforms are carried out, they ought to address the fundamental structural or institutional inefficiencies of the system, in order to be meaningful. Contrarily, prioritising symbolic over actual reforms might cast a shadow over the entire process. The change in the title prefixed to the judges is one such example.

Section 3 of the Civil Courts Act 1887 sets out that there shall be five classes of Civil Courts with five different classes of judges presiding over them. However, the recent Civil Courts (Amendment) Act 2026 (repealing the Ordinance with the same name) amended the aforementioned categories by changing the titles of judges from 'Assistant' Judge to 'Civil' Judge. The amendment was brought in line with the report by the Judicial Reform Commission, which noted that the mention of 'Assistant' before the Judge's title creates confusion among the common people seeking justice about the powers and jurisdiction of the concerned judges.

Three key reasons can be identified to support this amendment. First, in neighbouring jurisdictions, like India and Pakistan, a judge of similar status is referred to as 'Civil Judge' instead of 'Assistant Judge'. Second, from a layman's perspective, 'Assistant Judge' may suggest that they are a judge's personal assistant, which may indeed confuse the public at large. Third, if we look at it historically, the judiciary has never used the term 'Assistant' as a prefix to judges, and the term was foreign to the Judicial Office. In 1987, the title 'Munsif' was changed to 'Assistant Judge' through the Civil Courts (Amendment) Act 1987. It seems that the object was to imitate the terminology used in reference to other Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) officers. However, after the separation, to a limited extent, of the judiciary from executive through the Masdar Hossain Case verdict in 2007, the use of the titles 'Assistant Judge' and 'Senior Assistant Judge' appears problematic.

Indeed, this change is not inherently problematic since symbolic terminology and public perception of those said terminology do shape public trust, which is indispensable to the legitimacy of courts. However, when symbolic reforms are brought in isolation, there is a risk of them becoming substitutes for substantive changes.

The Judicial Reform Commission had put forward a wide range of substantive and long-overdue reform proposals, which require systemic changes and resources. It included the formation of national and district-level investigation committees to reduce corruption, the establishment of four types of legal aid and mediation offices, the creation of an independent legal education board, the enhancement of a dedicated mediation law to formally institutionalise Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Bangladesh, etc. Although many of these recommendations have been translated into law, their implementation is still overdue. Against this backdrop, the prompt implementation of this particular recommendation, which is limited solely to a change in name, invites scrutiny. It is thus difficult to avoid the question whether the authorities opted for the least demanding course of action and, in doing so, found a convenient means of demonstrating compliance with the reform agenda without engaging with the deeper, more challenging and more crucial institutional reforms.

In a country where case backlog, lack of enforcement of laws, false and vexatious litigation, political influence over the judiciary, shortage of judges and many other problems plague the judiciary, should our priority really be fixating on terminologies, whereas countless other reforms are yet to see the light of day? If Bangladesh claims to be actually committed to judicial modernisation, then the reforms must go beyond mere symbolism and address deeper fundamental and structural weaknesses that prevent the courts from delivering timely and effective justice.

Md. Abdur Rahman Galib
Student of law at the University of Dhaka.



COURT CORRIDOR

Jurisdictional complexities in the Land Survey Tribunal

RAJIB KUMAR DEB

The Land Survey Tribunal (and Appellate Tribunal) is constituted under Chapter XVIII of the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950 (SAT Act). Its jurisdiction is confined to the correction of entries in the record-of-rights (Khatian) arising from final surveys (BS, RS, etc.), rather than deciding substantive, longstanding title disputes. In contrast, civil courts have plenary jurisdiction over all civil matters, including exclusive authority to adjudicate on title and possession of immovable property, unless expressly barred.

The Land Survey Tribunal (and Appellate Tribunal), while adjudicating disputes, exercises powers and follows procedures under the Code of Civil Procedure 1908, insofar as they are not inconsistent with the Act. In doing so, it may examine incidental questions of title and possession, trace the chain of records from the CS survey to the latest record-of-rights, and assess the authenticity and evidentiary value of title documents. However, as it is not a civil court, it lacks jurisdiction to finally determine title or possession of immovable property. This is where the jurisdictional complexity arises.

First, even a cursory perusal of the title deeds referred to in the pleadings may reveal a chain of title inconsistent with the plaintiff's claim and, in turn, indicate a competing legal interest in favour of the contesting party. In such circumstances, the existence of those deeds assumes considerable significance, as it entitles the defendant to deny, or to be interested in denying, the specific legal

character or right asserted by the plaintiff. Consequently, the dispute ceases to be one of mere correction of the khatian and instead involves complex questions of title and possession requiring adjudication by a civil court.

Similarly, where the plaintiff neither challenges the authenticity nor disputes the existence of registered title deeds, and no evidence is adduced to show that they are void or invalid, such documents carry a statutory presumption of genuineness under the Evidence Act 1872 (sections 76, 79, and 90). Unless set aside by a competent court, they remain valid and operative, and their recitals are admissible and binding. In such circumstances, the core controversy extends beyond record correction and essentially involves the determination of title along with consequential relief.

Again, a claim of title founded on an alleged family settlement among the co-heirs of a common predecessor cannot be sustained where the existence of the settlement (*aposhnama*) is denied by the contesting party and remains unproven by any document, *eg*, a partition deed, or any order of partition passed by a competent civil court. In the absence of such proof, questions relating to the determination of share, *hotchpotch* (inclusive account of possible contestations over the property), and title inevitably arise. Hence, in these types of cases as well, recourse to civil courts becomes necessary.

Now, if the dispute involves correction of immediate records (SA khatian) that



constitute the immediately preceding record-of-rights prior to the final publication of the current record and serves as corroborative evidence thereof. In the course of adjudication, the Tribunal is required to examine whether the names of the plaintiff or his predecessors-in-interest were recorded therein and may, where appropriate, draw a presumption of hereditary succession between the plaintiff (or his predecessors) and the SA-recorded raiyat. It is pertinent to note that the non-recording of the plaintiff's names or their predecessors-in-interest in the SA khatian, or any dispute alleging incorrectness of both the former SA khatian and the present BS khatian, also involves determination of title.

In fact, even when the dispute involves correction of abandoned property at the time of adjudication, where the disputed land has been recorded as abandoned property in BS Khatian No 1/1 under the *Orpito Sampotti Prattarpan Ain 2001*, and has further been included in the 'Ka' schedule of a Government Gazette notification, such recording and inclusion give rise to a question involving the determination of title.

As we can see, all such disputes involving the determination of title and consequential relief, or issues of share and *hotchpotch*, etc., must be adjudicated by a competent civil court through a properly instituted suit. Under section 145A (5) of the SAT Act, not only

section 144 suits but also many other civil-triable cases were transferred to the Tribunal; yet, after prolonged proceedings, they are often dismissed on the ground that the disputes fall within the jurisdiction of the civil court. Such dismissals, added to similar outcomes in regular suits, cause significant hardship to litigants, who endure lengthy proceedings only to have their cases rejected for want of jurisdiction.

In my opinion, an urgent amendment to Chapter XVIII under Part V of the SAT Act should be introduced to empower the Tribunal, either on its own motion or upon application, to transfer to a competent civil court a case at any stage of the proceedings, even at the time of pronouncement of judgment, if it finds that the dispute falls within the jurisdiction of the civil court. The civil court shall thereupon treat the matter as a duly instituted civil suit, register it accordingly, assess and realise any requisite court fees, and proceed with the trial from the stage at which the Land Survey Tribunal left off.

Alternatively, where the land survey tribunal suit discloses a substantial question of title, the record may be transmitted to the competent Civil Court (having been powered by Gazette Notification 478 dated 1 November 2023) for joint hearing and disposal with any pending civil suit, thereby ensuring effective adjudication and avoiding conflicting decisions in parallel proceedings.

The writer is member of the Bangladesh Judicial Service.



Munich braces for PSG-Bayern fireworks

AGENCIES

Another classic or a full-blown blockbuster feels inevitable as PSG head to Munich to face Bayern, defending a thrilling 5–4 aggregate lead from one of the Champions League’s most dramatic semifinal clashes in Paris. Under Luis Enrique, PSG are once again on the brink of history, their fearless attacking identity pushing them toward another final. Yet Vincent Kompany refuses to blink. Bayern’s coach is doubling down on his high-risk, high-reward approach, demanding goals—at least three—to overturn the deficit at the Allianz Arena. Critics question Bayern’s defensive fragility, but Kompany sees courage, not caution, as the path forward. Joshua Kimmich put it simply: “We’re not going to change our style of play in three days and just sit back and defend.” PSG, inspired by last season’s dominant title run, won’t retreat either. With both sides committed to relentless attacking football, Wednesday’s second leg promises another unforgettable night on Europe’s grandest stage.



- Paris and Bayern are the top scorers in this season’s UEFA Champions League with 43 and 42 goals respectively. It is the first time in the competition’s history that two different clubs have each reached 40+ goals in a single edition. Barcelona hold the single-season record with 45 (1999–2000).
- Bayern have won five of their seven previous UEFA two-legged ties against French opposition and have also won all three of their single-leg knockout meetings with French sides. They are in their fourth European Cup/Champions League semifinal against Ligue 1 opponents, having won all three of the previous ties.
- The Bavarian side have won only one of their last six Champions League semifinal ties – the 3–0 single-leg victory over Lyon in 2019–20 – meaning

- they have lost their last five two-legged semifinals in the competition.
- The German outfit have lost only one of their last 29 Champions League home matches (W23 D5), and have won all six home matches this season.
 - Bayern have won only one of their last eight UEFA two-legged ties after losing the first leg by one goal.
 - PSG have lost their last two UEFA two-legged ties against German opposition, though their overall record in such encounters remains positive with four wins and two defeats.
 - Luis Enrique’s men are aiming to become the first defending Champions League winners to reach the final since Real Madrid did so in 2016–17 and 2017–18 – seasons in which they went on to win the title.

36 DAYS TO GO





Europe far ahead in quarterfinal appearances

South American teams have collectively played 36 World Cup quarterfinals. European teams top the list with 105 appearances in the last eight. Teams from North and Central America and the Caribbean have reached the quarterfinals five times, African teams four times, and Asian teams twice.

****Read The Daily Star’s website to also read: “The miss that defined a career”**

Hollow promises, dying district leagues

ANISUR RAHMAN

How can Bangladesh football progress?

The answer to this, or similar queries, is almost always delivered by experts and even Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) authorities in a more or less identical manner – stressing the need to improve the grassroots.

The answer seems perfect, but the act of masquerading behind such big talk eventually wears thin when confronted by reality – a bleak state of the country’s footballing culture that focuses only on the national team, disregarding the rot at the rudimentary level that instead needs careful nurturing to produce talent capable of enriching the national side.

For years, crores have been invested in renovating a number of district stadiums, but what use is that wealth if it cannot cater to the basic needs it was intended for?

Sherpur District Stadium was massively overhauled with a whopping sum of more than Tk 41 crore a few years ago, but the district’s premier venue remains largely unused, with the dreams of budding footballers fading in the absence of competitive football.

The story is hardly unique. Jamalpur District Stadium, renovated at a cost of Tk 44 crore, has suffered a similar fate – infrastructure without activity, promise without delivery.

Since the completion of renovation works around mid-2020, Jamalpur has not hosted a local football league, while Sherpur last staged its district league in 2023 – isolated instances in an otherwise prolonged drought.

This stands in stark contrast to a not-so-distant past when district stadiums thrived as vibrant hubs of football, packed with players and fans alike. Those leagues once served as vital pipelines, consistently feeding talent into the country’s top tier football.

That pipeline, however, has nearly dried up over the past two decades, particularly after district football administration came under BFF-affiliated committees in 2008, replacing the government-backed district sports associations. Since then, the grassroots structure has steadily weakened under inconsistent planning and limited execution.

Ironically, district football now finds itself clinging to a flicker of hope – not because of structural reform, but due to the emotional lift provided by high-profile additions to the national team. The arrivals of Hamza Choudhury from England and Shami Shome from Canada have reignited belief among young footballers across the country.

Hamza and Shami’s decisions to represent Bangladesh have elevated the national team’s profile and inspired countless youngsters to dream of wearing the red and green jersey. But belief alone is not a system – and inspiration

without infrastructure rarely produces results.

That belief remains confined to the hearts of aspiring footballers, demanding to be nurtured through functioning district leagues – something the BFF has consistently failed to ensure. Of the country’s 64 districts, only five managed to organise leagues last year, leaving 59 without competition, sponsors, or opportunity.

This is not an isolated failure but a systemic one spanning nearly two decades. Over the last 20 years, the BFF has provided financial assistance to district organisers only four times – in 2013, 2014, 2018, and 2020 – with support from Prime Bank, Nitol Tata, and government allocations. Notably, the last such assistance came before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We are planning a budget of Tk 6.40 crore for all 64 districts in the coming fiscal year so they can run their activities, especially district leagues. Due to a busy national schedule and financial constraints, we could not hold leagues last year despite taking steps.”

BFF district football committee chairman
Iqbal Hossain

The end of the long-standing Kazi Salahuddin-led BFF regime in October 2024 had raised hopes for change under new president Tabith Awal. However, more than a year into his tenure, Tabith seems to be following the footsteps of his predecessor, showing little evidence of a shift in approach, particularly in terms of expanding financial support to districts.

Ground-level officials paint a familiar picture of dependency and stagnation.

“We last organised the district league in 2020 with financial help from the BFF. We could not organise it in recent years, partly due to stadium renovation worth Tk 23 crore. Still, we will need BFF’s financial support to resume,” said Patuakhali DFA president ANM Aminul Haque Mamun.

Rangpur DFA president Shamim Khan Miskin noted that they last held their league in 2023 and are preparing for another this year, while Sherpur DFA president Manik Datta cited scheduling conflicts with different national age-group tournaments and the inter-district national football championship as a reason for inactivity.

Jamalpur DFA member Abdullah Al Fuad Redwan, meanwhile, directly blamed both the

BFF and the previous Awami League government for the irregularity, noting that their last league was held in 2018.

Despite the existence of over 250 BFF-accredited football academies across the country, young players at the district level continue to lack a proper platform to test and develop their skills competitively.

This has allowed the rot to seep deeper over time, fostering a culture where only a handful of players with good relations with coaches and officials are referred for trials in Dhaka, whereas a merit-based progression could have ensured a far richer dataset over the years, including vital details and video footage of numerous potential talents, instead of focusing on just a select few of the ‘blessed ones’.

“We see age-group players gradually progressing to the senior team, but very few actually make that step because the selection pool is too small and not diverse enough,” said Miskin, adding that regular district leagues could address this imbalance.

Mamun also pointed out that while academies like Patuakhali Football Academy spend heavily to compete in Dhaka’s Pioneer Football League, a functioning district league could provide a more inclusive and cost-effective platform for local players.

Yet, when confronted, the response from the BFF remains unchanged – promises of future action.

“We are planning a budget of Tk 6.40 crore for all 64 districts in the coming fiscal year so they can run their activities, especially district leagues. Due to a busy national schedule and financial constraints, we could not hold leagues last year despite taking steps,” said BFF district football committee chairman Iqbal Hossain.

Whether these assurances translate into sustained action remains uncertain. Past patterns suggest otherwise.

In the absence of competitive football, young players are left to rely solely on self-training, missing out on crucial aspects of development such as tactical awareness, mental resilience, and match intelligence – elements that can only be cultivated through regular competition within a proper system featuring structured coaching and opportunities, something that remains far beyond the BFF’s comprehension.

As a result, many players enter the professional circuit in their 20s with limited tactical maturity, forcing the national system to operate at a disadvantage by ignoring its own grassroots.

In such a scenario, it is not unreasonable to assume that the next Hamza Choudhury may already exist somewhere in the districts – unseen, untested, and ultimately lost in a system that continues to promise much but deliver little.



Bashundhara Kings midfielder Sabbir Hossain jumps high in the air after scoring his side’s fourth goal in a 4-0 thrashing of Brothers Union in the first qualifier of the Federation Cup at the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday. The defending champions will play the final on May 19 at home against the winners of the second qualifier between Brothers Union and Mohammedan Sporting Club, who beat Rahmatganj MFS 3-0 in the eliminator in Cumilla yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

‘Not in our hands now’

REUTERS, London

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola admitted the Premier League title race had slipped out of his team’s control after they were held to a chaotic 3-3 draw at Everton on Monday.

“It’s now not in our hands, before it was, now no,” Guardiola said.

“Four games we have (remaining) in the Premier League. They will be quite similar and we’ll see what happens.”

City had the chance to draw level on points with leaders Arsenal with victories over Everton on Monday and Brentford five days later.

Instead, they find themselves five points adrift, albeit with a game in hand, and needing a wobble from Arsenal.



Guardiola was left to reflect on a point salvaged rather than three secured at Hill Dickinson Stadium.

“It’s better than losing,” he said. “We’d rather win. We play for that and we just showed what a team

we are. We tried everything. The players were aggressive.”

Winger Jeremy Doku struck the dramatic equaliser in the 97th minute to complete a double on the night, and echoed his manager’s frustration while

insisting City had not abandoned belief with four league games still to play.

“It’s painful now but there’s still a lot of games to go and anything can happen,” Doku said. “We’ll keep on fighting. We owe it to ourselves and our fans.”

City striker Erling Haaland, who scored in the 83rd minute, could be heard saying “We’re still in it” as he shook hands with his teammates after the final whistle.

Following Saturday’s game against Brentford, City face Crystal Palace, Bournemouth and Aston Villa in their final three league games.

Arsenal have the far easier schedule, at least on paper, with games against relegation-threatened West Ham United, already-relegated Burnley and Palace.



JOURNOS IN JAIL Some may have been complicit in crimes against humanity: Zahed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Filing murder cases against journalists over the atrocities during the July uprising was a wrong move, Zahed Ur Rahman, the prime minister's adviser on information and broadcasting, said yesterday.

He, however, said he personally believes that the crimes allegedly committed by some of the journalists currently behind bars are far graver than murder. While they are being held on specific murder charges, he argued that they could instead be held, to some extent, responsible for crimes against humanity.

Speaking to reporters during a weekly press briefing at the Secretariat's Press Information Department, he also highlighted



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Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) workers draw boxes with white paint on Gulistan streets to designate hawker spots and ensure space for pedestrians. The photo was taken on Shaheed Abrar Fahad Avenue yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Trade deal with US cannot be scrapped at will Says commerce minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh cannot unilaterally revoke its trade deal with the US, Commerce Minister Khandaker Abdul Mukhtar said yesterday.

He made the remarks as the agreement faced fresh scrutiny over language that reportedly places far more binding obligations on Dhaka than on Washington DC.

"A state-level agreement is not like a personal contract that can be cancelled at will," he told the media following a meeting with Brendan Lynch, assistant US trade representative for South and Central Asia, at the ministry in Dhaka.

"It is a reality, and we want to make the best use of it to expand the country's trade and investment," the minister said.

He said Bangladesh need not worry about the agreement, as international trade deals are structured to benefit all signatories.

"Any international agreement is reached through coordination between two parties. It is designed to create a win-win situation by taking into account the interests of both sides," Mukhtar said.

The minister urged stakeholders to focus on extracting mutual value from the arrangement. He also noted that the current government did not negotiate the Agreement

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'Drug dealers' hack Rab men in Narayanganj

Jubo Dal leader snatched away from police custody in Rupganj, seven cops hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

At least three Rab members were injured in an attack in Narayanganj city yesterday, while assailants attacked police personnel and snatched away an arrestee, a Jubo Dal leader, in Rupganj.

According to a Rab statement, a four-member intelligence team of Rab-11 was collecting information as part of an anti-narcotics drive when drug dealers attacked them with sharp weapons in the city's Boalia Khal area around 12:30pm.

Corporal Najibul and constables Mahi and Ibrahim were injured in the attack. Najibul was critically wounded and is currently undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"All four members of the intelligence team were in plainclothes. Two of them were hacked with sharp weapons," Abdur Rashid, deputy director of Rab-11, told The Daily Star over the phone.

A Rab official, requesting anonymity, said the attack was carried out by associates of listed criminals Jahid and Masud, also known as "Buita Masud", who are involved in drug trading in the area.

Rab sources said the same group had previously attacked a Rab team during an anti-crime drive in Gaibandha Bazar of Masdair on November 16 last year, when indiscriminate gunfire left a woman injured.

CCTV footage of yesterday's incident shows several people, wielding machetes and cleavers, attacking the Rab members.

Abdus Salam, president of Narayanganj District

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58 killings tied to Shapla Chattar crackdown

Says ICT chief prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigators have identified 58 killings linked to the crackdown on Hefazat-e-Islam's Shapla Chattar rally in Dhaka and four districts on May 5-6, 2013, the International Crimes Tribunal's (ICT) chief prosecutor Md Aminul Islam said yesterday.

He confirmed the figure based on post-mortem reports, burial site identifications, and statements from victims' families. Of the victims, 32 were in Dhaka, 20 in Narayanganj, five in Chattogram, and one in Cumilla.

Aminul said the number of accused would be "no fewer than 30," with six already arrested, including a former inspector general of police, though identities were not disclosed at this stage of investigation.

He indicated responsibility may extend to the highest levels of government under the doctrine of superior

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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 4

Govt plans polls to local bodies within a year

Says Fakhrul; army chief thanks all for help in successfully holding national election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to hold elections for all tiers of local government bodies within a year, including city corporations, district councils, upazila parishads, municipalities, and union parishads.

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, minister of local government, rural development, and cooperatives, told reporters after attending the third day of the DC conference at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka yesterday.

He emphasised that local government is the strongest foundation of democracy and a vital grassroots institution. He said that strengthening these institutions bolsters both democracy and the state.

The minister also asked deputy commissioners to work alongside the people, asserting that the citizens are the true owners of the country and that people at the grassroots determine the nation's direction.

After discussions on power and energy at the conference, Minister Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku told journalists that the government's goal is to generate 5,000 megawatts of electricity from solar energy over the next five years.

Regarding power outages, he said there is currently no load-shedding in the country and suggested that any electricity shortages are likely due to transmission line faults rather than load-shedding.

Brig Gen (ret'd) AKM Shamsul Islam, PM's defence adviser, said certain groups were trying to undermine the military by deflecting attention from their own failures and shifting

blame in an attempt to create discord in civil-military relations.

The defence adviser further emphasised that a strong civil-military relationship built on mutual respect and trust is essential for the country, noting that the roots of this bond lie deep in the history of Bangladesh's independence.

He made the remarks while addressing a session on the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Division at the DC conference, said an ISPR press release.

Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman, in his

The four-day DC conference, which began on Sunday, held eight sessions covering 14 ministries and divisions on its third day.

speech, congratulated all concerned on holding a successful and impartial election. He noted that discharging duties in coordination with the civil administration has further strengthened public trust in the army.

Navy Chief Admiral M Nazmul Hassan highlighted the navy's activities in protecting maritime boundaries, while Chief of Air Force Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan presented future development plans, including the necessity of adding new aircraft for the air

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RAPE OF 11-YR-OLD 2 weeks on, accused still at large, goes live on FB

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrokona

Despite nearly two weeks having passed, police are yet to arrest madrasa teacher Amanullah Mahmudi Sagor, the prime accused in a case over the rape and impregnation of an 11-year-old student in Netrokona's Madan upazila.

Meanwhile, Sagor, 30, founder of the madrasa, went live on Facebook yesterday from an undisclosed location to claim his innocence.

On April 23, the mother of the child filed a rape case against two including Sagor with Madan Police Station after discovering that her daughter was seven months pregnant.

The incident has since sparked outrage across the country.

According to the First Information Report, on October 2 last year, after classes ended in the afternoon, Sagor told the child to sweep the mosque adjacent to the madrasa. By that time, other teachers and students had already left for home. After the child finished sweeping, he told her

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UNBOWED

On the occasion of
WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY,
The Daily Star will continue its
exhibition till
MAY 15 (11:00AM TO 8:00PM)
at its Dhaka office on Kazi Nazrul
Islam Avenue.

The exhibition documents the brutal
attack on its Dhaka office on
December 18, 2025. We invite you to
walk through these scarred
spaces and bear witness to what
was endured.

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35
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Three-month-old Arbin Sarkar being carried to the intensive care unit (ICU) at the DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital in the capital's Mohakhali yesterday as his condition suddenly worsened after suffering from measles for five days. His guardians had brought him from Narsingdi and admitted him to the hospital.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Rohingya youth held over 'TTP link'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police in Cox's Bazar have arrested a Rohingya youth for alleged links with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a Pakistan-based militant group.

Officials said this marks the first reported case of suspected TTP communication with a Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh.

A team from Teknaf Model Police Station apprehended Mahmudullah, 19, from Camp 24 on Monday and seized an Android mobile phone.

Case documents state that the device showed his connection to a WhatsApp group named "Haqeeqat News" (in Urdu), operated by TTP, through his social media ID "Ayatullah BD alias Amhed".

"He has been regularly maintaining the communication

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