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## Deadline for tax return submission extended to Dec 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deadline for individual taxpayers to file their tax returns has been extended by a month by the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

The previous deadline was November 30. In a notice issued yesterday, the tax administration said it would continue to accept personal income tax returns until December 31.

The time has been extended due to demands from various professional bodies, the NBR said in the press release.

Individual taxpayers can also submit their income and wealth statements both online and in person without being subject to any fines.

The release added that the NBR was taking measures to encourage taxpayers to file returns online, adding that 3.75 lakh taxpayers had filed their returns electronically so far.

Earlier, the NBR made the online filing of tax returns mandatory for government officials under tax zones of the Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur city corporations.

It also asked all bankers and officials of mobile network operators to file returns electronically for the current assessment year.



A massive fire burnt 37 business establishments to ashes in the Akmal Ali Ghat area of Chattogram city. Firefighters said the blaze originated from a mosquito coil at a shop where fishing nets were kept and it spread to other establishments. The fire, which broke out around midnight, was still smouldering when the photo was taken around noon yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

## Women key to Bangladesh's economic progress

Says US envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Chargé d' Affaires at the US Embassy in Dhaka Megan Bouldin yesterday said women have a critical role to play in Bangladesh's economic development.

She congratulated the remarkable women who completed the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) programme this year.

"You are paving the way for future generations of women entrepreneurs and proving that women have a critical role to play in Bangladesh's economic development," said Bouldin.

The US Embassy, Dhaka, in partnership with BRAC University's Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED), celebrated 90 aspiring women entrepreneurs on their completion of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) program at the university's campus in Badda on Sunday.

"The AWE programme is not just about entrepreneurship—it's about SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

HSIA THIRD TERMINAL

## Biman to be sole ground handling service provider

Stakeholders worry about service quality, cite poor record, question capability

RASHIDUL HASAN

As Biman is set to take charge of ground handling for the third terminal at Dhaka airport for two years, stakeholders are raising concerns about its ability to manage such a large terminal.

Director (investment promotion) of Public Private Partnership (PPP) Authority of the Office of the Chief Adviser recently issued a letter announcing the decision to award Biman the job.

The ground handling job involves passenger boarding, baggage handling, cargo handling, and all types of aircraft services. Biman is currently providing ground handling services to around 40 foreign carriers at the airport.

Given the track record of Biman, and criticism by carriers and passengers alike over poor service at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, a monopoly over ground handling operations at the new terminal will not ensure quality service, aviation experts said.

They said Biman is struggling to run Terminal-1 and -2 of HSIA and does not have the necessary and trained manpower to operate the third terminal.

Biman should not be entrusted with the ground handling work as a single entity, they said.

The ousted Awami League government in 2023 had decided in principle to operate and maintain the third terminal by a Japanese consortium under a public-private partnership.

The PPP authority in its letter said if Biman failed to meet expectations in the two years, then a reputed foreign company should be given the responsibility of ground handling as a second company.

Former chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) Md Mofidur Rahman told The Daily Star that everyone wants the quality of ground handling services at the third terminal to be world-class, satisfying carriers and passengers.

"The airlines operating at the Dhaka airport are not happy with the way the ground handling services are being provided at Terminal-1 and Terminal-2, and they raised their dissatisfaction at different forums," he said.

He said in a survey conducted by the HSIA authority, 93 airlines opined for keeping multiple ground handling service providers at the third terminal, paving the way for competition and better services.

"We have failed to meet the passengers' SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## Biden allows Kyiv to use long-range US missiles

REUTERS, Washington

President Joe Biden's administration has authorised Ukraine to use long-range American missiles to strike deep into Russia, two US officials and a source familiar with the decision said yesterday, in a significant reversal of Washington's policy in the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

Ukraine plans to conduct its first long-range attacks in the coming days, the sources said, without revealing details due to operational security concerns.

The move comes two months before President-elect Donald Trump takes office on Jan. 20 and follows months of pleas by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to allow Ukraine's military to use U.S. weapons to hit Russian military targets far from its border.

The change comes largely in response to Russia's deployment of North Korean ground troops to supplement its own forces, a development that has caused alarm in Washington and Kyiv, a US official and a source familiar with the decision said.

The White House and the State Department declined to comment. The Ukrainian foreign ministry and president's office did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Russia has warned that it would see a move to loosen the limits on Ukraine's use of US weapons as a major escalation.

Ukraine's first deep strikes are likely SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## Dozens killed, hurt in Israeli strikes

Say Gaza medics; residential building, refugee camps targeted in attacks

AGENCIES

Dozens of Palestinians were killed or injured in an Israeli strike on a multi-storey residential building in northern Gaza's Beit Lahiya yesterday, medics told Reuters.

There was no immediate figure for how many people were killed. The Palestinian Civil Emergency said around 70 people have lived in the property.

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office put the number of those killed at 72, saying the strike hit a residential building that housed members of six families.

The Israeli military said several strikes were conducted overnight on "terrorist targets" in Beit Lahiya with everything possible done to avoid civilian harm.

"All information released by the Hamas-run Ministry of Health should be treated with caution, as it has been repeatedly proven unreliable in previous incidents," it said.

The Israeli army sent tanks into Beit Lahiya and the nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Jabalia, the largest of the Gaza Strip's eight historic

refugee camps, last month in what it said was a campaign to fight Hamas waging attacks and prevent them from regrouping.

Earlier yesterday, an Israeli air strike killed at least 10 people in the Bureij camp in the central Gaza Strip, when a missile hit a house, medics said. Four other people were killed in the nearby Nuseirat camp, they added.

The Gaza health ministry said at least 43,846 people have been confirmed dead since October 7, 2023, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, three suspects were arrested, Israeli police said yesterday morning, after two flares landed near Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence in the central town of Caesarea.

The speaker of Israel's parliament, Amir Ohana, accused anti-government protesters of being behind the incident, reports AFP.

The Israeli military issued call-up notices to more members of the ultra-Orthodox community yesterday to bolster its forces as it fights on its southern and northern borders, a move that may further inflame tensions between religious and secular Israelis.

» Suspects arrested after flares shot targetting Netanyahu's home

» Israel sends draft orders to more ultra-Orthodox

» Death toll in Gaza rises to 43,846

## BJP wants Manipur to burn

Says Congress as mob tries to storm state CM's home amid rising violence

AGENCIES

As fresh violence erupted in the Indian state of Manipur, the Congress renewed its attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of "deliberately" keeping Manipur burning.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, in a long post on X said, Manipur, since May 2023 has undergone "unimaginable pain", "division and simmering violence" which has destroyed the future of its people.

"We are saying it with utmost responsibility that it looks that the BJP deliberately wants Manipur to burn, for it serves its SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



The bodies of Palestinians, killed in an Israeli strike, are put into the boot of a car and brought to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital for funeral in Deir Al-Balah in the Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Volcanoes erupted billions of years ago on dark side of moon

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

For decades, scientists have been puzzled by the geological makeup of the far side of the moon, the mysterious hemisphere that faces away from Earth. But now, a breakthrough has shed light on this unexplored region.

US and Chinese researchers have discovered that supervolcanoes erupted billions of years ago on the far side, similar to those on the near side, creating massive craters in the moon's surface.

The ground-breaking findings came from 2kg of lunar rocks and soil collected by China's Chang'e-6 mission—the first spacecraft in history to successfully land and launch from the far side, an area whose geology differs dramatically from the hemisphere visible from Earth.

Two independent teams of scientists identified volcanic rock fragments that are approximately 2.8 billion years old. One fragment, however, is even older, dating back to about 4.2 billion years.

This discovery provides further evidence that the Moon's volcanic activity was not limited to the side we see from Earth.

