



## VICTORY DAY TODAY

# The day a nation cried tears of joy

AHMAD ISTIAK

From the first week of December 1971, freedom was already in the air. Pakistan was losing ground across Bangladesh to the joint forces, composed of the Mukti Bahini and the allied Indian forces. One by one, different regions were being liberated from the occupation forces.

By the second week of December, guerrilla fighters of the Mukti Bahini infiltrated various parts of Dhaka city. On Dhaka's outskirts, Manikganj and Narayanganj were freed from enemy occupation on December 13.

In a desperate effort to manage the deteriorating situation, the then governor of East Pakistan Dr MA Malik convened a cabinet



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PHOTO: IRANIAN PHOTOGRAPHER ABBAS ATTAR

## How our red and green came to be

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The fluttering red and green never fails to inspire pride and joy.

A crimson disc against a dark green background to signify our verdant plains and blazing sun, the national flag's meaning reaches much deeper than just the circle and rectangle on the surface.

The crimson is also to signify the blood of martyrs and the green, the vitality of our people.



Come every national celebration, there is a deluge of red and green that has come to represent Bangladesh.

The flag is a symbol of unity and

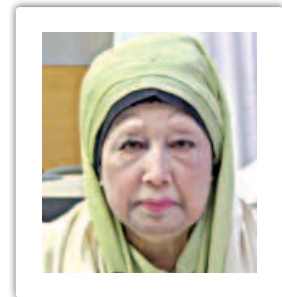
patriotism, it is a symbol of defiance and resistance uniting the people in their fight against exploitation, injustice and discriminations.

The first flag, however, was slightly different than today's one: inside the crimson disc was a map of Bangladesh in the colour gold.

The history of this flag dates way back from the Liberation War. It was conceptualised, with green and gold, back in 1966, as those who designed

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Khaleda may join her first rally in 7yrs on Dec 21



MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is set to make her first appearance in a political programme in seven years on December 21, reigniting discussions about her symbolic presence and the possibility of a political comeback.

While the former prime minister's attendance at the event is significant for BNP supporters, party insiders think her role will remain largely ceremonial due to her deteriorating health and the current leadership dynamics that formed during her absence.

For now, Khaleda's

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## 'How long will you take to complete reforms?'

Tarique asks govt, says people have the right to know

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said the people have the right to know how much time the interim government will need to complete its reforms.

"What does the current interim government intend to do? How many months or how much time does it need to repair the state? The people have the right to know this," he said while virtually addressing a discussion.

Any sign of discomfort among advisers, caused by questions about the government's action plans or roadmap, would go against public aspirations, Tarique said, speaking as the chief guest from London. The BNP organised the event at the Engineers' Institution auditorium in Ramna to mark Victory Day.

Tarique also raised concerns about delays in reforms and the hardships faced by the public.

"If the interim government wastes time in the name of reforms without controlling the market situation and addressing daily hardships, the question may arise among the people: What comes



first, reforms or livelihood?"

While people are enduring hardships, they have not strongly opposed the government yet because they still hope to see the interim government succeed, Tarique said, adding, "The interim government must prove through its actions whether it genuinely wants to see

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## ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES State-backed system behind it all

Says commission's preliminary report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An entire government-sanctioned system was set up to disappear, detain, torture and execute victims.

A report of the inquiry commission, submitted to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on Saturday, states, "...Evidence suggests that far from being passive or accidental or, indeed, the work of isolated rogue officers, these systems reflect a deliberate design orchestrated by a central command structure."

The report, which was shared with the media yesterday, notes that the concerted efforts of different agencies "could not have emerged organically or without centralised direction".

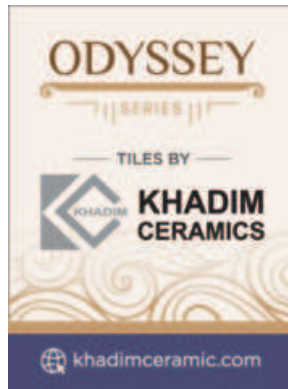
The report details the methods used by law enforcers to target, abduct, torture, detain and kill victims of enforced disappearance.

Disappeared victims came out of captivity in two ways — they were either executed or framed in trumped up charges.

Of the 758 complaints received by the commission, more than a fourth (27 percent) never returned.

This is only a preliminary report, and does not divulge

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## Beximco's liabilities now Tk 50,098cr

BB tells HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Beximco Group companies' outstanding loans and liabilities to 16 banks and seven financial institutions were Tk 50,098.3 crore as of November 30, the central bank has revealed in a report.

The compliance report was submitted to the High Court yesterday during the hearing of a rule following a writ petition that sought the court's order on the government to appoint a receiver to manage the Beximco Group firms.

A receiver is a person appointed by courts, government regulators or private entities as custodian of a person or entity's property, finances, general assets or business operations.

Janata Bank on the insistence of the government has been paying the salaries of Beximco employees by lending money for several months. As such, the receiver appointed by the Bangladesh Bank under the HC directive is justified and necessary, the report said.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury

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## Govt employees to get dearness allowance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim administration has decided to provide a dearness allowance to all government officials and employees, including those who are retired and are receiving pensions.

"Everyone from peon to cabinet secretary will get this allowance. In the interest of fairness, a two-slab (level) system may be adopted, wherein officials might receive a lower allowance, while employees receive a higher percentage," Mokhles Ur Rahman, senior secretary of the public administration ministry, told reporters at his office at the Secretariat yesterday.

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A picturesque scene unfolds as farmers, balancing the bounty of the golden harvest on their shoulders, navigate a slender bamboo bridge across the tranquil waters of Gumai Beel. As the largest beel in the Greater Chattogram region, the Gumai Beel plays a vital role in the region's agricultural economy. Its abundant harvests have significantly contributed to Chattogram's prosperity.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



## \$5b spent abroad on healthcare a yr

Says BB governor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshis spend more than \$5 billion annually on medical treatment abroad, with India and Thailand being the primary destinations due to their more advanced healthcare systems, according to Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur.

"Unless we develop the medical facilities, we have fallen into the trap of India and Thailand," he said, adding that the local people do not have the trust in the local healthcare system.

Improving the quality of service is critical, Mansur said at a workshop titled "Cross-Border Data Flow: A

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# 1971 War Through a Child's Eyes: Innocence Meets Reality

RBR

When our Liberation War broke out, I was just shy of two. I have no recollection of what happened around me during that period.

I heard many such recounts of those days — some good, some sheer ugly. Villagers cooked in big pots to feed the exhausted Mukti Bahini; sang songs to keep their spirits up; fell in love, and married during those days of war.

Ordinary memories of 1971 are all we have now to hold on to.

Tahera Yasmin's new podcast series "Reminiscing 1971" is in sync with this exact thought, where she is recollecting her everyday experiences as she passed her day constantly shifting from Mohammadpur, Green Road, and Dhanmondi back in 1971.

Her naturally eloquent narration of the scattered memories as a child gives you another perspective of the times of war.

How children coped with the stress of war, not quite comprehending what the screaming, and the sound of artillery on the night of March 25 meant, or why it left her teeth clattering throughout the night.

"Words like enemy, fear, danger

was introduced to me. Suddenly, the adolescent girl was aware that rape could be a reality, and death or being tortured a possibility. I came to realise how many left their families, trusting others, to go into the unknown to join the war," Tahera said.

She talks about the fear, the complete blackouts, and the drop-dead silence that was only shattered by the bombing. She talks about her raw emotions when an orphanage in Tejgaon was bombed to debris. She remembers how as a child she coped with stress and fear with the books she

read, the food she ate, and the games she played in her grandmother's backyard with her sisters and cousins.

"Children could comprehend the gravity of the situation. I vividly remember the images of fear and anxiety on the faces of our parents and elderly relatives but amid the tension, we enjoyed the extended school holidays caused by the war."

Born in 1959, Tahera grew up in Dhaka and was fortunate to have witnessed the Liberation War. She feels that the time has come to

talk about her memories as a 12-year-old during the war, before she becomes older and starts to forget the experience.

She finds it easier to talk to the camera than to write, hence the series on Reminiscing 1971, the title coined by her friend. The short videos capture what she remembers of her and her family's life and hopes that these videos rekindle the memories of others who lived through the war.

And rightly so.

Her videos posted on Facebook are like an account of oral history without any political spin to it.

"I am not a social scientist or a historian. These short anecdotes of 1971 are of ordinary people like me, my friends, family and others, who lived through

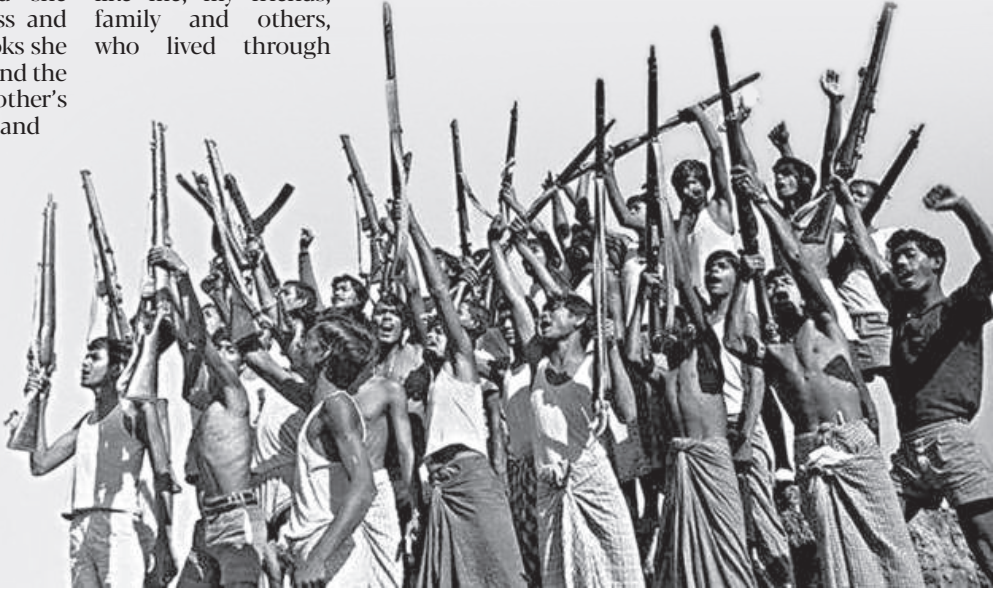
those days.

"My memories are my testimonials of our Independence War. My mother remembered the horrifying details about the war that I was not aware of during that time. My memories are based on my experiences and has helped define me. These videos might attract the younger generation who did not live through the war, or it might not. They will only listen if it is relevant to them."

Listening to her podcast, I feel the sanctity of our Liberation War should be held above any political affiliations. There are so many such minuscule sacrifices that, till today, no one knows about.



TAHERA YASMIN



## The day a nation cried tears of joy

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meeting at the Governor's House in Dhaka at 12:00pm on December 14. However, by 9:30 that morning, the news of the meeting had already reached Major General JFR Jacob, chief of staff of the Indian eastern command, through signal intelligence. A plan to foil the meeting was soon underway.

In his book *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation*, Jacob himself wrote about this plan: "I immediately telephoned Air Vice Marshal Devasher, the very competent senior air staff officer at Eastern Air Command in Shillong. We felt that a disruption of the meeting would spur the Governor to accept the surrender calls."

The Indian Air Force launched its first airstrike on the Governor's House at 11:15am.

Shortly after the strike, British journalist Gavin Young of *The Observer* visited the Governor's House to meet John Kelly, a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In his book *Worlds Apart*, Young wrote that a panic-stricken Malik asked Kelly for advice on what to do at that critical moment. Kelly avoided the question as he was not willing to involve the UN in the matter.

When the airstrikes resumed, Dr Malik resigned from his position as governor and moved to the Intercontinental Hotel.

Amid this edgy situation in Dhaka, at 1:30pm, Pakistan's President Yahya Khan instructed Lt Gen AAK Niazi, the chief of staff of the eastern command, to take necessary steps to save lives. The message reached Dhaka at 3:00pm and by the evening, Niazi began the process of initiating a ceasefire.

A detailed account of how Niazi moved towards the ceasefire is documented in Siddiq Salik's book, *Witness to Surrender*. During the Liberation War, Salik served in Dhaka as the chief public relations officer under Tikka Khan and Niazi.

According to Salik's account, while drafting the ceasefire agreement, Niazi initially considered involving China and the Soviet Union as mediators. However, he eventually chose US Consul General Herbert Daniel

Spivack in Dhaka as the intermediary.

Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali, the governor's adviser, accompanied Niazi to meet Spivack. Initially, Niazi held a private meeting with Spivack and requested Spivack to mediate a ceasefire agreement with India. However, Spivack declined to act as a mediator.

"I cannot negotiate a ceasefire on your behalf. I can only send a message if you like," Spivack said.

At this point, Rao Farman Ali was summoned to draft the ceasefire message to be sent to Indian Army Chief General Sam Manekshaw.

Once the draft was finalised, Spivack remarked, "It will be transmitted in twenty minutes."

However, that night, Spivack did not send the draft to India; instead, he forwarded it to Washington.

In *Witness to Surrender*, Siddiq Salik wrote, "At that time, the US government tried to contact President Yahya Khan, but he was unreachable."

General Jacob in *Surrender at Dacca* noted that apparently Spivack had sent the message to their ambassador in Islamabad who in turn sent it to the State Department in Washington.

### ALL HOPE LOST FOR PAKISTAN

On December 15, just a day before the final victory, Pakistan sent a ceasefire proposal to Manekshaw. Both sides agreed to a ceasefire from 5:00pm on December 15 to 9:00am on December 16, which was later extended to 3:00pm.

Also on December 15, Poland proposed a 72-hour ceasefire at the United Nations Security Council, and called for the transfer of power to the elected representatives of East Pakistan.

Pakistan's representative at the UN, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, reacted angrily.

In a report titled "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Denouncing U.N. Security Council" published in *The New York Times* on December 16, Bhutto is quoted as saying: "I do not want to return with a surrender document... The Security Council has completely failed... They are only bringing up proposals for surrender in Dhaka. But why? Because their objective is the fall of Dhaka. But what

will happen if Dhaka falls? What will happen if all of East Pakistan falls?"

Towards the end of his speech, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto tore up the ceasefire proposal document while declaring the intention to continue the war, and then walked out of the session.

On the same day, the presence of 20 Soviet naval ships in the Indian Ocean, supported by the Indian Navy, forced the US Seventh Fleet to change course. This destroyed the last hope of the Pakistanis. Earlier, on December 10, the US fleet had departed from Saigon towards the Indian Ocean, crossing the Malacca Strait on the night of December 13/14.

At 10:00am on December 15, India informed the Bangladesh government of Pakistan's imminent surrender. Colonel Das, an Indian liaison officer, conveyed the message to Faruq Aziz Khan, the personal secretary of the prime minister of Bangladesh.

In his book *Basanta 1971*, Faruq Aziz Khan writes that General Aurora spoke to Tajuddin Ahmad that night. Aurora stated that General Jacob would arrive in Dhaka at 10:00am the next day to implement the remaining decisions based on the ground situation.

The following morning, at 9:15am, General Manekshaw instructed General Jacob to ensure the surrender was completed by evening.

The entire nation awaited the final victory. By December 15, Gazipur was liberated from the occupation forces, leaving the Pakistani army effectively encircled in Dhaka.

### THE FINAL VICTORY

According to General Jacob's book *Surrender at Dacca*, Major General Dandharv Singh Nagra reached the outskirts of Dhaka at 9:00am on December 16. From the end of Mirpur Bridge, General Nagra sent a message to the Pakistani outpost: "Dear Abdullah [Niazi], I am at Mirpur bridge. Send your representative."

At that time, Niazi was at the East Pakistan army headquarters in Dhaka cantonment. Upon receiving the message, he became utterly bewildered. He had been expecting General Jacob. Eventually, Pakistani

Major General Jamshed welcomed General Nagra and escorted him to the cantonment.

Meanwhile, around 1:00pm, General Jacob and Colonel MS Khara, an intelligence officer, arrived at Tejgaon Airport by helicopter, carrying the surrender documents. They were received by Pakistani Brigadier Bakar Siddiqui and John Kelly, the UN representative in Dhaka. From there, Jacob proceeded to the East Pakistan army headquarters to discuss the surrender. He was greeted by General Niazi, Rao Farman Ali, and Major General Jamshed, commander of 36 Division of the Pakistan Army.

At one point, General Jacob and Colonel Khara entered Niazi's office to discuss the terms of surrender. General Nagra was already present there. The Pakistanis still believed they would be signing a ceasefire agreement rather than a surrender document. Inside Niazi's office, discussions on the surrender began. The room fell silent as Colonel Khara read out the terms of surrender one by one. Tears rolled down Niazi's cheeks.

Eventually, Niazi agreed to surrender but expressed his desire to complete the process at his office. Jacob informed him that the Indian Army had planned for a public surrender ceremony at the Racecourse Maidan.

This finalised the arrangements for the formal surrender. "Dhaka fell silently, like a heart patient succumbing to death," Siddiq Salik wrote describing the surrender negotiations in his book.

Later that afternoon, senior officials from the Allied Forces and the Mukti Bahini arrived in Dhaka from India by helicopter. Among them were General Aurora and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Mukti Bahini, A K Khandker.

Since Colonel Osmani was stationed in the liberated areas of Sylhet, A K Khandker was selected to represent the Mukti Bahini at the surrender ceremony in his absence.

In his book *1971: Bhitore Baire*, AK Khandker writes, "On a late afternoon, we landed at Tejgaon Airport in a helicopter. As we descended, we saw thousands of people standing along the roads. We

boarded a jeep and headed towards the Racecourse Ground. On our way, we witnessed people brimming with joy, their faces lit with smiles and an aura of relief."

From December 15, radio broadcasts about the impending surrender had already signalled Dhaka's residents that the event would take place post-noon. The city streets were charged with an electric atmosphere. By midday, the Racecourse Ground had transformed into a sea of people, with hundreds of thousands gathering in jubilant anticipation.

Amid the chants and slogans of the crowd, General Aurora and General Niazi, along with other generals, entered the Racecourse Ground.

In *Witness to Surrender*, Siddiq Salik describes the scene, "The vast ground bubbled with emotional Bengali crowds. They were all keen to witness the public humiliation of a West Pakistani General. The occasion was also to formalise the birth of Bangla desh."

Amid this fervour, the surrender ceremony commenced. First, a joint contingent of Pakistani and Indian forces presented a Guard of Honour to General Aurora. The surrender document was then placed on the table. General Niazi signed first, followed by General Aurora. As per the tradition of surrender, Niazi handed over his revolver to General Aurora.

Bangladesh burst into celebration. Some were speechless with joy, while others took to the streets in victory processions across the country.

Recalling the victorious moment, 77-year-old Abdal Hossain from the Rahmatganj area of Old Dhaka told *The Daily Star*, "We knew from the radio that the surrender would happen that day. By afternoon, the streets of Dhaka were packed with people. Some even started dancing in the streets. After hearing the news of the surrender, hundreds of people marched with flags. At that moment, everyone forgot who was friend and who was foe."

Overcome with emotion, he added, "That day was the only time in my life I saw my father cry."

## \$5b spent

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Bangladesh Perspective" jointly organised by the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh and the World Bank. The event took place at the Amari Dhaka.

A significant portion of the expenditure occurs unofficially, placing considerable pressure on the country's balance of payments.

To address this issue, he called for establishing a legal framework for data processing, which would enable efficient sharing of data locally and across borders.

Mansur also said the country lacks the regulatory framework in the national data management system.

Since there is no central data repository system, the individual bank cannot create such a big volume of data system alone as it needs a collective effort.

The private sector cannot make the national data repository system, but it can help the government for making it, he said.

Although Bangladesh has a lot of data the country cannot use the data effectively, Mansur added.

The main obstacle in data sharing and data management is the lack of digital infrastructure, said Subrata Paul, local point of the health economics unit of the ministry of health and family welfare.

A national health care card is not needed as the National Identity (NID) card is enough to address the healthcare system.

But the problem is that the NID also lacks a lot of basic information, he said.

It is not possible to make the data system without real-time data and digitalisation, Paul added.

Institutes must work to make data management easy, said Md. Sabbir Hossain, deputy managing director and chief operating officer of BRAC Bank.

In the open discussion session of the workshop, the speakers said the banking and telecom sectors have a lot of data but they cannot share the data because of data privacy and national security. However, the tourism and healthcare sectors' data are not too risky and these data can be shared within the country and outside of the country.

Although no estimates are available to assess the contribution of smooth data flows for Bangladesh, a recent estimate suggests that a restrictive data regime may hinder imports, enhance import prices and thereby have deleterious impacts on economic growth, said Ashikur Rahman, principal economist at PRI.

## How our red and green

FROM PAGE 1

it had a liberated Bangladesh on their mind.

### HOW IT WAS CONCEIVED

The Agartala Conspiracy Case, which was framed by the Pakistan government in 1968 during the Ayub Khan regime, was filed against 35 people, including Awami League chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, some in service and ex-service army personnel, and high government officials.

According to the charge sheet, Moazzem Hossain, a lieutenant commander of the Pakistan navy and number two accused in the case, convened a meeting at his Nasirabad Housing Society residence in Chattogram in June 1966. There, he showed the attendees a diary that contained some guidelines for the formation of the proposed independent country "Bangladesh".

The charge sheet also claimed a flag of green and gold was also shown at that meeting. (Agartala sharanjantra mamla: prasangik dalilpatra by Shahida Begum)

That was the first known concept and primary draft of the flag.

A second draft was done by the students in 1970. It was done in one night.

The idea was generated by the Shadhin Bangla Nucleus, a secret organisation formed in 1962 that played a crucial role in taking the independence struggle to its zenith.

Chhatra League and Jatiyo Sramik Jote (National Workers Unity) decided to hold a reception for Sheikh Mujib at the Paltan Maidan on June 7, 1970. Chhatra League later decided to form a special force (Joy Bangla Bahini) and give Mujib a guard of honour. (Bangalir Jatio Rastro: Kazi Aref Ahmed)

Following the decision, the Nucleus gave its leader Kazi Aref Ahmed the responsibility to organise the guard of honour, and the then Dhaka University Central Students' Union vice president ASM Abdur Rab was made commander of the "Joy Bangla Bahini".

The Nucleus decided that a "battalion flag" would be presented to Mujib at the parade. The main responsibility for preparing that flag was then given to Kazi Aref Ahmed. (Swadhinata Soshostro Songram Ebong Agamir Bangladesh by Sirajul Alam Khan)

On the evening of June 6, a day before the parade, Kazi Aref informed student leaders Monirul Islam, Shahjahan Siraj and ASM Abdur Rab about the Nucleus's decision to make a flag. He spoke to them in room 116 of the then Iqbal Hall (now Shahid Sergeant Zahurul Huq Hall).

Aref further said this battalion flag would be the national flag of a liberated Bangladesh.

Monirul and Rab suggested the dark green background of the flag, while Siraj proposed adding the red.

Aref then drew a dark green flag with a red sun right at its centre and showed it to everyone. The Nucleus's high-command Sirajul Alam Khan endorsed the design.

The Pakistan government, meanwhile, was spreading a propaganda that there was a plot afoot to create "United States of Bengal". So, Aref then proposed adding a golden map of Bangladesh in the centre of the red sun.

As his reasoning, he said Pakistan often spread propaganda saying Bangladesh's logical movement was supported by or had the involvement of India or Indian infiltrators and agents.

The Pakistan administration used to distribute an imaginary map of "United States of Bengal", which contained India's West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura along with East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Myanmar's Arakan. This was done to undermine the Bangalees' demand for autonomy.

To ensure the flag was protected from such propaganda, the map of Bangladesh was then placed on the red disc and the

colour golden was chosen to signify jute and ripe paddy.

Once it was decided upon, Kamrul Alam Khan Khasru was sent to buy the fabric — he picked out dark green and red fabric from one Apollo Shop in New Market.

He then had the flag sewn at Pak Fashion on the third floor of Balaka Building. A Pakistani tailor Abdul Khalek sewed the Bangladesh flag.

Once the green and red flag was sewn, the challenge was to paint the map of golden Bengal on it. Shib Narayan Das, a member of secret students' organisation Swadhin Bangla Biplobi Parishad, was called to Iqbal Hall for this purpose.

However, Shib Narayan said he could only colour the map but not draw it. Hasanul Haque Inu and Yusuf Salauddin Ahmed then went to Enamul Haque, a student of East Pakistan University of Engineering and Technology (now Buet), who drew the map of East Pakistan on tracing paper.

Shib Narayan then used a matchstick to trace the map and used golden paint to colour it in.

Thus, the design of the flag of a liberated Bangladesh was complete.

That very night, it was approved at a meeting in room 116 of Iqbal Hall and the next morning, Sheikh Mujib presented the "battalion flag" to the "Joy Bangla Bahini". Commander ASM Abdur Rab received it.

The process of making the flag involved 22 student leaders, who did the entire work in secrecy.

### THE FIRST HOISTING

The flag was hoisted for the first time on March 2, 1971, by members of the Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad, an alliance established in 1969 in Dhaka University.

It comprised the main student organisations, whose objective was to wage a movement for the autonomy of East Pakistan and putting an end to the autocratic rule of Ayub Khan.

On behalf of the students, DUCSU VP ASM Rab hoisted the flag at a rally called by the Parishad to protest General Yahya Khan's sudden postponement of the national assembly session scheduled for March 3.

The rally was conducted at Bot Tola but Rab hoisted the flag at the rooftop at the southwest side of the Fine Arts building to ensure it was high enough for all to see.

Recalling the memories of that day, ASM Rab told *The Daily Star* that he only discharged the historical duty as it was unanimous decision by the Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad.

"There was no specific flag and anthem in any country before liberation. Bangladesh is a rare example where a decision was made finalising a flag and an anthem before the country was even liberated," he said, adding that hoisting the flag inspired freedom-loving students and people and sparked in them the hunger for liberation.

"We had no alternative to an armed revolution then, and hoisting the flag became the emblem of the patriotic spirit of the Bangalees."

On the Republic Day of Pakistan (March 23), the Joy Bangla Bahini burned the Pakistan flag and hoisted the red and green one in its stead.

The flag was later taken to Sheikh Mujib's Dhanmondi 32 residence and he hoisted it there.

The first post-liberation cabinet meeting was held on January 13, 1972. There, Bangabandhu, who chaired the meeting, adopted the first 10 lines of Rabindranath Tagore's "Amar Shonar Bangla" as the national anthem and Kazi Nazrul Islam's "Chol chol chol" as the national marching song.

It was there that the decision to drop the map from the flag was taken and later, Patua Kamrul Hasan gave the national flag its current look.

This flag, a red disc on a green background, then officially became the national flag when the first constitution of Bangladesh was drafted and adopted on November 4, 1972.



## PESTICIDE USE

## Experts call for balanced farming approach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Excessive use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers in farmlands is causing severe health hazards and must be curtailed, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

While organic farming can mitigate such risks, a balanced approach incorporating proper use of chemicals is essential for ensuring food security, they emphasised.

The seminar, titled Environment, Agriculture, and Food Security, was organised by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) at The Daily Star Centre.

Delowar Jahan, a farmer and coordinator of Organic Farming, said 70 percent of deaths in Bangladesh result from non-communicable diseases, with four out of five elderly people affected annually. He said organic farming can ensure agricultural sustainability and reduce health risks.

Rehmuna Nurain, BELA's coordinator for research, advocacy, and campaigns, cited a 2022 WHO report revealing 1.5 million cancer patients in Bangladesh.

She reiterated that 70 percent of NCD-related deaths are linked to food adulteration, referencing icddr data. Rehmuna called for sustainable agriculture policies, highlighting unclear farmland protection laws and the lack of restrictions on topsoil use.

Farmers from Savar and Manikganj shared their experiences with organic farming. However, they said it produces only one-third of conventional yields despite its benefits.

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Timor-Leste President José Ramos-Horta and Bangladesh Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus oversee the signing of agreements to strengthen bilateral ties, including a visa exemption deal and an MoU on bilateral consultations, during a meeting at the chief adviser's office in the capital's Tejgaon yesterday.

PHOTO: PTI

## Yunus for a prosperous Bangladesh

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has pledged to work together towards a prosperous, well-governed Bangladesh, recognising the interim government as a product of the mass uprising by students, workers, and the people.

In a message on the eve of Victory Day, he said, "Victory Day is not only our source of pride but also a day to reaffirm our oath to protect sovereignty and uphold the Liberation War's spirit."

Recalling the sacrifices of martyrs, he added, "On December 16, 1971, we achieved freedom and self-identity as a nation."

Prof Yunus urged unity in safeguarding the country's achievements and wished success for Victory Day 2024.

Meanwhile, the chief adviser yesterday unveiled a commemorative postage stamp worth Tk 10 in celebration of the Victory Day.

## Probe report on 'some' HC judges sent to president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Judicial Council completed an investigation on some High Court judges and sent its report to the president last week for a decision, Supreme Court Spokesperson Muajjem Hussain told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, could not reveal the contents of the report.

The president has yet to give any feedback on the report, he also said.

The three-member committee is led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed.

The other members are senior judges of the Appellate Division Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury.

Twelve High Court judges are currently without benches after over a thousand students demonstrated on the SC premises on October 16 demanding the removal of the "pro-Awami League fascist judges."

On that day, SC Registrar General Aziz Ahmed told the protesters that 12 judges would not be assigned benches. Following this statement, the agitating students postponed their demonstrations.

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## Bangladesh far from achieving equality

Says Rizwana at MJF event, blames lack of true democracy



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is far from establishing equality and justice in society as it has never truly experienced democracy, said Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan, at a discussion yesterday, marking Human Rights Day.

"Though human rights are recognised on paper, the understanding of these rights differs greatly between the privileged and the underprivileged classes," she said at the event organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation at the NGO Affairs Bureau auditorium in Agargaon, Dhaka.

People from indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, NGO workers, and numerous others participated in the discussion, raising various human rights concerns.

Rizwana, the chief guest, said, "While the masses are aware of their rights, we are far from having a responsive system."

She pointed out that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) lacks the

empowerment to operate effectively.

"Our governments have always displayed an authoritarian tendency, showing reluctance to empower institutions or make them inclusive," she said.

Civil society, too, has been fragmented, hindering united resistance to oppression, she added.

Referring to violations of civil and political rights, including abductions and wrongful arrests, she said, "We have not been able to respond uniformly to such cases."

Rizwana also questioned the legitimacy of three consecutive elections, calling them fraudulent.

The adviser emphasised the need for constitutional safeguards to balance power and prevent one class from enjoying exclusive privileges while others are deprived.

She vowed to push for amendments to laws and policies to prevent activities harmful to the environment or human rights. "To achieve

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## BR launches Dhaka-Gazipur commuter trains

BRTC introduces 10 AC buses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway yesterday launched two pairs of commuter trains on the Dhaka-Gazipur route.

In a separate development, Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) introduced 10 air-conditioned buses on the Gazipur-Gulistan route, utilising the Bus Rapid Transit infrastructure built between Airport and Shibbari in Gazipur.

Md Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the railways, road transport, and bridges ministries, inaugurated the services at two programmes in Gazipur.

"The interim government is working to alleviate people's sufferings... The new trains will enable quicker travel to Dhaka," he said while inaugurating the Joydebpur commuter train service at Joydebpur Railway Station.

The adviser also announced plans to launch a commuter train on the Dhaka-Narsingdi route and additional trains on the Dhaka-Narayanganj route by March 26 next year.

BR has adjusted the schedule of Turag commuter trains to align with the timings of the new Joydebpur commuter trains.

Both services will now make four daily round trips on the Dhaka-Gazipur route. Turag commuter trains will have Fridays as their weekly holiday, while Joydebpur commuter trains will have Saturdays off.

Passengers can travel from Joydebpur to Kamalapur for a fare of Tk 20.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## BTI-Star STELLAR WOMEN Nomrota, Mouri honoured

STAR REPORT

Building Technology and Ideas Ltd (bti) and The Daily Star honoured two exemplary women for their exemplary contributions to nation-building as part of the "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women" initiative at an informal event recently.

The event took place at bti Celebration Point, Gulshan-2 in the capital. The awardees were Nomrota Sarker and Mouri Morium. Nomrota received the award for her unique idea of "Saus



Taus" in the "Entrepreneur" category, while Mouri received it the award in the "Writer" category for her book "Naiori".

Emerging young women from a all walks of life need to be recognised and celebrated for their contributions to society. It is from this idea that bti and The Daily Star first collaborated in 2023 for the "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women".

This year, the first two awards for the second season where given to Nomrota and Mouri recently.

Additionally, some of the categories this year

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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System Name	Downtime Period
Core Banking System	<b>01-01-2025 to 05-01-2025</b> <b>3 Working Days</b> (January 01, 02 & 05, 2025)
Agent Banking System	<b>30-12-2024 to 05-01-2025</b>

We sincerely regret for the inconvenience.

## Dutch-Bangla Bank

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## BNP against partisan

FROM PAGE 5  
information to journalists after submitting the recommendations.

In its proposals, the BNP called for the immediate identification of partisan and corrupt officials who have been serving in the administration during what they referred to as the “autocratic Awami League regime” of the last 16 years.

suggest that officials identified as corrupt or partisan, who have completed 25 years in service, should either be dismissed, made Officers on Special Duty, or transferred to less important positions.

The BNP committee also proposed the promotion of honest officials who had been made OSD or forced into retirement over the last 15 years.

## Government

FROM PAGE 5  
out the real culprits and masterminds behind the killings during the BDR massacre in February 25-26, 2009.

The HC bench ordered the government to complete the process and to submit a report after complying with the directive before it by yesterday. On November 5, the bench issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why they should not be directed to constitute a national independent committee in this regard.

The court also ordered the home ministry to dispose of the application filed by the writ petitioners, seeking to form such a committee in 10 days.

It issued the rule and order following a writ petition filed by two Supreme Court lawyers—Md Tanvir Ahmed and

Biplab Kumar Poddar—seeking its directive on the government to constitute a national independent committee headed by a retired Appellate Division judge.

## ACC sues

FROM PAGE 5  
savings that could be traced for these assets.

Benazir himself declared assets worth Tk 11.42 crore, while ACC's verification revealed that he, along with his minor daughter Jahra Zarin Binte Benazir, possessed assets valued at Tk 14.05 crore.

Meanwhile, former member of the National Board of Revenue Motiur Rahman and his second wife have been accused in two separate cases of acquiring illegal assets worth Tk 11.18 crore and concealing asset information.

## Cadet College Club gets new board of directors



### STAR REPORT

Tariq Abul Ala has been elected as president and Ashraf Hussain director (administration and services) of Cadet College Club Limited, said a press release.

Besides, Kazi Masum Hossain has been elected as director (finance & accounts) and Zinnat-un-Nahar (Seema) director (women and children affairs).

The board of directors 2025 was announced in the 22nd annual general meeting of Cadet College Club Limited held on December 14 on the club premises, Purbachal.

The other elected board of directors are Tanim Khan, M/N 1092; Dr Hasan Shahriar Md Nuruzzaman (Kallol), M/N 1144; Maj (ret'd) Syed Shahed Hasan Kabir, M/N 1174; Khandakar Md Wahid Sadique Shuvo, M/N 700; Zeeshan Kingshuk Huq, M/N 1350; Nazbul H Khan, M/N 1132; Dr Mafruha Akter Rumana, M/N 2220; Maj (ret'd) Mohammad Abu Sufian, M/N 1506; and Mohammad Asaduzzaman Shaon, M/N 1366.

## Bangladesh far from

FROM PAGE 3  
genuine human rights, we must remain vocal and proactive while ensuring supportive government policies,” she said.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF, stressed the need to eliminate human rights violations. “As we envision a new Bangladesh based on anti-discrimination movements, fundamental rights must always be protected,” she said.

She said violence and hatred persist because the principles of international human rights have not been fully embraced in society. “We need to nurture a mindset of accepting differences from an early age,” she added.

She also criticised the NHRC for being ineffective and called on civil society to be more vocal against violations. “Had we stood firmly, the scale of atrocities could have been reduced,” she said.

Swedish Ambassador to Bangladesh Nicolas Weeks highlighted structural barriers such as stereotypes and limited access to resources as key factors

behind inequality. “We need a civic space where people can share opinions and exercise fundamental freedoms,” he said.

He called for greater transparency and accountability in governance.

Corinne Henchoz Pignani, Chargée d'Affaires of the Swiss Embassy, urged patience while working towards a fairer society.

“Right now might be challenging, but don't lose the vision,” she said, referencing the Human Rights Day slogan: Our rights, our future, right now.

Sara Hossain, executive director of BLAST, emphasised the unique challenges faced by the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

“The CHT has distinct characteristics, and its policies require a unique approach,” she said. Unresolved court proceedings are stalling progress in the region, she added.

Prof Sharmind Neelormi of Jahangirnagar University and a member of the White Paper Commission also spoke at the event.

## Probe report on

FROM PAGE 3  
The 12 HC judges – Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan, Justice Naima Haider, Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif, Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar, Justice Ashish Ranjan Das, Justice Khizir Hayat, Justice SM Maniruzzaman, Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman, Justice Md Akhtaruazzaman, Justice Shahed Nuruddin, Justice Md Aminul Islam, and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon – have not been given judicial duties since then.

Meanwhile, three other High Court judges, who were barred from judicial

duties for five years in the wake of an inquiry into allegations against them, resigned on November 19.

They are Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury, Justice Quazi Reza-Ul-Hoque, and Justice AKM Zahirul Hoque.

The president accepted their resignation letters the same day, a law ministry notification said.

However, neither the government nor the Supreme Court administration has provided information on the allegations against the judges, the investigating authority, or the current status of the investigation.

## Experts call

FROM PAGE 3  
They urged the government to offer financial support, citing high costs and low demand for organic products.

Md Abu Zubair Hossain Bablu, additional secretary of the agriculture ministry, acknowledged the harmful effects of excessive pesticide use and called for strategic control. He urged farmers to adopt high-yielding seeds and use fertilisers and pesticides judiciously.

Taslima Islam, acting chief executive of BELA, advocated for a specific law on farming protection, while Md Ziaul Haque,

director of the Department of Environment, stressed collaborative efforts to safeguard farmland and water bodies.

Dr Mohammad Ariful Islam, chairman of Agricultural Chemistry at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, said both organic and conventional farming can ensure food safety if managed responsibly.

The event also featured contributions from Dr Munnujan Khanam of the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute and Prof Dr Nazneen Sultana of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University.

## New executive committee for ex-rotaractors



### STAR REPORT

Ex-Rotaractors Forum, an organisation of former Rotaractors, has recently elected its executive committee for 2024-26.

Saadat R Khan and Muhammad Ezaz Rasul were elected president and general secretary respectively, said a press release.

Other elected are: Mohammad Asadujjaman Rasel (vice-president); Rashed Haider and Ferdousul Alam Ferdous (joint secretaries); Md Siddiqur Rahman (treasurer); ATM Kamruzzaman Apu (publication secretary); Shimul Parveen Parvez (welfare secretary); Mohammad Nurul Huda Ansary (membership secretary); Kamrul Hasan Chowdhury (finance secretary); and executive members Afzal Hossain, Syed Abu Zafar, Murtaza Nurul Huda, Mohammad Bin Kashem Khokon, Lutfur Rahman Putul and Khandaker Mohammad Zaman.

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## BR launches Dhaka

FROM PAGE 3  
BRTC LAUNCHES AC BUSES

In another programme held at Shibbari in Gazipur, the adviser launched 10 AC buses of BRTC on the Gazipur-Gulistan route.

The service includes a 20km-long corridor formally known as BRT Line-3.

The adviser urged authorities to complete the unfinished works of the BRT project to ensure full functionality of the service.

“Despite several extensions of the project deadline, work remains incomplete. This has delayed benefits for the public. As an interim measure, we are starting service with 10 BRTC buses on an experimental basis, aiming to make journeys more comfortable,” he said.

According to a BRTC official, the bus service will have seven designated stoppages at Gulistan, Shahbagh, Farmgate, Airport, College Gate,

Board Bazar, Joydebpur Chowrasta, and Shibbari. The fare for the route has been set at Tk 140.

Originally, the project aimed to procure specialised buses for the dedicated BRT service. However, in the absence of these vehicles, the authorities opted to introduce BRTC buses, deviating from the initial plan.

The decision comes over a decade after the BRT project was launched in November 2012.

*\*Our Gazipur correspondent also contributed to this report.\**

PRAYER TIMING					
DECEMBER 16					
	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5:20	12:45	3:45	5:22	7:00
JAMAAT	5:55	1:15	4:00	5:25	7:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

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## Jamuna Bank

## Correction Notice

In reference to Bangladesh Bank BRPD Circular Letter No. 54, dated 12 December 2024, the age limit for Management Trainee (MT) and Probationary Officer (PO) positions has been revised to 32 years as of December 29, 2024.

All other terms and conditions and the application deadline remain unchanged.

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## BDR MASSACRE

## Govt backtracks from forming committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday backtracked from its decision to form a committee to find the real culprits and masterminds behind the BDR massacre.

The home ministry informed the High Court that it will not form any committee about the BDR massacre now as two criminal cases are pending with the Appellate Division and a Dhaka Court over the incidents.

Deputy Attorney General Tanim Khan paced a letter from the home ministry to this effect before the HC bench of justices Farah Mahbub and Debasish Roy Chowdhury during hearing a writ petition.

The bench fixed January 5 for passing an order on this issue.

Earlier on December 2, the attorney general's office informed the HC bench that the government has initiated the process for forming a national independent committee in order to find

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

**Women workers use hammers to remove rust from old ships. Exposure to sea water means these boats experience frequent rusting. These women then solve this issue, working for eight hours daily to earn a wage of Tk 350. The photo was taken from Rupsha area in Khulna yesterday.**

## ACCUMULATING ILLEGAL WEALTH

## ACC sues Benazir, wife, two daughters

STAR REPORT

Eight persons were killed and 11 others injured in road accidents in four districts yesterday.

In Cumilla, a passenger bus hit a roadside tree at Padua Bazar in Chaudhagram after its driver lost control over steering, killing three passengers and injuring 10 others.

"The injured were taken to nearby hospitals," said Jashim Uddin, in charge of Mia Bazar Highway Police Outpost.

Identities of the victims could not be known immediately.

In Jashore, two persons died and another was injured as two motorcycles collided head-on near Chalkidanga Bazar in Manirampur. The deceased were identified as Hafizur Rahman, 48, and Ashabur Islam, 18.

Emon, 20, of Chalkidanga village, was admitted to Jashore Medical College Hospital, said Aminul Islam, station officer (acting) of Manirampur fire station.

Manirampur Police Station OC Nur Mohammad Gazi said they sent the bodies for autopsy.

In Jamalpur, a speedy truck hit a battery-run auto-rickshaw at Shahapur Bypass Intersection in Sadar upazila, killing the auto-rickshaw's driver Shamim Mia, 44, on the spot, said Jamalpur Police Station OC Abu Faisal Md Atiq.

In Devanganj upazila, a tractor hit a motorcycle in Hatibhanga Chakpara area, killing a bike rider.

Rina Begum, 40, was from Uttar Moamari Beparipara in the upazila, said Obaidul Haque, in-charge of Taratia Police Investigation Center.

In Noakhali, a motorcycle rider Jiharul Islam Rahul, 17, died after being hit by a truck in Chatkhil, said Abdus Sultan, inspector (investigation) of Chatkhil Police Station.

DIPAN NANDY

Housewife Jissan Mirza reportedly owns immovable and movable assets worth approximately Tk 11.5 crore.

Recent graduate Farheen Rishda Binte Benazir has assets valued at around Tk 8.75 crore, while student Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir possesses assets worth over Tk 5.5 crore.

These figures are based on the asset declarations submitted by the individuals, although the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) claims it could not identify any legitimate income source for them.

According to the ACC, the sole source of these assets appears to be Benazir Ahmed, former Inspector General of Police, who also served as the director general of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and as commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Based on the findings, the ACC filed four separate cases against the four individuals yesterday, with Benazir

Ahmed listed as a common accused in those.

The accused include Benazir's wife Jissan, and their two daughters, Farheen and Tahseen.

The ACC alleges that Benazir Ahmed abused his power during his tenure in high-ranking positions in the police and Rab to accumulate wealth under the names of his wife and daughters.

Akhtar Hossain, ACC's director general (prevention), said the cases were filed at the ACC's integrated district office in Dhaka under allegations of acquiring wealth beyond known sources of income.

An analysis of the case documents reveals that Jissan declared assets worth Tk 11.42 crore in her submission to ACC. However, the ACC's verification uncovered undisclosed assets amounting to Tk 31.69 crore.

While the ACC found the declared amount of wealth to be accurate for Farheen and Tahseen, it could not find any legitimate sources of income or

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

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Mugger suspect beaten to death  
Man dies in muggers' attack

STAR REPORT

A man was killed after being beaten by a group of people on suspicion of being a mugger in Dhaka's Gulistan area yesterday evening.

The identity of the deceased, aged around 30, could not be known immediately.

The incident took place around 7:30pm in front of the Sundarban Square Super Market.

Sub-Inspector Subrata Paul of Paltan Police Station said pedestrians and vendors apprehended a man suspected of attempted mugging and assaulted him.

Police from the nearby Ahad Police Box rescued him and took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he died around 9:30pm, the SI said.

The deceased was wearing a jeans pant and a long-sleeve t-shirt at the time of the incident, said the SI.

Meanwhile, a man died last evening, around 12 hours after being stabbed by muggers in Moghbazar.

Mohammad Habibullah, 18, an employee of a cloth shop in Dhaka's Islampur, lived in Moghbazar.

The incident happened around 5:45am when the victim was walking towards his residence while returning from his ancestral home in Mymensingh.

"Some muggers intercepted him and stabbed him in the head..." said Md Razu, officer-in-charge of Hatirjheel Police Station.

He died at DMCH around 6:00pm, the OC said.

They are collecting CCTV footage of the nearby areas and trying to arrest the killers, he added.

Sohel Rana, a relative of the victim, said the muggers took away his mobile phone.

The body was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

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৩। দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখঃ ১৬-১২-২০২৪ খ্রিঃ।  
৪। দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ৩০-১২-২০২৪ খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।  
৫। দরপত্র দাখিলগ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ৩১-১২-২০২৪, সকাল ১১:৩০ টা পর্যন্ত।  
৬। দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ০১-১২-২০২৪, সকাল ১১:৩০ টা।  
৭। দরপত্র বিক্রয়, গ্রহণ ও খোলার স্থানঃ ট্রেজারার অফিস, প্রশাসনিক ভবন, কালিয়াটেক, গাজীপুর।  
৮। বিজ্ঞপ্তিতত্ত্বের জন্য: [www.bdu.ac.bd](http://www.bdu.ac.bd), ই-মেইল: [tender@bdu.ac.bd](mailto:tender@bdu.ac.bd), ফোন: ০৯৬৬৬৭৭৫৩৩-৪।

স্বাক্ষরিত  
(প্রফেসর ড. মোঃ আনোয়ার হোসেন)  
ট্রেজারার

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ডিজিটাল ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ

GD- 1196

PUBLIC ADMIN  
BNP against partisan, corrupt officials

BSS, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), in a series of recommendations to the Public Administration Reform Commission, has sought action against party-biased and corrupt officials in the administration over the past 16 years.

A delegation led by Ismail Jaberullah, a member of the BNP Chairperson's Advisory Council and the party's Public Administration Reform Committee, submitted the short, medium, and long-term recommendations to Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA) and Member Secretary of the Public Administration Reform Committee Md Mokhlesur Rahman at the secretariat yesterday.

Ismail Jaberullah disclosed the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## BCL's Eden College president arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Eden Mahila College unit president of the recently banned Bangladesh Chhatra League was arrested in Dhanmondi area yesterday.

Rezaul Karim Mallick, DB additional commissioner, confirmed the arrest of Tamanna Jesmin Riva.

Besides, the DB team arrested Mahbubur Rahman Mahbub, the social welfare secretary of BCL central committee, he said.

The DB official said both of them are accused in several cases. Besides, they recently held a procession near Square Hospital under the banner of BCL, now a banned organisation, he said.

## 30 Rohingya refugees rescued from traffickers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Traffickers in Teknaf held hostage at least 30 Rohingya refugees after luring them with the promise of sending them to Malaysia.

The hostages were held for a month at the house of one Saiful Islam of South Lambari under Teknaf Sadar union, said Teknaf police OC Gias Uddin.

The traffickers were in the process of collecting ransoms against the hostages when police, acting on a tip-off, rescued the Rohingya hostages after conducting a drive on Saturday morning.

The OC said the members of the trafficking group fled after sensing the presence of police.

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**JASHORE WATER DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**  
**BWDB, JASHORE**

**Invitation for Tenders**

e-Tender has been invited in the national e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for Procurement of the following works.

Invitation Reference No	Tender ID	Package No & Description	Tender/Proposal Document Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing & Opening Date & Time
T30-A/1001 Dated: 12.12.2024	1050451	Package No- CSAWM-WDB-SWZ-WD-14/05 Re-excavation of Amdanga Khal from 0.500 Km to 2.700 Km=2.200 Km and strengthening of Amdanga khal by protection works from km.0.000 to km 0.450 = 0.450 Km and Rehabilitation of 2Nos. Outlet at Km. 1.170 & Km. 1.330 of Amdanga khal in ChitraBhairab-Afra Sub- Project (Jashore Part) i/c with CSAWM Project (BWDB Part) under Jashore WD Division, BWDB, Jashore During the Year 2024-25 & 2025-26	13-Jan-2025 17:00 hrs	14-Jan-2025 12:20 hrs
T30-A/1007 Dated: 12.12.2024	1050693	Package No- CSAWM-WDB-SWZ-WD-14/02 Re-excavation of Chitra River from km 0.000 to km 20.000 = 20.000 km of Chitra-Bhairab-Afra Sub-Project (Jashore Part) in C/W "Climate Smart Agriculture & Water Management Improvement Project" in Upazilla-Bagherpara under Jashore WD Division, BWDB, Jashore during the year 2024-2025 & 2025-26.	13-Jan-2025 17:00 hrs	14-Jan-2025 12:30 hrs
T30-A/1008; Dated: 12.12.2024	1050705	Package No- CSAWM-WDB-SWZ-WD-14/03 Re-excavation of Chitra River from km 20.000 to km 38.500 = 18.500 km of Chitra-Bhairab-Afra Sub-Project (Jashore Part) in C/W "Climate Smart Agriculture & Water Management Improvement Project" in Upazilla- Bagherpara, Dist- Jashore under Jashore WD Division, BWDB, Jashore during the year 2024-2025 & 2025-2026.	13-Jan-2025 17:00 hrs	14-Jan-2025 12:40 hrs
T 30-A/1009; Dated: 12.12.2024	1050706	Package No- CSAWM-WDB-SWZ-WD-14/04 The River bank protective work at (A) Afra Ghat from km 0.000 to km 0.300 = 300.00 m. (B) Gobindo Mondir from km 0.077 to km 0.200 = 123.00 m. (C) Kali Mondir from km 0.00 to km 0.077 = 77.00m. (D) kalibari from km 0.00 to km 0.630 = 630.00m. (E) Sarderghat from km 0.00 to km 0.500 = 500.00m. Total 1630.00 m. in Chitra-Bhairab-Afra Sub-Project (Jashore Part) in C/W Climate Smart Agricultural & Water Management Project in district Jashore under Jashore WD Division, BWDB, Jashore during the FY of 2024-2025 & 2025-2026	13-Jan-2025 17:00 hrs	14-Jan-2025 12:50 hrs

This is online tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in National e-GP portal and no offline and 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 Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branched up to Banking hours as stated in IFT.

Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help Pdesk ([helpdesk@procure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@procure.gov.bd)) (01762625528-31). (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>)

পানি- ৪৩০/২০২৪-২০২৫  
১৩"X৩

(Polash Kumar Banerjee)  
Executive Engineer,  
Jashore Water Development Division,  
BWDB, Jashore.

GD- 1193



## Migrant workers unsung heroes

FROM PAGE 16

through formal channels. But if you count what they send through hundi and other informal methods, the amount would be over \$40 billion. One of the things we are working on is increasing the formal means of remitting,” he said.

Highlighting BRAC’s efforts to support migrant workers, he said more migrant-friendly formal channels would help bolster foreign reserves.

He also stressed the importance of coordination among ministries for migrants’ welfare.

Michael Miller, ambassador and head of the Delegation of the European Union in Bangladesh, said the EU member states believed in regular, safe, and dignified migration.

“If Bangladeshi workers possess the necessary skills for the types of jobs we are seeking, more of them will be able to migrate to Europe for employment.

Ensuring safe migration will benefit both the European Union and Bangladesh,” he said.

He also highlighted the critical role of journalists in the migration sector, saying, “The work of journalists influences policy makers. The media contributes by working objectively.”

Mahfuz Anam, editor and Publisher of The Daily Star, said he wondered how much the government invested for migrant workers who send \$22 a year.

He noted that the ministry received just 0.5 percent of the national budget and asked, “Which ministry or government department earns even \$1 billion? Yet, this is among the most underfunded ministries in our government.”

He opined that the current system exploits human resources.

“You send them abroad. But where do they go? How do they live? What are their health issues? Are they safe? These are not

our concerns. How much money they send is our concern,” he said.

Mohammad Shaheen, NDC, joint secretary of the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment, said the government was working on developing skills of prospective migrants.

“Skilled labour migration will make the migration process safer,” he said.

Shariful Hasan, associate director (Migration and Youth Platform) of BRAC, presented the keynote paper, while Safi Rahman Khan, director of the Education, Skills Development, and Migration Program at BRAC, delivered the welcome address.

Rahnuma Salam Khan, national programme manager of the International Labour Organization, spoke as a jury board member.

The award-winning journalists in the newspaper (national) category are Kamrun Nahar and Masum Billah

of The Business Standard (first), Saiful Islam of Ajker Patrika (second), and Hasanuzzaman of Dainik Inqilab (third).

In the newspaper (regional) category: Shariful Islam of Ekushey Patrika (Chattogram), Iftekharul Islam of Dainik Chattogram Khobor, and Shahin Alam of Saptahik Choddogram (Sylhet) won.

From TV: Khefayet Ullah Chowdhury Shakil of Bangla Vision with cameraperson Rajibul Islam, Rasheduzzaman with videographer SI Suman of Channel 24, and Tanvir Hossain with Jakir Hossain Rana of RTV won.

Independent Television’s Talash won in the programme category, while Badsha Miah of Radio Tehran won in the radio category.

Jahangir Alam of Jagonews24.com, Ajoy Kundo of Daily Madaripur Sangbad, Saddif Ovee of Bangla Tribune, and Shakila Khatun of Daily Khoborer Kagoj (Sylhet) were the winners in the online category.

## DU halls no longer students’ nightmare

FROM PAGE 16

when they notice irregularities in the dorms,” said Abdul Jabber, a resident student of Surja Sen Hall.

“Earlier, if students raised their voices against the irregularities, Chhatra League leaders would interrogate and torture them in the gonoroom [guest room].”

Hafizul Islam, of the same hall, said, “Now, when a student falls ill, the hall provost even sends fruits if informed. The administration consults the students before making decisions, and the relationship between the students and administration has improved.”

Additionally, house tutors now visit the halls every month to address the students’ problems – a practice that had been missing for a long time at DU dorms.

These tutors are responsible for students’ education and well-being, but they were rarely present before, leaving students unsure of where to turn for help.

The change is also reflected in the dormitories’ study spaces. Students now have enough space to study in the reading rooms, which were previously overcrowded with job seekers.

“The rooms are also cleaner and better furnished now,” said Arif Hossain, a student of Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall.

Mohammad Shahin Khan, provost of Kabi Jasimuddin Hall, also acknowledged these changes.

“We can now manage the hall and distribute seats among students systematically without political interference. It was difficult before because of that interference. Now, as hall authorities, we can do our jobs properly.”

He also mentioned that canteen managers and vendors inside dorms no longer have to provide food to political leaders for free.

“I haven’t received a single complaint about this since the changes.”

**POSITIVE CHANGES SPARK HOPE**

From among freshers to master’s students, there is now a renewed sense of

hope that campus politics will not align with students’ expectations through the positive changes and actions taking place since August 5.

The DU authorities have launched several initiatives, including a bus service for students on campus, efforts to reduce traffic on and around the campus, and measures to ensure student safety.

Meanwhile, members of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement have been distributing blankets to students for the winter, as well as offering health services and computer training programmes.

Abdul Kader, a key coordinator of the platform, said, “Students were once controlled by Chhatra League. The leaders forced them to participate in rallies, meetings, and personal tasks against their will. Now, students are free from that culture. They are given the dignity they deserve. We hope this trend continues.”

Salma Nasrin, provost of Sufia Kamal Hall, said, “Positive changes are now

visible. We’re now trying to solve any problems by attaching importance to the opinions of the hall’s students. No one is now forcing girls to attend political programmes. The gonorooms have been abolished. The female students now feel safe and free here.”

**HALL FOOD STILL POOR**

For years, low-quality food has been served in the hall canteens and students believed that this would change too.

When canteen owners were earlier questioned about the poor quality of food, they would blame BCL leaders, who would not pay for food and extort money from the canteen.

But even now, the residential students claimed the food remains the same as before.

Abdul Kader said, “It’s time to improve the quality of the food served in the halls for the sake of the students’ welfare. Even though the canteen owners have been changed, the food has not. If needed, the entire system [of canteens] will have to be changed.”

## Khaleda may join her first rally

FROM PAGE 1

appearance signals a symbolic return to the public eye, reinforcing her enduring legacy as the BNP’s figurehead, even as the party navigates its challenges under the leadership of her son and the party’s acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

Pro-BNP freedom fighters’ group the Jatiyatabadi Muktijoddha Dal will organise the event under the theme “Shobar Age Bangladesh” (Bangladesh First) at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka from 2:00pm to 5:00pm.

Khaleda will attend as the chief guest. Tarique, who has been leading the party from London, is also expected to address the rally virtually.

Her return to the public stage after years of political inactivity comes at a critical time in Bangladesh’s politics. An interim government led by Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus is in power after the ouster of the Awami League on August 5 in the face of a student-led mass uprising. Khaleda’s archival and deposited prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India during the massive political

changeover.

The political vacuum created by these developments allowed the BNP leadership to regain momentum in street politics as well as in the shifting national political landscape. Now the announcement of her appearance in the rally has once again put Khaleda at the centre of attention in the political arena.

Khaleda has already resumed some activities. She attended the Armed Forces Day programme at Dhaka Cantonment on November 21, further fuelling speculations about her ability to reengage with party activities despite her health constraints.

However, party insiders remain cautious about her long-term political engagement.

One senior party leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated, “Her physical condition remains fragile. She cannot move alone. While her presence is a source of inspiration, a full-fledged comeback is highly unlikely.”

The leader also pointed to Tarique’s growing influence within the party, saying, “Tarique Rahman has established a strong command over the BNP.

If Khaleda Zia attempts to take an active role again, it may create unnecessary internal chaos.”

Khaleda’s presence still holds symbolic value for the BNP, with many party supporters viewing her as the unifying figurehead of the parties that opposed the Awami League’s rule.

Muktijoddha Dal President Ishtiaq Aziz Ulfat said, “We invited her to the rally, and she gladly accepted. Although she is unwell, we hope she will say a few words at the event. This alone brings immense joy to the freedom fighters.”

Around 1,500 freedom fighters are expected to attend the rally, which forms part of BNP’s Victory Day programmes.

The rally is expected to draw leaders from BNP-affiliated organisations, political allies, and members of civil society. The organisers hope the event will strengthen party unity and inspire supporters at a time of heightened political tension.

Party leaders interviewed by The Daily Star believe Khaleda’s return to the political stage will be a critical juncture and an emotional boost for the BNP amid its push for election at

the earliest possible time after necessary reforms promised by the interim government.

The BNP leaders also recognised the limitations of her involvement as there are also renewed hopes that Khaleda may travel abroad for advanced medical treatment, something the BNP has long been demanding.

The 79-year-old former premier has been battling multiple health complications, including arthritis, diabetes, liver cirrhosis, and kidney ailments, and requires specialised care unavailable in Bangladesh, according to her doctors.

She last addressed a BNP rally on November 12, 2017, at Suhrawardy Udyan, and presided over her final extended party meeting on February 4, 2018, just two days before her arrest in a corruption case.

Since her release on conditional bail in 2020, she has remained confined to her residence Firoza in Gulshan, with frequent visits to Evercare Hospital for treatment. Although her release was secured on humanitarian grounds, legal restrictions have barred her from active political participation.

## How long will you take

FROM PAGE 1

itself succeed.”

The BNP acting chairman highlighted the need for transparency and accountability, which he said the government can ensure by announcing its action plans and roadmap.

It will also speed up the administration’s activities. He also highlighted the role of parliament in strengthening democracy.

Addressing party leaders, Tarique urged them to remain connected with the people.

“After clearing all uncertainties, our beloved Bangladesh will soon begin its journey with the electoral

roadmap. In this journey, the people will be your loyal companions. Therefore, stay with the people and make every effort to keep them by your side,” he said.

Presiding over the programme, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhruul Islam Alamgir said the Awami League had destroyed the dreams of the Liberation War shortly after independence with its misrule and repressive acts. The party also dismantled democracy and stripped people of their rights, he said.

“What we want now, and what every Bangladeshi desires at this moment,

is Tarique Rahman’s leadership so that he can return to the country.”

“The most crucial step to tackle this challenge is to swiftly pave the way for reforms through a credible election. This is the only rightful course of action and the greatest need of the moment.”

Fakhruul added, “Let us, the leaders, workers, and supporters of BNP, move forward together towards this goal. Remember, as our acting chairman repeatedly emphasises, our behaviour will determine whether we gain the people’s love in the days ahead. Let us move forward with this in mind.”

BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said that after the mass uprising, people expected positive actions from the interim government, but many things have caused disappointment.

“The BNP supported this government and expected it would quickly restore the people’s right to vote; through elections, the people would form a government by casting their votes,” he said.

He urged the interim government to finish the reforms and announce a roadmap for election as soon as possible.

## We can import more from Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 16

be part of a region of 700 million people.”

With the Asean inclusion, Timor-Leste will join an economic zone with a GDP of over US\$ 4 trillion, he added.

The Timor-Leste president hoped that Bangladesh would be a developing partner of his country.

Earlier, Yunus and Ramos Horta held “fruitful discussions” and shared their ideas to take the

relations between the two countries to a new height.

They witnessed the signing of two instruments – MoU on bilateral consultations mechanism and agreement on visa exemption for diplomatic and official passport holders – to further strengthen the relations.

The two leaders had a tete-a-tete which was followed by a delegation-level meeting.

Ramos Horta said Nobel Peace Laureate

Prof Yunus is one of the most respected leaders in the world comparing the Bangladesh chief adviser to world leaders like Nelson Mandela, John F Kennedy, Mahatma Gandhi, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara.


“So, Bangladesh is very fortunate to have such an unassuming and humble person leading ... he is working with you to transform the country,” he said.

Saying Bangladesh and Timor-Leste have a similar

history of suffering, the Timor-Leste president said the people of Bangladesh are resilient, hardworking, creative and successful.

He described Prof Yunus as his brother, friend, and mentor and thanked the Bangladesh government for hosting him.

Ramos Horta was elected president in May 2022. He had previously been president from 2007-2012 - during which he was shot during an attempted assassination.




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**Notice of the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting**

Notice is hereby given that the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of **ALIF MANUFACTURING COMPANY Ltd.** will be held on Sunday, the 29<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 1:00 P.M under Hybrid System (both Physical and Digital Platform), Gulshan Club, Dhaka through the link <https://alif2024.hybridagmbd.net> to transact the following business:

**AGENDA:**

- To receive, consider and adopt the directors’ report, auditor’s report and audited financial statements of the company for the year ended 30th June, 2024;
- To approve 1% (One percent) cash dividend i.e Tk. 0.10 for each ordinary share only for the general shareholders other than Sponsors/Directors;
- To elect Directors in terms of the relevant provision of Articles of Associations;
- To appoint of Statutory Auditors for the year 2024-25 and fix their remuneration;
- To appoint corporate governance compliance auditor for the year 2024-25 (till holding of next AGM) and fix their remuneration; and
- Any other business with the permission of the chair.

By the order of the Board  
  
Company Secretary

**Dated, Dhaka**  
December 15, 2024

**NOTES:**

- The Record Date for 29th AGM is fixed on November 21, 2024.
- The shareholders whose name appeared in the Register of Members of the Company or in the depository (CDBL) on the record date shall be entitled to attend the meeting as well as qualify for dividend to be approved at the AGM.
- A shareholder entitled to attend and vote at the AGM may appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his/her behalf. The Proxy Form, duly filled, signed and stamped of Tk. 20.00 must be sent through email to the Company at [alifmanufacturing@gmail.com](mailto:alifmanufacturing@gmail.com) not later than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting.
- The concern stock broker, merchant banker and portfolio manager are requested to submit hard copy or through mail to the Company at [alifmanufacturing@gmail.com](mailto:alifmanufacturing@gmail.com) on or before **December 26, 2024**; the statement along with detail of their margin client or customer who has debit balance or margin loan, who are entitled to receive cash dividend of the Company for the year ended June 30, 2024. The statement should include shareholder’s name, BO ID number, client-wise shareholding position, gross dividend receivable, applicable tax rate, net dividend receivable etc. along with the Consolidated Customers’ Bank Account number, routing number and contact person.
- The shareholders will be able to submit their questions/comments and vote electronically 24 hours before commencement of the AGM and during the AGM. For logging in to the system, the shareholders need to put their 16 digit Beneficial Owner (BO) ID number and other credential as proof of their identity by visiting the link <https://alif2024.hybridagmbd.net>.
- Shareholders are requested to Physical present at Gulshan Club, Dhaka or log-in to the system prior to the meeting start time of 1:00 p.m. on December 29, 2024.

## Bowling ban

FROM PAGE 16

on Friday when the English board announced that he can not bowl in ECB-run events until he proves his bowling action is legal in an ICC accredited testing centre.

However, according to clause 11.3 of the ICC regulations for illegal bowling actions, a suspension from a national cricket body is automatically recognised by the ICC and other national boards and enforced accordingly.

ECB confirmed that the ECB suspension on Shakib, which came following an independent assessment conducted at Loughborough University earlier this month, will be enforced accordingly.

ECB also informed that the all-rounder will soon go for a reassessment and there is no restriction on him to continue playing as

a batter. Shakib is currently taking part in the Lanka T10 for Galle Marvels.

“While Shakib is currently unable to bowl, he remains eligible to continue playing as a batsman in all forms of domestic and international cricket. The BCB is aware that Shakib will soon appear for reassessment at an accredited testing centre in an effort to have his bowling action cleared.

“Should the results of this analysis clear his action, Shakib will be permitted to bowl in international cricket and in domestic cricket competitions under the jurisdiction of all National Cricket Federations.” Shakib’s action was deemed suspect by the umpires during his lone appearance for Surrey in the County Championship in September.

## Beximco’s liabilities

FROM PAGE 1

fixed January 22 for further hearing.


Following the writ petition filed by senior Supreme Court lawyer Masood R Sobhan, another HC bench on September 5 directed BB to appoint a receiver to manage the Beximco companies and attach all their properties for six months.

The HC also ordered the central bank to recover the money taken by Salman F Rahman, founder of Beximco Pharmaceuticals,

from different banks and bring the money back to Bangladesh from abroad and issued a rule to this effect.

Central bank Executive Director Md Ruhul Amin was appointed as Beximco’s receiver on November 10.

After hearing an appeal filed by Beximco Pharmaceuticals, the Appellate Division of the SC on November 12 stayed a part of the HC order instructing BB to appoint a receiver to manage the pharmaceutical company.




**ALIF INDUSTRIES LIMITED**  
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**Notice of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting**

Notice is hereby given that the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of **ALIF INDUSTRIES LTD.** will be held on Monday, the 30<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 4:00 PM under virtual platform through the link <https://ail2024.digitalagmbd.net> to transact the following business:

**Agenda:**

- To receive, consider and adopt the directors’ report, auditor’s report and audited financial statements of the company for the year ended June 30, 2024;
- To approve 10% (Ten Percent) stock to all shareholders and 10% (Ten Percent) cash dividend i.e. Taka 1.00 per share for every ordinary share only for the general shareholders other than Sponsors/Directors as recommended by the board of directors;
- To elect Directors in terms of the relevant provision of Articles of Associations;
- To appoint statutory auditors for the year 2024-2025 and fix their remuneration;
- To appoint corporate governance compliance auditor for the year 2024-25 (till holding of next AGM) and fix their remuneration; and
- Any other business with the permission of the chair.

By Order of the Board  
  
Company Secretary

**Dated: Dhaka**  
December 15, 2024

**Notes:**

- The Record Date for 32<sup>nd</sup> AGM is fixed on November 21, 2024.
- The shareholders whose name appeared in the Register of Members of the Company or in the depository (CDBL) on the record date 21 November 2024 shall be entitled to attend the meeting as well as qualify for dividend to be approved at the AGM.
- A shareholder entitled to attend and vote at the AGM may appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his/her behalf. The Proxy Form, duly filled, signed and stamped of Tk. 20.00 must be sent through email to the Company at [alifindustries95@gmail.com](mailto:alifindustries95@gmail.com) not later than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting.
- The concern stock broker, merchant banker and portfolio manager are requested to submit hard copy or through mail to the Company at [alifindustries95@gmail.com](mailto:alifindustries95@gmail.com) on or before **December 26, 2024**; the statement along with detail of their margin client or customer who has debit balance or margin loan, who are entitled to receive cash dividend of the Company for the year ended June 30, 2024. The statement should include shareholder’s name, BO ID number, client-wise shareholding position, gross dividend receivable, applicable tax rate, net dividend receivable etc. along with the Consolidated Customers’ Bank Account number, routing number and contact person.
- The shareholders will be able to submit their questions/comments and vote electronically 24 hours before commencement of the AGM and during the AGM. For logging in to the system, the shareholders need to put their 16 digit Beneficial Owner (BO) ID number and other credential as proof of their identity by visiting the link <https://ail2024.digitalagmbd.net>.
- Shareholders are requested to log-in to the system prior to the meeting start time of 4:00 p.m. on December 30, 2024.



# Climate-Resilient Cooperatives to Green SMEs

## Enabling Resilience for Climate Vulnerable Women

UNDP in collaboration with The Daily Star organised a roundtable titled ‘Climate-Resilient Cooperatives to Green SMEs: Enabling Resilience for Climate Vulnerable Women’ on November 12, 2024. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



**A K M Azad Rahman,**  
*Project Coordinator,  
LoGIC, UNDP (Key-Note  
Speaker)*

The LoGIC Project is a collaborative initiative of the Embassy of Sweden, the Embassy of Denmark, UNDP Bangladesh, and UNCDF, implemented by the Local Government Division of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB). The project provides support to 500,000 vulnerable households across nine districts and 94 Union Parishads, as well as 29 Upazila Parishads, local communities, civil society organisations (CSOs), local institutions,

business models can be difficult to adopt, and remote locations often hinder market linkages. Engaging youth in these enterprises can be transformative, as it builds capacity and strengthens market linkages with organisations such as Amal Foundation and iGrow. Collaboration with government line departments is vital for technical support, and risk insurance is necessary to manage high-risk areas. Ultimately, the sustainability of cooperatives hinges on innovation, effective risk management, community cooperation, and access to grants and larger funding sources.

climate crisis while supporting vulnerable populations, especially women. However, effectively implementing this solution requires careful preparation and nuanced strategies. Comparative analysis shows that women are disproportionately vulnerable to climate impacts, yet project designs often oversimplify their needs. It is crucial to recognise that women are not a homogenous group. Multiple variables and their unique circumstances must be considered. While empowering women through income-generating opportunities is essential, it is equally



RECOMMENDATIONS

» Encourage the adoption of cooperatives as an effective model to empower vulnerable communities, strengthen climate resilience, and enable women to lead adaptive green business initiatives.

» Select climate-resilient, smart enterprises with short production cycles that utilise local raw materials and cater to strong local demand.

» Introduce insurance schemes tailored for climate-vulnerable cooperative members, particularly

women.

» Encourage youth participation in cooperatives to build capacity and strengthen market connections.

» Strengthen market linkages by establishing connections between cooperatives and Upazila-level associations.

» Facilitate networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs by connecting them to urban markets, while promoting a gender-neutral market system to ensure equal access and

opportunities for their success.

» Prioritise collaborative efforts, innovative financing, and public-private partnerships to scale up programmes like LoGIC.

» Establish organised supply chains, identify reliable buyers, and implement buy-back guarantees to support SMEs.

» Promote innovative technologies and alternative energy solutions to streamline supply chains and ensure uninterrupted production.

and government officials. Among these, 42,500 individuals—99% of them are women—have received direct assistance, with a primary focus on climate-vulnerable regions.

The journey began with efforts to reduce household vulnerabilities. Over time, we have supported beneficiaries in forming small groups to establish green businesses. These groups are now generating profits, confidently managing their climate adaptive livelihood, and making small scale investments within their communities. To scale up these initiatives into medium-sized enterprises, a collaborative approach to pooling resources is crucial. Recognising the importance of sustainability after the project concludes, we identified the need for a legal framework, and cooperatives emerged as the most suitable model.

Cooperatives have a proven track record in empowering vulnerable communities, building climate resilience, and enabling women to establish adaptive green businesses. Following sustained advocacy, the cooperatives division approved a new category for climate-vulnerable cooperatives. These cooperatives pool resources from members, including women shareholders, to invest in green small and medium enterprises (SMEs), thereby creating opportunities for green businesses and ensuring sustainability through a transformative approach.

Within the LoGIC Project, 247 cooperatives have been established, of which 99 have already invested in green businesses. Among these, 14 cooperatives are in a revenue-generation cycle, collectively earning around BDT 500,000, demonstrating promising momentum.

The portfolio of green SMEs includes eco-friendly agricultural farms, climate-smart agriculture, handicrafts, sanitation product businesses, vermicompost production, solar-powered poultry incubators, honey collection and sales, agro-feed production using local raw materials, plastic recycling factories, natural and safe dry fish processing, commercial aquaculture, coconut oil processing, coco peat production, Areca leaf-based eco-products, bioflock fish culture, and eco-friendly bag manufacturing.

LoGIC project introduced a software system regulated by the cooperatives division and operated by young people from beneficiary communities. This system ensures transparency by sending automatic SMS notifications to all members whenever funds are withdrawn, fostering trust within the cooperatives.

Despite these advancements, challenges persist. Transitioning from informal groups to cooperatives and then to green SMEs is complex. Establishing sustainable enterprises is a long-term endeavour, often requiring five to ten years to gauge success. Additionally, innovative



**Nayoka Martinez Bäckström,**  
*First Secretary, Embassy of Sweden*

Since 2016, we have been actively involved in the LoGIC project, which has had a transformative impact on both systems and individuals, particularly on vulnerable women. Many of these women are now empowered to make informed economic decisions—a cornerstone of the LoGIC resilience model. Rather than prescribing solutions, the project enables women to find out their own options, whether in agriculture or market access, based on their unique circumstances.

A key recommendation is to connect these women with other government sectors, such as the Ministry of Agriculture or Fisheries, which are developing climate-resilient products. This linkage will provide women access to new technologies and enable them to adapt to evolving conditions. Building strong relationships with these actors is essential to ensure that women can continue making informed choices even after the project concludes.

Additionally, categorising SMEs and cooperatives into appropriate classifications is critical, as lending to these entities involves varying levels of risk assessment. Learning from global best practices, such as those from Kenya, can guide necessary policy and regulatory reforms. With regulatory support, women-led enterprises, which are already investing in land and infrastructure, can expand and seize new opportunities.




**Esrat Karim Eve,**  
*Founder, Amal Foundation*

We have closely worked with beneficiaries of the LoGIC project the positive changes within these communities are truly remarkable.

Market linkage is critical for ensuring sustainability of the positive changes. A significant challenge we have observed is the high logistics costs in coastal areas, where farmers face inflated prices due to the involvement of multiple middlemen. Addressing this issue will require better coordination among organisations, businesses, and cooperatives to establish a more efficient market system.

It is crucial for the project to continue thriving organically after external support. This entails creating sustainable systems, such as circular economic chains, and empowering local communities to sustain their progress independently. I urge all colleagues to contribute their expertise to ensure the long-term success of these initiatives.



**M Khurshed Alam Ph.D (Sociology),**  
*Chairman, Bangladesh Institute of Social Research (BISR)*

The LoGIC project has made significant strides, particularly in securing government approval for the cooperative model, despite the strict compliance requirements imposed by the Department of Cooperatives. The collapse of many cooperatives due to regulatory pressures underscores the need for policy revisions that are more practical, field-oriented, and supportive of cooperative sustainability.

A critical issue is the lack of insurance for cooperative members, especially women, who often juggle multiple responsibilities. Identifying which agencies—such as the Department of Cooperatives or the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs—should spearhead these efforts is vital for providing institutional backing.


For green SMEs, there remains confusion over what qualifies as “green,” making it essential to establish clear criteria. Any cooperative initiative must also align with local realities, as on-the-ground challenges often hinder the pursuit of green SME activities. Strengthening market linkages and connecting cooperatives with Upazila-level associations can bolster resilience.



**M. Parvez Kaosar Sarkar, AGM**  
*(Deputy Head of SME Department), Bangladesh Krishi Bank*

At Bangladesh Krishi Bank, we offer green financing support under Bangladesh Bank's packages and operate our own SME system. However, a basic legal framework is necessary to ensure that the social segments we aim to support, particularly those from lower socio-economic strata, receive adequate assistance.

As a financial institution, our primary product is capital, and we need assurance on how borrowers will repay their loans. Without the ability to market their products effectively, borrowers may struggle to generate returns. Insurance plays a vital role in mitigating risks, helping vulnerable groups sustain and grow their businesses. Sharing risks through market assurance and supportive facilities would enable us to confidently finance these enterprises.



**Shakhawat Hossain,**  
*Joint Director, Sustainable Finance Department, Bangladesh Bank*

Bangladesh Bank has made significant strides in promoting sustainable finance and identifying green projects. A sustainable finance policy introduced in 2020 and updated in 2023 outlines support for green SMEs under three pillars: inclusive financing, climate resilience, and transitioning to a low-carbon economy. ESG guidelines further require all loans to comply with an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) checklist to ensure low-risk, green financing.

Currently, the banking sector's sustainable finance portfolio stands at BDT 4,000 billion, including BDT 3,000 billion for SMEs and BDT 800 billion for green SMEs. However, challenges persist, including limited stakeholder awareness, the high cost of sustainable technology, and an insufficient certification infrastructure.

Since 2011, Bangladesh Bank has addressed these challenges by establishing sustainable finance desks and promoting women-centric lending. Initiatives include issuing circulars on climate-related disclosures aligned with IFRS standards and the Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI). Banks are also required to report semi-annually on climate risks, with a focus on vulnerable areas.



**Mousumi Pervin, Senior Climate Change Officer, Asian Development Bank**

Advancing SMEs requires a focus on four critical areas.


Firstly, strengthening value chains is essential. While women in remote areas produce high-quality green products, broken value chains and limited market access—exacerbated by poor communication infrastructure and social barriers—hinder their progress.

Secondly, access to advanced green technology is crucial. Many women still rely on traditional methods, but adopting modern sustainable technologies could significantly enhance productivity and expand market reach.

Thirdly, capacity building must be prioritised. Women often struggle with bureaucratic processes and complex documentation. Comprehensive training can empower them to navigate these challenges confidently.

Lastly, creating networking opportunities is vital. Many women lack knowledge about where to sell

their products. Connecting them to urban markets, such as green product outlets in Dhaka, can enhance their visibility and profitability.



**Nazim Hossain Sattar,**  
*General Manager, SME Foundation*

In recent years, green compliance and climate resilience have gained significant traction within Bangladesh's SME sector. As the leading SME development agency, the SME Foundation actively supports women entrepreneurs, who frequently employ other women, thereby fostering wider female workforce participation.

Recognising the impact of climate challenges, the foundation has introduced tailored packages for climate-vulnerable and green-focused women entrepreneurs. However, a significant gap remains in awareness, particularly among rural women-led SMEs. To address this, the foundation is organising workshops, video campaigns, and roadshows, while also establishing model green SMEs in regions such as Khulna, Cox's Bazar, and Rangpur to inspire others.

The foundation is also developing green compliance guidelines and a platform to connect existing green SMEs with aspirants for collaboration and knowledge-sharing. It has initiated referral and consultation reporting to bridge rural-urban gaps, with results from ongoing applications expected soon. Lastly, fostering green finance will require collective stakeholder efforts, with a focus on promoting “associations” over cooperatives for securing loans.



**M Zakir Hossain Khan,**  
*Chief Executive, Change Initiative*

The green microfinancing and microcredit initiative targeting vulnerable women is more than a transformative programme—it is a tool for empowerment. Women impacted by natural or man-made disasters, often trapped in cycles of debt, will benefit significantly from this initiative.

We also need to prioritise the adoption of innovative technologies, such as apps to streamline supply chains, and alternative energy solutions like rooftop solar systems.



**Md. Ruhul Amin,**  
*Chief Executive Officer, Countree Agro*

Our work in agribusiness engages producers from char regions and climate-affected coastal areas. Projects are being implemented across six upazilas in three districts, focusing on promoting green products and creating a rural-urban continuum.

We encourage supermarkets and food processing companies to actively address the needs of climate-vulnerable areas. Beyond traditional gender distinctions, we aim to foster a more structured and inclusive development model within SMEs.

negotiations. Organised supply chains, buyer identification, and buy-back guarantees are essential to overcome these challenges.



**Dr. Maliha Muzammil,**  
*Climate Change Specialist, Resilience and Inclusive Growth (RIG) Cluster, UNDP Bangladesh*

Three years ago, a study conducted with Kingston University London and IID Dhaka revealed that single-women-headed households in vulnerable areas bear three times the expenses of double-income households. This finding highlights how empowering women can directly benefit families and underscores the urgent need to prioritise innovative private financing solutions.

Currently, UNDP Bangladesh is collaborating with the SME Foundation, Bangladesh Bank, and BSEC to identify financing bottlenecks for climate-resilient cooperatives and develop a blended finance facility for green SMEs in vulnerable areas.

In collaboration with Bangladesh Bank, we are utilising LoGIC's climate vulnerability index (CVI) to rank unions across the country. Bangladesh Bank is also assisting in the development of a climate damage function, which will be based on micro-level data from this CVI. This function will help quantify the social and financial impacts of the climate crisis.

Strengthening linkages from local to national levels is crucial for effective impact monitoring, expanding private sector financing, and ensuring thematic bond proceeds reach the most vulnerable.



**Sonali Dayaratne,**  
*Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh*

Having spent 15 months in Bangladesh, I am deeply inspired by the resilience and creativity of its people. Grassroots implementation has been both humbling and enlightening. Despite enduring over five disasters this year, which affected 18 million people, Bangladesh remains a global leader in climate resilience. Efforts in agriculture and vulnerable communities deserve global recognition for driving meaningful change.

UNDP, in partnership with Bangladesh Bank, the SME Foundation, and development agencies from Sweden and Denmark, is focused on scaling initiatives for wider impact. While pilot projects offer valuable insights, the true challenge lies in replicating transformational change across communities. To achieve this, financing and governance models must shift towards people-centred solutions, emphasising demand-driven approaches over supply-driven ones.

Inclusion is crucial, especially for women-headed households and youth networks. Achieving sustainability in financing, service delivery, and market alignment is vital for success. To scale up initiatives like LoGIC and ensure long-term impact, collaborative efforts, innovative financing models, and public-private partnerships are essential.



**Tanjim Ferdous, In-Charge, NGOs & Foreign Missions, Business Development Section, The Daily Star**

The Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC) project has demonstrated the potential of community-owned green enterprises to drive localised solutions. However, critical gaps remain in defining these enterprises, establishing supportive policies, and ensuring sustainable financing mechanisms.





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PRESIDENT  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA

16 December 2024  
01 Poush 1431

Message

16 December, our great Victory Day. On this day in 1971, we achieved our long-cherished victory after a long struggle and a nine-month bloodshed war. It gives us a sovereign country, a sacred constitution, our own map and a red-green flag. We also gained our existence and status in the world as an independent nation. On this joyous day, I extend my sincere felicitations and warm greetings to my fellow countrymen living in home and abroad.

I recall with profound respect the valiant freedom fighters who made supreme sacrifice in the War of Liberation for the cause of country's Independence. I remember with gratitude the national leaders, the heroic freedom fighters, two lacs oppressed women, the organizers and supporters of the Liberation War, foreign friends, warwounded individuals and members of the martyrs' families including people of all walks of life who directly and indirectly contributed to our victory. I also remember those who accepted their martyrdom in various democratic movements along with anti-discrimination movement. The nation recalls their contributions with utmost respect.

Independence is the greatest achievement of the Bengali nation. In its backdrop, there was a prolonged history of deprivation, sanguinary struggle and supreme sacrifice of our people. The dream journey of Independence that started with the great Language Movement in 1952, subsequently, came into reality on 26 March in 1971 through the Proclamation of Independence, overcoming various ups and downs and by staging long movement and agitation. The final victory was achieved on 16 December 1971 through a nine-month long armed War of Liberation.

The ultimate goal of our Liberation War was to attain political sovereignty as well as people's economic emancipation. Keeping the aims of Independence in mind, the journey for achieving economic emancipation and the agricultural revolution began by rebuilding economy and infrastructure of the war-torn country. But even after five decades of the victory, people's economic emancipation has not yet been achieved. Time and again our democratic advancement and path to the economic freedom have been obstructed.

However, the development and progress of Bangladesh never been stopped. The country is advancing in various indices of socio-economic development including health, education, women empowerment etc. I think, the dream to build a discrimination and corruption free Bangladesh that people envisioned through the student mass uprising in July-August this year, will be realized soon. Bangladesh, the land of heroes, will be glorified in the world-Inshallah.

Bangladesh believes in world peace and harmony. War is not desirable for any country. Bangladesh believes that any crisis can peacefully be solved through dialogue. Bangladesh is always ingenuous in humanitarian solutions of any international crisis. Bangladesh strongly condemn Israel's heinous aggression, atrocity and bombing on mass people of Palestine and Lebanon. Bangladesh will always stand by and extend unwavering support to the people and government of Palestine in establishing their inalienable rights. It is my expectation that international community would take effective actions to bring a permanent solution to this problem ensuring safe and dignified repatriation of the displaced Rohingyas stranded in Bangladesh.

The role of expatriates is evident in the economic development of Bangladesh. Expatriate Bangladeshis are making a significant contribution to the national economy by sending their hard-earned remittances to the country. We acknowledge their contribution with gratitude. I hope that during this global recession and economic crisis, our expatriates will continue to send foreign remittance and play a positive role in country's development.

To deliver the benefits of Independence at people's doorstep, we need to institutionalize our democracy which we attained through the sacrifice of millions of martyrs. The political parties will have to nurture the culture of mutual respect and of tolerance of others' opinion. Inspiring from the spirit and values of the anti-discrimination movement of 2024, let us contribute more from our respective positions to build a country free of corruption as well as to implement the goals of Liberation War and establish a society free from exploitation. Let us take the nation towards the path of development and prosperity and build a prosperous 'New Bangladesh'- this is my expectation on this great Victory Day.

May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Mohammed Shahabuddin

16 December 2024: A New Day of Victory  
Brigadier General (R.) Dr. M Sakhawat Hussain ndc, psc

Although we are observing the 53<sup>rd</sup> Victory Day of our liberation and independence war on 16 December 2024, that war had commenced many years earlier, since the partition of India and the establishment of Pakistan. The struggle of the students and masses of the then East Pakistan against the exploitation and deprivations of the Bangalis was transformed into a fight for survival. That struggle against discrimination and exploitation had continued for a long time, similar to the blood-drenched struggle of the students and masses during July-August 2024 fifty-three years later. Exploitations and discriminations over a long period were again the reason behind this blood-drenched movement. But the struggle this time was not against any foreigners speaking a different language. Rather, the people emerged victorious by spilling blood following a movement waged by students and masses against the exploitations, deprivations, and discriminations perpetrated by the ruling coterie for about 16 years. That is why our youths have termed this a 'second independence'.

However, although there were no battles during the independence struggle earlier on, it started in full swing on the night of 25 March 1971, when the Pakistani forces appeared on the scene to slaughter the unarmed Bangalis. The war then commenced with the participation of the students-masses and the Bangali soldiers. It may be recalled that the nine-month long liberation war was organized and directed by a handful of fearless young officers of those forces, with the students and masses joining them gradually.

But the soldiers of that war, that is the young military and militia men and the students-masses, were also courageous like the participants of July-August Revolution of 2024. All segments of the country's population were bewildered when the Pakistani forces launched a sudden attack on the Bangalis in the midnight of 25 March 1971. The political leaders did not issue any directive then. Although Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was acknowledged as the leader of the Awami League,



which was the largest political party in Pakistan, he also remained inactive on the question of starting an independence war. It can be gathered from the books written by a number of leaders of the period that although the students and masses were



CHIEF ADVISOR  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH

16 December 2024  
01 Poush 1431

Message

Today is 16th December, Victory Day. This day is a very glorious and memorable day in Bangladesh's history. On December 16, 1971, we gained the taste of freedom and self-identity as a nation through the victory in the War of Independence. We get our desired freedom in exchange for the blood and sacrifice of millions of martyrs.

Victory Day is not only our source of pride but also our oath day. The oath is to remain united, protect the sovereignty of the country, and hold the spirit of the Liberation War.

On this day, we remember the brave martyrs of our freedom struggle with respect and honour their sacrifices. We promise to work together to build a developed, prosperous, and well-governed Bangladesh by the interim government formed through the mass uprising of the students, workers, and people.

We are determined to further develop and strengthen our country and enjoy the full benefits of freedom.

I wish Victory Day 2024 a great success.

Professor Muhammad Yunus

Victory Day: Memorable Day of Declaring Victory in the Inevitable Struggle for Bangladesh's Freedom

Professor Niaz Ahmed Khan, PhD

Victory implies the joyous message of ultimate freedom that is desired by all humans. This statement is more applicable in the context of the independence war that took place in Bangladesh during 1971. The memorable victory that the freedom fighters achieved against the Pakistani forces on 16 December 1971 was especially important and significant for all the people living inside the geographic boundary of Bangladesh. This independence struggle cum liberation war that continued for long nine months against the pseudo-colonialist Pakistani military rulers reached a final conclusion on the eventful day of 16 December. A new country called Bangladesh was born on that day through the surrender of the Pakistani army to the allied forces. Therefore, the Victory Day on 16 December is quite significant in the building of our independent nationhood and for presenting our national identity before the world community.

The victory achieved on 16 December 1971 had a long and painful background. East Bengal was incorporated into Pakistan in 1947 because of its Muslim majority during the partition of India following the end of British rule. It assumed the name of East Pakistan in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan in 1955. All Bangali Muslim inhabitants of East Bengal were then optimistic about the prospects of their complete freedom due to their inclusion in an independent Pakistan free from British imperialism. This total freedom implied economic, political, and cultural freedom.

However, the people of East Bengal became disillusioned within a short time. This was because, the rulers and people of West Pakistan started to exploit the Bangalis anew by playing the role of pseudo-imperialists. Although Pakistan was constituted with two distant territories – East and West Pakistan – there were huge differences between the two in terms of linguistic, anthropological, and socio-economic contexts. Consequently, the people of West Pakistan started nurturing the idea of providing leadership to the Bangalis through exploitation. As a part of this stance, they attempted to take away the cultural independence and linguistic rights of the Bangalis.

The architect and Governor General of Pakistan Quid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah visited Dhaka in 1948. He declared during a public meeting held at



Racecourse Ground near Dhaka University on 21 March that 'Urdu shall be the lone state language of Pakistan'. The students lodged a strong protest immediately after this announcement by Jinnah. Movement against the Pakistanis commenced in this way, and this agitation centring on linguistic right gradually spread to all corners of East Bengal. Its final form was witnessed on 21 February 1952, when the Pakistani policemen opened fire on the advancing students and masses in Dhaka who broke the unfairly imposed section-144. Numerous youths including Salam, Rafiq, Barkat, and Jabbar had to embrace martyrdom as a consequence.

The Pakistani government had to accept the heartfelt demand of the Bangalis as a result of this bloodletting, and Bangla was accorded recognition as the principal state language in the Constitution of Pakistan.



## Special Supplement

## The Glorious Victory Day

## 16 December 2024: A New Day of Victory



## Party of Bullets

**Hasan Robayet**

Then the horse of Isa Khan from Baro Bhuiyan clan  
Was listening to music while reclining on a breeze,  
Who were the people reading the verse of Charyapada?  
How far was Kanhapa from the lanes of Dhaka!

Here beside the house laughs the whole day  
Low-caste paramour with sovereign smile,  
Bakhtiar and Chand Ray drinks forever side by side  
Water from Mohua's hand.

Matiur blossoms from the clouds of Palashi –  
Who are the people crying in the marsh of water-lily?  
The sister of Bangladesh dangles alone unconcerned  
From the summit of that infinite space!

Is liberty then a pseudo dialect of Khana?  
Would the tailors arrive to sew the words?  
The offspring of Shah Jalal would give up life –  
And a she-demon would swallow our freedom?

There is now striped breeze in the tide of noon  
Since when did Isa Khan latch the bolt of valour?  
Victory is like a party of laughing bullets  
— On the petals of people's blood.

**Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed**

The attack by the Pakistani forces first started simultaneously against the Bangali troops of the then EPR (now BGB) and the members of East Pakistan Police force at Rajarbag, where a majority were Bangali constables. Many were martyred during these sudden attacks, but a sizeable number tried to build up resistance on their own with arms at their disposal. On the other hand, although the young officers and soldiers of 2<sup>nd</sup> East Bengal Regiment at Joydebpur near Dhaka, a majority of whom were Bangalis, were ready to repel the impending Pakistani attack, no such directive was issued to them. Similarly, although armed assaults were launched against the Bangali soldiers at different locations across Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan), they were not organized though they tried to defend themselves. As a consequence, many young Bangali officers and soldiers were martyred. Besides, although resistances were built up at various places, the nation remained directionless up to 27 March 1971.

Finally, a mid-ranking officer of 8<sup>th</sup> East Bengal Regiment Major (later sector commander, army-chief and martyred president) Ziaur Rahman took the initiative to declare independence by using the broadcast-relay equipment of Chattogram Kalurghat radio station. This declaration later helped the Bangali nation, especially the soldiers, to come together and protect the country from the invaders, and also provided direction for achieving independence. At that time, another outstanding sector commander and renowned freedom fighter late Major (later Brigadier) Khaled Mosharraf was in Sylhet. Khaled Mosharraf had acknowledged that he got a direction after that declaration by Ziaur Rahman on 27 March 1971. They then moved to take shelter in India by crossing the border and to take preparation for waging the independence war. However, he initially continued the warfare by remaining inside the country for many days. Similarly, the Bangali soldiers, police and EPR-men of Dhaka, Jashore and Cumilla also revolted. Later, they all came together under the leadership of East Bengal Regiment.

Later on, the leaders of the autocratic regime ousted in 2024 tried to establish the historical narrative of giving full credit for independence to their sole leader of that era late Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which does not stand the scrutiny of logic and factuality. That was because, their claims were unfounded and incoherent. It was said that somebody took a chit from the residence of Sheikh Mujib at midnight of 25 March and propagated his declaration through the radio set up at the EPR (now BGB) headquarters. I consider this claim to be totally illogical. That was because, the Pakistani forces had taken control of all broadcasting equipment, radio and wireless-sets before the midnight of 25 March. In that case, the theory of using EPR radio (wireless) set does not pass the test of logic.

The war and the independence of Bangladesh are two different matters. Although the assistance received from India must be acknowledged, that help was not extended merely for establishing the right of self-determination of the Bangalis. The huge gains made by India through this have been noted by both the geo-political and ordinary analysts of that country. In whatever manner the war might have started, it became a people's war due to the participation of the masses. The Kaderia Bahini was an example of this people's war. The allied forces launched the final attack on the Pakistani military that was facing defeat due to the outstanding roles played by the MuktiBahini, different forces including the Crack Platoon, Bichchu Bahini, Bangladesh Liberation Forces, etc., as well as for geo-strategical reasons.

All these led to our Victory Day on 16 December 1971. On that day, the biggest act of surrender in the military history of the world took place at the racecourse ground of Dhaka, when the Pakistani military surrendered to the allied forces. But there was no formal representation from Bangladesh at the event. The then deputy chief of the MuktiBahini Air Commodore (later Air Vice-Marshall and AL minister) A K Khandaker was present there through own initiative. Despite that, the greatest victory in history for the 75 million (population at that time) freedom-seeking Bangalis materialised on 16 December 1971.

We the Bangladeshis are proud of our freedom. We are proud of 16 December as well. This independence was not donated to us by anyone; rather, it was achieved at the cost of lakhs of lives and the honour of lakhs of mothers and sisters. In the annals of the Bangalis, it was for the first time that Bangla could become an independent and sovereign land. This country must not be allowed to fail, nor should it be subservient to anyone, just as the students and masses have shown by shedding blood during July and August this year.

This Victory Day on 16 December will not be a second in the series, rather it will a new and complete Victory Day.

(The writer is Adviser for Shipping, Labour and Employment)

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

## Eternal War of Freedom

## Rawshan Ara Mukta

The fallen leaves fly with the dusts of highway  
At the foot of flyover where the workers live,  
On days of blazing sun alongside the footpath  
In the crowds of speedy buses, the fallen leaves fly  
— From town to village, with the charter of eternal freedom.

The fallen leaves fly for a thousand years on the nights of Baul song  
Walking beside devout men offering prayer at dawn  
In the festival of Shiva, carnival of Boisabi, full-moon of Dol-Purnima.  
In the joy of harvesting crops and the laughter of farmers  
The fallen leaves fly from one shrine to another on Shabe-Barat night  
—Seen in the flashes of star-crackers reflected in the eyes of children.

These accounts of pre-historic flights denoted love,  
But inside remains the seal of hatred, tales of aversion, and  
Wrapped in a packet of love above – what took place at Rajarbag?  
And what happened at Jatrabari? Men were killed by men,  
Even now, the dwellings of people are being burned by the same fire!

Even now the fallen leaves fly, the roads shake with the sound of slogans  
Even now, the fallen leaves go to war, leaving behind letters for parents  
Even now the fallen leaves cry, on seeing the mark of bullet that kills daughter.  
Even now, the fallen leaves seek freedom! All poems of unseen triumph –  
Are written by those fallen leaves, Oh, the fallen leaves!  
The girl Felani keeps on hanging from the barbed wire at the border.

**Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed**



## Victory Day: Memorable Day of Declaring Victory in the Inevitable Struggle for Bangladesh's Freedom

Although the linguistic right of the Bangalis was established through the language movement that culminated in the events of 21 February 1952, the then Pakistani government started to interfere with the economic and political rights of the Bangali people of East Pakistan. For example, the foreign currency earned by East Pakistan through export of jute and other agricultural commodities were mostly spent for economic and industrial growth of West Pakistan. As a result, the Bangalis were deprived financially on a massive scale.

Alongside linguistic and economic exploitations, the undemocratic forces of West Pakistan also created obstacles to the practice and flourishing of our free political thought. They resorted to extreme repressive measures against political demands, movements, processions, meetings, etc. organized by the Bangali citizens of East Pakistan. As a result, their exploitative and autocratic attitude became quite noticeable. The students' movement of 1962, the 6-point movement of 1966, and the non-cooperation movement cum mass-upsurge of 1969 in East Pakistan bore testimony to that. The launching of the aforementioned movements demonstrated the efforts and agitations by the Bangali people of East Pakistan for establishing their right of self-determination in the face of coercive rule by West Pakistan. Through these movements and struggles, the Bangalis basically prepared the ground for their independence movement and total freedom.

Before the laying of this ground, the Pakistani rulers created huge hindrances in the exercise of our political rights. They obstructed the flow of democracy by ignoring the outcome of parliamentary election held in 1970. The people of East Pakistan were deprived of their political right due to the dilly-dally tactics of Pakistani rulers. Consequently, the Bangali people had to take final preparation for their independence struggle. As a continuation of this trend, the independence war of the Bangalis commenced on 26 March 1971.

The Pakistani armed forces brutally pounced on the unarmed Bangali population during this struggle cum war, and started killing innumerable people quite unjustly. The armed resistance and fightback by the students-workers-masses then commenced. In this way, all Bangalis including the soldiers got directly involved with the independence war of Bangladesh. Spanning long nine months, this war ultimately ended on 16 December 1971, when the Pakistani military finally surrendered to the allied forces and the freedom fighters of Bangladesh. The final victory in our

nine-month-long armed struggle was achieved in this way, and a new independent country called Bangladesh emerged on the world map.

The Victory Day on 16 December is significant in our national life for multiple reasons. Firstly, our political independence was achieved through this victory. This political freedom ensured our sovereignty, which is essential and inevitable for an independent country like ours. We got an independent territory spread over 56 thousand square miles through this triumph on 16 December, where our red and green national flag that symbolises our victory, independence, and sovereignty flutters in the air. The infiniteness of our vast green fields that stretch from one horizon to another, and the sunrise at dawn that arouses limitless dreams and enormous possibilities mingle with the colour of this flag.

This historic victory has bestowed us with a national anthem that praises the motherland and projects our identity and uniqueness at various programmes staged inside and outside the country. All in all, this historic triumph on 16 December 1971 has become a memento of our existence for all citizens of Bangladesh.

On the occasion of this unforgettable and emotion-filled 16 December – reminiscent of Bangladesh's War of Independence, I recall with reverence all our leaders, as well as the military, civilian, professionals and students-masses, who made this struggle a success. I recall with reverence all freedom fighters including those who embraced martyrdom in the battlefield – whose infinite sacrifices resulted in Bangladesh standing in the comity of nations today with her head held high.

On this noble occasion of final victory on 16 December, I particularly wish to recall the martyrs who embraced martyrdom during the mass upsurge of 2024. They were the freedom fighters of this new Bangladesh. We got a new Bangladesh free from the stains of autocracy on 5 August 2024 due to their self-sacrifices. Just as the freedom fighters of 1971 made supreme sacrifice during the independence war of 1971

for bestowing us with a new country, territory and sovereignty, similarly, the new freedom fighters of 2024 have gifted us a new and promising Bangladesh that should be free from discrimination and autocracy. We firmly believe that the dreams of the martyrs who had sacrificed their lives during the 1971 War of Independence as well as those of the freedom fighters of 2024 will materialise only if we can build a modern and progressive Bangladesh free from all kinds of discrimination and communalism.

(The writer is Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University.)

*Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed*







PHOTO: REUTERS

**REUTERS, Cairo**

Residents said clusters of houses were bombed and some set ablaze in

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli army. Since October last year, Israel's offensive in Gaza has

A bid by Egypt, Qatar and the United States to reach a truce has gained momentum in recent weeks, yet there has been no news of a breakthrough.

**REUTERS, Kyiv**

The North Koreans were being used in combined Russian units and only on the Kursk front for now, he said, adding: "We have information

Ukraine has battled to hold the area, although some Western military analysts have questioned the incursion's rationale, arguing it has extended an already-sprawling front line, exposing Ukraine's manpower weakness as it battles a larger foe.



**FROM PAGE 1**

"A significant development this time is the government's decision to extend the benefits of the dearness allowance to pensioners."

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
**Upazila Health Complex, Bagharpara, Jashore**  
**Email: [bagherpara@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd](mailto:bagherpara@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd)**

Ref No. UHC/Bagher/Jashore/MSR-Tender/2024-2025/1409 Date. 15.12.2024

## **e-Tender Notice**

Tender ID No.	Package No. & description	Last selling date & time	Closing & opening date & time
1050383	MSR Group-"Ka" Medicine (Non EDCL)	01-Jan-2025 15:00pm	02-Jan-2025 01:00pm
1050382	MSR Group-"Kha" Surgical Equipment	01-Jan-2025 15:00pm	02-Jan-2025 1:00pm
1050380	MSR Group-"Ga" Chemical Re-Agent	01-Jan-2025 15:00pm	02-Jan-2025 1:00pm
1050373	MSR Group-"Gha" Furniture & Kitchen Items	01-Jan-2025 15:00pm	02-Jan-2025 1:00pm
1049913	MSR Group-"Umo" Linen Items	01-Jan-2025 15:00pm	02-Jan-2025 1:00pm
1049881	MSR Group-"Ca" Gauge, Bandage & Cotton	01-Jan-2025 15:00pm	02-Jan-2025 1:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenderer 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. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any branch of any registered bank within the date mentioned in the tender notice. Future information & guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

  
**Dr. Arup Jyoti Ghosh**  
 UH&FPO  
 Upazila Health Complex  
 Bagharpara, Jashore

GD-1189

## FROM PAGE 1

identifying details.

"Such uniformity strongly indicates centralised planning and oversight," it said.


## TARGET SELECTION AND SURVEILLANCE

The commission concluded, based on interviews with victims and members of armed forces, that mobile

Detailed interviews of living victims have helped the commission to map their locations during detention.

**TORTURE**  
The commission found that with agencies like the detective bureau and the police counter terrorism unit, "torture was carried out in a manner that integrated it into the daily operations of these offices".

Detainees reported that workers



**ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন, ঢাকা।**  
পরিবহন বিভাগ  
w.w.w.dscc.gov.bd  
আপনার পরিবেশ সুন্দর ও পরিচ্ছন্ন রাখুন  
আপনার শিশুকে টিকা দিন  
প্রিয়জনকে বই উপহার দিন।

তারিখ: ৩০ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ  
১৫ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

**পুনঃ উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (৪র্থ বার)**

স্মারক নং-৪৬.২০৭.০০২.১৬.০৩.৪৪৪.২০১৩-২৩

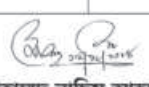
তারিখ: ৩০ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ  
১৫ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের মালিকানাধীন ফুলবাড়িয়া ষ্টপওভার বাস টার্মিনাল এর বাৎসরিক ইজারা প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/ব্যক্তিবর্গের নিকট হতে সাদা কাগজে/প্যাডে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ, স্থানীয় সরকার পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়।																
২	সংস্থা	ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন।																
৩	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী	পরিবহন বিভাগ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন, নগর ভবন, ঢাকা।																
৪	ইজারার মেয়াদকাল	কার্যাদেশের তারিখ থেকে পরবর্তী ০১ (এক) বছর।																
৫	দরপত্রের সাথে যে সকল কাগজপত্র জমা দিতে হবে	(১) ব্যক্তি/প্রোগ্রাইটরের ক্ষেত্রে পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সদ্য তোলা ২ (দুই) কপি সত্যায়িত ছবি (২) কাউন্সিলর/চেয়ারম্যান কর্তৃক চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র (৩) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি (৪) হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি (৫) হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্সের সত্যায়িত কপি ও (৬) হালনাগাদ ভ্যাট সাটিফিকেটের সত্যায়িত কপি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।																
৬	জামানত	উদ্ধৃত দরের ৩০% (শতকরা ত্রিশ ভাগ) অর্থ পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে, ২৫% (শতকরা পঁচিশ ভাগ) ইজারা মূল্যের সাথে সমন্বয় করা হবে এবং বাকি ৫% (শতকরা পাঁচ ভাগ) অর্থ জামানত হিসেবে সংরক্ষিত থাকবে।																
৭	সিডিউলের টাকা জমা দেয়ার খাত	সিডিউল মূল্য বাবদ নির্ধারিত অর্থ ব্যাংক চালানের মাধ্যমে মেয়র/প্রশাসক, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন, চলতি হিসাব নম্বর ২০০০১৭৮৩৯ (বিবিধ), সোনালী ব্যাংক, নগর ভবন শাখায় জমাদানপূর্বক উল্লিখিত কার্যালয় হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।																
৮	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের স্থান	(ক) বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, ঢাকা বিভাগ (খ) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ঢাকা (গ) ঢাকা মেট্রোপলিটন পুলিশ, ঢাকা (ঘ) ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের হিসাব বিভাগ ও (ঙ) ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের সকল আঞ্চলিক নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়।																
৯	দরপত্র জমা দেয়ার স্থান	(ক) বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, ঢাকা বিভাগ (খ) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ঢাকা (গ) ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের পরিবহন বিভাগ ও সকল আঞ্চলিক নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়।																
১০	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর	স্মারক নম্বর-৪৬.২০৭.০০২.১৬.০৩.৪৪৪.২০১৩-২৩, তারিখ: ১৫/১২/২০২৪ বিঃ																
১১	দরপত্র বিক্রয় শুরুর তারিখ	পত্রিকায় প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে।																
১২	সিডিউল ক্রয়ের তারিখ, দরপত্র জমা দেয়ার তারিখ ও খোলার সময়	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">দরপত্র আহ্বানের পর্যায়</th> <th style="width: 25%;">সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ</th> <th style="width: 25%;">দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়</th> <th style="width: 25%;">দরপত্র বাস্তব ও খাম খোলার তারিখ ও সময় (দরদাতার উপস্থিতিতে)</th> </tr> <tr> <td>১ম পর্যায়</td> <td>০৯/০১/২০২৫ (অফিস সময় পর্যন্ত)</td> <td>১২/০১/২০২৫, সময় ১২.০০ ঘটিকা</td> <td>১২/০১/২০২৫, সময় ০২.৩০ ঘটিকা</td> </tr> <tr> <td>২য় পর্যায়</td> <td>০২/০২/২০২৫ (অফিস সময় পর্যন্ত)</td> <td>০৩/০২/২০২৫, সময় ১২.০০ ঘটিকা</td> <td>০৩/০২/২০২৫, সময় ০২.৩০ ঘটিকা</td> </tr> <tr> <td>৩য় পর্যায়</td> <td>২৪/০২/২০২৫ (অফিস সময় পর্যন্ত)</td> <td>২৫/০২/২০২৫, সময় ১২.০০ ঘটিকা</td> <td>২৫/০২/২০২৫, সময় ০২.৩০ ঘটিকা</td> </tr> </table>	দরপত্র আহ্বানের পর্যায়	সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র বাস্তব ও খাম খোলার তারিখ ও সময় (দরদাতার উপস্থিতিতে)	১ম পর্যায়	০৯/০১/২০২৫ (অফিস সময় পর্যন্ত)	১২/০১/২০২৫, সময় ১২.০০ ঘটিকা	১২/০১/২০২৫, সময় ০২.৩০ ঘটিকা	২য় পর্যায়	০২/০২/২০২৫ (অফিস সময় পর্যন্ত)	০৩/০২/২০২৫, সময় ১২.০০ ঘটিকা	০৩/০২/২০২৫, সময় ০২.৩০ ঘটিকা	৩য় পর্যায়	২৪/০২/২০২৫ (অফিস সময় পর্যন্ত)	২৫/০২/২০২৫, সময় ১২.০০ ঘটিকা	২৫/০২/২০২৫, সময় ০২.৩০ ঘটিকা
দরপত্র আহ্বানের পর্যায়	সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র বাস্তব ও খাম খোলার তারিখ ও সময় (দরদাতার উপস্থিতিতে)															
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৩য় পর্যায়	২৪/০২/২০২৫ (অফিস সময় পর্যন্ত)	২৫/০২/২০২৫, সময় ১২.০০ ঘটিকা	২৫/০২/২০২৫, সময় ০২.৩০ ঘটিকা															
১৩	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তা ও যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	মহাব্যবস্থাপক, টেলিফোন নম্বর ০২২২৩৮৫৫৭২																
১৪	দরপত্র দাতার প্রতি বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী (প্রাক যোগ্যতা)	(ক) ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত শর্তাবলী অনুসরণ বাধ্যতামূলক। (খ) প্রতি সেট সিডিউল মূল্য ৫১,৬০০/- (একাল হাজার ছয়শত) টাকা মেয়র/প্রশাসক, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের তহবিলে চালানের মাধ্যমে জমা প্রদান করে তা দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করে দাখিল করতে হবে। দরপত্র খোলার তারিখে কোন সিডিউল বিক্রয় হবে না। দরপত্র গ্রহণ করার দিন কোন কারণ বশত: সরকারি ছুটি ঘোষিত হলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে যথানিয়মে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে। (গ) কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন সময় কোন কারণ ছাড়াই দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা রাখেন।																

**কাজের বিবরণঃ**

ক্রমিক নং	কাজের নাম	আনেষ্টি মানি	প্রাক্কলিত দর	নিয়োগের মেয়াদ	দরপত্র বিক্রয় মূল্য
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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## Time to fulfil the dreams of 1971

This Victory Day, we must pledge to create a fair and just Bangladesh

Victory Day marks one of the brightest moments in our history—a time to honour the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, martyred intellectuals, and countless brave men, women, and children who contributed in various ways to liberate this country from decades of oppression under the Pakistani regime. It is a day of gratitude and reflection, reminding us of the resilience of our people and inspiring a vision of a stronger, united Bangladesh. This year's Victory Day is particularly special, as, after 15 years of authoritarian rule by the Awami League, we now stand in a free country following the student-led mass uprising that led to the regime's ouster. This moment presents an opportunity to correct the wrongs of the past and begin anew, building a Bangladesh founded on the principles of equity, justice, the rule of law, and human rights.

Unfortunately, in the 53 years since our victory on December 16, 1971, Bangladesh has yet to become a successful democracy. While the country has held four free and fair elections under caretaker governments, the elected administrations have largely failed to fulfil the people's aspirations. Over the past 15 years of Awami League rule, the situation deteriorated further. The economic condition worsened, and people's freedom of expression and right to dissent were suppressed through draconian laws like the Cyber Security Act (recently repealed). With the interim government taking charge after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's administration on August 5, there is renewed hope that the long-unfulfilled dreams of 1971 can finally be realised. On this Victory Day, we must pledge to overcome divisions and unite in our efforts to make Bangladesh a success story on the world stage.

To achieve this, we must address the major challenges currently facing the country. Stabilising the economy is an urgent priority. According to a government-commissioned white paper, an estimated \$234 billion was syphoned out of Bangladesh between 2009 and 2023 during the Awami League's tenure. Recovering this stolen money is essential to revitalise the economy. Additionally, the lower- and lower-middle-income groups are struggling due to rising inflation, necessitating immediate government action. Another critical issue is the high unemployment rate, which must be addressed promptly.

Moreover, the government must work to improve the living standards of workers, especially those in the ready-made garment sector, who form the backbone of our economy. Ensuring the rights of marginalised groups is equally important. Environmental protection must also be prioritised, with a particular focus on improving air quality, which has become a significant concern for public health recently. These are just some of the key priorities that demand immediate attention.

Let this Victory Day be a moment for reflection, recalibration, and decisive action to guide our nation in the right direction.

## Ensure justice for the disappeared

Arrest and try those involved in such heinous crimes

Ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's direct involvement in cases of enforced disappearance, as revealed in the finding of the inquiry commission's preliminary report, confirms our foreboding that these gross human rights violations were state-sponsored, with orders coming from the highest echelon of power. Otherwise, this heinous crime could not have continued for so long without any perpetrator ever being tried.

The inquiry commission, formed on August 27 to investigate cases of enforced disappearances from 2009 to August 5, 2024, also found *prima facie* evidence against Hasina's defence adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan, and senior police officers Monirul Islam and Md Harun Or-Rashid. Of the four, Tarique, Monirul and Harun are still absconding. The commission's report detailed how trained professionals in forces, including Rab, DGFI, DB, CID, and CTTC, "deliberately designed the system of enforced disappearances over 15 years in a fashion calculated to avoid detection and attribution of responsibility."

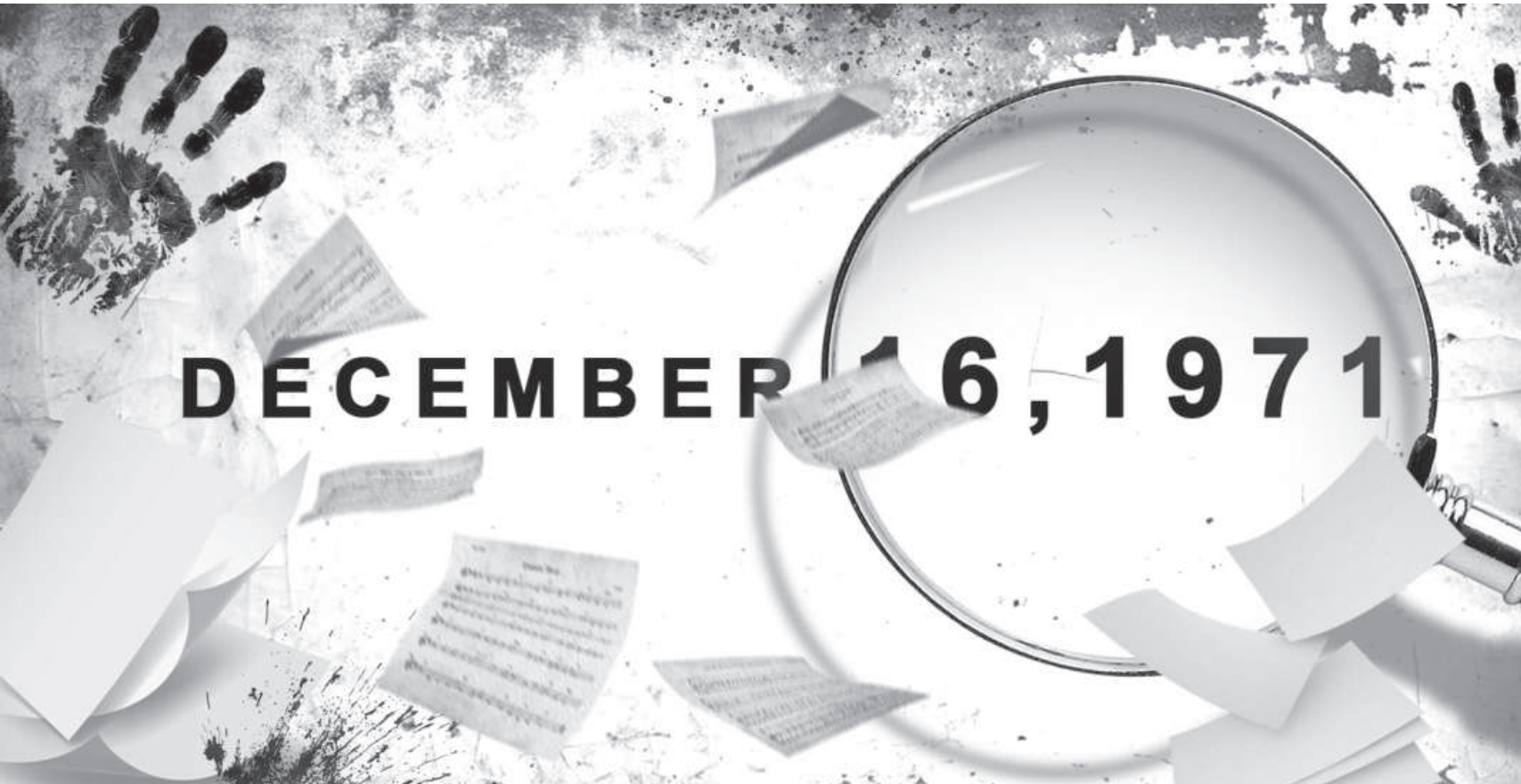
In fact, the commission estimates that the actual number of enforced disappearances might exceed 3,500—more than double the 1,676 complaints they received so far. To date, the commission has examined 758 complaints, and in 27 percent of the cases, the victims never returned. Another interim report will be published by the commission in three months, but the final report will take at least another year. While it is necessary to take as much time as needed for a proper investigation, the concerns of the families and rights activists that much evidence might be lost or destroyed during this time should also be taken seriously. The government must ensure that no perpetrator goes free because of any lapse in collecting and preserving evidence or delay in starting the trial process. It is, therefore, imperative to unearth and preserve all the Aynaghars, which, according to the latest findings, now total nine.

Meanwhile, we welcome the commission's recommendation to enact a new law criminalising enforced disappearance and amend the Anti-Terrorism Act 2009, which has been used as a weapon to victimise many innocents. The commission's recommendation to disband Rab, which was found involved in 172 cases of enforced disappearance, should be considered and weighed against the alternative of extensive reform. Most of all, everyone, including Sheikh Hasina, must be held accountable for their involvement in enforced disappearances, which not only traumatised surviving victims for life but broke many families who, not knowing the fate of their loved ones, cannot get closure.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Clinton orders air attack on Iraq

On this day in 1998, then US President Bill Clinton announced that he had ordered airstrikes against Iraq because it refused to cooperate with the United Nations (UN) weapons inspectors.



## December 16: Proudly celebrated, not seriously studied



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AHRAR AHMAD

December 16, 1971 was a unique moment for Bangladesh. The supposedly fractious and non-martial Bangalees had united in struggle, sacrifice, and courage and prevailed over an organised, trained, and brutal military force. The dream of freedom had been desperate and determined, the sacrifices many and excruciating. Therefore, when the day finally arrived, the people were overwhelmed with relief, pride, vindication, wonder, confidence, joy, and hope. They were not concerned about who would claim credit and what narratives would emerge. They assumed that research would be undertaken, and authentic histories would be preserved and presented. The intellectual failures that became evident later were surprising and disappointing.

Given the systemic and structural tumult that followed (and probably lasts to this day), there was some fear that our economic elite and our leaders, political parties and policymakers could presumably be lured by selfish ambitions driven by the imperatives of power and profits. However, our educators, particularly our university teachers, enjoyed an enviable position of trust and respect. They were expected to enlighten the people and bring some clarity and understanding about the development and significance of the moment.

This optimism was dictated by several factors. First, the subcontinent, including Bengal, had inherited a long and rich tradition of historical research and writing that had been published and acclaimed by internationally recognised platforms. It was naturally expected that scholars of history would bring their professionalism, training, experience, and their location within an active intellectual environment, to the new challenges that had been fortuitously created.

Second, the dynamics of the Liberation War constituted probably the most dramatic and traumatic development in the history of this region. Therefore, it was anticipated that the interest it would generate would be immediate and popular, and the support from governmental and private sources to advance an agenda of research and analysis would be steady and robust.

Third, 1971 happened in the full light of day. The cruelties of the genocide, and the heroism of the resistance—the trainings, mobilisations, encounters, losses, victories—were all parts of the people's lived experience. Most facts could be easily located, verified, codified, and compared. Moreover, many of the participants in the armed struggle, some occupying leadership positions, were themselves students. It was presumed that they would appreciate the importance of historical enquiry and willingly, perhaps eagerly, become complicit in the effort to further our knowledge and understanding.

One of the biggest challenges all historians face is simply finding material in their hunt for appropriate

empirical evidence, substantive documentation, logical connections, and causal explanations. All studies are expected to satisfy the demands of the Popperian “falsification doctrine,” i.e. results could only be scientifically acceptable if they could be subjected to challenge and rejection. In other words, if the research offered “proof” that was weak or untrustworthy, documentation that was not appropriate or reliable, conclusions that were not logically established, or explanations not theoretically grounded, that particular historical project could not claim academic validity.

In the case of Bangladesh, the evidence was all around us, memories were fresh and vivid, names and numbers, places and boundaries, population movements and resettlements, perpetrators and victims could all be identified, counted, and organised for academic purposes. Moreover, relevant documentation was easily accessible. Also, there were no contrarian voices that could confuse the project. The facts were “us”; this was “our” history; we were an open book. Sadly, we did not study it with any degree of professional seriousness or scholarly authority.

Several explanations for this sluggishness may be suggested. First, the events were too raw, too immediate, too overwhelming. We did not have the kind of psychological/intellectual distance and composure to undertake the kind of studies that would satisfy the standards of academic efficacy.

Second, the authoritarian intolerance and political tuggery into which the country descended soon after independence (a presidential system, one-party rule, a severely restricted media, all in just three years), the moral squalor created by predatory capitalism, kleptocratic cronyism, a perverse rent-seeking state establishment (breeding pervasive bribery, corruption, and exploitation), and the class inequities, social divisions, and gender violence it generated, all contributed to an environment where people had little patience for, or interest in, the principles and practices of history. That process obviously and notoriously deteriorated over the years.

Even the universities felt the loss of moral authority and scholarly respect they had traditionally enjoyed. Teachers realised that the usual norms and standards that are followed for appointments and promotions, perks and protections, an administrative position here or a foreign trip there, were usually determined by considerations that had little to do with excellence in research, service or teaching.

Similarly, some students felt sufficiently emboldened to engage in various money-making schemes, terrorising others through threat and intimidation (including occasional violence), controlling residential halls and, in some cases, even manipulating university policy, with absolute

impunity. They had little respect for the teachers, academic integrity or education itself.

To expect teachers to engage in research and remain focused on the acquisition and circulation of knowledge in that context was quite unrealistic (though a few brave souls and iconoclasts persisted with admirable determination and honour). In international rankings, the position of Dhaka University, the flagship institution which, at some point, had been heralded as the “Oxford of the East,” progressively worsened.

It should also be pointed out that the economic elite of the country, or the political leadership represented in the legislature which had final authority over public universities, had little interest in improving the condition of the universities, since most of them (almost 60 percent of the last parliament) were businessmen, and their children mostly studied abroad.

Third, in the battle of controlling the meta narratives of our historical evolution, it became increasingly evident that one party could eventually claim total “victory.” It not only set the parameters of enquiry, but it also dictated the outcomes. Questions and challenges were considered intolerable and eventually illegal. The “truth” had been discovered, evidence-based research was irrelevant, and history was weaponised in a hyper-polarised

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environment. Thus, we could never know real figures of those who died, who were raped, who fled, who fought, who disappeared, or who became the enemies of the liberation. The answers were all “given.”

The process led to a partisan usurpation of the historical dynamic, the presentation of a singular, unilateral, absolute version of events, and the elevation of Bangabandhu (whose charismatic presence in the history of our struggle cannot be neglected or even minimised) to a level of personal cultism. The hero-worshipping excesses, aggressively promoted by cynical sycophants, were relentless, tasteless, and eventually counterproductive (which partly explains the angers and frustrations unleashed after the fall of the previous regime). But the damage to independent research it inflicted was rude and debilitating.

Finally, written research projects also had to contend with the patterns and expectations of popular culture. The compulsively oral tradition characteristic of the region indicated a greater preference for speeches

than for written records. Hence, oratorical talents were valorised over the supposedly plodding effort of researchers (a shadow that continues to hang heavily over the intellectual scene in Bangladesh). There are some notable exceptions of productive scholars acquiring sterling reputations and large followings, but those are probably few.

Related to that is the Bangalee penchant for melodrama, sentimentalism, and romance. The interest was in personal stories of bravery and sacrifice, not micro-histories of specific areas, groups or subcultures, nor macro-histories that were more inclusive. This led to three consequences.

First, given the natural propensity for stories of suffering, tragedy and loss in the Bangalee psyche, there was an emphasis on depictions of brutality inflicted by the Pakistani forces, of murders and rapes, of people who disappeared, and homes destroyed, of *jalladkhanas* and *bodhhobhumis* (killing fields). However, the accent was on description, not quantitative elaboration.

Second, there were some memoirs of influential people who had been involved in the events in some form or another, describing the internal issues and workings of the leadership. Many of these biographical undertakings are most useful for their insights and impressions, for tracing connections between specific people, events, and decisions, and for cross-checking facts and individual claims. Most of these could be fruitfully mined to support larger studies.

Third, there was a plethora of publications containing individual experiences and testimonies of our freedom fighters. Many of these publications were commendable (incidentally, the *Muktijuddho* has generated thousands of books, more than almost any war for liberation in history). They were basically honest, many were engagingly written, some brilliant, and had the advantage of first-hand accounts of participant-observers that cannot be replicated. But their focus was necessarily limited and personal. They form an essential part of our history, provide indispensable raw materials for historical reconstruction, and offer important dots that could be connected for more comprehensive portrayals. But, by themselves they do not constitute history as an academic enterprise.

This essay, and the lament it contains, reflects the perspective of history presented by Prof John Lewis Gaddis in his influential *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*. It follows a long and rich tradition blazed by Will and Ariel Durant, William H McNeil, Marc Bloch, E P Thompson, Howard Zinn, Arnold Toynbee, E H Carr (and subcontinental historians such as Irfan Habib, Romila Thapar, Tapan Raychaudhuri, R C Majumdar, Niharranjan Ray, Nalini Kanta Bhattachali, Amiya Kumar Bagchi, Abu Mohamed Habibullah, Salahuddin Ahmed, Ranajit Guha and the subaltern historians, among others) who tried to follow the scientific method in terms of maintaining a theoretical framework, methodological sophistication, rhetorical discipline, empirical grounding, logical clarity, and fairness of analysis and judgement. Perhaps historians of 1971 will also be inspired by similar ideals, convictions, and craftsmanship.



# Our Victory Day and the questions of equality, justice, and human dignity



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AZFAR HUSSAIN

My friend, this is the age-old story: The people win the fight, the king is sung for victory.

—Kazi Nazrul Islam (translation mine)

Those who wax lyrical about and shed tears over oppression and injustice in the country and the world—while at the same time remaining silent about the questions of capital, empire, state, and class—may appear to be sympathetic to the oppressed, but they actually side with the oppressor and the unjust in the final instance.

—Maulana Bhasani (translation mine)

Our Independence Day and Victory Day are organically interconnected, involving the historical vectors and valences that enacted the very becoming-and-being of Bangladesh as a distinct, sovereign state in the hardest political sense of the term. The Italian Marxist revolutionary Antonio Gramsci's famous formulation that "events are the real dialectics of history" aptly captures this relationship. Our Victory Day, celebrated on December 16, derives its significance from the Liberation War of 1971. It is impossible to contemplate the meaning of Victory Day without recognising its roots in the struggle to create an independent Bangladesh. In this reflection—both historical and conjunctural—I set aside the run-of-the-mill military details of the Pakistan army's surrender to explore broader, even unresolved questions surrounding independence and victory.

The emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state followed a victory against the neo-colonial regime of Pakistan and its military oligarchy. This hard-won independence—achieved through the Liberation War—remains the most defining political event in our history. It created conditions, at least initially, for shaping a future free from colonial and neo-colonial domination. Bangladesh's liberation holds a singular place in South Asian history: unlike other nations in the region that achieved independence through ruling-class negotiations with colonial powers, Bangladesh was born of a bloody Liberation War, marked as it was by one of the most horrific genocides in human history.

This war was decisively a *people's war*, fought predominantly—if not exclusively—through guerrilla tactics and fuelled by the overwhelming participation of the poor. These men, women, and even children bore the brunt of the struggle, suffering the heaviest losses. Women—as freedom fighters—played a pivotal role at multiple levels, including those from ethnic minority communities whose contributions are often elided and erased in mainstream narratives dominated by our national ruling classes, particularly the Awami League. While middle-class Bangalee leaders figure flagrantly in these accounts, how many of us know freedom fighters like Kaketi Heninchita, a courageous Khasia woman, or Princha Khen, a young Rakhine girl (just to cite two names, among many others)? What kind of victory did they achieve? What did the poor—who made up

the majority of the fighters—truly gain, both then and now? These questions resonate while remaining urgent and unresolved on our Victory Day even today.

Yet, the history of Bangladesh has already been written in blood, even if it remains consigned to a massive blank in the narratives of those who claim the title of "historians" in the professional or disciplinary sense. Mainstream historians often unabashedly apotheosise their so-called "heroes," celebrated as extraordinary individuals; but there are other—and *othered*—historians and her-storyans: peasants, workers, women, minorities, and the oppressed. These people not only make history but also keep it alive through the telling and retelling of their own stories of struggle, shared in solidarity with one another. Their voices challenge us to confront whose stories are remembered, whose victories are honoured, and whose sacrifices are forgotten.

Indeed, the Liberation War of Bangladesh was fought by both ordinary Bangalees and non-Bangalees at immense cost, driven by the hope of building a true "people's republic" predicated on the promises of *equality, social justice, and human dignity*—the three core principles enshrined in the Proclamation of Independence on April 10, 1971. However, immediately after independence, the middle-class leadership—including Sheikh Mujibur

**To remember is to resist; forgetting is defeat—victory lives in memory! So, let's remember then, you and I, the blood of the July uprising—the children, the youth, the elders brutally killed in their fight against Hasina's fascist regime. Let us reject the divisive rhetoric—in fact, the blatant falsehood—that pits 1971 against 2024, recognising instead their shared battle cry for equality, justice, and human dignity.**

Rahman, the unparalleled leader of the Liberation War, despite being in jail at the time—perpetrated violence on the very core principles of our liberation movement that his own party initially endorsed. Freedom fighters from poor backgrounds were disarmed and sent back to poverty, while a

state was constructed to serve the interests of the rising Bangalee bourgeoisie.

Moreover, it was none other than Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who—his historic contributions and stature notwithstanding—sowed the seeds of fascism (I'm fully aware of how the term "fascism" gets loosely used, but the term has its nationally and historically determinate register and resonance in Bangladesh) by establishing a one-party

an unprecedented moment in the country's history. For the first time, a politically unaffiliated, student-led mass movement toppled an entrenched fascist autocracy, forcing Sheikh Hasina to flee. This movement's own victory resided not only in its outcome but in its rejection of conventional leadership in favour of a decentralised, almost non-hierarchical model, attesting to the youthful creativity and determination of the students.

citizen uprising—one where equality, justice, and human dignity will prevail. A political settlement will ensure that dictatorship and fascism can never return."

Let us not forget this ardent declaration amidst the current turmoil created by the remnants of Awami fascism in Bangladesh. To remember is to resist; forgetting is defeat—victory lives in memory! So, let's remember then, you and I, the blood of the July



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

authoritarian rule. This move also created conditions for the extrajudicial killings—with some estimates pointing to at least 30,000 deaths—as already demonstrated in the superbly researched historiographical work of Badruddin Umar, among others.

Indeed, anti-people ruling-class politicians, their followers, and subservient intellectuals forged and mobilised a proto-fascist tradition of hero-worship and cult-fetishism in the name of *Muktijuddher chetona* (the spirit of the Liberation War). In doing so, they erased the poor majority from the history of the Liberation War, effectively excluding them from the political, economic, and cultural policies of the new state. Despite subsequent changes in government—whether civil or military—the ruling class has remained unchanged, perpetuating inequality, injustice, and indignity in stark contrast to the core principles of our independence movement. A poignant example is Nagendranath, a courageous freedom fighter from Moulvibazar, who was reduced to begging on the streets of post-independence Bangladesh. His plight singularly serves as a stark reminder of the betrayal faced by those who sacrificed everything for liberation. Indeed, the rise of proto-fascist political and cultural practices during the Mujib era laid the groundwork for the full-blown fascist regime of Sheikh Hasina to which, of course, the 2024 July Mass Movement was nothing short of a powerful response, among other things.

In fact, the July Mass Movement emerged as the largest uprising in the history of Bangladesh. Marked by the sacrifice of over 1,500 martyrs, the movement inaugurated

This truth must be recognised, no matter how the current situation with the interim government appears. Also, the immediate victory of the July uprising was deeply rooted in 15 years of socio-political struggles—often unsuccessful—that, however, fostered discontent and rage—accompanied by political awareness—ultimately culminating in the movement that toppled Sheikh Hasina.

Moreover, a significant triumph of this movement lay in its challenge to the Awami League's fascist-style commodification and idolisation of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In its place, the movement advanced a people-centred narrative of the 1971 Liberation War, accentuating the stubborn historical fact that ordinary individuals—not singular idols—are the true protagonists of this historic struggle. The 2024 mass movement—in which I myself was a direct participant in July and August—repeatedly called attention to the three core principles of our Liberation Movement of 1971—equality, human dignity, and justice—principles erased and violated by the Awami regime but reclaimed through the students' platform. Furthermore, the uprising exemplarily deconstructed the Awami League's long-exploited identitarian binary of "freedom fighter" versus "razakar," revealing its manipulative, authoritarian, and vindictive deployment over decades.

Indeed, the July uprising was a powerful act of resistance against decades of systemic oppression and the betrayal of the Liberation War's core principles. It's not for nothing that the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement platform recurrently declared, "A new Bangladesh will be built through the student-

uprising—the children, the youth, the elders brutally killed in their fight against Hasina's fascist regime. Let us reject the divisive rhetoric—in fact, the blatant falsehood—that pits 1971 against 2024, recognising instead their shared battle cry for equality, justice, and human dignity. In the words of the African Marxist revolutionary Amílcar Cabral, "Claim no easy victory!"

Indeed, every progressive mass movement in human history is simultaneously incomplete and paradoxical: it's never entirely victorious, yet never fully vanquished. The struggle for justice persists; while, of course, there are attempts—both inside and outside the country—to discredit and even besmirch the hard-won gains of the July Mass Movement. And yet, a truth looms large and remains undeniable: there can be no justice without bringing Sheikh Hasina and her collaborators themselves to justice. Equally imperative is the creation of a comprehensive record of the martyrs and the injured—a testament to their sacrifice—and the extension of necessary support to them and their families. This, at the very least, is the demand of history and the duty of our collective conscience, I reckon.

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## JULY UPRISING

# A turning point or a missed opportunity?



Eresh Omar Jamal is deputy head of editorial at The Daily Star. His X handle is @EreshOmarJamal.

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

In an article published on July 7, in relation to the Awami League's mass corruption, I wrote that ordinary citizens have only two options left. One, allow it to cost them in every sphere of life—literally ruining their lives and turning them into slaves on whose backs those in power could continue to live their lavish lives. Two, form mass movements to change things. Given the political reality back then, for anyone from within the local media to call for the "formation" of mass movements was perhaps riskier than it appeared from the outside—whether it be from real or perceived threats.

Nevertheless, the reason why I wrote this was quite simple: the writing was on the wall. By that I don't mean that it was obvious that the mafia-like AL regime would fall. Indeed, there had been moments previously when I personally felt that, only to be proven wrong. But what was obvious from an economic side of things—in addition to the other grievances people had because of the regime's arrogant, oppressive and shameless behaviour—is that we were at a crossroads. Through absurd levels of corruption, the parasitic mafia class was destroying every avenue of real

wealth production and producers, i.e. the hardworking citizens of this nation they scrounged off from. And without some form of imminent radical change, we were on the verge of falling off an economic cliff.

Given this and other realities, the fall of the AL regime is indeed something to celebrate. However, the mess it has left behind is not going to be easy to clean up. Take, for instance, the massive amount of wealth that has been syphoned out of the country. According to TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman, some \$12-15 billion was laundered from the country annually under the former regime. Over the AL's 15-plus years in office, this adds up to somewhere between \$180 billion and \$225 billion.

The government commissioned white paper on the economy takes it a step further, estimating that \$234 billion was syphoned out of Bangladesh in 2009-2023. However, given the difficulty of estimating the true extent of the laundering—because of the complexity of the crime—even that may be an underestimation.

Another TIB finding suggests that people paid an estimated Tk 1.46 lakh crore in

bribes to get services under the AL regime. Not only does such widespread corruption impose enormous social and economic costs on a nation, but it also imposes a heavy philosophical cost due to the scale of immorality that people are forced to participate in. After all, when you remove all morality from society, the only remaining, logical move for individuals is to act without morals—its just simple game theory.

There are endless examples of past AL

Across social media platforms in particular, the political left and right seem to be constantly battling each other—and dragging everyone else into their fights. While I believe the battle between ideas is almost always a good thing, at this time, it must not come at the cost of our priorities.

Even though we say that in a democratic society, power, ideally, is supposed to belong to the people, reality isn't always that. It belongs to the elected representatives of

**Even though we say that in a democratic society, power, ideally, is supposed to belong to the people, reality isn't always that. It belongs to the elected representatives of the people and state machinery. Power only belongs to the people when the people unite to collectively exercise it, like they did during the July uprising to oust the fascist AL government.**

corruption and warning signs at present that show the economy is in substantial trouble. Therefore, both the interim government and the people as a collective must prioritise turning it around.

What's disappointing, however, is that since the AL's ouster, the interim government has been forced to divert its attention from one less relevant issue—or a completely irrelevant one—to another. Non-stop protests on various issues have been causing further harm to the economy. While some of these protests were perhaps for legitimate demands, it seems people have again lost sight of the bigger picture.

the people and state machinery. Power only belongs to the people when the people unite to collectively exercise it—which alone can challenge the state machinery and those wielding its massive influence—like they did during the July uprising to oust the fascist AL government.

Having ousted the former regime, if the people lose their unity before cleaning up the mess left behind and creating a system that rewards moral individuals over immoral ones—one based on the rule of law in which justice prevails—then the spirit of July uprising will remain unrealised.

Right now, it seems that there is a race

going on between certain individuals/groups/ideologies to claim the credit for ousting the AL government. However, we must not forget that if people with whom we don't fully (or at all) agree with did not take to the streets along with us during those July days, we would not have been able to break the shackles of AL fascism.

Another important reason to avoid infighting is that, in today's interconnected world, external powers can most easily interfere in a country's internal affairs when there is a lack of unity. Bangladesh has a history of being exploited by outside forces because its people have often failed to set aside their differences to focus on protecting the nation's sovereignty. Blaming those foreign forces serves little purpose—this is the nature of realpolitik. It is our responsibility to ensure we don't leave ourselves vulnerable to such threats.

Sometimes, in our efforts to tear down the walls of oppression, we forget that we must also build the walls of truth and justice. It is equally important to see through the euphoria of victory we are currently experiencing, just as it was to see through the despair during the darkness of oppression.

At this moment, we must be able to see what comes next, and we must not allow ourselves to be so intoxicated by the moment so that we forget what we are supposed to be building. This is the least we can do to honour the sacrifices of the martyrs of the July uprising—and those who gave their lives before it—to create a better Bangladesh. A Bangladesh where everyone, except for outright psychopathic criminals, has a place and a future, regardless of their differences.





PHOTO: CAPTAIN (RETD.) DR. SITARA BEGUM, BIR PROTIK  
Hilltop view of “Bangladesh Hospital” across the street at Bishramganj, Melaghar, Tripura in 1971.



PHOTO: JEAN-JACQUES KUR  
An Indian Red Cross nurse vaccinating a Bengali refugee at Salt Lake, Kolkata.

# WARTIME TREATMENT

## The heroes who saved lives, silently

“Many doctors and medical students in Dhaka secretly provided medical services to the freedom fighters, because they were so easy to obtain.”

DR M A HASAN

.....

“We would request the rural medical practitioners to stock up on the necessary medicines, as they received supplies from the government, It was a risky endeavour.”

DR M A MANNAN

**AHMAD ISTIAK**

While the armed freedom fighters fought valiantly on the battlefield during the 1971 war, a quieter yet equally crucial battle was being waged on the medical front.

Among the unsung heroes of the war were dedicated doctors who risked their lives to provide medical care to the wounded and sick.

One such individual was Dr Harimon Das, a rural physician from Chattogram.

During the brutal Banigram massacre, Dr Harimon bravely treated the wounded freedom fighters, including Sukumar Chowdhury, who survived despite suffering multiple gunshot wounds.

In October of this year, The Daily Star visited Chattogram and interviewed several doctors, freedom fighters, and witnesses for a report on the doctors' contributions to the war in the region.

Speaking to this newspaper, Somen Mitra Chowdhury, a witness to the Banigram massacre, said, “Even after the military was gone, villagers were afraid to leave their homes, fearing another attack. However, doctor Harimon bravely ventured out and treated Sukumar Chowdhury, removing three bullets from his body and stitching his wounds. Without Harimon's timely intervention,

of doctors participated in the medical efforts.

“Many doctors and medical students in Dhaka secretly provided medical services to the freedom fighters, because they were so easy to obtain.” Researcher and Freedom Fighter Dr. MA Hasan

The number of doctors killed by the Pakistani army and their local collaborators during the war is also unknown. As of 2024, 99 physicians are listed as martyred intellectuals by the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.

**INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

According to the book “Muktijuddho O Nari” by Rokeya Kabir and Mujib Mehdi, Dr Renu Kona Barua was an assistant surgeon at the East Pakistan Railway

government restrictions on the supply of medicines to private dispensaries, he ordered necessary items through rural medical practitioners.

“We would request the rural medical practitioners to stock up on the necessary medicines, as they received supplies from the government,” the doctor told The Daily Star. “It was a risky endeavour. On one occasion, we were caught by the Razakars while delivering medicine in Khiram, Fatikchari, but fortunately, we managed to escape unharmed.”

The book also tells the story of Rahima Khatun, a resident of Chaptla village in Kashiani, Gopalganj, who took the initiative to train women in nursing. These trained women later

Dr Rafiq continued to offer medical aid to the injured. Sadly, on April 13, Pakistani soldiers brutally murdered Dr Rafiq and three of his sons in front of their Railway Colony residence.

AJM Rakib Uddin, another son of Dr Rafiq, told The Daily Star, “While others fled to safety at the outbreak of the war, my father chose to remain and provide medical care to the injured freedom fighters. He believed it was his duty to help those in need.

“His selfless act of providing medical care ultimately led to his tragic demise, along with my three brothers, at the hands of the Pakistani army and their local collaborators.”

Like Dr Rafiq, Dr MK Sarker, a doctor from Chattogram, became a target of

**INTERNATIONAL AID**

The international community also played a significant role in providing medical assistance to Bangladesh during the war. Friendly nations, international aid organisations, and NGOs extended support in various forms, including medical supplies, equipment, and personnel.

According to Chowdhury Shahid Kader's book “Muktijuddher Chikishsha Shohayota”, the West German government, for instance, sent a 60-bed mobile hospital to West Bengal to treat injured freedom fighters. The West German Red Cross Society also donated funds to establish a 105-bed hospital for refugees.

Organisations like Caritas India, Save the Children, Oxfam, and the Red Cross provided essential medical services to refugees and displaced persons.

Caritas India opened a 270-bed hospital in Kolkata's Salt Lake, while Save the Children funded a 70-bed hospital in Kalyani.

Oxfam, in collaboration with Indian agencies, provided medical care to 600,000 refugees.

Foreign volunteers, such as those from Operation Omega, risked their lives to deliver medical supplies and provide treatment in the war-torn regions.

Despite facing numerous challenges, including arrests and imprisonment by the Pakistani military administration, the Omega volunteers, led by Roger Moody, editor at UK-based Peace News, persevered.

They were arrested three times in August, September, and October but were undeterred. They continued their mission, making nine incursions into Bangladesh in October and November to distribute essential medicines and food.

Churches and missionary hospitals played a pivotal role in the Liberation War. The Baniarchar Catholic Church in Faridpur, led by Father Marino Regan, and the Memorial Christian Hospital in Malumghat, Cox's Bazar, were particularly significant in providing medical aid and support.

The majority of refugees who sought shelter in India during the war received medical care from Indian doctors and health workers.

As per the book “Muktijuddher Chikishsha Ithash,” the Bangladesh Medical Association UK was formed in late March 1971, bringing together 450 Bangladeshi doctors residing in the UK.

Each member donated at least £10 per month to support medical initiatives in the war-torn country.

Meanwhile, the medical care of the approximately one crore refugees who sought shelter in India during the war posed a significant challenge.

The Indian government, its doctors, health workers, and citizens, were instrumental in addressing this challenge.

According to Chowdhury Shahid Kader's book “Muktijuddher Chikishsha Shohayota,” 25,000 unregistered doctors from West Bengal provided medical services to the refugees.

Over 7.2 million refugees took shelter in West Bengal, with 2.7 million receiving cholera vaccinations. The Karimganj Red Cross Society in Assam treated 37,000 refugees, while 1,000 trained and 2,000 untrained volunteers provided medical services to refugees and freedom fighters in Tripura.

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Translated from Bangla by Subrata Roy



▲  
Operation Omega volunteers enter Bangladesh with medicine and food for Bangladeshi people. August 17, 1971 .  
PHOTO: AP ARCHIVE

“My father's crime was to provide medical care to freedom fighters. That's why my father and my three brothers were killed by Pakistani soldiers and Biharis.”

RAQIB UDDIN

Hospital in Chattogram in 1971.

In April, her husband was abducted and killed by the Pakistani forces. Overwhelmed by grief, Dr Renu returned to her father's home in Aburkhal village of Raoozan upazila.

There she channeled her sorrow into strength and offered shelter and medical care to freedom fighters for the remainder of the war.

She also provided medical training to a group of young women, turning the house into a makeshift clinic. Many freedom fighters, after receiving treatment, returned to the battlefield.

In October, Dr Renu treated freedom fighters wounded in the Madunaghat battle in Hathazari. One of these fighters was Abdul Mannan, Bir Bikram, who suffered serious injuries. Despite Renu's best efforts, Abdul Mannan, unfortunately, did not survive.

Paritosh Barua, who was there at the time, told The Daily Star, “Dr Renu worked tirelessly day and night to save Mannan, but his injuries, particularly the stomach wound, were too severe. Despite her best efforts, he succumbed to his injuries.”

Dr Renu provided medical care to the local villagers of Aburkhal and surrounding areas as well. She passed away in the United States on October 27, 2015, at the age of 79.

The book also mentions Ferdousi Begum and her husband Hasanul Karim, who turned their Jashore home into a makeshift hospital to provide medical care to injured freedom fighters and civilians.

While Dr Mohiuddin and Dr Momtaz Begum of Jessore Sadar Hospital treated the most severe cases, around two dozen seriously injured freedom fighters received treatment at this house.

Medical supplies, including medicines and surgical equipment, were cleverly smuggled in grocery bags disguised as vegetables.

Another physician, Dr MA Mannan, was instrumental in supplying essential medicines to the freedom fighters of Sector 1 from within the country.

From May, he persistently sought to procure medicines and medical equipment for the fighters. To bypass

provided medical services in their villages, Chaptla and Ratail, under the Orakandidham freedom fighter camp.

Before the war, Dr Motahar Ali Sikder served as the director of the Central Medical Stores Depot in Teigaon. As the war broke out, he secretly hoarded a significant quantity of medical supplies to aid the freedom fighters.

After he was transferred to Rajshahi in April, his wife, Salema Begum, provided medical treatment, equipment, and clothing to around a battalion of soldiers under Sector 2.

Dr MA Hasan, a Liberation War researcher, and the son of Dr Motahar Ali Sikder, told The Daily Star that the Pakistani authorities had ordered for his father to be killed in Rajshahi.

“However, he survived due to the intervention of Ayub Khan,” MA Hasan said.

Dr Hasan also said that many doctors and medical students in Dhaka secretly provided medical services to freedom fighters. “They discreetly supplied medicines and medical equipment through various channels, taking advantage of their easier access to these resources.”

According to Jahanara Imam's memoir Ekattorer Dinguli, a polyclinic on Elephant Road in Dhaka was run by Dr Azizur Rahman, Dr Sultana Rahman, and Dr Alim Chowdhury.

On August 19, Abdul Halim Jewel, a member of the Crack Platoon, was shot in one of his fingers during a reconnaissance mission at the Siddhirganj Power Station. He underwent surgery at the clinic.

On December 15, Dr Alim Chowdhury, an ophthalmologist and founder of the polyclinic, was abducted and killed by Al Badr members.

Dr Rafiq Ahmed, a physician at Pakshi Railway Hospital, was also martyred.

According to “Muktijuddhe Shaheed Chikitsak Jibonkosh”, the night of March 26 marked the beginning of resistance and all-out war in Pabna.

Dr Rafiq provided medical care to wounded freedom fighters and civilians from March 26 to 29. After the Pakistani army occupied Pabna on April 10 and initiated a brutal genocide,

the Pakistani army and Razakars for providing medical services to freedom fighters. To evade capture, he was forced to disguise himself as a monk and seek refuge in a Buddhist temple.

Dr MK Sarker told The Daily Star, “I regularly visited the freedom fighter camp at Latumura hill in Banskhali to provide medical treatment. Unfortunately, the Pakistani army and Razakars became aware of my activities. With the help of a local chairman, I managed to evade capture and sought refuge in a Buddhist temple.”

**BANGLADESH HOSPITAL**

Bangladesh Hospital was vital in delivering medical care during the war.

According to the book “Muktijuddher Chikishsha Ithash”, in April, Lieutenant Dr Akhtar Ahmed, an Army Medical Corps doctor, established a makeshift hospital in a dilapidated room in Srimantapur, Tripura. Later, when he was transferred to Sonamura, Dr Nazim Uddin joined the hospital. Eventually, a temporary Bangladesh Field Hospital was set up at Daroga Bagicha in Melaghar. In May, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury and Dr Mobin arrived from the UK to join the hospital.

On August 26, Bangladesh Hospital was relocated to Bishramganj in Melaghar. While precise figures regarding the number of treated sick and injured freedom fighters are unavailable, a report from October 1971 indicates that the hospital staff comprised six doctors, four final-year medical students, and 18 volunteers and nurses.

As per the book, the massacre of 102 Bangalee members of the Army Medical Corps in Jashore and Cumilla cantonments by the Pakistani army at the war's outset ignited the resolve of their surviving colleagues to join the war.

The need for a dedicated medical corps emerged in October, as preparations were underway for a confrontation with the Pakistani forces in November.

Given the circumstances, medical treatment in the sub-sectors was carried out by a combination of qualified doctors and senior medical students, including second-year students and above.







## Bleak memories Head back for India

While racking up centuries and a 241 stand on Day 2 of their third Test at the Gabba on Sunday, Australia's Travis Head and Steve Smith gave India a repeat of their nightmare in the World Test Championship (WTC) final. At The Oval in June last year, the pair combined for 285 runs in the first innings to set a platform for Australia's maiden WTC title, Head smashing 163 while Smith made 121. The pair reprised their roles on Sunday, Smith making 101 off 190 deliveries and Head racing to 152 at nearly a run a ball. With the series level at 1-1, Australia finished day two at well in front at 405 for seven after rain restricted them to 28 for no loss on day one.

Travis Head bounced back from a run of three golden ducks at the Gabba with a stunning 152.

By striking his first Test ton in 18 months, Steven Smith overtook Steve Waugh on Australia's all-time list of century-makers, moving to 33 Test hundreds -- second only to Ricky Ponting's 41.

Jasprit Bumrah's five for 72 in 25 overs helped him become the first Indian bowler to claim 10 five-wicket hauls outside Asia, surpassing Kapil Dev's record of nine.

This marked the first time in 11 Tests across three home series that Australia posted a total exceeding 400 against India -- the previous instance being 572-7 declared at the SCG in 2015.

## Habib hopes to bring joy to war-torn Lebanon

REUTERS

Hady Habib blazed a trail by taking Lebanon to the Olympic tennis tournament for the first time earlier this year and he is hoping another breakthrough at the Australian Open in January will bring comfort to his war-torn country.

The Texas-born 26-year-old enjoyed a special moment when, as a lucky loser, he went down 6-3, 6-1 to Carlos Alcaraz in the first round of the Olympic men's singles at Roland Garros in July. The experience fired his ambitions to get back to the biggest stages and he took a step towards that goal when he won a Challenger title in Chile earlier this month to clinch a spot in Australian Open qualifying.

"This was a goal of mine... being the first Lebanese to win a Challenger," he told The National newspaper. Habib, who moved back to Lebanon with his family at the age of six, will be able to count on some crowd support in Melbourne in January with around 1% of the Australian population having Lebanese heritage.

## BCL RELEGATION REVERSAL BFF continues bad precedence

ANISUR RAHMAN

Farashganj SC and Uttara FC, teams that were relegated from the country's second tier football competition the Bangladesh Championship League (BCL) last season, have been given the green light to compete in the upcoming season as well by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) -- a development that highlights the absence of a proper structure at that level.

As per bylaws, Farashganj SC and Uttara FC, who finished seventh and eighth respectively in the 2023-24 season, should be relegated to the Senior Division League this season.

However, after an executive meeting on Wednesday, the BFF decided to allow both teams to stay afloat in the second-tier competition, following a bad precedent set by the previous committee.

Earlier, Swadhinata KS were allowed to compete in the 2019-20 season of the BCL in spite of finishing bottom of the table the previous season.

The 2019-20 season never got going due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but Swadhinata KS remained in the BCL in the 2020-21 season as well, and shockingly ended up winning the league in that edition.

The reason why BFF has stop teams from getting relegated is because unlike countries which have a well-established football structure with multiple tiers, in Bangladesh the federation asks for applications from clubs interested to compete in BCL, assesses them and then chooses which teams would compete.

So, if a relegated team applies for the following season and the BFF deems them fit to compete, they can return to BCL.

This system has been set in place since the 2015-16 season of the BCL, when the professional league committee headed



by Abdus Salam Murshedy started deciding who would compete in the BCL by assessing applications, focusing more on including teams that have a strong financial backing.

Clubs like Bashundhara Kings, Saif SC, NoFel SC, Karwanbazar PS and many others were brought into the BCL in this way.

While some of those inclusions proved to be a net positive for the country's football, like the current Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) champions Bashundhara, some new outfits got entangled in online betting and fixing controversies like Karwanbazar PS, who were found

guilty in 2022.

The BFF has also failed to fix the number of participants in BCL even after 11 completed seasons as the number of teams have fluctuated from seven to 13. There are also no secondary competitions available for second tier teams, meaning other than the BCL season which runs for three-four months the footballs at that level don't get opportunities to compete.

The fact that the newly formed BFF committee led by Tabith Awal followed the precedent set by the previous committee of keeping relegated teams afloat in BCL surprised and disheartened the country's football fraternity.

"It doesn't go with the sporting spirit, they should have relegated at least one team," BCL outfit PWD SC manager Ittekkharul Islam said. "After this decision, the competitiveness among the teams may decrease."

BCL outfit Wari Club general secretary Mohidur Rahman Miraz said, "I fought against this system for the last 10 years because many clubs, especially blessed outfits, went AWOL after getting direct entries. "I think BCL should be abolished because it has no standard and the federation should reform the whole footballing structure."

## 'Quality' emerges as Akbar, Salman, Jishan deliver

SPORTS REPORTER

For those wondering about Akbar Ali, who led Bangladesh to victory in the 2020 Under-19 Cricket World Cup, the 23-year-old batter made a statement in the ongoing NCL T20 yesterday as his blistering half-century helped table-toppers Rangpur Division chase down a challenging 190-run target against Rajshahi Division in Sylhet.

At the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium (SICS), Najmul Hossain Shanto was not among the big runs, but Sabbir Hossain stepped up with a 52-ball 73 to help Rajshahi post an imposing total of 189 for eight. However, as this tournament has shown, big chases are becoming a reality.

In reply, Rangpur's 33-year-old opener Tanbir Hayder gave them a solid start with a 45-ball 71, setting the stage for captain Akbar's dazzling innings -- a 29-ball 68, which included four fours and six sixes.

After his knock, Akbar emphasised the importance of focusing on performances rather than age.

"Whoever performs,



### Hridoy, Mushy set to return

Rajshahi Division are set to get a boost in the NCL T20 as star national team batters Towhid Hridoy and Mushfiqur Rahim will be returning to competitive cricket through the tournament following injuries. Mushfiqur succumbed to a finger injury during the first Afghanistan ODI in the UAE last month, subsequently missing the West Indies tour. Hridoy suffered a groin injury before the Windies series and was left out of the ODI and T20I teams for the tour. Both are expected to play Rajshahi's next fixture against Chattogram on Tuesday at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

whether senior or junior, the focus should be on them. Experience obviously matters, but what's important is quality. I feel sometimes we over-emphasise experience," Akbar said. Meanwhile, quality and experience

also combined for Dhaka Metro as they secured a 19-run win over Dhaka Division, who were restricted to 171 for eight, courtesy of medium pacer Anisul Islam's four-for. This followed Naim Sheikh's 54-ball 69 and Shamsur Rahman's 22-ball 43, which took Metro to 190 for seven at Sylhet Academy Ground (SAG).

In the second game at SICS, Chattogram Division's Tamim Iqbal's 54-ball 91 against Barishal Division went in vain as Salman Hossain and Ittekkhar Hossain both struck fifties to help Barishal chase down Chattogram's 182 for seven in a last-ball finish. With 25 runs needed off the final over, Salman hit Ifran Hossain for three sixes and two boundaries -- one in the last ball with two needed -- to seal a thrilling victory.

The afternoon game at SAG saw Sylhet defeat Khulna by six wickets while chasing 145, riding on Jishan Alam's 48-ball 73, which featured four boundaries and six maximums. The 20-year-old Jishan now leads the run-scoring charts after four matches, with an average of 51 and a strike rate of 160.63, weighing in on the notion that quality alone, not age, matters as Bangladesh looks to unearth and nurture emerging T20 talents.



Indonesian shuttlers pose with gold medals after winning all five events of the Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Junior International Series 2024 at Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. It was an all-Indonesian final in the mixed doubles and men's singles events, while India challenged the champions in the women's singles and doubles and men's doubles. Hosts Bangladesh, meanwhile, were eliminated from the semifinals of men's doubles, women's doubles, and women's singles.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## NEPAL KABADDI LEAGUE 6 Bangladesh players drafted

SPORTS REPORTER

Six Bangladeshi kabaddi players secured places in four different franchises in the inaugural Nepal Kabaddi League (NKL), as the draft of the franchise-based tournament was held in Kathmandu yesterday.

The six-team competition will kick off on January 17 before coming to an end on February 1.

The Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation (BKF) had nominated six players to the All Nepal Kabaddi Association (ANKA) for the NKL. Among them, all-rounder Monirul Islam and defender Sabuz Mia were picked by the Pokhara Lakers, while Yeasin Arafat was drafted into the Dhangadhi Wild Cats. Mijanur Rahman and Roman Hossain secured places in the Kathmandu Mavericks, and Sha Mohammed Shahan joined the Himalayan Raiders, informed BKF General Secretary Shah Newaj Shohag.

"As it is the first edition of the franchise-based kabaddi league in Nepal, they will provide daily allowances, accommodation, airfares, and nominal pocket money. We have decided to send the players to the NKL to gain experience from playing with foreign players," said Shohag yesterday.

The ANKA signed a 10-year agreement with sponsors to run the NKL in a bid to provide their players with a strong platform to compete, especially after Nepal women's team won a bronze medal in last year's 19th Asian Games.

## Slot 'very, very, very happy' despite draw

REUTERS, Liverpool

Four days ago Liverpool boss Arne Slot was unhappy with a narrow Champions League victory at Girona but on Saturday the Dutchman was delighted with their resilience in a 2-2 draw against Fulham after his 10-man team twice fought back from a goal down.

Cody Gakpo and Diogo Jota scored for Liverpool, who remain top of the Premier League on 36 points from 15 games, five points clear of Chelsea, with Jota netting an 86th-minute equaliser to send the Anfield faithful into a frenzy.

"I think it's exactly the opposite from the Girona game, where I was pleased with the result (1-0), but not with the performance," Slot said. "Now I'm very, very, very happy about the performance. Couldn't have asked for more."

"Of course, not with the result, because if you drop points in a home game against Fulham that's definitely not what you expect and what you want, but being two times a goal down, so many things go against you, except for one thing, that is our players and our fans, they were outstanding today."

Liverpool were reduced to 10 men in the 17th minute after Andy Robertson's awkward lunging tackle on Harry Wilson denied a scoring opportunity. There was a lengthy VAR check to confirm the red card and that Wilson was in an onside position.

Slot said Robertson was still feeling the effects of taking an early knock to his knee and that contributed to the red card.







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## Migrant workers unsung heroes Say speakers at BRAC Migration Media Award ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Migrant workers are the unsung heroes of the country's development, and if formal means of overseas money transfer were stronger, remittances could exceed \$40 billion annually.

The view was expressed yesterday at the 9th BRAC Migration Media Award ceremony held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

For reports on migration, 15 journalists and a TV programme were recognised at the event.

BRAC Executive Director Asif Saleh said there was no one to listen to what the migrant workers had to say. As a result, they were often deprived of their rightful benefits.

"Migrant workers remit \$22 billion SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Winners of the 9th BRAC Migration Media Award pose for a photo with the organisers at a ceremony at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## We can import more from Bangladesh

Says Timor-Leste president in joint press briefing with CA

UNB, Dhaka

Timor-Leste President Jose Ramos Horta yesterday expressed optimism over greater cooperation between Bangladesh and his country in the coming days to expand economic and trade relations.

"We can import more from Bangladesh," he said in a joint press conference at the Chief Adviser's Office after the bilateral meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

The Timor-Leste president also invited Bangladeshi companies to his country to explore opportunities there.

He urged Bangladeshi business firms to invest in his country.

Ramos Horta said, "We invite Bangladeshi companies to come to Timor-Leste. By next year, we will join Asean and

PHOTO ON PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

## Bowling ban on Shakib carries over to int'l cricket



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is banned from bowling in international cricket and domestic cricket overseas due to the suspension imposed on him by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) for having an illegal action, confirmed the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday.

"The BCB has been informed that national team allrounder Shakib Al Hasan has been suspended from bowling in competitions under the jurisdiction of the ECB. As a result, Shakib is also suspended from bowling in domestic cricket competitions outside Bangladesh and in international cricket," a BCB media release read.

Shakib's suspension, which officially began on December 10, came to light

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## POST-AUGUST 5 DU halls no longer students' nightmare

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Molla Taimur Rahman was enrolled at Dhaka University in 2022 and had landed himself a seat in Sir AF Rahman Hall as a residential student.

His first year, however, was one that still haunts him, as Chhatra League leaders, who controlled the halls at the time, subjected him to both physical and mental torture.

It began with allegations of "violating" an unwritten rule prohibiting first-year students from speaking to seniors without permission from BCL.

"We were controlled by them," he recalled, adding that he initially fled the dorm after being threatened.

Taimur had lodged a formal complaint in this regard with the hall administration, and the media too reported on his case.

BCL then contacted him, urging him to return to the hall and saying he would be safe. "They contacted my parents and asked them to persuade me to come back .... I returned but only for two days due to intense pressure from BCL to withdraw my complaint.

"I was threatened again, and my friends were instructed by [BCL leaders] to stay away from me or they too would be punished."

Ultimately, no one stood by Taimur in front of the probe committee due to continuous threats from BCL leaders.

"My parents suffered as well. I will never forget those difficult days."

From being forced to attend political meetings to having voices silenced or even being physically and mentally tortured in the infamous "gonorooms" -- this is what the first-year and second-year residential students of Dhaka University would have to encounter when the halls were controlled by Chhatra League leaders during the 15-year-long Awami League regime.

Things, however, began changing after the fall of the AL government on August 5, as most BCL leaders, many of whom were non-students, had left.

"Even when I would be studying in the reading room or resting after lunch, they [BCL activists] would force me to take part in political activities every day," said Asad of DU's Bijoy Ekattor Hall.

"There's no one here now to force us into political meetings. We now feel free in the dormitory. We can chat with friends and focus on our studies."

This correspondent spoke to at least 30 students from various dormitories and they said that positive changes have been noticed.

In the absence of BCL, the hall seat crises have eased, with the administration now being able to fairly distribute seats among regular students.

"Students can now voice their concerns SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

**In the absence of BCL, the hall seat crises have eased, with the administration now being able to fairly distribute seats among regular students.**

## Crackdown on AL leaders accused in cases to intensify Says Asif Mahmud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has decided to intensify its crackdown on Awami League leaders and activists who have cases filed against them and are indulging in disruptive activities.

Asif Mahmud, adviser to the Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives Ministry, made the remarks following a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Law and Order yesterday.

Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury presided over the meeting.

In reply to a query, Asif Mahmud said that fascist elements of the previous regime, which are now abroad, are still trying to provoke different groups.

"Those who are conspiring to destabilise the country, against whom there are cases and clear allegations, will be arrested," he added.

The government is closely monitoring programmes planned by AL and BCL's in the coming days, particularly on December 16, to prevent any potential disruptions to law and order.

Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury confirmed that the government is taking steps to improve the overall law and order situation, especially ahead of important dates like December 16, 25, and 31.

While acknowledging an increase in mugging incidents in Dhaka, the home adviser assured the public that the police are taking measures to curb the problem, including increased night patrols.



## Oldest human DNA reveals lost branch of human family tree

CNN ONLINE

Scientists say they have recovered the oldest known Homo sapiens DNA from human remains found in Europe, and the information is helping to reveal our species' shared history with Neanderthals.

The ancient genomes sequenced from 13 bone fragments unearthed in a cave beneath a medieval castle in Ranis, Germany, belonged to six individuals, including a mother, daughter and distant cousins who lived in the region around 45,000 years ago, according to the study that published Thursday in the journal Nature.

The genomes carried evidence of Neanderthal ancestry.

Researchers determined that the ancestors of those early humans who lived in Ranis and the surrounding area likely encountered and made babies with Neanderthals about 80 generations earlier, or 1,500 years earlier, although that interaction did not necessarily happen in the same place.

Scientists have known since the first Neanderthal genome was sequenced in 2010 that early humans interbred with Neanderthals, a bombshell revelation that bequeathed a genetic legacy still traceable in humans today.

However, exactly when, how often and where this critical and mysterious juncture in human history took place has been hard to pin down.

Scientists have believed interspecies relations would have occurred somewhere in the Middle East as a wave of Homo sapiens left Africa and bumped into Neanderthals, who had lived across Eurasia for 250,000 years.



Palestinians mourn over the bodies of children, killed in an Israeli strike, at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City yesterday. Inset, Palestinians inspect the damage at the site of an Israeli strike in Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood in Gaza City.

PHOTO: AFP

