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A selection of 22 Nakshi Kantha on display at Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts
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U2 frontman Bono might not play guitar again
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Young freelancers show the way

Target \$100m earning a year from outsourced IT-based jobs in next 5 years

SUMAN SAHA

Young Bangladeshis, fresh out of colleges and universities, are on course to earn about \$100 million a year by 2020 working freelance from home, industry people say.

This is five times what the freelancers now earn from jobs outsourced by companies abroad.

A young population base, coupled with advances in technology and good pay, is said to be the reason for more and more Bangladeshis taking the freelance route, and the flexible working hours is a bonus.

"Many people are interested in freelance work in the country due to high income and flexible working hours," said Saidur Mamun Khan, country manager of Elance-oDesk, a leading freelancer marketplace.

Inadequate opportunity for quality jobs, especially for young graduates, is another reason for the increasing popularity of freelance jobs, he said, adding that around 2

- Young population leading the boom
- Good pay, flexible working hours
- Around **5.5 lakh** registered freelancers in Bangladesh
- Bangladesh **7th** popular outsourcing destination

lakh graduates enter the job market every year.

Freelance jobs in software development, customer service, data entry, writing, editing, blogging, accounting, mobile apps development, web development, search engine optimisation, graphic design and translations are all there for the taking.

Citing data recently pulled from Elance-oDesk, which helps companies get skilled freelancers, Saidur said businesses spent around \$930 million on hiring remote independent workers around the globe in 2014, up from \$750 million of 2013. He said the amount is expected to reach \$10 billion by 2020.

In terms of earnings, Bangladesh is ranked seventh among 186 countries where online jobs are outsourced to, he said.

Currently, the country has around 5.5 lakh freelancers registered with different freelance marketplaces. Elance-oDesk has

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

The metal floor, inset, of the footbridge at Shahbagh intersection is so worn out that huge gaping holes have appeared and the street below could be seen through them. A step of the stairs to the bridge is also missing, raising the possibility of an accident anytime.

Politics heats up over Jan 5

Govt warns against anarchy, BNP vows to hold rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a somewhat stable year, the political situation in the country is once again heating up centring on the first anniversary of January 5 parliamentary polls.

The virtually one-sided election, also the bloodiest in the country's history, saw the Awami League forming government for the second time in a row and the BNP, which boycotted the polls, ending up without a representation in parliament for the first time in 22 years.

A year on, the BNP-led alliance now wants to observe January 5 as "Democracy Killing Day" and hold a rally in the capital, while the ruling party is set to celebrate it as "Victory Day for Democracy", raising among the general masses the spectre of a return of violence.

Against this backdrop, leaders of both camps are engaged in a war of words, hurling warnings and threats at each other.

State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday warned that the BNP would not be given permission to hold the rally if there is any indication that it wants to create chaos.

The law enforcers would take necessary measures if the 20-party combine attempts to trigger anarchy in the name of rally on January 5, he told the press at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

He, however, did not specifically say whether or not the BNP would get the permission for the rally.

On the other hand, BNP standing committee member Abdul Moeen Khan said the 20-party combine will hold the rally at any cost.

"Our anti-government programmes will continue no matter what," he told the press after placing wreath at BNP founder late president Ziaur Rahman's grave yesterday.

BNP Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed too said, "We will hold a rally in Dhaka on January 5 and it will be held in a peaceful manner if we get the permission."

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PHOTO: FILE

On this day a year ago, people trying to foil the polls torched books and furniture of a kindergarten in Feni.

REVISITING POLITICAL TURMOIL A YEAR AGO

People wary of unrest

RASHIDUL HASAN

The mindless violence that left at least 507 people killed and 22,407 others injured in the year preceding the January 5 national elections was something the country has never witnessed since the restoration of democracy in 1990-91.

Before 2013, people never saw

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VIOLENCE OVER JAN 5 POLLS
DEAD 507
INJURED 22,407

Democracy perverted

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The polling on January 5 appeared only a formality.

A boycott by the BNP-led alliance made it certain for the ruling Awami League to retain power by winning the one-sided election. And it was made all too easy.

Before a single vote was cast, the AL bagged 127 of the 153 parliamentary seats that went uncontested. It needed just 24 more seats to

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BCL faction calls nonstop CU blockade

Presses for withdrawal of case against its leaders over Taposh murder

CU CORRESPONDENT

A faction of Chittagong University Chhatra League enforces a nonstop blockade on the campus from today, to realise its six-point demand over the killing of BCL activist Taposh Sarker.

The demands include withdrawal of "false cases" against the leaders and activists of the faction, arrest of the "real" killers and withdrawal of the officer-in-charge of Hathazari Police Station for dereliction of duty.

The Varsity Express (VEx) group, allegedly backed by the university administration, made the announcement around 9:00pm yesterday.

Anwar Jahid Anik, member of the dissolved CU BCL committee, said they came up with the programme as the university administration failed to meet its demands within the given time.

The faction on December 17 had issued a 72-hour ultimatum to the authorities to meet the demands.

Taposh, 20, a first-year student of CU Sanskrit

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Vessel workers push for Shela river route

Threaten to go on strike if the route remains shut

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A water transport workers' organisation yesterday demanded immediate resumption of movement of vessels through the Shela river in the Sundarbans and threatened the government with a countrywide strike if their demands were not met by January 5.

Leaders of the organisation under the banner of Bangladesh Lighter Vessel Workers Federation drove home their demands in two separate meetings at Mongla and Sarankhola in Bagerhat.

The government imposed a ban on plying of vessels through the Shela river for an indefinite period following the oil spill from a sunken tanker in the river on last year's December 9. The government had allowed vessels' movement through the river since April 2011.

Hundreds of vessels i.e. tankers, cargo vessels have remained stuck in the Pashur river after the alternative channel of Shela was banned for the last three weeks, obstructing import and export works at the Mongla port, said the organisation's general secretary Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam.

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Schoolboy Fahim in a bed of Dhaka Medical College Hospital on January 6, 2014. He was injured when a homemade bomb went off in Badda in the capital during a hartal.



Pickets torch the motorbike, right, of a journalist at Khandar intersection of Bogra on January 4, 2014.

PHOTO: FILE