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## Biman ignored its board in hiring pilots

ZYMA ISLAM

Minutes of Biman's 269th board meeting held on January 18, 2022, show the board approved recruitment of three captains for its Boeing 777s but the carrier hired eight.

A detailed working paper, signed by Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, former CEO of Biman, was presented to the board and it too mentions the recruitment of three standby captains for the Boeing 777-300ERs.

This paper has obtained documents and meeting minutes.

Of the eight captains recruited, Biman had to suspend two – Irfanul Haq and Shah Nasimul Awal – because they failed to complete their training within the stipulated one year.

They also failed to complete their initial route check, this newspaper had reported.

The training of another had to be halted allegedly due to security concerns, according to a Biman document dated February 12, 2023.

Biman in February 2022 hired 14 pilots – captains and first officers – but only five of them could take to the skies a year later. The rest were lost for many reasons including failure to pass tests within a stipulated time and being fired for faking documents.

The Daily Star on March 1 last year ran a report titled

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Ambia Khatun, 66, who lives and begs on the street near the education ministry building in the capital, has been suffering in the harsh cold this winter. While she sees many others get warm clothes donated by people, she is yet to get any. The photo was taken early yesterday morning, when the temperature in Dhaka had dipped to a record low of 11 degrees Celsius.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## RED SEA CRISIS US, Britain hit Houthi targets in Yemen

REUTERS, Washington

US and British forces carried out a fresh round of strikes in Yemen early yesterday, targeting a Houthi underground storage site as well as missile and surveillance capabilities used by the Iran-aligned group against Red Sea shipping, the Pentagon said.

The Houthis, who control the most populous parts of Yemen, have said their attacks are in solidarity with Palestinians as Israel strikes Gaza. The Houthi attacks have disrupted global shipping and stoked fears of global inflation.

In the latest response, US and British forces carried out strikes at eight different locations in Yemen, with support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands, according to a joint statement signed by

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## JATIYA SANGSAD Lobbying intense for reserved seats

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

The reserved seats for women in the 12th national parliament are all up for grabs, and a large number of women – from former MPs to even movie stars – have been seeking a spot on the Awami League's list of potential nominees.

Many have been trying to get the attention of AL President Sheikh Hasina by showing up at different events at the Gono Bhaban and her Dhanmondi office. They are also visiting the residences of influential AL leaders.

Female leaders, who were initially nominated but made to withdraw from the race due to seat-sharing arrangements, will be given priority, AL sources said.

Some party candidates who lost in the January 7 election have also been lobbying.

Former lawmaker Montaz Begum, who lost in the polls for Manikganj-2, has been vying for the party's nomination for reserved seats, AL insiders said. She was a reserved seat MP in the ninth parliament.

Sanjida Khanam and Meher Afroze Chumki, who lost in the election for Dhaka-4 and Gazipur-5 constituencies respectively, are also in the race.

Shammi Ahmed, international affairs' secretary of Awami League, too has been lobbying for a spot on the nominees' list.

She was a party candidate for the national polls for Barishal-4, but her candidature was scrapped by the Election Commission due to dual citizenship.

Meanwhile, some partners of the AL-led 14-party alliance, with whom the party did not share any seat, have been "seeking blessings" from AL high-ups to get a nomination, according to party sources.

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According to some AL policymakers, women who rose from the grassroots to be involved in central Awami League politics will be evaluated for the nominations.

## BGB MAN'S DEATH Border forces' statements at odds

Family still waiting for body, answers

STAR REPORT

The BGB yesterday sent a letter to the BSF protesting the death of a soldier shot by the latter along the border in Benapole, Jashore, early Monday.

The Border Guard Bangladesh also demanded a fair investigation into the death of Mohammad Roisuddin, said a press release.

The para military force is making efforts to ensure that Roisuddin's body is brought back home, it added.

However, the BSF yesterday issued a statement saying that Roisuddin was accompanying a group of cattle smugglers in plain clothes.

The smugglers attacked an Indian Border Security Force jawan who tried to stop them. The jawan then fired his weapon in self-defence, the statement added.

The BSF said the involvement of the BGB man in trafficking and attacking BSF members

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## Israel suffers worst Gaza losses

24 soldiers killed in one day; Netanyahu vows to push on until 'absolute victory'

AGENCIES

Twenty-four Israeli soldiers were killed in Israel's worst day of losses in Gaza, the military said yesterday, as it claimed to have encircled southern Gaza's main city in a major ground assault.

Spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said 21 soldiers were killed when two buildings they had mined for demolition exploded after Hamas fighters fired at a nearby tank. Earlier, three soldiers were reported killed in a separate attack in southern Gaza.

"Yesterday we experienced one of our most difficult days since the war erupted," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. "In the name of our heroes, for the sake of our lives, we will not stop fighting until absolute victory."

The deaths came amid the heaviest fight of 2024 so far, as the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) stormed remaining parts of Khan Younis, the main city in the south of the enclave sheltering hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians.

Gazans said the Israeli forces, advancing west across the crowded city towards the Mediterranean coast since Monday, have blockaded and stormed hospitals, leaving the wounded and dead beyond the reach of rescuers.

At least 195 Palestinians were killed in the previous 24 hours, raising the documented toll to 25,490, according to Palestinian health officials, who said thousands more dead are feared lost in the rubble.

Bodies were being buried in the grounds of Khan Younis's

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## 'Oppenheimer' tops Oscar nominations

AFP, Los Angeles



"Oppenheimer" – Christopher Nolan's masterly portrait of the father of the atomic bomb – topped the Oscars nominations yesterday, earning an impressive 13 nods including for best picture.

It was followed by "Poor Things," a female-focused take on the Frankenstein myth, on 11, and Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon" on 10, in the race for Hollywood's most prestigious awards.

But it was a somewhat disappointing morning for "Barbie," the other half of last summer's "Barbenheimer" box office phenomenon and the year's highest-grossing film.

The comedy had to settle for eight nods – not bad for a satire based on a popular line of plastic dolls, but lower than many had predicted, and missing out on key nominations for Greta Gerwig as director, and star Margot Robbie in best actress.

"Oppenheimer," which came out in theatres on the same day, and itself almost grossed \$1 billion, led the way with nods for its director Nolan, and stars Cillian Murphy, Robert Downey Jr. and Emily Blunt.

The film – which is the clear favourite to win best picture, the industry's top prize, at the 96th Academy Awards on March 10 – also racked up nods in an array of technical categories.

"Killers of the Flower Moon," Scorsese's three-and-a-half-hour true crime opus on murders ripping through the oil-rich Osage community in early 20th century Oklahoma, made history.



Fortune Barishal batter Mushfiqur Rahim glides one to third man region during his 44-ball 62 against Comilla Victorians in their Bangladesh Premier League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Mushfiqur's innings, which helped him become the second batter to score 3000 runs in the tournament, however failed to prevent his side from suffering a four-wicket defeat. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Comilla pick up first win

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defending champions Comilla Victorians picked up their first win in this



Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), defeating Fortune Barishal by four wickets at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Barishal's erroneous fielding effort and poor death bowling saw the Tamim Iqbal-led side succumb to their second successive defeat.



Barishal started well with the ball after putting on 161 for nine as Dunith

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## China's rights record under fire at UN

### IN FOND MEMORY

Mrs. Anwara Islam, died on 24-01-2006 - exactly the same day and date as her husband Mr. Sirajul Islam who died twenty four years earlier in 1982.

Please join us in praying to the Almighty Allah to grant them eternal peace.

Lubna (Children)  
Anika, Talita, Numair (Grand Children)  
Amani, Tijaan & Jinaan (Great-Grand Children)

Ms Lubna Choudhury  
Founder Principal & Chairperson, B.I.T.L