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'We don't use first-class cricket like other countries'
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15TH AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION HC scraps part that abolished caretaker system

Appellate Division to have final say on its restoration; system for referendums restored

ASHUTOSH SARKAR and ASIFUR RAHMAN

In a landmark verdict, the High Court yesterday scrapped a part of the 15th amendment to the constitution that abolished the non-partisan caretaker government system.

The verdict removes an obstacle to reintroducing the system for holding parliamentary elections.

The court also restored the provision for holding referendums for amending the constitution.

The abolition of the non-partisan caretaker government system has destroyed democracy, the process of free and fair elections, independence of the judiciary and the sovereignty of people, which are the basic structures of the constitution, observed the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury.

Delivering the verdict on two writ petitions, the bench also said the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will make the final decision about the restoration of the caretaker government system as review petitions on a verdict on the amendment are pending with the apex court.

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman, however, believes the next two polls can be held under caretaker governments even if review petitions remain pending with the Appellate Division.

A full bench of the Appellate Division is scheduled for January 19 to hear three review petitions that challenge a 2011 verdict that scrapped the system. The BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and five citizens lodged the petitions.

After the verdict was delivered yesterday, Mohammad Shishir Manir, a lawyer for Jamaat, told The Daily Star, "The Parliament has to pass a law in line with the judgment. Since there is no parliament now, the government may pass an ordinance."

Contacted, eminent lawyer Shahdeen Malik said, "Reviving the caretaker government system certainly reflects people's expectations."

"Articles 7A and 7B [abolished yesterday] were in conflict with the constitution, so it was expected that these would be declared unconstitutional. Bringing back the provision for a referendum is also a welcome decision."

"Overall, everyone would be happy with the judgment. It will pave the way for

ISSUES LEFT WITH JS

- Keeping secularism, socialism, state religion, nationalism in the constitution
- Whether displaying portrait of Bangabandhu at govt offices be mandatory
- If March 7 speech of Bangabandhu should be kept in the constitution
- Keeping reserved seats for women in parliament

a more democratic Bangladesh."

Citing writ petitions and lawyers' arguments, the HC bench led by Justice Farah Mahbub observed that after the caretaker government system was abolished, the country saw three consecutive elections that did not reflect the will of the people and led to the July uprising, the HC said.

The bench observed that the 13th amendment introduced the caretaker government system in 1996 to ensure free and fair election and to strengthen democracy, and therefore, the 13th amendment became part of the basic structure of the constitution.

The Appellate Division in its judgment on the 13th amendment had asked for holding two national elections (10th and 11th) under the caretaker government system, but after the 15th amendment, those elections were held under partisan governments.

On June 30, 2011, the Jatiya Sangsad passed the 15th amendment. With that, Islam's status as the state religion was retained and "Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim" with its translation "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful/ In the name of the Creator, the Merciful" became a part of the constitution.

The amendment also introduced the provisions for holding parliamentary polls within 90 days before a parliament's tenure ends; gave more powers to the war crimes tribunal; and made it mandatory to display the portrait of Father of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

BNP, Jamaat content with HC verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday welcomed the High Court's verdict that declared parts of the 15th amendment unconstitutional, removing a major obstacle to reinstating the non-party caretaker government system.

BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said people's expectations had been met.

In his immediate reaction to the HC ruling, Mosharraf said Sheikh Hasina had scrapped the caretaker government system to serve her party's interests, which led to "one-party rule" and ultimately to the fall of the previous Awami League government.

"People wanted it [caretaker government], and our leader Khaleda Zia introduced the caretaker government system. Sheikh Hasina abolished the system to secure her party's interests, paving the way for one-party rule and killing of democracy."

"As a result, the Awami League government fell, and Sheikh Hasina had to step down," Mosharraf told The Daily Star.

The BNP leader said three elections under caretaker governments allowed people to vote freely and change governments as per their will.

"The BNP came to power in 1991, Awami League took over in 1996, and the BNP returned to power in 2001. This shows that people were able to vote freely

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Crucial door now open for restoring democracy

Says Badiul Alam



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Badiul Alam Majumdar, one of the five writ petitioners challenging the 15th amendment, expressed satisfaction with the High Court's verdict yesterday declaring two articles of the act – regarding the abolition of the non-partisan caretaker government system – unconstitutional and nullified.

"This historic verdict has opened a critical

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TK 80,000CR GRAFT ALLEGATION

ACC to probe Hasina, family

Nowfel, ex-DB boss Harun sued for amassing illegal wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday decided to launch a probe into allegations that Sheikh Hasina and her family members embezzled Tk 80,000 crore from nine priority projects.

The family members facing allegations are Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, her sister Sheikh Rehana, and Rehana's daughter Tulip Siddiq, a British lawmaker.

The projects are Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Ashrayan and seven other projects under Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority and Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, ACC Director General (prevention) Akhtar Hossain told reporters yesterday.

"The decision to investigate Sheikh Hasina and her family members was made at a meeting of the commission," he said.

According to a complaint filed with the ACC, the aforementioned individuals embezzled Tk 59,000 crore from the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant through several banks in Malaysia.

Another complaint said Hasina embezzled Tk 21,000 crore from Ashrayan and seven other projects by abusing power and fraud.

The development came two days after the High Court issued a rule questioning the legality of the ACC's inaction

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INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

Remittance soaring but workers still neglected

Despite a record increase in remittance, experts and migrant workers criticise the government for not taking meaningful steps to improve their welfare. Workers say their safety, health, and dignity remain neglected. Calls for reforms include reducing migration costs, regulating recruitment agencies, and ensuring proper job security and payment for workers abroad. Bangladesh earned US \$24.24 billion, a historic high, till November this year in remittance, despite the number of migrant workers declining.

STORY ON PAGE 3



Standing in long queues, people buy edible oil and pulses at subsidised prices from a TCB truck in the capital's Kakrail yesterday. The demand for OMS goods has grown sharply due to high prices of essentials.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CASES AGAINST HASINA, OTHERS

ICT extends probe time by 2 months

Asks law enforcers to explain why they failed to arrest Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday extended by two months the deadline for completing the investigations into two cases against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Alongside her, former roads and bridges minister and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, and 44 others are currently facing charges in a case of crimes against humanity and genocide.

Hasina is the lone accused in the other case on the same charges.

A three-member bench, led by Justice Golam Mortuza Mazumder, who is also the chairman of the ICT, passed the order and set February 18 as the new deadline.

The probe reports in both cases were due yesterday, but the investigating agency requested for more time, saying the process is following international standards, according to the prosecution.

Yesterday, 16 prominent individuals, including former ministers, bureaucrats, and other high-profile figures, were produced before the tribunal for the hearing on one of the cases.

However, Hasina, Quader, and some others, who were accused in both cases, could not be arrested as they are currently either in hiding or have fled the country.

The tribunal questioned law enforcement agencies as to why they had failed to arrest Quader, despite the issuance

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5 serene escapes in Dhaka to reconnect with nature



PHOTOS: STAR

TASMIAH RAHMAN

In the heart of a buzzing metropolis, finding time to reconnect with nature can be tricky. Amid the cacophony of the urban sprawl, there are serene pockets of nature offering a refreshing escape from the daily grind.

Whether you yearn for a soulful morning walk, a reflective moment by the water, or a lively catch-up with friends, here are five nature retreats that can bestow moments of tranquillity in this concrete jungle.

BALDAH GARDEN: A HISTORIC GREEN HAVEN

Nestled in the heart of Old Dhaka, Baldah Garden is a haven of natural beauty. As you step into the century-old botanical garden, an array of rare species of plants welcomes you. The diverse foliage, like orchids, cacti, conservatory and wall plants, offer a scenic break.

The historic Joy House in Baldah Garden is a tranquil territory, where Rabindranath Tagore once found inspiration to write his poem “Camelia”. Nearby, the Shankanand Pond beholds picturesque aquatic plants.

Moreover, there is also a sundial which you should definitely

check out. Overall, the garden is a soothing setting for morning walks or slow nostalgic strolls.

RAMNA PARK: NATURE’S HEART IN THE CITY

Whether you’re looking to spend quality time with family and friends or simply bask in the soft warmth of the low noon sun – Ramna Park offers a peaceful oasis right in the heart of Dhaka.

Sprawling with greenery, the park is home to a rich variety of plant life, including fruit-bearing trees, vibrant flowers, medicinal plants, and forestry species. The intricate walkways wind through a tapestry of green, while wooden decks over the lake offer a perfect viewpoint to admire the calm waters.

Morning runs or yoga sessions beneath the towering trees of Ramna Park are especially invigorating. A range of outdoor eateries are also available at the gates to meet your cravings!

MIRPUR BERIBANDH: WHERE THE RIVER MEETS CITY

Mirpur Beribandh, a riverfront retreat on the bank of the Turag, offers city dwellers an exciting respite. The vast highways open up a stunning view of a series of trees and distant villages. Large

boats and smaller vessels glide through the waters, painting a picture of the riverine country forgotten in the city. Visitors can enjoy boat rides and the abundance of a refreshing river breeze while enjoying quick bites or steaming hot tea.

Entertainment parks, floating restaurants, and a footbridge make this spot vibrant with visitors. Before the sun sets, the area becomes enchanting, with the river reflecting hues of orange and gold.

MIRPUR BOTANICAL GARDEN: A PLANT LOVER’S PARADISE

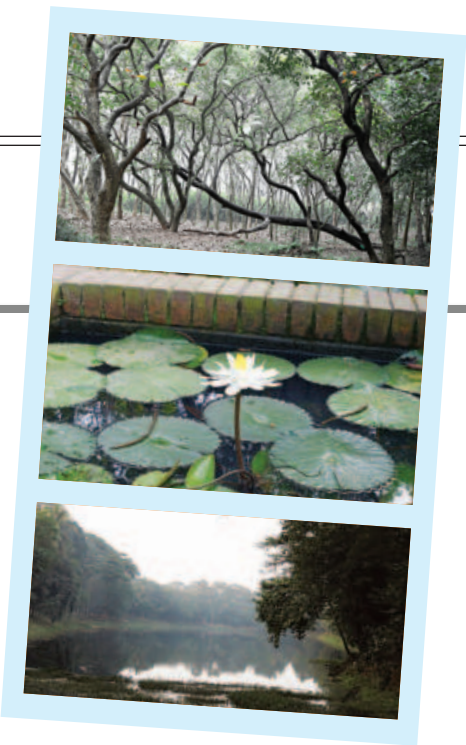
In the ever-bustling concrete city, Mirpur Botanical Garden offers a verdant sanctuary. The 84-hectare garden is home to more than 80,000 plants, herbs and shrubs.

The serpentine lakes and sprawling lawns invite leisurely strolls. Tree corridors, tunnels and seating corners provide an enjoyable experience. The rose garden offers a picturesque scene, especially in winter when a diverse species of roses bloom.

For botany enthusiasts and city dwellers alike, the Mirpur Botanical Garden is the perfect spot to rejuvenate your spirit.

DIABARI, UTTARA: A QUICK OUTING IN NATURE

For an unplanned getaway into the outdoors, Diabari can be a great option. Situated in Uttara, Diabari is well-known for its pockets of green spaces and calm surroundings, providing stunning sunset views and serene wetlands. Visitors can take boat rides, indulge in therapeutic kayaking sessions and take strolls down the hamlet streets. The cool breeze and golden sunlight filtering through the trees create a calming ambience. This location is ideal for a quick hangout for afternoon delights and tea-time treats while enjoying the serene environment.



Polls to take place by June 30, 2026

Says CA’s press secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The next parliamentary polls are expected to take place by June 30, 2026, said Shafiqul Alam, the press secretary to the chief adviser.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has given a clear cut roadmap about the election, he said at a press conference yesterday when asked about the BNP’s demand for a definite roadmap for the next general elections.

It is the Election Commission’s job to announce the election schedule and the government’s role is to facilitate the EC, said Azad Majumdar, deputy press secretary to the chief adviser.

About enforced disappearances, Alam said all involved, including political parties and members of law enforcement agencies, will be brought to justice.

When asked how the Awami League leaders and members of law enforcement agencies left the country after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina on August 5, Alam said that the government is reviewing the matter.

The government has no concrete

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Crucial door now open

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pathway for the revival of democracy,” said Majumdar, who filed the petition along with four other prominent citizens on August 18, 2011.

The amendment was enacted by the parliament on June 30, 2011 during the Awami League government’s tenure, with its gazette notification issued just three days later.

The court observed that the provisions undermined democracy, which is the fundamental structure of the constitution.

Additionally, the court nullified several clauses added through the 15th amendment, including Articles 7A, 7B, and 44(2), citing their inconsistency with the constitution.

The AL government became authoritarian with the help of the 15th amendment and with the

judgement of Justice ABM Khairul Haque, according to Majumdar, also the secretary of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik.

The amendment institutionalised authoritarian governance in two ways: by stipulating holding elections under a partisan government and introducing Article 7A into the constitution, which prohibited criticism of the constitution and labelling such actions as seditions.

“I believe this is a landmark judgement – a seminal ruling,” said Majumdar, also the chief of the Election Reform Commission.

While the judgment has opened a significant door for the return of democracy, whether democracy actually returns depends on future actions.

“Democratic progress requires

behavioural changes. If politicians and stakeholders reform their conduct and fulfil their responsibilities, democracy will be restored. Otherwise, it will not.”

Majumdar said he and many others had been vocal against the 15th amendment despite extremely hostile conditions and the court recognised and expressed gratitude to them.

Various entities – including the BNP, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Gono Forum, organisations and individuals – later joined the proceedings of the writ petition as interveners. During the hearing, legal arguments were presented by representatives of all petitioners.

“We filed this writ to uphold truth and justice and to ensure a functional democratic system. Today, I am overjoyed for the entire nation.”

ACC to probe Hasina, family

FROM PAGE 1

and failure to investigate into an allegation against Hasina of embezzling money from the Rooppur plant.

Nationalist Democratic Movement Chairman Bobby Hajjaj filed the petition, referring to reports published by different newspapers.

Hasina fled to India on August 5 in the face of a mass uprising led by students.

In another development, the ACC filed cases against former education minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel, former additional deputy commissioner (Detective Branch) Harun or Rashid, his wife Shirin

Akhtar, and his brother ABMS Shahriar.

The case statement says Nawfel acquired illegal assets worth Tk 2.94 crore, Harun Tk 17.51 crore, Shirin Tk 10.76 crore, and Shahriar Tk 12.96 crore.

The graft watchdog also sued Hasina’s former personal assistant Jahangir Alam and his wife Kamrun Nahar.

Jahangir was accused of illegally acquiring Tk 18.29 crore and Kamrun Tk 6.80 crore.

evidence of suspicious transactions of Tk 626 crore in his bank accounts, said sources.

ACC sources said around Tk 626.65 crore was deposited across

23 accounts in eight banks. The accounts are of Jahangir and entities he owns. Of the sum, Tk 624.60 crore was withdrawn.

The ACC investigators deem these transactions highly irregular and suspicious, they added.

The former prime minister during a press conference on July 14 shared how one of her former “peons” accumulated over Tk 400 crore and enjoyed extravagant helicopter trips.

Without mentioning his name, she said she took action against him.

That night, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit froze the bank accounts of Jahangir and Kamrun for 30 days.

ICT extends probe time by 2 months

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of a warrant. They were ordered to submit an explanation before the court within the next 15 days.

Media reports suggest that Quader had remained in the country for a good while even after the ouster of Hasina on August 5.

Meanwhile, Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said the government has been unaware of Quader’s whereabouts since the fall of the AL government.

THE HEARING

The 16 accused were brought to the tribunal between 10:00am and 11:00am.

They included former law minister Anisul Huq; industries minister Amir Hossain Amur; food minister Qamrul Islam; civil aviation and tourism minister Lt Col (Retd) Faruk Khan; Workers’ Party President Rashed Khan Menon; Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu; former adviser on power, energy, and mineral resources Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury; and former ministers Kamal Ahmed Majumder and Golam Dastagir Gazi.

Others brought to the court included former justice Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and former home secretary Jahangir Alam.

Of the 16 produced before the ICT yesterday, 15 were shown arrested in the case on November 18, with the exception of former agriculture minister Abdur Razzaque, who was

on remand at the time in a separate murder case filed on August 21. He was arrested on October 14.

Razzaque was produced before the ICT and shown arrested in the genocide case yesterday.

Before being presented in the courtroom, the 16 were seen discussing freely in the lock-up room for about half an hour. The hearing began around 11:15am in a packed courtroom.

Azizur Rahman Dulu, a defence lawyer representing Lt Col (Retd) Faruk Khan and Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, claimed his phone was seized upon entering the courtroom. Responding to this, the judges present said it was an established practice to not allow phones inside the courtroom.

Dulu also claimed he had requested a copy of the allegations against his clients but had not yet received it.

The judges then said that, as it was part of an ongoing investigation, it was not the appropriate time to provide copies of the allegations.

Around 1:00pm – half an hour after the hearing ended – Zunaid Ahmed Palak was escorted to a prison van.

At that time, journalists asked, “Palak bhai, how are you?”. He gave a brief response and then pressed a finger to his lips.

“Pray for me....I have to keep mum,” he said as he boarded the vehicle.

Later on, Chief Prosecutor Md Tajul Islam briefed journalists about the hearing.

“All the accused assisted the prime accused Sheikh Hasina in initiating and executing the genocide. They were all involved in the decision-making at various levels.

“We informed the tribunal that we are continuing the investigation against Sheikh Hasina, who is accused of crimes against humanity and genocide during the July-August uprising.”

He further said, “For the past 16 years, thousands of people have been subjected to enforced disappearances and inhumane torture in secret detention cells. Many were killed, their bodies tied to heavy cement bags and then thrown into rivers.

“The Commission for Inquiry into Enforced Disappearances found that Sheikh Hasina, her defence adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former DG of the NTMC Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan, and senior police officers Monirul Islam and Md Harun-Or-Rashid were all involved in enforced disappearances. We presented this information to the tribunal.”

Tajul further said, “[It [the tribunal]] has accepted the commission’s report.”

The ICT is currently trying two cases against Sheikh Hasina. In one, she is the sole accused, while in the other, she faces charges alongside 45 others, including Obaidul Quader.

BNP, Jamaat content with

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in the elections held under caretaker governments.”

Mosharraf said people have fought for the last 16 years to restore the caretaker government system.

Accusing the AL of violating the constitution to cling on to power, Mosharraf said the parliamentary polls of 2014, 2018, and 2024 cannot be called elections.

Jamaat, on the other hand, congratulated the nation on the “restoration of voting rights”.

HC scraps part

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Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at all government offices.

The historic speech of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 7, 1971, was placed in the fifth schedule of Bangladesh Constitution through the 15th amendment.

Yesterday, the HC bench also struck down articles 7 (A), 7 (B), 44(2) and 58A of the constitution, declaring them void and unconstitutional.

Article 7(A) of the constitution is regarding the use of force and other unconstitutional means to “abrogate, repeal or suspend” the constitutions or any of its articles.

Article 7(B) makes certain parts of the constitution unamendable “by way of insertion, modification, substitution, repeal or by any other means”.

Article 44(2) says, “Without prejudice to the powers of the High Court Division under article 102, parliament may by law empower any other court, within the local limits of its jurisdiction, to exercise all or any of those powers.”

In the judgement yesterday, the HC bench said even though article 142 of the 12th amendment ensured the provision for referendums, it was abolished by the 15th amendment.

The HC reinstated article 142, saying its scrapping went against the basic structure of the constitution.

In the verdict, the HC said a total of 54 changes, modifications, and substitutions have been brought to the constitution through the 15th amendment.

The court did not delve into other provisions of the 15th amendment that deal with state principles, including secularism, socialism, state religion, nationalism; the issues of displaying the portrait of father of the nation, historic speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 7, 1971; increasing the number of reserved seats for women in parliament from 45 to 50; protection and development of culture and tradition of the tribes, minor races, ethnic sects and communities; protection and improvement of environment and biodiversity; and article 116 of the constitution regarding presidential control over lower court discipline.

The future parliament will decide on these issues on the basis of people’s opinions, said Justice Farah Mahbub.

Article 116 says: “The control (including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising judicial functions shall vest in the President and shall be exercised by him in consultation with the Supreme Court.”

The HC bench said it would not say

anything about article 116 as a rule questioning its constitutionality was pending with the court.

The court also clarified that the interim government is not a caretaker government.

It said the current government is different as it was formed by the president after he sought the opinion of the Appellate Division under article 106 of the constitution.

Article 106 says, “If at any time it appears to the President that a question of law has arisen, or is likely to arise, which is of such a nature and of such public importance that it is expedient to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court upon it, he may refer the question to the Appellate Division for consideration and the division may, after such hearing as it thinks fit, report its opinion thereon to the President.”

Replying to a question, Attorney General Asaduzzaman, however, said the interim government can be renamed a caretaker government as the Appellate Division has given legitimacy to this government.

“For example, the district judges are termed as district judges when they deal with civil cases and the same judges are termed as district and sessions judges when they deal with the criminal cases. In the same way, when the persons of this interim government will function for the caretaker government the government will be termed caretaker government,” the attorney general said.

The HC earlier heard arguments on the three petitions for 12 working days.

One of the writ petitions was filed by Mofazzal Hossain, a freedom fighter from Narayanpara of Naogaon.

On October 19, the HC bench issued a rule asking the government to explain why the 15th amendment should not be declared unconstitutional. It also questioned why actions taken under the amendment should not be invalidated.

On August 19, another HC bench led by Justice Naima Haider, now on leave, issued a similar rule following a writ petition filed by five Badiul Alam Majumdar, Tofail Ahmed, M Hafizuddin Khan, Md Jobirul Hoque Bhuiyan, and Zahrah Rahman.

Apart from them and the state, a few political parties, including the BNP, Jamaat, Gono Forum, and some SC lawyers placed arguments before the HC against the 15th amendment.

LAWYERS’ REACTIONS

After the HC delivered the judgment yesterday, Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman demanded the trial of former chief justices ABM Khairul Haque and Syed Mahmud Hossain for their role in abolishing the caretaker government system.

He said, “They ruined the judiciary. They must be punished.”

Briefing the press at his office, Asaduzzaman said a seven-member bench led by Justice ABM Khairul Haque announced that the caretaker system was unconstitutional, but two more elections could be held under such a government.

“But 16 months later, he reversed his judgment when parliament amended the constitution omitting the caretaker government system,” he said, adding that Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain supported Justice ABM Khairul Haque.

He said Justice Mahmud was instrumental in the destruction of the judiciary.

Due to the judges’ roles, he said, democracy was exiled, crimes against humanity and enforced disappearances happened, and cases were filed against dead people.

The attorney general said it is possible to conduct the next two elections under the caretaker government system even if review petitions remain pending with the Appellate Division.

“There were two parts of Khairul Haque’s judgment. One was about whether the caretaker government was legal or illegal. In that part, there was a divided judgment, but there was no disagreement among judges on the issue of conducting the next two elections under caretaker government,” he added.

Quoting the HC observation, Sharif Bhuiyan, principal lawyer for a writ petitioner, said as democracy and elections are basic structures of the constitution, the caretaker government system became a part of it.

“We filed a review petition on the judgment of Justice Khairul Haque with the Appellate Division which is pending and scheduled for a hearing in the third week of January. If the Appellate Division delivers a verdict in our favour, only then we would be able to say the caretaker government system has been restored,” he said.

BNP’s Vice-Chairman Zainul Abedin said, “People’s will is the basis for changing the constitution, but the previous government did not bother with the people’s will while making the 15th amendment. They made the amendment by putting pressure on the court.”

Barrister Kaiser Kamal said, “The 15th amendment was the final solution for the Awami League to stay in power and for Sheikh Hasina to stay as prime minister forever.”

Lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir said, “Democracy is the basic structure of our constitution, and the court said the caretaker government also became a basic structure of the constitution since it is not possible to conduct free, fair and impartial elections without such a government.”

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Prof Yunus,
Ramos-Horta
eye deeper ties

UNB, Dhaka

The maiden visit as president of Timor-Leste Dr José Ramos-Horta to Bangladesh “ushered in a new era” in the bilateral relations between the two countries, said a joint communique yesterday.

Both the leaders -- Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and President José Ramos-Horta -- expressed optimism for a stronger and deeper partnership for mutual benefits of the two friendly nations.

Both the nations expressed concern over the agony of poverty, rising costs in the most impoverished countries.

They called for the global combined efforts of unlocking finance through writing off debt, streamlining international finance at lowest interest rates, and significantly increasing official development assistance to Small Island Developing

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Passengers had to wait for a long time at Kamalapur Railway Station in Dhaka yesterday, as all trains were delayed by over an hour. The disruption was caused by a blockade at the level crossing near FDC in the Karwan Bazar area, staged by temporary railway workers protesting for unpaid arrears, *inset*. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

WOMEN EMPLOYMENT

Experts seek
region-based
solutions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities should prioritise district or region-based employment models to foster industry growth and create sustainable job opportunities for adolescent and young women, said experts at an event yesterday.

The session, titled “Reforms in Vocational Education, Employability and Market Readiness Agenda on Adolescent and Young Women”, was organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue in partnership with Save the Children International, UCEP Bangladesh, and The Earth Society, held at a hotel in the capital.

The event was centred around findings from a survey titled “Labour Market Assessment 2024: Kishoreganj District”, which surveyed 1,728 respondents (845 adolescent girls and 883 young women) from 108 unions across 13 upazilas of Kishoreganj. The survey revealed several key insights and recommendations for improving employment prospects for young women in the region.

Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, chairman of the Workers’ Rights Commission, highlighted the need to harness the unique characteristics of each district to create specialised job opportunities. He stressed the importance of moving beyond mere training to creating tangible employment prospects based on local traditions and industries.

The survey found that female employment in Kishoreganj is highest in the agricultural sector, with 75

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CA leaves for
Cairo to join
D-8 summit

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus left Dhaka for Egypt early today on a two-day state visit to attend the D-8 Summit scheduled to be held on December 19.

The summit will be held under the theme “Investing in Youth and Supporting SMEs: Shaping Tomorrow’s Economy.”

The heads of government of some other countries, including Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, and Pakistan, will also join the D-8 meet, said Abul Kalam Azad Majumder, deputy press secretary of the chief adviser, during a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

He said Prof Yunus has been focused on youth and that is why he will get scopes to work on youth development at the global forum.



INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

Remittance hits record high,
but workers remain neglected

MD ABBAS and MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Despite a record increase in remittance this year, experts and migrant workers say the government has yet to take meaningful steps to alleviate their suffering or ensure their benefits and welfare.

Data from Bangladesh Bank shows that up to November of 2024, remittance stood at \$24.24 billion, an all-time high, and is expected to surpass \$26 billion by year-end. This is despite a decline in the number of migrant workers compared to the last two years.

In 2024, 9,06,355 Bangladeshis travelled abroad for work up to November, compared to 1.3 million in 2023 and 1.1 million in 2022.

During the pandemic, remittance reached \$22.77 billion in the 2020-21 fiscal year and US \$23.91 billion in the last fiscal year.

Mustafa K Mujeri, executive director of Institute for Inclusive Finance and Development, credited the rise in remittance to shifts in its sources.

“It is a good sign that remittance is now coming from non-traditional markets like the USA,” he said.

He explained that traditional markets usually recruit low-skilled workers, resulting in lower remittances despite higher outflows

EARNINGS OVER THREE YEARS

2024: \$24.24b [Till Nov]
FY 2023: \$23.91b
FY 2022: \$22.77b

“The government does not care about how we live, our health issues, or whether we are safe. Their only concern is how much money we send.”

FARHAD HOSSAIN
A worker in Oman

of workers.

Mujeri, a former chief economist of Bangladesh Bank, also said a reduced gap between formal and informal channels, such as hundi, has contributed to the higher remittance.

“To sustain this flow, the government must maintain the low gap and address inefficiencies,” he said.

He urged authorities to conduct studies

on foreign labour markets and prioritise upskilling workers.

However, migrant workers say while their contributions to the economy continue to grow, they receive little in return.

Farhad Hossain, a worker in Oman, said, “The government receives over US \$22 billion annually from us but makes no effort to ensure our basic needs. They don’t care about how we live, our health issues, or whether we are safe. Their only concern is how much money we send.”

“What will happen if we stop sending remittances? The government knows we are vital to the economy but refuses to treat us with dignity. Even the embassies do not respect us; they treat us like slaves,” he added.

At least 10 migrant workers from Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Oman, and several other Middle Eastern countries expressed similar frustrations.

Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC’s Migration and Youth Platform, said, “We haven’t seen any significant initiatives over the past four months to address their suffering. These fighters keep our economy afloat, yet they are denied the rights and respect they deserve.”

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

CYBER PROTECTION

Draft of ordinance
needs thorough
review: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh has urged the interim government to allow at least a month for a thorough review and inclusive consultation process before implementing the draft Cyber Protection Ordinance, 2024.

TIB warned that issuing the ordinance without adequate analysis and input from relevant stakeholders could undermine its intended purpose. The organisation made this request in a letter to the government on Sunday, reads a press release provided yesterday.

TIB Executive Director

Iftikharuzzaman said the repeal of the controversial Cyber Security Act, which was criticised for stifling dissent and media freedom, had brought relief to citizens. The new ordinance, he hopes, will focus on ensuring cyber security, preventing cyber crimes, and facilitating

Issuing such an important ordinance without sufficient stakeholder feedback risks disrupting its core objectives.

IFTIKHARUZZAMAN
TIB Executive Director

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Revive info
commission
immediately

Demands Tathya Adhikar Forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tathya Adhikar Forum (Rights to Information Forum) yesterday demanded that the interim government appoint the chief commissioner and other commissioners of the Information Commission immediately to resume its functions.

Shaheen Anam, convener of the platform, made the demand in a press statement.

She urged the government to form a five-member review committee in this regard under section 14(1) of the Right to Information Act, 2009.

Activities of the commission have been shelved since the resignation of three of its commissioners in September. This is hampering the fair use of the right to information act, said the statement.

There is no system now to hold officials of different government agencies accountable if they refuse or fail to provide information to the public. As a result, people’s applications go unheard, disputes remain unresolved, and no solutions are found, it also said.

Not just ensuring accountability of government officials, the right to information act also increases awareness among people, develops quality of services, and can help increase the proximity of the people with the government, it added.

The statement further said there is no alternative to the law to establish good governance.



A man transports a large bundle of iron rods on a shallow engine-run vehicle in Noakhali. The precariously placed rods pose a serious risk of falling on him during the bumpy ride along a dilapidated road in Subarnachar’s Char Katra area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

CICA MEETING

Bangladesh
urges greater
regional
cooperation

DIPLOMATIC
CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Adviser Md Touhid Hossain has called for enhanced collaboration among Asian countries to ensure regional peace, security, and stability.

Speaking at the 7th Ministerial Council Meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Baku, Azerbaijan, via video link, he stressed the need for collective action to tackle the threats of war, conflict, climate change, and natural disasters.

Touhid emphasised the importance of dialogue grounded in compassion and solidarity, urging CICA members to work together for lasting peace and stability across Asia and beyond. He highlighted CICA’s role

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

BSMRAAU syndicate meeting held



STAR REPORT

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University (BSMRAAU) held its 15th syndicate meeting yesterday in the university's conference room, said a press release.

The meeting was chaired by Vice Chancellor Air Vice Marshal AKM Manirul Bahar, OSP, BSP, ndc, hdmc, afwc, psc, ADWC.

In his opening remarks, the VC highlighted the university's mission as an aviation and space technology education and research centre. He emphasised BSMRAAU's role in preparing the youth to face the challenges of the new millennium and the 4th Industrial Revolution through skill development and innovation.

Key achievements since the 14th syndicate meeting were discussed, including workshops, visits, and events.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 3

as a dynamic platform for fostering confidence and cooperation, saying its success in addressing various global challenges and its positive impact on economic, environmental, and humanitarian issues.

Bangladesh, a member since 2014, reaffirmed its commitment to CICA and its readiness to contribute, particularly in the fields of information technology, natural disaster management, and environmental protection, where it currently co-chairs CICA's initiatives.

The meeting also marked the handover of CICA's chairmanship from Kazakhstan to Azerbaijan for the next two years. The gathering, attended by foreign ministers and heads of international organisations, adopted a statement commemorating the 25th anniversary of CICA's founding principles.



Marking Victory Day, Barishal Reporters Unity organised a two-day exhibition on the 1971 Liberation War at its office, which ended yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Draft

FROM PAGE 3

investigations and judicial proceedings. However, he raised concerns that the ordinance, resembling the Digital Security Act and the Cyber Security Act, could still infringe on citizens' freedom of speech and expression.

Media sources indicate that the draft has already received initial approval from the Advisory Council on December 12, 2024.

If tekharruzzaman said issuing such an important ordinance without sufficient stakeholder feedback risks disrupting its core objectives. He recommended that the government allocate at least one month for experts and stakeholders to review the draft, ensuring the ordinance is thoroughly assessed before being enacted.

Prof Yunus

FROM PAGE 3

States, LDCs and climate vulnerable nations.

Both the countries believe that it would be a leap forward in international solidarity if all OECD countries were to allocate 1 percent of their national GDP to ODA, as it would bring a positive effect on poverty rates, food security, access to basic health services, education, electricity, drinking water, sanitation, housing or social security, with multiplier effects on the diversification of economies, especially in agriculture.

At the official invitation of Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus,

President Ramos Horta paid an official visit to Bangladesh from December 14 to 17.

He delivered a lecture at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) yesterday.

During the visit, the president paid deep homage to the martyrs of the "Liberation War in 1971" and "July-August Revolution 2024" who made supreme sacrifice for an independent and discrimination free Bangladesh. President José Ramos Horta recalled with gratitude the contribution of the Bangladesh Peacekeeping forces in Timor-Leste in 2002.

The wonder

FROM PAGE 5

Girani, Abdul Aziz, and Nurul Islam are among the freedom fighters of the Kaderia Bahini noted for their bravery in the war.

After the independence, Kader Siddique was honoured with the title of "Bir Uttam" for his extraordinary contributions in the Liberation War, while 16 others from the force got different awards -- two with "Bir Bikram" and 14 with "Bir Protik".

Kader Siddique and his Kaderia Bahini surrendered their arms to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on Bindubasini Boys' High School premises on January 24, 1972.

Remittance hits

FROM PAGE 3

Shariful attributed the decline in number of migrant workers to the shutdown of labour markets in Malaysia and Oman.

He said the government did not address high migration costs. He also called for tough measures to control recruiting agencies.

Prof Tasneem Siddiqui, founding chair of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, expressed disappointment that the government has not yet formed a commission to address migrant workers' issues.

Mentioning migrant issues in the government's white paper is a positive step but stressed the need for concrete action, she

stated.

"The government must reduce the number of recruiting agencies, improve monitoring in destination countries, and ensure jobs and regular payment of salaries for migrant workers," she added.

Prof Tasneem called for the repatriation and rehabilitation of workers who do not receive jobs or salaries abroad.

She emphasised the need to stop recruiting agencies from purchasing visas at inflated prices to lower migration costs.

"We want a proper migration process, even if it reduces the number of workers going abroad," she said.

Experts seek

FROM PAGE 3


percent of women engaged in this field.

While the service sector accounts for 21.6 percent of female employment, it remains underdeveloped. The industrial sector offers limited roles for women, prompting suggestions for industrial development, skills training, and targeted investment to create more opportunities.

The survey also noted that 50 percent of respondents were open to working outside their locality, with many young women and adolescent girls willing to relocate for work. Marriage was cited as the primary reason for 53.6 percent of respondents discontinuing their education.

Recommendations included business training for young women, enhanced digital literacy, career awareness, and apprenticeships tailored to age-specific needs.

The event was chaired by Rasheda K Choudhury, a member of CPD's Board of Trustees.



NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY

Center of Excellence in Higher Education

TENDER NOTICE

Tender No. NSU/24-25-T01

North South University is inviting sealed offers from bona fide/ reputed organisations/ distributors/ business partners/ agents for supplying desktop computer, digital podium for North South University as described in the tender schedule.


Detail of the items mentioned below:

Lot: 1- Core i9 desktop computer
Lot: 2- Core i7 desktop computer
Lot: 3- Core i5 desktop computer
Lot: 4- Digital podium

Interested bidders may collect schedule of tender from **Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka-1229** within the banking hour on all working days till **January 8, 2025** by paying non-refundable amount of taka 1,000.00 (one thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of **"North South University"** along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **January 9, 2024 by 2:15 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Internal Affairs
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229
Phone : +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204, **Fax:** +88-02-55668202
E-mail to: procurement@northsouth.edu, www.northsouth.edu



এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা
ঢাকা-১২০৮।

পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ইডিসিএল নিম্নোক্ত আইটেমগুলি প্রকৃত স্থানীয় প্রস্তুতকারী/ সরবরাহকারীদের (সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যবসার সাথে জড়িত) নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহবান করছেঃ-

ক্রমিক নং	দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ	বিবরণ	পরিমাণ	আনুষ্ট মানি	দরপত্র শিডিউলের মূল্য (অফারথযোগ্য)	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
০১।	ইডিসিএল/ক্রয়/স্থানীয়/ পুনঃ দরপত্র/২০২৪/৪৭৫ তারিখঃ ১৭/১২/২০২৪ইং	০২(দুই) প্রকার প্রিন্টেড এ্যালু এ্যালু ব্লিস্টার বক্স {02 (two) Kinds of printed Alu Alu Blister Box} (সিডিউল মোতাবেক)	১,১০,০০০ পিস	২.৫%	টাকা ৭৫০.০০ প্রতি সেট	৩০/১২/২০২৪ইং বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা	৩০/১২/২০২৪ইং বেলা ১২.১৫ ঘটিকা
০২।	ইডিসিএল/ক্রয়/স্থানীয়/ পুনঃ দরপত্র/২০২৪/৪৭৬ তারিখঃ ১৭/১২/২০২৪ইং	১৭ (সতেরো) প্রকার প্রিন্টেড বক্স {17 (seventeen) Kinds of printed Box} (সিডিউল মোতাবেক)	৭,৯৬,৫০০ পিস	২.৫%	টাকা ১,২৫০.০০ প্রতি সেট	০২/০১/২০২৫ ইং বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা	০২/০১/২০২৫ ইং বেলা ১২.১৫ ঘটিকা

সকল কার্যদিবসে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে উপরোক্ত কার্যালয় হতে শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলীসহ দরপত্র শিডিউল ক্রয় করা যাবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, যাদের ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন নাই তাদের দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করার প্রয়োজন নাই। দরপত্র খোলার দিনে কোন দরপত্র শিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হবে না। কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

(৫ কলাম x৫ ইঞ্চি)

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CORRECTION NOTICE

This is for kind information of all concerned that as per 'BRPD Circular No.-54' dated 12 December 2024, the acceptable age limit of applicants mentioned in the Recruitment Circular for Management Trainee Officer and Trainee Assistant Officer (General) of Standard Bank PLC. published in The Daily Prothom Alo and The Daily Star on 15 December 2024 has hereby been increased to 32 years as on 1 December 2024.

All other requirements will remain unchanged.

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ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

শিক্ষাবর্ষঃ ২০২৩-২০২৪

বিদেশি ভাষার নাম	আরবি, চীনা, ইংরেজী, ফরাসি, জার্মানি, হিব্রি, ইতালিয়ান, জাপানি, কোরিয়ান, মালয়, ফার্সি, রাশিয়ান, স্প্যানিশ, তুর্কি এবং বাংলা (প্রথমাংশ বিদেশি শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য)।
কোর্সের মেয়াদ	১৫০ ঘণ্টা (০১ বছরে সমাপ্য)
শিক্ষা কার্যক্রমসমূহের নাম	এগিয়েটারি সার্টিফিকেট কোর্স। ইংরেজী ভাষার জন্য প্রি-ইন্টারমিডিয়েট ও ইন্টারমিডিয়েট সার্টিফিকেট কোর্স
ক্রাশের ব্যারিকাল	প্রতি ক্লাস ২ ঘণ্টা করে, সপ্তাহে ২/৩ দিন।
ভর্তির ন্যূনতম যোগ্যতা	এইচ.এস.সি./সমন্বিত পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ। ন্যূনতম দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/বি গ্রেড/জিপিএ ২.৫ থাকতে হবে। ইংরেজী ভাষা কোর্সটি শুধুমাত্র ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যয়নরত নিম্নমিত স্নাতক শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য।
আবেদনপত্র সঙ্গ্রহ (অনলাইন ও অফলাইন)	ক) জনতা ব্যাংক, চি.এস.সি. (ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়) শাখা থেকে নগদ টাকার বিনিময়েও ভর্তির আবেদন সঙ্গ্রহ করা যাবে। খ) আধুনিক ভাষা ইনস্টিটিউটের নির্ধারিত ওয়েবসাইট https://portal.iml.du.ac.bd/Other-registration এর মাধ্যমে ভর্তির জন্য নির্ধারিত ফর্ম অনলাইনে পাওয়া যাবে, যা যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে (i) ১ কপি ছবি ও (ii) নিজ স্বাক্ষর (৮০x৮০ কেবির নিচে) এর স্ক্যানড কপি আপলোড করতে হবে।
আবেদন বাদ্য ফিস জমা (অনলাইন ও অফলাইন)	ক) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যয়নরত বর্তমান শিক্ষার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (খ) ভূতপূর্ব ও অন্যান্য শিক্ষার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে ৭০০/- (সাতশত) টাকা
আবেদনপত্র জমা	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যয়নরত বর্তমান শিক্ষার্থীদের স্ব-স্ব বিভাগের চেয়ারম্যান/ইনস্টিটিউট পরিচালকের স্বাক্ষরকৃত আবেদনপত্র এবং ভূতপূর্ব ও অন্যান্য শিক্ষার্থীদের আপলোডকৃত আবেদনপত্রের সাথে এল.এস.সি. ও এইচ.এস.সি./সমন্বিত পরীক্ষার সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি সহ আধুনিক ভাষা ইনস্টিটিউটের ১২৪নং অফিস কক্ষে আপাদী ২২শে ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ তারিখ থেকে ২২শে জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে জমা দিতে হবে।

ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত ব্যাপারে যাবতীয় তথ্য ইনস্টিটিউটের ওয়েবসাইট এবং নোটিশ বোর্ডে প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে।


অধ্যাপক মোহাম্মদ আব্বাস কামাল
পরিচালক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)

GD-1204



Department of Geography and Environment

University of Dhaka

75th Anniversary Celebration

31 January 2025
Qazi Motahar Hossain Bhaban
University of Dhaka

Registration

Starts:	Ends:	Mode:
9 December 2024	15 January 2025	Offline: Department Office Online: Google form: https://forms.gle/YoYiYqSCTp2Hq9JY8



Registration	Fees:
Alumni	1500 BDT
With Spouse	2500 BDT
Per Child (10+ yrs)	1000 BDT
Per Child (below 10yrs)	500 BDT
Current Students	500 BDT
PMEPMSD Students	1000 BDT

Payment Methods:

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Nagad (personal): +88 01575077033 (preferable); +88 01819629965 (alternative)

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Agrani Bank PLC, Dhaka University Branch, Dhaka



bKash payment

Highlights

- Grand Opening
- Souvenir
- Academic Seminar
- Remembrance
- Networking
- Food and Beverage
- Exhibition
- Food Corner
- Cultural Program
- Raffle Draw

Contact:
Professor Dr. Kazi Md. Fazlul Haq
Member Secretary
Phone: +88 01819007362 (personal), 01910784145 (office)
email: 75th.geoenv@gmail.com

**Organized by:**
Department of Geography and Environment, University of Dhaka
in collaboration with Geography and Environment Alumni Association

GD-1203

GD- 1213

‘Priyo Maloti’ offers a fresh, authentic narrative: Mehazabien

Mehazabien’s excitement was visible while speaking about the experience, “It feels great, really great. I’ll finally be able to see myself on the big screen, and the audience will get to see me in this new light as well.”

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

After 15 years of dominating television and digital platforms, prominent actress Mehazabien Chowdhury is ready to take on a new challenge: the silver screen. The celebrated actress, who has gained immense popularity for her work in dramas and OTT platforms, is now set to star in two films, marking her debut in cinema.

Both of her films, *Priyo Maloti* and *Saba*, have already received international recognition, having been screened at multiple film festivals abroad. However, it is with *Priyo Maloti* that Mehazabien will make her official theatrical debut.

Mehazabien’s excitement was visible while speaking about the experience, “It feels great, really great. I’ll finally be able to see myself on the big screen, and the audience will get to see me in this new light as well.”

Priyo Maloti, directed by Shankha Dasgupta, is a story deeply rooted in the lives of ordinary people. “It’s our story, the story of our lives. It’s completely original. The audience will get to experience a film with a fresh, authentic narrative,” Mehazabien explained. “There is always a demand for good stories, and this film delivers just that.”

The actress, who has garnered a reputation for portraying complex characters, finds the role of Maloti particularly challenging. “It was tough. It wasn’t easy at all. The character was a real challenge,” she admitted.

When asked about the film’s thematic focus, Mehazabien candidly responded, “To be honest, *Priyo Maloti* is a story about women. It captures the journey of women’s lives, their struggles, and their resilience.”

The plot follows Maloti, whose life is



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

upended by a fire that leaves her husband missing. With no government assistance forthcoming, she is forced to embark on a difficult journey to secure a living, setting the stage for the narrative’s emotional depth. The film, based on a true story, highlights the trials and tribulations of those left behind in the wake of personal tragedy.

Mehazabien believes that the story will resonate with the audience on a deep level. “I believe that the story will move people. It’s a narrative that will linger in their minds.”

She also spoke highly of the director,

Shankha Dasgupta, praising his meticulous approach. “He has crafted this film with such care. All of us, the entire cast and crew, gave it our all, with complete dedication and love,” she said.

Priyo Maloti is poised to bring Mehazabien’s talent to the forefront of cinema, with audiences eagerly awaiting her first appearance on the big screen.

Mehazabien’s transition from television to cinema, marked by her involvement in meaningful, nuanced films, signals a new chapter in her already illustrious career.



‘Paatal Lok’ season 2 teaser dropped

Amazon Prime Video has dropped a gripping teaser for the much-awaited second season of *Paatal Lok*, showcasing Jaideep Ahlawat’s gritty return as Hathiram Chaudhary. The teaser features Hathiram in a brutal fight, bloodied yet defiant, ending with the chilling line: “The Door to Hell Opens Soon.”

Prime Video shared the teaser with the caption: “Mausam badalne wala hai. #PaatalLokOnPrime.”

Created by Sudip Sharma, the new season promises a darker investigation as Hathiram reunites with Ishwak Singh’s Ansari. Directed by Avinash Arun and produced by Karnesh Sharma under Clean Slate Filmz, the release date remains under wraps. Ahlawat was last seen in Netflix’s *Maharaj*.

Bangladesh Int’l Short and Independent Film Festival to showcase 276 films from 100 nations

The 17th Bangladesh International Short and Independent Film Festival, organised by the Bangladesh Short Film Forum, will screen 276 films from over 100 countries from December 20-27 at the National Museum in Dhaka.

The event opens on December 20 at 4pm, with Nahid Islam, adviser to the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and IT, inaugurating. Special guests include photographer Nasir Ali Mamun and fiction writer Mashrur Arefin.

Dedicated to the July-August Uprisings’ martyrs and celebrating SM Sultan’s centenary, highlights include Palestinian films on December 25 and Arab films on December 26. Mostofa Sarwar Farooki will grace the award ceremony on December 27.

COUNTRYWIDE

Dried fish trade thriving in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Huge quantities of dried fish are produced every year in different haor areas of Netrakona while several hundred marginalised people are involved in the business worth hundreds of crores annually.

The district fisheries department has set a target of producing 425 tonnes of dried fish this year as the haor areas in five upazilas of the district see huge quantities of dried fish production this season, Netrakona District Fisheries Officer (DFO) Mohammad Shahjahan Kabir said.

In addition to the flash floods, heavy rainfall has helped much to increase the amount of country fishes in the open waterbodies in different upazilas of the district, the DFO said adding that the production of dried fish was around 400 tonnes last season, which was 230 tonnes the year before.

Alongside the fishers, hundreds of families in the region are involved in this profession and hope to earn a good amount of money by producing different types quality dried fishes, locally called Shutki, this season.

Fishers are enjoying a good business of dries fish due to its high demand and good prices in last couple of years, the DFO further said.

Usually local haors like Dingaputa, Boali, Chhayar, Kirtankhola Haor and the several rivers including Dhanu, Moghra, Satmadhalai and Kongsha are main sources of different country varieties that include puti, chingri, shol, boal, batasi,

tengra and chanda, fishers said.

Many ponds in five upazilas of the district got washed away due to the flash floods this year, resulting a good catch in different haors, fisher Sukhen Das of Gaglajur village in Mohanganj upazila said.

Sukhen, who has been involved with the profession since his boyhood, said last season he produced nearly 150 maunds of dried fishes and expecting a higher production this year than that of the previous year.

“Dried fishes produced here have a good demand across the country,” said Arati Rani Das of the same locality.

Shamim Reza, Khaliajury upazila fisheries officer, said hundreds of families in different haor areas have been producing dried fishes, using traditional methods for decades.

The upazila fisheries department has a target to produce 100 tonnes of dried fishes this year, Shamim said.

Usually fish drying season starts in September every year, when different types of indigenous fishes are available in local haors, and continues till March next year, he said, adding that fishermen set up bamboo platforms in the open field to dry their catches.

While talking, a number of fishermen said they sell their products to buyers, coming from different areas of the country including Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj and Dhaka.

Each kilogramme of dried fish is currently selling for Tk 350 to Tk 500, depending on its variety, fishers said.

Killings at Pilkhana

FROM PAGE 12

High Court that it will not form any committee about the BDR (renamed Border Guard Bangladesh) massacre now as two criminal cases are pending with the Appellate Division and a Dhaka Court over the incident.

Deputy Attorney General Tanim Khan placed a letter from the home ministry to this effect before the HC bench of justices Farah Mahbub and Debasish Roy Chowdhury during the hearing of a writ petition. The bench fixed January 5 for passing an order on this issue.

On December 16, Mahin Sarker, a member of the executive committee of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, in a social media post, has announced to lay siege to the ministry related to the formation of a commission for the BDR killings.

Then Md Sarjis Alam, chief organiser of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, in another social media status supported Mahin and declared a programme at

the Central Shaheed Minar around 11:00am yesterday.

But the home adviser Jahangir Alam addressed the briefing around 9:40am, and said, “The interim government is determined to re-investigate the BDR killings and ensure justice.”

He highlighted that the home ministry has been active in this matter since the formation of the interim government, and as the ministry’s adviser, he had consistently advocated for re-investigating the incident. “I first made the announcement at the home ministry on September 2 and again during my visit to the BGB headquarters on November 4, which received wide coverage in print, electronic, and online media,” he said.

The adviser emphasised his personal commitment to justice for the BDR killings, both as a former member of the army and as a citizen.

Jahangir reiterated the interim government’s commitment to establishing

rights, good governance, and justice, aiming for a discrimination-free society.

He clarified that the exact number of committee members had not yet been finalised but suggested it could be between five and nine, with more representation from the armed forces. The senior-most member of the committee will serve as its head.

After finalising the committee’s composition, discussions will determine the scope of its work and the timeframe for submitting the report.

Regarding whether there will be a committee or a commission, the adviser said, “When we sit, the commission can be formed. It doesn’t seem to be much difference between forming a committee and a commission.”

In response to queries, the adviser said there was no conflict with the law ministry over the committee’s formation and that the government would seek legal opinions, if necessary.

Govt prepared to hold polls

FROM PAGE 12

made and we’re ready to conduct the polls as per the timeline outlined by the honourable chief adviser.”

Regarding local government elections, Nasir Uddin noted that the chief adviser’s statement was about the national parliamentary election, and nothing had been mentioned about local polls.

He highlighted that political parties too have focused on the parliamentary election and the transition of power from the interim government to an elected government.

“As such, the

commission’s focus remains on the parliamentary election for now, with no immediate concerns about local elections.”

Asked whether the EC would announce a formal roadmap for the national election, the CEC said, “The honourable chief adviser has already provided a timeframe. We will proceed accordingly. There are no plans to announce a public roadmap.... We’ll have our own internal action plan to guide us.”

He added that the commission would finalise a new voter list in two months.

“We’ll update and verify the list, as many people have passed away, some have been excluded, and others who shouldn’t be on the list may have been included. There is also duplication. We are receiving such information, and we will work to revise the list. The election will be held based on the updated list.”

Nasir Uddin also assured that the younger generation would be taken into account during the revision process, ensuring their inclusion in the list.

He, however, did not want to comment on Awami League’s participation in the election.

Nothing wrong

FROM PAGE 12

political parties and individuals jealous and they have “begun conspiring”. Such conspiracies are also a threat to the independence and sovereignty of the country, he said.

“Since before 1981, we have faced conspiracies both domestically and internationally. But the BNP has always believed in people’s right to vote.”

Tarique urged BNP leaders to gain people’s trust. “When people vote freely, they think carefully

before casting.

“If we want to repair the state and implement our plans, we must go to power with people’s support.”

Referring to the Awami League and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, he said the autocrat and some of its accomplices had fled, but their conspiracies are here.

“If anyone among us breaches public trust for personal gains, strict action must be taken to prevent them from tarnishing the party’s reputation.”

Promotions

FROM PAGE 12

Commission was separated from the Public Service Commission.

The commission is also considering organising the remaining cadres into five distinct clusters.

Muyeed added that the commission will suggest eliminating the police verification requirement for government jobs and passports.

“Every citizen has the right to obtain a passport. Unless there is a legal restriction, everyone has the right to travel abroad.”

The senior secretary said the reform commission will also propose formation of separate bodies to oversee the health and education sectors as it believes the current structure of the education and health cadres is no longer necessary.

“Education and health are vital sectors for the public. The commission is actively considering offering special benefits to professionals working in these areas. However, the final decision will be made by the government.”

He said the commission has agreed to recommend upgrading Faridpur and Cumilla to administrative divisions. “If the government wishes, it can implement this

recommendation.”

A proposal in this regard was placed at a cabinet meeting in November last year, but it could not be implemented due to economic condition of the country.

Reform commission members Prof Syeda Shahina Sobhan, Mohammad Tarek, Mohammad Ayub Mia, and Md Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan, and student representative Mehadi Hasan attended yesterday’s meeting.

Expressing frustration over the comments from the reform commission members, Administrative Service Association Secretary-General Mahbubur Rahman last night told The Daily Star that the administration cadre officials were deeply disheartened by the reform commission’s comments.

“In a meeting tonight [last night], we discussed the issue and made some decisions. We will soon inform the media about our stance.” He said 25 percent posts of deputy secretary are kept aside for other cadres as per a court order, and the authorities should consider whether the reform commission can raise question over the issue.



Fishermen in Netrakona have turned to drying their catch and preserve them for sell, especially ahead of winter when supply of fish across the country is heightened.

PHOTO: STAR

A step towards restoring democracy

Return of caretaker system could ensure free and fair elections

In a welcome decision, the High Court on December 17 restored the provision for the non-party caretaker government system in Bangladesh and the provision for holding referendums to approve any constitutional amendments. The court rightly observed that the 15th Amendment of the constitution—which abolished the non-party caretaker government system—contradicted the constitution's fundamental framework and undermined key democratic principles. Emphasising that there is no legal bar to reinstating the caretaker government system, the court ruled that while the 15th Amendment is not entirely void, it has compromised the fundamental structure of the constitution. In its observations, the court stated that the core of the constitution lies in democracy, which can only be ensured through free, fair, and credible elections.

Unfortunately, since the passage of the 15th Amendment on June 30, 2011—which annulled the 13th Amendment—Bangladesh has not witnessed a single free or fair election. This has severely damaged the nation's democracy. In fact, it can be argued that democracy effectively ceased to exist under the Awami League regime, which enacted the amendment amid widespread controversy and outrage from nearly all other political parties.

The irony is that the 13th Amendment, which introduced a non-party caretaker government system on March 28, 1996—to ensure all possible aid and assistance to the Election Commission in holding general elections—was passed following intense agitation and mass street protests primarily led by the Awami League itself. Yet in 2011, despite extensive consultations carried out by a parliamentary committee led by senior lawmaker Sajeda Chowdhury, which unanimously recommended retaining the caretaker government provision, Sheikh Hasina, the sitting prime minister at the time, chose to abolish it.

Since then, three parliamentary elections have been held in Bangladesh—in 2014, 2018 and 2024—all of which were either flawed or outright farcical. The 2014 election was boycotted by the main opposition parties; the 2018 election was marred by massive vote rigging the night before polling day; and the 2024 election featured dummy candidates put forth by the Awami League to compensate for the absence of major opposition parties, that once again boycotted it.

Through these farcical elections, the Awami League government grew increasingly authoritarian over time, eradicating all political space for opposition parties and turning the country into a one-party state. Given this history and the consistent failure of partisan governments to hold credible elections, it has become evident that the caretaker government system is one of the main safeguards for ensuring free and fair elections in Bangladesh.

In light of this, we hope the High Court verdict will restore people's voting rights, establish a system for holding free and fair elections, and re-establish democracy in Bangladesh.

Reduce the costs of hajj packages

High costs are discouraging many from registering

It is unfortunate that as the registration deadline for the 2025 hajj has passed, around 51,000 hajj quotas still remain unfulfilled. Reportedly, despite efforts from both the government and private agencies, only 4,800 prospective pilgrims under government management and 71,800 under private management completed their registrations by the December 15 deadline. Reportedly, although the government extended the deadline thrice since November, it could not attract more people to register due to the rising costs associated with hajj packages. This is concerning because it will adversely impact the businesses of private hajj operators in the country, while for the aspiring pilgrims, their spiritual journey to Makkah and Madina will remain a distant dream.

Several factors have reportedly contributed to this situation. While the high registration cost has been a significant deterrent, the distance of accommodation and increased food costs have also discouraged many from registering. Reportedly, while the general package for a Bangladeshi pilgrim costs Tk 5.23 lakh and the special package Tk 7 lakh under private management, the government-managed packages begin at Tk 4.78 lakh, with an additional package available for Tk 5.75 lakh. These prices represent a reduction from last year by Tk 1 lakh and Tk 11,710, respectively. This year, however, the cost of food—Tk 40,000—is not included in the government's hajj package. While pilgrims under the government package were previously kept within 1.5 kilometres of the Haram Sharif, this year the government tried to reduce the price of hajj packages by arranging accommodation three kilometres away from the Haram Sharif. This has created significant challenges for the elderly people. Additionally, the requirement to pay a substantial amount upfront—Tk 3 lakh for registration—is particularly challenging for those from rural areas who often gather the required funds by selling assets over time.

To address the situation, the government and private hajj agencies must urgently consider further decreasing the package costs and introduce more flexible payment options. The government should also consider extending the deadlines for registration while working closely with private hajj agencies to offer financial assistance and reduce the upfront costs. Additionally, ensuring that accommodations are within a reasonable distance from the Haram Sharif will significantly aid the elderly pilgrims. We hope the government will create an inclusive and financially accessible hajj experience, ensuring that all intending pilgrims can fulfil their religious obligations without facing undue financial burden.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Slavery abolished in the US



On this day in 1865, by proclamation of the United States secretary of state, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, outlawing slavery, officially entered into force, having been ratified by the requisite states on December 6.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

Actions, not slogans, are needed for migrant workers' welfare



Shariful Hasan is associate director of BRAC Migration Programme and Youth Platform and a columnist.

SHARIFUL HASAN

Around 18,000 aspirant migrant workers could not fly to Malaysia this year before the May 31 deadline, when Malaysia closed its doors to Bangladeshi workers. Many paid lakhs of taka to recruiting agencies and received emigration clearance but failed to get a ticket due to mismanagement by the recruiting agencies and government authorities.

Even though the government instructed recruiting agencies to refund the money to the aspiring migrant workers by a set deadline, which was revised three times, none of the workers have been reimbursed yet.

In October, during his visit to Dhaka, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim promised that the migrant workers who failed to meet the May 31 deadline would be given priority when the country reopens recruitment of Bangladeshi workers. Yet, nobody knows when this will happen.

Over the past four decades, Malaysia has repeatedly shut down its labour market because of various irregularities, corruption, and syndicates. The last time the country resumed hiring Bangladeshi workers was in 2022. According to a survey conducted by Verite Incorporated and four other companies (May 2023), the syndicate charged an average of Tk 5,44,000 per worker instead of the government-specified cost of Tk 79,000. Allegations have been raised that Tk 1,07,000 has been taken as a syndicate fee from each worker, and approximately Tk 50 billion has been laundered in this way. Moreover, Tk 37.5 billion has been laundered in the name of visa trade.

Such irregularities have constantly raised the cost of migrating to Malaysia. In fact, the migration cost from Bangladesh is almost the highest in the world for most destinations, while the earnings of our migrants remain among the lowest. A 2020 survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and ILO found that the average migration cost for a Bangladeshi was Tk 4.17 lakh, requiring a migrant worker to work for 18 months to recover the cost.

Though the government has fixed the migration cost to 14 countries at a maximum of Tk 1.66 lakh, job seekers often had to pay six times higher because of bribes, corruption, visa

trading, and intermediaries at every stage. Despite the high costs, people are desperate to go abroad. Nearly one million Bangladeshis have already gone abroad this year, compared to 1,305,453 last year, a record for the last 53 years.

Like last year, Saudi Arabia (KSA), Malaysia, Qatar, Singapore, and Kuwait have been the top destinations for Bangladeshis in 2024.

A 2018 IOM report data shows that over 12 million Bangladeshis have gone abroad in the last four decades. In the last fiscal year, they sent approximately \$22 billion with the highest amounts coming from UAE, USA, UK, KSA, and Malaysia.



FILE PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Despite being one of the largest contributors to our GDP, migrant workers face harassment at home and exploitation abroad.

According to a 2022 International Organization for Migration report, Bangladesh is the sixth-largest labour-sending country and the seventh-largest in terms of earning remittance. But despite such contributions, are Bangladeshi migrants getting the respect they deserve?

The answer is no; instead, they are harassed while getting a passport, completing medical check-ups, paying for tickets, etc. After facing all these barriers in the country, when a migrant finally reaches their destination, they are often exploited. They are given low or no salary, inhuman workload, and are made to live and work in dire

conditions, which even results in death.

Last year, a record 4,552 Bangladeshi workers died abroad, with a majority in Gulf states. According to Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB), Bangladesh received more than 50,000 corpses of migrant workers since 1993. Also, nearly one million migrants have returned as deportees almost empty-handed in the last 15 years. This year, nearly 85,000 have already returned, with half of them deported from KSA, according to airport sources.

Many of them endured physical injuries and mental torture, while many women migrants were sexually exploited, leading to severe trauma. To mitigate these challenges, the government can consider establishing standard operating procedures (SOPs) at the airport and setting up welfare desks and lounges for migrant workers in the new third terminal.

Besides, a more comprehensive reintegration service is essential for the returnees. However, high migration costs—fees paid to intermediaries and recruitment agencies by migrants—

being the main problem, should be addressed first. Promoting and developing online platforms can reduce dependency on intermediaries, cutting down costs for workers. End-to-end digitalisation of services (e.g. throughout the life cycle of migrant workers) can also be a solution for ensuring transparency.

Focus should be placed on sending skilled workers instead of unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Two million people have gone to KSA in the last four years, but the remittance has decreased by almost two billion. So, skill and better migration governance should be prioritised rather than numbers.

The government can also upgrade its training centres to provide sector-specific skills based on labour market needs abroad in collaboration with private institutions. Emerging sectors such as technology, healthcare, care economy, and engineering should be more focused on.

Proper information and services are still a challenge at the grassroots. Migrant workers and their families often lack accurate and reliable information about the migration process and this makes them more vulnerable to exploitation and the risk of trafficking or irregular migration. In fact, in 2024, Bangladesh has once again emerged as the top country for migrants undertaking risky sea journeys to reach Europe, surpassing war-torn nations like Syria, which is a shame for Bangladesh.

To raise awareness against this, the government can conduct nationwide awareness campaigns, particularly in rural areas. Making formal migration pathways more accessible and affordable will help curb irregular migration by giving workers safe and legal options.

While the government has indeed taken various positive initiatives in the field of migration, there is still a long way to go. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment should lead and ensure that the Wage Earners Welfare Board's fund management is transparent, BMET is corruption-free and Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited and Probashi Kallyan Bank more effective in serving millions of migrants every year.

It is also important to remember that migrants are not just money-making machines; they are human beings who deserve dignity and better care, which we often forget as they don't have voting rights. Most countries around the world now provide voting rights to their expatriates. Yet Bangladeshi expatriates, who make up a significant portion of the country's voting population, do not have the right to vote.

The irony is felt more today as the world observes International Migrants Day to recognise and celebrate the contributions of millions of migrants and protect their rights. This year, Bangladesh is observing this day along with National Expatriates' Day. The slogan for this year is, "Migrants' rights are our commitment; discrimination-free Bangladesh belongs to all." It's a good slogan, but we see good slogans every year rather than actions. The concerns for migrants and the actions taken should not be limited to just one day. Rather, our real unsung heroes should be celebrated every day, both within the country and abroad.

Recalibrating for inclusive growth in Bangladesh



Owais Parray is country economic adviser in UNDP Bangladesh.

OWAIS PARRAY

This is an opportune time for Bangladesh to recalibrate structural transformation towards an inclusive and greener economy. The policies that enabled the country to increase its footprint in manufacturing—albeit mainly in the ready-made garment sector (RMG)—may not work in the future. Policymakers must choose whether to continue a selective export-driven focus while protecting the rest of the economy, or opt for a more outward alignment of the economy for growth and jobs.

There is empirical evidence that export-driven growth was one of the major drivers of economic development in East and Southeast Asia. Several countries in the region started their industrial journey with RMG, but over time diversified and moved vertically along the value chain. Although export-led growth was pursued as a policy objective, the degree of economic openness varied. With a relatively smaller consumer base, Singapore followed largely *laissez-faire* economic regulations while limiting foreign capital to strategic sectors. Larger economies such as Indonesia pursued a dualistic

approach by opening parts of the economy for exports and investments while protecting some sectors from competition through state-owned enterprises or investment restrictions.

In Bangladesh, there is a strong correlation between exports, more specifically RMG exports, and economic growth. The share of RMG exports in the national output increased from less than six percent in 1990 to over 13 percent in 2023, after peaking at 20 percent in 2012, according to the World Bank. Although weakening, the positive relationship between RMG exports and jobs is also visible.

It is fair to say that Bangladesh's export-led growth story has essentially been an RMG story. There have been limited spillover effects for other sub-sectors. RMG products still represent around 85 percent of Bangladesh's exports. There are also worrying signs that the RMG-led growth has already peaked. In the last decade, the share of private sector investment has remained stagnant at around 22 percent of GDP.

Given its population size and potential, Bangladesh has not been

able to attract enough foreign direct investment (FDI). Between 2010 and 2022, annual FDI inflow averaged \$2.2 billion, significantly lower than Vietnam and Indonesia, where it averaged \$12 billion and \$18 billion, respectively, according to UNCTAD. An overly regulated economy, red tape, and weak enforcement of business regulations have often been cited as barriers to domestic and foreign investments in Bangladesh.

From 133 in 2003, Bangladesh's ranking on the Ease of Doing Business Index improved to 119 but fell as low as 168 out of 190 countries in 2020, the last year before the report was discontinued. On the Global Competitiveness Index, Bangladesh's ranking was 102 in 2023, which is quite low and has barely improved in the last five years. Bangladesh performs poorly on trade, investment, and financial indicators, broadly indexed as economic freedom. Between 2013 and 2023, the economic freedom score of Bangladesh increased from just 52 to 54.

A narrowly defined export-led growth model can limit the diffusion of technology and learning into other sectors of the economy. Protecting selected industries and businesses to build domestic capabilities is justified if measures are time-bound and not too distortionary for the economy, which can result in skewed distribution of income and wealth.

Relying on a few export goods without gradually opening and reforming the rest of the economy is bound to run its course. Many analysts

have pointed out the anti-export bias that a long period of protection has created for the non-RMG sectors in Bangladesh. There is a need for change, but the sequencing of reforms and timing is also critical.

The first task should be to address regulatory bottlenecks, making it easier for businesses to invest and operate in the country. These can be followed by a gradual rationalisation of import tariffs that should be underpinned by a rigorous cost-benefit analysis. These reforms can go alongside trade facilitation support, incentivising already established local companies to start looking outwards.

The geo-economic factors also necessitate a change in the current course of action. We are living in a world markedly different from the 1990s when Bangladesh's RMG sector took off. Many low- and middle-income countries are vying to be the supplier of choice for global buyers. Rapid technological changes are also profoundly affecting the economy. And, increasingly, businesses are required to adhere to higher environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards.

Bangladesh's dualistic growth model must be adapted to meet these new demands. Recent political changes have created momentum for economic and business reforms, providing a unique opportunity for policymakers to recalibrate the economic model and make it fit for the future—a model of economic growth that is good for shared prosperity and the natural environment.

The Gen Z factor in geopolitics and the Bangladesh-US dynamics



Dr Iftekhar Ul Karim is assistant professor at BRAC Business School, BRAC University. He can be reached at iftekhar.karim@bracu.ac.bd.

IFTEKHAR UL KARIM

In his victory speech following the US presidential election last month, President-elect Donald Trump began by thanking his supporters and highlighting the unwavering support of his family, especially his youngest son, Barron Trump. Barron, who stood by his father's side during the speech, was acknowledged as a source of strength throughout the campaign, particularly his silent role in shaping the podcast strategy for the Trump campaign during the election. Barron masterminded the well-crafted campaign's digital presence, utilising podcasts as a key platform to engage with tech-savvy voters, with his calm presence offering a softening contrast to the fiery rhetoric of the election. This draws an interesting parallel to developments in Bangladesh, and both offer a glimpse into a future where youth-driven values can guide the direction of politics and trade.

The argument that those belonging to Generation Z, or Gen Z, is too immature to take on higher roles, overtaking more experienced generations, overlooks the fact that maturity and leadership are not solely defined by age or years of experience, but by fresh perspectives and the ability to address current challenges. Rather than criticising Gen Z for stepping into leading roles, it is more productive to guide them through the complexities of the future. By fostering intergenerational collaboration, older generations can equip Gen Z with the tools they need to lead effectively in an ever-evolving global landscape, navigating the nuances of decision-making, diplomacy, and long-term strategy. For instance, Gen Z in Bangladesh must grasp the complexities of global trade, including the influence of major powers like the US, China, Russia and the EU, each with its own economic priorities and strategies.

Gen Z should keep in mind that the US cannot afford to overlook a partner like Bangladesh given the country's pivotal position in South Asia's economic landscape. Bangladesh's geopolitical location along the Bay of Bengal places it at the crossroads of

vital maritime routes and in close proximity to other major players, including India and China. Supporting Bangladesh's economic stability aligns with the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, offering a counterbalance to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and reducing excessive reliance on Beijing in an increasingly contested region. By understanding these complexities, Gen Z leaders can advocate for policies that not only drive growth locally, but also position Bangladesh as a bridge between aforesaid larger powers. Likewise, they must actively participate in international forums, harnessing its geopolitical influence to negotiate better trade terms, attract foreign green investments, and secure support on critical climate issues, especially given Bangladesh's vulnerability.

For the US, missing out on Bangladesh as a partner would mean yielding influence in South Asia to China and Russia, potentially limiting its own access to the rapidly growing South Asian market and diminishing regional strategic foothold. Conversely, by leveraging the Indo-Pacific Strategy and EU

Gen Z should recognise that Bangladesh's growing maturity opens new opportunities for deeper US engagement given a renewed Trump presidency. No longer just a partner for development assistance or low-cost manufacturing, Bangladesh is increasingly a sophisticated strategic ally ready to foster a forward-looking relationship based on mutual economic growth and matured strategic alignment.

Global Gateway together with the potential BRICS and ASEAN alignment, Bangladesh can pursue a more autonomous development path that safeguards its economic interests and strategic flexibility. This multi-aligned approach empowers Bangladesh to tap into a variety of global resources, strengthening its economy while asserting its role as a key player in the geopolitical and economic order of Asia.

Bangladesh's growing role as a soft power leader within the Muslim world is a significant asset that enhances its strategic appeal to the US, especially amid shifting global alliances. As the world's third largest Muslim-majority country, Bangladesh is well-positioned to influence and engage with other Muslim-majority nations with a rich history of promoting religious tolerance and social stability. This moderate stance of the

challenges, including political reforms, economic stabilisation, and curbing external pressures. Recent steps taken by the interim government to introduce reforms in various crucial sectors signal a desire for a more transparent and autonomous leadership, making it an ideal time for the US to support Bangladesh's ambitions for a stable and sovereign future. Furthermore, by addressing the root causes of regional



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

Gen Z should recognise that Bangladesh's growing maturity opens new opportunities for deeper US engagement given a renewed Trump presidency. No longer just a partner for development assistance or low-cost manufacturing, Bangladesh is increasingly a sophisticated strategic ally ready to foster a forward-looking relationship based on mutual economic growth and matured strategic alignment. Expanding trade and investment in emerging sectors, supporting the diversification of Bangladesh's economy, and increasing trade preferences could not only secure US interests in Asia, but also ensure that Bangladesh remains resilient in a region of growing strategic significance.

country offers a model that can resonate in regions susceptible to extremism, making it a potentially valuable partner for the US in promoting win-win stability across the Muslim world. For the US, which has often struggled to engage with Muslim-majority countries in ways that align with both security interests and values, Bangladesh's leadership in the Muslim world offers a resourceful bridge.

A second Trump administration would have an opportunity to engage with Bangladesh as it aims to establish more accountable governance free from the undue influence of neighbouring powers. Bangladesh is currently navigating complex

crises, such as border tensions, refugee pressures and political interference, Trump could advance a cooperative framework that supports Bangladesh's national sovereignty. Moreover, the Yunus effect for Bangladesh stands as a powerful equation linking the US and Bangladesh through shared values of economic development, entrepreneurship, and social responsibility.

The role of a well-informed Gen Z in shaping Bangladesh-US trade relations through a growing demand for stability, sovereignty, and sustainability will only strengthen them, positioning them as a key catalyst for transformative change in future global trade dynamics.

A wake-up call for India's strategic interests

Saifur Rahman is a senior IT specialist and certified professional, Australian Computer Society.

SAIFUR RAHMAN

The political upheaval in Bangladesh on August 5, 2024 marked a turning point in the nation's history. A massive student-led uprising, backed by a wide spectrum of the population, toppled Sheikh Hasina's long-standing authoritarian regime. This movement culminated in the formation of an interim government led by Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus. The uprising was a response to years of frustration under Sheikh Hasina's administration, characterised by corruption, institutional decay, and the suppression of dissent.

During Sheikh Hasina's tenure, her policies often favoured India, granting it substantial economic and strategic benefits—at the expense of Bangladesh's own interests. Critics likened this dynamic to quasi-colonialism. In return, Hasina relied on India's support to maintain her grip on power, despite growing domestic opposition.

Despite Sheikh Hasina's total trust in India's support to safeguard her regime, she

had to face the reality that India ultimately declined even to dispatch an aircraft for her rescue. This turn of events highlighted the pitfalls of over-reliance on foreign powers rather than cultivating domestic legitimacy.

Her removal was seen as a strategic blow by India. Faced with an unfamiliar political landscape in Dhaka, Indian policymakers seemed uncertain about their next steps.

Following Hasina's ouster, a section of the Indian media delved into a widespread disinformation campaign, alleging that massive atrocities were being carried out against Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh. Claims of killings, rape, and attacks on Hindu temples were circulated to depict as though Bangladesh was spiralling into chaos and extremism. However, most of these allegations were entirely unfounded.

For example, ABP Ananda, a subsidiary of West Bengal's *Anandabazar Patrika*, aired a video showing police brutality against students on August 5, but it was misleadingly presented as evidence of Hindu oppression. Similarly, a video claimed to be circulated by RT India showed attacks on Hindu temples in Bangladesh. However, verification revealed that the footage actually depicted a religious festival in West Bengal, India.

Despite the interim government's urging to extradite her, India continues to allow Sheikh Hasina—an alleged violator of human rights with an active arrest warrant issued by a competent court—to

disseminate propaganda and incite civil unrest in Bangladesh. By openly facilitating activities intended to demonise the interim government, India is disregarding international norms, undermining peace and security, and fuelling hostility.

Such misinformation campaigns not only distort reality but also risk inflaming communal tensions. The Indian media has

Bangladesh is not just a neighbour but a vital trading and security partner whose stability directly affects India's northeastern states. Escalating tensions could destabilise the region, harm economic ties, and push Bangladesh closer to other global powers eager to fill the vacuum left by India's waning influence.

even featured commentary advocating military intervention in Bangladesh under the guise of "protecting minorities" or securing strategic interests. Speculative suggestions include occupying areas like Chattogram or regions near the Siliguri Corridor.

Despite the provocative nature of these

claims, the Indian authorities have taken no action to discourage such rhetoric, raising questions about their adherence to international norms. However, India recently clarified that the government was not responsible for the activities of the media outlets that have been spreading disinformation.

Domestically, India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) appears to be leveraging these narratives to strengthen Hindu nationalist sentiment in their favour. Opposition parties, including the Indian National Congress and Trinamool Congress, have echoed similar rhetoric to appeal to the Hindu majority electorate. This tactic may temporarily unify the Hindu vote but risks long-term damage to India's regional relationships.

On an international level, if India continues to view misinformation as a strategic tool to retain influence on Bangladesh by undermining the credibility of its interim government, it will be counterintuitive. This strategy overlooks a critical reality: the more pressure India applies, the more the people of Bangladesh, including its minority communities, unify against its interference. It reflects the same miscalculation India made by exclusively supporting the Sheikh Hasina regime, disregarding the will of the Bangladeshi people.

Bangladesh is not just a neighbour but a vital trading and security partner whose

stability directly affects India's northeastern states. Escalating tensions could destabilise the region, harm economic ties, and push Bangladesh closer to other global powers eager to fill the vacuum left by India's waning influence. India's dominant posture in South Asia has already strained its relationships with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal among others. A similar trajectory with Bangladesh risks further isolation, undermining India's long-term strategic objectives.

The recent visit by Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to Dhaka—four months after the interim government took office—provides some room for optimism, however. The Indian foreign secretary said they wanted to "carry on from where we left off" and that they "have to do business with the government of the day." Indeed, constructive engagement, based on mutual respect and shared goals, would benefit both nations. A stable and prosperous Bangladesh is critical for regional security and economic interdependence.

Hence, India should focus on fostering trust and rebuilding ties. By respecting Bangladesh's sovereignty and prioritising dialogue, India can strengthen its position as a reliable partner, safeguarding its interests in South Asia. To realise its aspirations for superpower status, India must prioritise cooperation, respect for sovereignty, and genuine partnership; only then can it secure its place as a stable and respected leader in the region.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

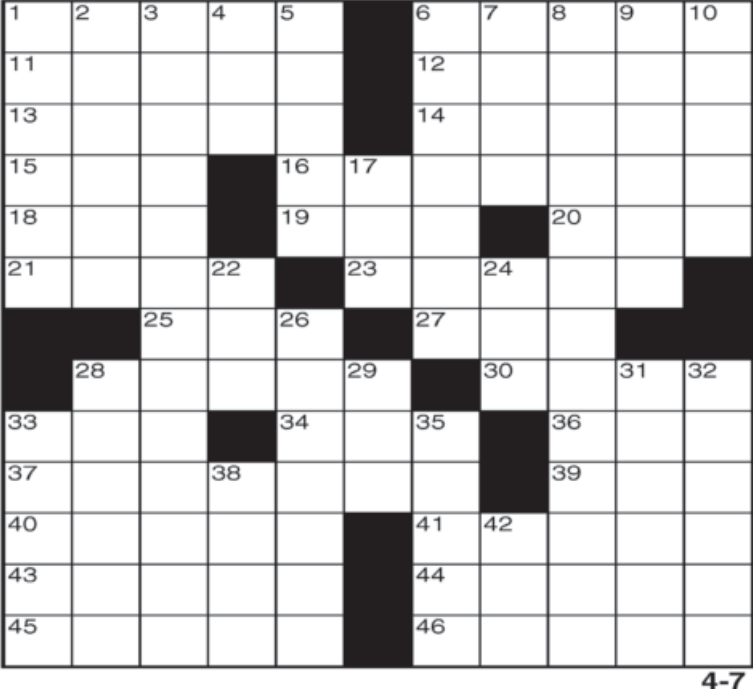
- 1 Barge setting
- 6 Sub system
- 11 Curaçao's neighbor
- 12 Tickle
- 13 Women, in hard-boiled tales
- 14 Buccaneers' base
- 15 Diminish
- 16 It's smaller than a full one
- 18 Even score
- 19 Army address
- 20 Print measures
- 21 Mystery writer Woods
- 23 Strata
- 25 Dressing part
- 27 Barracks bed

- 28 Llama's land
- 30 Trade
- 33 Take to court
- 34 Before today
- 36 Vein yield
- 37 Gives approval
- 39 Bribe
- 40 Sculpting medium
- 41 Enjoyed avidly
- 43 Mates of harts
- 44 Gaggles group
- 45 Uneasy feeling
- 46 Tribal leader

DOWN

- 1 West Point group
- 2 Mecca's place
- 3 Chart topper
- 4 Penny prez

- 5 Endures
- 6 Mocking
- 7 Yemen neighbor
- 8 Second-best in a tourney
- 9 Quaking trees
- 10 Goes through
- 17 Funny fellow
- 22 Help out
- 24 Dawn goddess
- 26 Most slender
- 28 Lone Star capital
- 29 Corp.'s superior
- 31 Stir
- 32 Mill contents
- 33 Malia's sister
- 35 Sioux language
- 38 Cuts off
- 42 — Aviv



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

A	L	O	T			S	P	R	A	T
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WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
dsopinion@gmail.com.

আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস এবং জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস ২০২৪

International Migrants Day and National Expatriates Day 2024

প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়

বুধবার, ৩ পৌষ ১৪৩১ / ১৮ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪

বিশেষ ক্রোড়পত্র

আয়োজনে: প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়

সহযোগিতায়: তথ্য অধিদপ্তর (পিআইডি) এবং চলচ্চিত্র ও প্রকাশনা অধিদপ্তর (ডিএফপি), তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রণালয়

প্রবাসীর অধিকার, আমাদের অঙ্গীকার
বৈষম্যহীন বাংলাদেশ, আমাদের সবার



রাষ্ট্রপতি
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ
বঙ্গবন্ধু, ঢাকা।
০৩ পৌষ ১৪৩১
১৮ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪

বাণী

প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক প্রতিবছরের ন্যায় এবারও আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস ও জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস ২০২৪ উদ্‌যাপনের উদ্যোগকে আমি যাগত জানাই। এ উপলক্ষ্যে আমি বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন প্রান্তে বসবাসরত অভিবাসী বাংলাদেশি ও তাঁদের পরিবারের সদস্যদের আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন জানাচ্ছি।

বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন দেশে বসবাসকারী বাংলাদেশিদের দেশে নিজ মাতৃভূমিকে প্রতিনিখিত করছেন। বর্তমানে ১৭০টিরও বেশি দেশে প্রায় ১ কোটি ৪০ লক্ষ বাংলাদেশি বসবাস করছেন। প্রবাসীদের প্রেরিত রেমিট্যান্স বাংলাদেশের অর্থনীতির ভিত্তিকে শক্তিশালী করতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখছে। প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশিরা বিভিন্ন মানব-হিতৈষী কর্মকাণ্ডে অংশগ্রহণ এবং ব্যবসাবাহিন্য ও বিনিয়োগের মাধ্যমে দেশের আর্থসামাজিক উন্নয়নে বিশেষ অবদান রাখছেন। পাশাপাশি গন্তব্য দেশের অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন ও অর্থনৈতিক সমৃদ্ধি অর্জনে অবদান রাখার মাধ্যমে দেশের সুনাম বিশ্বব্যাপী ছড়িয়ে দিচ্ছেন। দেশ গড়ার কারিগর প্রবাসীরা বৈষম্যমুক্ত নতুন বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তোলার প্রত্যয়ে জুলাই-আগস্টের ছাত্র-জনতার গণ-অভ্যুত্থানেও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রেখেছেন।

বর্তমান অষ্টদশকালীন সরকার প্রবাসীদের অধিকার ও কল্যাণ নিশ্চিতকরণ এবং জাতীয় উন্নয়নে প্রবাসীদের অধিকতর সম্পৃক্ত করার ওপর বিশেষ গুরুত্বারোপ করেছে। অভিবাসীদের কল্যাণ নিশ্চিত করে তাদের অধিকার ও স্বার্থ সংশ্লিষ্ট বিভিন্ন জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক আইন, কনভেনশন ও সনদসমূহের যথাযথ গ্রয়োগ নিশ্চিত করতে হবে। বিদেশ গমনেচ্ছু এবং অভিবাসী কর্মীরা যেন কোনোরূপ শোষণ, প্রতারণা ও হয়রানির শিকার না হন, তা নিশ্চিত সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে অধিকতর সজাগ ও সচেতন থাকতে হবে। বিদেশ গমনেচ্ছু যুবসমাজ সরকার প্রদত্ত নানাবিধ সুযোগ সুবিধার সর্বোত্তম ব্যবহার করে নিজদের দক্ষ মানব সম্পদরূপে গড়ে তুলবেন এবং বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানের মাধ্যমে দেশের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নে কার্যকর ভূমিকা রাখবেন- এ প্রত্যাশা করি।

দিবস দুটি উদ্‌যাপন উপলক্ষ্যে প্রবাসে বাংলাদেশ দূতাবাস কর্তৃক বিভিন্ন আয়োজনের মাধ্যমে প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশিদের যথাযথ সম্মাননা প্রদান নিয়মদেহে একটি প্রাঙ্গণসমী উদ্যোগ।

আমি 'আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' ও 'জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' উপলক্ষ্যে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সাফল্য কামনা করছি।

বাংলাদেশ চিরজীবী হোক।

মোঃ সাহাবুদ্দিন



উপদেষ্টা
প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাণী

আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস এবং জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস ২০২৪ এর এই বিশেষ মুহূর্তে সংশ্লিষ্ট সবাইকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা। এই দিনটি অভিবাসীদের অবদান ও ত্যাগকে সম্মান জানানোর একটি সুযোগ এনে দিয়েছে। বিভিন্ন প্রতিকূল পরিস্থিতি মোকাবিলা করেও প্রায় দেড় কোটি প্রবাসী নিজ পরিবারের ও আমাদের অর্থনৈতিক সমৃদ্ধিসহ দেশের মর্যাদা বৃদ্ধিতে অসামান্য অবদান রেখে চলেছেন।

বৈষম্যবিরোধী ছাত্র-জনতার গণ-অভ্যুত্থানের মাধ্যমে গঠিত বর্তমান সরকার দায়িত্ব গ্রহণের পর প্রবাসীদের কল্যাণে নানাবিধ কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করেছে। গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধান উপদেষ্টা প্রফেসর ড. মুহাম্মদ ইউনুস এর হৃদয়ঙ্গমে জুলাইয়ের প্রথম সপ্তাহে বাংলাদেশের ক্ষমতাচ্যুত হৈরাচারী সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে আন্দোলন করায় সংযুক্ত আরব আমিরাত দপ্তর ১৮৮ জন বাংলাদেশিকে মুক্ত করে দেশে ফেরত আনা হয়। লেবাননের যুদ্ধ পরিস্থিতিতে বিপদগ্রস্ত কর্মীদের সরকারি খরচে নিরাপদে দেশে ফেরত আনা হয়েছে। প্রবাসীদের সম্মানে বিমানবন্দরে প্রবাসী লাউজ হ্রাপন করা হয়েছে। বিদেশে কর্মী গমন প্রক্রিয়াকরণের সময় হ্রাস ও পদ্ধতি সহজিকরণের উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। মধ্যপ্রাচ্যের জবাবদিহি নিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে বিবিমালা সংশোধন ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানের জন্য একটি সমন্বিত অনলাইন প্ল্যাটফর্ম তৈরির কার্যক্রম চূড়ান্ত করা হয়েছে। বিদ্যমান শ্রমবাজার সম্প্রসারণের পাশাপাশি নতুন নতুন শ্রমবাজারে প্রবেশের কার্যক্রম জোরদার করা হয়েছে। বর্তমান সরকার দায়িত্বগ্রহণের পর বিগত কয়েক মাস যাবৎ রেমিট্যান্স প্রবাহে নতুন গতির সঞ্চার হয়েছে, যা দেশের বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার রিজার্ভ বৃদ্ধিতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করছে।

বৈষম্যহীন নতুন বাংলাদেশ গড়তে সরকারের কার্যক্রমকে সমর্থন দেওয়ায় প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়ের পক্ষ থেকে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের প্রতি কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ করছি। আসুন, সবাই মিলে একসাথে দেশের উন্নয়নে কাজ করি এবং প্রবাসী ভাইবোনদের কল্যাণে আমাদের প্রতিশ্রুতি পূরণ করি।

আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস এবং জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস ২০২৪ সফল হোক।

ড. আতিক নাজরুল



উপদেষ্টা
বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাণী

অভিবাসীদের অসামান্য অবদান ও মর্যাদাকে স্মরণীয় করে রাখতে প্রতিবছরের ন্যায় এ বছরও প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়ের আয়োজনে "আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস-২০২৪" ও "জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস-২০২৪" উদ্‌যাপিত হচ্ছে। অভিবাসী ও তাঁদের পরিবারের সদস্যদের জন্য তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ এ দিবসে অভিবাসনের সকল অংশীজনকে আমি আন্তরিক প্রীতি ও শুভেচ্ছা জানাচ্ছি।

প্রবাসীদের দ্রুততর সেবা নিশ্চিতকরণে অষ্টদশকী সরকার নানাবিধ পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেছে। ইতোমধ্যে ই-পাসপোর্ট পরিষেবা ও স্বয়ংক্রিয় নিয়ন্ত্রণ ব্যবস্থা চালু হয়েছে। ই-পাসপোর্ট এর প্রচলন নিয়মিত ও নিরাপদ অভিবাসনে অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখবে বলে আমি বিশ্বাস করি। মানব পাচার প্রতিরোধ ও দমন এবং নিরাপদ অভিবাসনের লক্ষ্যে প্রণীত 'মানব পাচার প্রতিরোধ ও দমন আইন-২০১২' কঠোর বাস্তবায়নের মাধ্যমে আইনানুগ অভিবাসন নিশ্চিত করার প্রচেষ্টা অব্যাহত রয়েছে।

অনিয়মিত অভিবাসন ও মানব পাচার রোধে বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়ের বিভিন্ন অধিদপ্তর/দপ্তর/সংস্থা এবং প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয় সমন্বিতভাবে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। তৃণমূল পর্যায়ে থেকে শুরু করে সকল স্তরে জনসচেতনতা বৃদ্ধির মাধ্যমে মানব পাচার রোধে একটি শক্তিশালী প্রতিরোধ ব্যবস্থা গড়ে তোলার চেষ্টা করা হচ্ছে।

নিরাপদ ও আইনানুগ অভিবাসন ব্যবস্থাপনা নিশ্চিতকরণের মাধ্যমে অভিবাসনের ক্ষেত্রে আন্তর্জাতিক মান বজায় রেখে নারী কর্মীসহ সকল অভিবাসী কর্মীর কাজের উপযোগী নিরাপদ পরিবেশ তৈরির প্রচেষ্টা অব্যাহত রয়েছে।

আমি "আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস-২০২৪" ও "জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস-২০২৪" এর সফল উদ্‌যাপন কামনা করছি।

লেক্টেন্যান্ট জেনারেল মোঃ জাহাঙ্গীর আলম চৌধুরী (অব.)

ডিএফপি নং- ১০, তারিখ: ১৭-১২-২০২৪ খ্রি.



বৈষম্যমুক্ত নতুন বাংলাদেশ বিনির্মাণে বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান: আমাদের অর্জন, চ্যালেঞ্জ ও সম্ভাবনা

বাংলাদেশের উন্নয়ন ও অগ্রগতির প্রধান খাত হিসেবে বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করছে। বিশ্বের ১৭০ টি দেশে প্রায় দেড় কোটি বাংলাদেশি কর্মসংস্থানে নিয়োজিত রয়েছেন। তারা নিজ দেশের ভাষা, সংস্কৃতি এবং মূল্যবোধকে বহিঃ-বিশ্বে তুলে ধরার পাশাপাশি রেমিট্যান্স প্রেরণ করে দেশের অর্থনীতির ভিত্তিকে মজবুত করেন। মধ্যপ্রাচ্য, ইউরোপ এবং এশিয়ার বিভিন্ন দেশে আমাদের শ্রমশক্তির চাহিদা রয়েছে। প্রধানত নির্মাণ, মানুস্ব্যাকারি, কৃষি, তথ্যপ্রযুক্তি ও সেবা সেক্টরসহ বিভিন্ন সেক্টরে বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানের নতুন নতুন সুযোগ তৈরি হচ্ছে। এ সম্ভাবনাকে কাজে লাগিয়ে বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান বৃদ্ধি এবং দেশের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নে অধিকতর ভূমিকা রাখা আমাদের অভিলক্ষ্য।

২০২৩-২৪ অর্থবছরে প্রায় ১২ লক্ষ জনের বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান হয়েছে। ২০২২-২৩ অর্থবছরে ১১ লক্ষ ২৬ হাজার জন এবং ২০২১-২২ অর্থবছরে ৯ লক্ষ ৬৬ হাজার জনের কর্মসংস্থান হয়েছে। এর মধ্যে দক্ষ কর্মী প্রবাহ বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে ৩ লক্ষ ৬ হাজার জনের অধিক। ২০২১-২২ অর্থবছর থেকে ২০২৩-২৪ অর্থবছর পর্যন্ত সর্বমোট ২,৫৭,২৯৯ জন নারী কর্মী বিভিন্ন দেশে কর্মে নিয়োজিত হয়েছে। বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানের প্রধান গন্তব্য সৌদি আরব, মালয়েশিয়া, সংযুক্ত আরব আমিরাত, ওমান, কাতার, কুয়েত, জর্ডান, সিঙ্গাপুর, দক্ষিণ কোরিয়া এবং জাপান। বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানে ইতিবাচক পরিবেশ বিরাজ করছে।

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের তথ্যানুযায়ী সম্প্রতি প্রবাসী কর্মীদের দেশে অর্থ প্রেরণের প্রণালী বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। জুলাই থেকে অক্টোবর ২০২৪ সময়ে ৮,৯৩৬.৬১ মিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার রেমিট্যান্স পাওয়া গেছে। জুলাই থেকে অক্টোবর ২০২৩ সময়ে রেমিট্যান্সের পরিমাণ ছিল ৬,৮৭৮.৩৮ মিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার। গত বছরের একই সময়ের তুলনায় ২০২৩-২৪ অর্থবছরে রেমিট্যান্স শতকরা ২৯.৯২ ভাগ বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। প্রেরিত রেমিট্যান্সের উপর সরকার প্রদত্ত ২.৫% হারে প্রদান্য রেমিট্যান্স বৃদ্ধিতে উল্লেখযোগ্য ভূমিকা রাখছে। গত কয়েক মাস যাবৎ রেমিট্যান্স প্রবাহে নতুন গতির সঞ্চার হয়েছে যা দেশের বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার রিজার্ভ বৃদ্ধিতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করছে।

সরকার অনুমোদিত বেসরকারি রিক্রুটিং এজেন্ট এবং জনশক্তি, কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো (বিএমইটি) ও বাংলাদেশ ওভারসিজ এমগ্রুয়েন্ট সার্ভিসেস লিমিটেড (বোয়েসেল) বিদেশে কর্মী প্রেরণ করে। বোয়েসেল সরকারি মালিকানাধীন রিক্রুটিং এজেন্ট হিসেবে নৈতিক, নিরাপদ ও নিয়মিত কর্মসংস্থান করে থাকে যা সর্বমহলে প্রাঙ্গণিত হয়েছে। বোয়েসেলের মাধ্যমে ২০২৩-২৪ অর্থবছরে ১৫,৫৫৮ জনের বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান হয়েছে। বিভিন্ন দেশে ডাক্তার, নার্স এবং উচ্চ দক্ষতাসম্পন্ন কর্মী নিয়োগের কার্যক্রম চলছে। গণ বা নামমাত্র অভিবাসন ব্যয়ে উত্তম কর্মসংস্থান নিশ্চিত করেছে বোয়েসেল। বিএমইটি IM Japan এর সহযোগিতায় জাপানে শূণ্য অভিবাসন ব্যয়ে কর্মী প্রেরণ করেছে।

ওয়েজ আর্নার্স কল্যাণ বোর্ড অভিবাসী কর্মী ও তার পরিবারের সার্বিক কল্যাণে কাজ করে। প্রবাসীদের সম্মানজনক শিক্ষা বৃত্তি প্রদান, প্রবাসবন্ধন কল সেন্টার এবং ওয়েজ আর্নার্স সেন্টারের মাধ্যমে প্রবাসীদের সহায়তা করে থাকে। বিশেষ শেণ্টার হাউজ পরিচালনা, প্রবাস ফেরত আহত ও অসুস্থ কর্মীর চিকিৎসার্থে আর্থিক সাহায্য এবং অ্যাম্বুলেন্স সেবা প্রদান উল্লেখযোগ্য। এছাড়াও প্রবাসী কর্মীর মৃতদেহ দেশে আনয়ন, মৃতদেহ পরিবহন ও দাফন খরচ প্রদান এবং বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানে নিয়োজিত থাকা অবস্থায় মৃত্যুবরণকারী কর্মীর পরিবারকে এককালীন ০৩ লক্ষ টাকা আর্থিক অনুদান প্রদান করে। তাছাড়াও আপদকালীন সময়ে বিভিন্ন দেশে বাংলাদেশি কর্মীদের সাহায্য সহযোগিতা প্রদান করে। সংশ্লিষ্ট দেশে কর্মীকে আইনি সহায়তা প্রদানের ব্যবস্থা করে।

প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংক অভিবাসনে ইচ্ছুকদের অভিবাসন ঋণ, নারী অভিবাসন ঋণ, প্রবাস ফেরত কর্মীদের পুনর্বাসন ঋণ, অভিবাসী বৃহৎ পরিবার ঋণ, আত্মকর্মসংস্থান ঋণ, বিশেষ পুনর্বাসন ঋণ, নারী পুনর্বাসন ঋণ, প্রবাসী কল্যাণ সাধারণ ঋণ প্রদান করে। প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংক স্বল্পসুদে ও অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে বিনা জামানতেও ঋণ সেবা প্রদান করে। প্রবাসীর সম্মানের শিক্ষা ও বিবাহ সম্বন্ধ কিম্বা চালু আছে। সম্প্রতি প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংকের গ্রাহকদের সিটি ব্যাংক পিএলসির এক্সচেঞ্জ হাউজের মাধ্যমে রেমিট্যান্স পাঠানোর ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে। ০৭ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৪ তারিখে সিটি ব্যাংক পিএলসির সাথে এই চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরিত হয়। এর ফলে প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংকের গ্রাহকগণ প্রেরিত রেমিট্যান্সের মাধ্যমে তাদের ঋণ সমন্বয় করতে পারেন।

বিএমইটি ১০৮ টি কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (টিটিসি) এবং ০৬টি ইনসিটিউট অব মেরিন টেকনোলজির (আইএমটি) মাধ্যমে গন্তব্য দেশের চাহিদা অনুযায়ী কর্মীদের ভাষা ও দক্ষতা উন্নয়নে বিশেষ প্রশিক্ষণ দিয়ে বিশেষ গমনেচ্ছুদের চাকরির জন্য তৈরি করে। আইএমটি ও টিটিসিসমূহের মাধ্যমে আরবি, ইংরেজি, জাপানিজ, চাইনিজ (ম্যান্ডারিন), চাইনিজ (ক্যান্টনিজ) ও কোরিয়ান ভাষা প্রশিক্ষণ এবং ৭৬ টি ট্রেন্ডে দক্ষতা উন্নয়ন প্রশিক্ষণ দেয়া হয়ে থাকে। বিএমইটির ২০২৩-২৪ অর্থবছরে ৬ হাজারের অধিক প্রশিক্ষণার্থীকে ভাষা প্রশিক্ষণ এবং ১ লক্ষ ৭ হাজার প্রশিক্ষণার্থীকে দক্ষতা উন্নয়ন প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করেছে। এছাড়াও, ১১ লক্ষ ৫ হাজার জন কর্মীকে প্রি-ডিপারচার ট্রেনিং প্রদান করা হয়েছে। বিশেষ ফেরত কর্মীদের জন্য টিটিসিতে Recognition of Prior Learning এর আওতায় সনদায়ন কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হচ্ছে।

বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানে চ্যালেঞ্জ

- বিশেষ গমনেচ্ছুদের বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান উপযোগী প্রশিক্ষণের আওতায় আনয়ন।
- অতিরিক্ত অভিবাসন ব্যয় এবং ব্যয় নির্বাহ করতে অপ্রাতিষ্ঠানিক উৎস থেকে ঋণ গ্রহণ ও ঋণের ফাঁদে আবদ্ধ হওয়া।
- গন্তব্য দেশের নিয়োগকারীর চাহিদাপূর্ণ অনুযায়ী বেতন-ভাতা ও অন্যান্য সুবিধা না পাওয়া।
- কর্মস্থল থেকে পালিয়ে গিয়ে অবৈধভাবে বসবাস ও প্রেক্ষভার, জেল-জরিমানা ও শাস্তি ভোগ করা।
- নতুন নতুন প্রযুক্তির ব্যবহার ও বৈদেশিক কর্মের চাহিদা অনুযায়ী দক্ষতা অর্জন।
- তৃণমূল পর্যন্ত অপর্ণাঙ্ক কাউন্সিলি সুবিধা এবং জেলায় রিক্রুটিং এজেন্টের অফিস বা নিয়োজিত প্রতিনিধি না থাকার ফলে বিদেশে কর্মসংস্থানের জন্য সঠিক সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে না পারা।
- সাব-এজেন্ট/মধ্যস্থত্বভোগীদের দৌরাখ্য।

বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানের সম্ভাবনা

ভৌগোলিক ভিত্তিতে এর কারণে বাংলাদেশ কর্মীর পর্যাপ্ত যোগান দিতে সক্ষম এবং কঠোর পরিশ্রমী হিসেবে বিদেশে বাংলাদেশের কর্মীদের ব্যাপক চাহিদা রয়েছে। জর্ডান ও গ্রিসের সাথে সম্প্রতি কর্মসংস্থান চুক্তি করা হয়েছে। ইতালিসহ বিভিন্ন দেশের সাথে নতুন করে কর্মসংস্থান চুক্তি সম্পাদনের কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। দক্ষিণ কোরিয়ায় একটি প্রকল্পে মৌসুমি কর্মী নিয়োগের জন্য চুক্তি সম্পাদন চূড়ান্ত পর্যায়ে রয়েছে। ওমান, বাহরাইন এবং কাতারে নতুন করে কর্মী প্রেরণের উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। বোয়েসেলের মাধ্যমে জর্ডানে নারী কর্মী, দক্ষিণ কোরিয়ায় এবং ব্রুনাইয়ে নিয়মিত স্বল্পদক্ষ/আধাদক্ষ কর্মী প্রেরণ করা হচ্ছে। জাপানে বর্তমানে ৩টি সেক্টরে কর্মী প্রেরণ করা হচ্ছে এবং আরো ১১টি সেক্টর উন্মুক্তকরণের উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। মালয়েশিয়ায় নতুন করে কর্মী নিয়োগের কার্যক্রম চলমান আছে। ইউরোপিয় ইউনিয়নের ট্যালেন্ট পাটনার্সশিপ প্রোগ্রামের আওতায় ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়নের সদস্য দেশসমূহে দক্ষ কর্মী নিয়োগের প্রকল্প গ্রহণ করা হচ্ছে। গ্রিস, ইতালিসহ ইউরোপের বিভিন্ন দেশে নিয়মিত কর্মীর পাশাপাশি সিঙ্গাপুর ওয়ার্কার নিয়োগের সম্ভাবনা দেখা দিয়েছে। বাংলাদেশের উজ্জীবিত তরুণ জনশক্তিকে প্রস্তুত করার মাধ্যমে বিদেশে বিভিন্ন সেক্টরে কর্মসংস্থানের উজ্জ্বল সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে।

বর্তমান সরকারের গৃহীত কার্যক্রম

- মাননীয় প্রধান উপদেষ্টার উদ্যোগে বৈষম্য-বিরোধী ছাত্র-জনতার গণ-অভ্যুত্থানে সমর্থন জালিয়ে সংযুক্ত আরব আমিরাতে আন্দোলন করার কারণে সে দেশে কারাদণ্ডপ্রাপ্ত প্রায় ১৮৮ জনসহ মধ্যপ্রাচ্যের দেশসমূহে একই অভিযোগে আটককৃত প্রবাসীদের মুক্ত করে নিজ দেশে ফেরত আনা হয়েছে।
- লেবাননে যুদ্ধ পরিস্থিতিতে বিপদগ্রস্ত ৯৫৭ জন প্রবাসীকে সরকারি খরচে নিরাপদে দেশে ফেরত আনা হয়েছে। তাছাড়া, IOM এর সহযোগিতায় আরও ১৫১ জন ফেরত এসেছেন।
- প্রবাসীদের ভিআইপি সেবা প্রদানের অংশ হিসেবে হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দরে প্রবাসী লাউজ এবং প্রবাসী ওয়েটিং লাউজ চালু করা হয়েছে। প্রবাসীদের বিদেশ গমন ও বিদেশ হতে ফেরত আসার সরাসরি বিমান বন্দরের প্রতিটি স্তরে সহায়তা প্রদানের ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে।
- মালয়েশিয়া প্রবাসী কর্মীদের সুযোগ-সুবিধা প্রাপ্তির লক্ষ্যে মালয়েশিয়া সরকারের প্রতিষ্ঠান PERKESO এর সাথে Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) স্বাক্ষরিত হয়েছে।
- প্রবাসী কর্মীদের আইনি সহায়তার জন্য কাতার, ওমান এবং কুয়েতে নতুন ল ফর্ম নিয়োগ করা হয়েছে। অন্যান্য দেশে নতুন ল ফর্ম নিয়োগের প্রক্রিয়া চলমান আছে।
- RAISE প্রকল্পের মাধ্যমে বিশেষ ফেরত কর্মীদের রিইন্টিগ্রেশনের কার্যক্রম জোরদার করা হয়েছে।

আইন ও বিধি সংশোধন

- অভিবাসন প্রক্রিয়ায় অনিয়ম প্রতিরোধে বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান ও অভিবাসী আইন ২০১৩ সংশোধন করে মোবাইল কোর্ট এর আওতা বাড়ানো হয়েছে।
- বিশেষ কর্মে গমনের প্রক্রিয়ায় লিড টাইম হ্রাস এবং পদ্ধতি দ্রুত ও সহজতর করার লক্ষ্যে বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান ও অভিবাসী ব্যবস্থাপনা বিধিমালা, ২০১৭ সংশোধন করা হয়েছে।
- অভিবাসন প্রক্রিয়ায় সাব-এজেন্টদের জবাবদিহি নিশ্চিতকরণে বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান ও অভিবাসী (রিক্রুটিং এজেন্ট লাইসেন্স ও সাব-এজেন্ট নিবন্ধন এবং আচরণ) বিধিমালা, ২০২৪ চূড়ান্ত করা হয়েছে।

কর্মসংস্থান

- ৩১ মে ২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে মালয়েশিয়ায় যেতে না পারা কর্মীদের অর্থ ফেরত প্রদান এবং বিশেষ বিবেচনায় তাদের মালয়েশিয়ায় কর্মে নিয়োজনের বিষয়ে মালয়েশিয়ার মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর আশ্বাস পাওয়া গেছে। এ বিষয়ে উভয় দেশের সংশ্লিষ্ট দপ্তরের মধ্যে আলোচনা অব্যাহত রয়েছে।
- মালয়েশিয়াসহ মধ্যপ্রাচ্যের বন্ধ দেশসমূহে পুনরায় কর্মী নিয়োগ চালুকরণে প্রচেষ্টা চলমান। বিদ্যমান শ্রমবাজারসমূহ সম্প্রসারণ ও নতুন নতুন শ্রমবাজার অনুসন্ধান এবং বিভিন্ন দেশের সাথে সমঝোতা স্মারক/চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের কার্যক্রম চলছে। তাছাড়াও সমঝোতা স্মারক চুক্তির মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণ হওয়া দেশসমূহের সাথে পুনরায় চুক্তির উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে।
- বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান সত্ত্বাক্ষেপক সকল কাজ সমন্বিতভাবে সম্পন্ন করার লক্ষ্যে একটি ডিজিটাল/অনলাইন প্ল্যাটফর্ম চালুর কার্যক্রম চলমান আছে।

দক্ষতা উন্নয়ন সক্রিয়তা

- বিদ্যমান কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্রসমূহের সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধি এবং নতুন নতুন প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র স্থাপন করে প্রশিক্ষণের আওতা বাড়ানোর উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে।
- কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণের effectiveness assessment করার উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হয়েছে।

আমরা সে দিনের স্বপ্ন দেখি যে দিন প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়ের ব্যবস্থাপনায় আমাদের প্রশিক্ষিত দক্ষ কর্মী ভাইবোনদের পৃথিবীর নানা প্রান্তে ছড়িয়ে পড়বে। তাদের উপার্জিত অর্থে বৈষম্যহীনভাবে গড়ে উঠবে বাংলাদেশ এবং সুদৃঢ় ভিত্তি পাবে আমাদের অর্থনীতি।



প্রধান উপদেষ্টা
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
০৩ পৌষ ১৪৩১
১৮ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪

বাণী

প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক 'আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' ও 'জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' উদ্‌যাপন করা হচ্ছে জেনে আমি আনন্দিত। এ উপলক্ষ্যে আমি প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশি এবং তাঁদের পরিবারের সদস্য, অভিবাসন বাত সংশ্লিষ্ট উন্নয়ন সহযোগী, বিভিন্ন আন্তর্জাতিক সংস্থার প্রতিনিধিসহ সকলকে প্রণামান্তা শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন জানাচ্ছি।

প্রবাসী কর্মীদের রেমিট্যান্স বাংলাদেশের বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা রিজার্ভের দ্বিতীয় বৃহত্তম উৎস এবং আমাদের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের অন্যতম চালিকা শক্তি। বৈষম্যবিরোধী ছাত্র-শ্রমিক-জনতার গণ-অভ্যুত্থানে প্রবাসীদের সক্রিয় ভূমিকা প্রশংসনীয়। পূর্বে দুইটি আলাদা দিনে 'আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস ও জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস' উদ্‌যাপন করা হলেও এবার একই দিনে দুইটি দিবস একসাথে উদ্‌যাপনের সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়া হয়েছে। এই সিদ্ধান্ত অভিবাসনে সুশাসন নিশ্চিতকরণে বর্তমান অষ্টদশকালীন সরকারের গৃহীত কর্মপরিকল্পনা ও কার্যক্রমসমূহ প্রবাসীসহ দেশের সার্বিক উন্নয়ন এবং বিশ্ব শ্রমবাজারে বাংলাদেশের সুনাম সমুন্নত রাখতে সহায়তা করবে।

ছাত্র-শ্রমিক-জনতার গণ-অভ্যুত্থানে অষ্টদশকালীন সরকার গঠনের পর বিগত কয়েক মাসে প্রবাসীদের কল্যাণে নানাবিধ কর্মপরিকল্পনা গ্রহণ ও বাস্তবায়ন করা হয়েছে।

আমি 'আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' ও 'জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' উপলক্ষ্যে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সাফল্য কামনা করছি।

প্রফেসর মুহাম্মদ ইউনুস



উপদেষ্টা
পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাণী

বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন প্রান্তে ছড়িয়ে থাকা প্রবাসীদের অধিকার, সুরক্ষা এবং স্বার্থ সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়কে প্রাধান্য দিয়েই আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস ও জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস উদ্‌যাপনের সূচনা। প্রতি বছরের ন্যায় এবছরও বিশ্বব্যাপী প্রবাসীদের অধিকার ও মর্যাদা রক্ষার অঙ্গীকারকে সামনে রেখে 'আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' ও 'জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' উদ্‌যাপিত হচ্ছে জেনে আমি অত্যন্ত আনন্দিত। বিপুল জনশক্তিসমৃদ্ধ বাংলাদেশের উল্লেখযোগ্য সংখ্যক অভিবাসী কর্মী বৈদেশিক কর্মে নিয়োজিত রয়েছেন। বাংলাদেশের আর্থসামাজিক উন্নয়নে অভিবাসী কর্মী এবং তাঁদের পরিবারের ত্যাগ ও অবদানের স্বীকৃতিরূপে পালিত এ দিবসটি অত্যন্ত তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ। জুলাই-আগস্ট ২০২৪ এ সংঘটিত বৈষম্যবিরোধী ছাত্র-জনতার গণ-অভ্যুত্থান পরবর্তী অষ্টদশকালীন সরকার দায়িত্ব গ্রহণের প্রেক্ষাপটে জনগণের আশা-আকাঙ্ক্ষা বাস্তবে রূপদানের লক্ষ্যে সরকার কর্তৃক গৃহীত বৃহত্তর সংস্কার পরিকল্পনার অংশ হিসেবে অভিবাসন উন্নয়ন, শ্রম কূটনৈতিক তৎপরতা, প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশিদের বিভিন্ন সেবা সহজপ্রাপ্তির জন্য প্রতিটি বাংলাদেশি প্রবাসীর অধিকার ও সুরক্ষা এবং অভিবাসন ব্যবস্থাপনা আরও সুসমন্বিত হবে বলে আমার দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস।

আমি 'আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' ও 'জাতীয় প্রবাসী দিবস ২০২৪' এর সার্বিক সাফল্য কামনা করছি। এ দিবসে বাংলাদেশের সকল অভিবাসী ও তাঁদের পরিবারের সদস্যবৃন্দ এবং অভিবাসন ব্যবস্থাপনায় সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়ের পক্ষ হতে আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন ও শুভেচ্ছা জানাচ্ছি।

মোঃ জোহিদ হোসেন



Chief of Mission
IOM Bangladesh

Message

On the occasion of International Migrants Day 2024, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reaffirms its commitment to promoting safe, orderly, and humane migration. As we reflect on the essential role of migration in advancing global development and human rights, we celebrate the remarkable resilience and contributions of migrants worldwide. In Bangladesh, the sixth largest migrant sending country, migration continues to be a vital part of the socio-economic fabric, with more than a million Bangladeshi nationals migrating annually predominantly for work. However, the journey of migrants often can involve risks, uncertainties, and challenges, making it crucial that we ensure pathways for migration are safe, regular, well-governed, and protective.

At IOM, we are focused on facilitating regular pathways to migration that prioritize the safety, dignity, and rights of migrants, ensuring that migration is an empowering experience for individuals, their families and communities alike. Our continued efforts in Bangladesh are built around strengthening migration governance through strategic interventions that enhance the effectiveness of national policies, practices, and processes, and foster greater cooperation across government bodies, the private sector, civil society, and international partners.

A key part of our work is supporting the Government of Bangladesh in its proactive engagement with global frameworks like the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), where Bangladesh has shown leadership as a GCM Champion Country. Through IOM's work fostering ethical recruitment practices, we are working closely with relevant stakeholders to reduce the risks of irregular migration and strengthen protection mechanisms for migrant workers, ensuring their rights are respected throughout the migration cycle.

In partnership with the UN Network on Migration in Bangladesh and through initiatives like the Bangladesh Migration Compact Taskforce, we are adopting a whole of government and whole of society approach, bringing together diverse stakeholders to create a holistic response to the challenges and opportunities migration presents. Through these collaborations, we aim to expand regular migration pathways, reduce irregular migration, and foster an environment where migration can be a force for positive change, both for individuals and for Bangladesh's broader development.

As we mark International Migrants Day, IOM remains dedicated to advancing sustainable migration solutions that promote human dignity, development, and global cooperation. We recognize that safe and regular migration is not just a fundamental right for all individuals but also a cornerstone for building resilient societies. As we look to the future, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting Bangladesh's journey toward achieving a migration system that is both inclusive and protective, ensuring that migration remains a positive force for individuals, families, and communities in Bangladesh and beyond.

Lance Bonneau

TIM SOUTHEE'S
career in numbers

Tests: 107	Strike-rate: 36.5
Wickets: 391	5w: 3
Average: 30.26	T20Is: 126
Strike-rate: 60	Wickets: 164
5w/10w: 15/1	Economy rate: 8:00
ODIs: 161	Average: 22.38
Wickets: 221	Strike-rate: 16.7
Economy rate: 5.53	5w: 2
Average: 33.70	

“It’s a nice way to fade out after what’s been an incredible journey. Every opportunity to play for New Zealand has been a special moment. It’s been a great ride and I’ve got 17 years of memories which I’ll take with me. “I’ll certainly enjoy a Christmas at home with the family. They’ve been few and far between over the last how many years.”

New Zealand’s retiring pacer
Tim Southee



New Zealand pacer Tim Southee waves to the fans after ending his international career with a victory as the hosts beat England by 423 runs in the third and final Test of a three-match series at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. The 36-year-old took two wickets and scored 25 runs in his final Test for the Kiwis.

PHOTO: AFP

Rangpur, Metro
book qualifiers
spots in NCL T20

SPORTS REPORTER

Rangpur Division and Dhaka Metro became the first two teams to book a place in the qualifiers of the National Cricket League (NCL) T20 yesterday after both sides clinched their fifth straight wins in the competition.

Pacer Alauddin Babu was the wrecker-in-chief in Rangpur’s seven-wicket win over Barishal Division at the Sylhet Outer Stadium, claiming 4-9 to help bowl out Barishal for just 108 in 19.2 overs.

Rangpur opener Chowdhury Rizwan made 53 off 44 balls to take his side home with 13 balls to spare.

Metro, meanwhile, after bossing the majority of the match against Sylhet Division, nearly lost due to Mahfuzur Rahman Rabby’s unbeaten 82 off 39 balls. Rabby needed to hit a four in the last ball off Shohidul Islam but could only fetch two as Metro won the game by one run.

In the other matches, Towhid Hridoy (69 off 50 balls) and Mushfiqur Rahim (46 off 31) returned to action for the first time since getting injured in last month’s Afghanistan series, but could not inspire their side Rajshahi Division to victory as they lost to Chattogram Division by four runs.

Meanwhile, Anamul Haque Bijoy hit the second century of the tournament, an unbeaten 101 off 67 balls, to help Khulna Division clinch a 21-run win over Dhaka Division.

‘We don’t use first-class
cricket like other countries’

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh cricket needs to adopt a “ruthless” decentralised model in player selection, where decisions are spread across a broader structure rather than concentrated in one individual’s hands, opined David Moore, who is stepping down from his role as the Bangladesh Cricket Board’s (BCB) Head of Programs at the end of his contract this month due to family commitments.

Moore, who joined the BCB in January last year, has made significant strides, organising the Bangladesh A team’s tours to Pakistan this year – which played its part in Bangladesh’s epic Test series win in Rawalpindi – and the High Performance team’s tour of Australia, with the foresight of providing experience for those earmarked to play in the 2027 Test series in Australia.

“I thought the tour to Australia with the HP was really good... We’ve got to think strategically about how we plan our tours,” Moore told The Daily Star on Monday before his departure.

According to the Australian, however, the role of HP teams often diverges from their intended purpose, leading to players staying in the system for extended periods without being promoted to higher levels.

“Someone not being picked [in the national team after a certain age] doesn’t mean he should be in HP. That’s not what it’s for. That’s what first-class cricket’s for,” he asserted.

Drawing a comparison with his home country, Moore stressed that decentralisation was key to Bangladesh’s cricketing future, with regional



bodies taking responsibility for player development.

“I think the Bangladeshi people are too nice sometimes. Because the system I came through, they’re ruthless. I think that we don’t use first-class cricket like other countries use first-class cricket,” he said.

One of Bangladesh’s ongoing struggles has been the difficulty in building a robust player pool. Moore noted that identifying the right kind of players within Bangladesh’s vast population is no easy feat.

“Massive. The bigger the population, the harder, the more difficult talent

identification is. It is really scientific. So we make sure that they’re fit, they’re game smart. You’ve got to make some tough decisions on the way and there’s got to be open and transparent selections,” he added.

Having worked closely with former head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, Moore moved the vital cogs from the background for two years in developing a framework.

“You need the [national] head coach to identify what they’re looking for. You know, do they need leg spinners, do they need finger spinners, etc. You look at all the best nations, they have a fully integrated program from the bottom to the top. There is complete communication, and U-15 to U-19 levels all work very closely with HP or the academy programs that run the A tours.

“And national selectors in countries know what’s going on at the under-15 level and so on. So I think one of the things that I would have liked to have seen happen was a fully integrated system from fifteens up to the top,” Moore opined.

After the change in BCB’s hierarchy following the political changeover on August 5, the Australian informed that he had found it more challenging to communicate ideas. With no standing committees, BCB president Faruque Ahmed had too much on his plate, running several departments.

“It was tough because of change. Like the new president’s been trying to put in place a program for the whole BCB to regenerate. It’s tough to be thinking about HP when you’ve got really big things you’ve got to deal with as well,” Moore said.

Kyrgios to team
up with Djokovic

REUTERS

Record 24-times Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic will team up with former Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios to play doubles at the Brisbane International, the Australian said.

The pair, who have developed a friendship after once being at loggerheads when Kyrgios labelled Djokovic “bonheaded” and a “tool”, will use the Dec. 29-Jan. 5 ATP 250 event as a warm-up for next month’s Australian Open.

Djokovic and Kyrgios have faced each other three times on the ATP Tour, with the Australian winning the first two encounters in 2017 before losing in four sets in the 2022 Wimbledon final.

In a post on Instagram on Monday, Kyrgios shared a picture of their meeting at Wimbledon, writing: “Doubles at Brisbane. See y’all there”.

Organisers of the Brisbane International did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

Kyrgios, who is also scheduled to play in the Dec. 19-22 World Tennis League exhibition event in Abu Dhabi, has played just one singles tour match in the last two years due to knee, foot and wrist injuries.

He is set to make his competitive singles return in Brisbane and will play at the Australian Open, where he will also be reunited with Thanasi Kokkinakis in the men’s doubles.

The 2025 Australian Open will run from Jan. 12-26.

SAFF U-20
Women’s C’ship
moved to July

SPORTS REPORTER

SAFF Under-20 Women’s Championship, which was initially scheduled to be held in Bangladesh from February 20, has now been pushed back to July 1-11, as part of rescheduling of SAFF age-level events.

A meeting of the SAFF Competition Committee yesterday also revised the schedule for the SAFF U-19 Men’s Championship in India, which will now take place from May 8-18. Similarly, SAFF U-17 Women’s Championship and SAFF U-17 Men’s Championship have been fixed for September 14-24 and October 17-27 respectively.

Bangladesh are the defending champions in SAFF U-20 Women’s Championship, having won the previous edition held in Dhaka in 2023.



India pacers Akash Deep Singh (L) and Jasprit Bumrah wear broad smiles after helping the visitors avoid follow-on with an unbroken 39-run stand for the 10th wicket at the end of the fourth day’s play in the third Test against Australia at The Gabba in Brisbane yesterday. The visitors were 252-9 in reply to Australia’s first-innings total of 445.

PHOTO: AFP

Sazzad dazzles as Brothers
crush Wanderers

SPORTS REPORTER

Forward Sazzad Hossain made a compelling case for his return to the national team with a hatrick that powered Brothers Union to an emphatic 8-0 victory over promoted Dhaka Wanderers Club in a Federation Cup fixture in Mymensingh yesterday.

Sazzad, who had been an unused substitute in the 1-0 loss to Bashundhara Kings in the opening match, was brought into the starting eleven for this game at Rofique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium. The 29-year-old repaid the coach’s trust with a brilliant performance, netting the season’s second hatrick after Gambian teammate Mustapha Drammeh claimed the first in the same match.

The result kept Brothers’ hopes alive for progressing to the second round, especially as defending champions Kings suffered a shocking 2-0 defeat to Fortis FC in Dhaka. Fortis currently top Group A with four points; one ahead of Brothers and Kings.

Sazzad, who previously featured for Sheikh Jamal DC, Mohammedan SC, and Saif SC, opened his scoring account



for the season in the 29th minute. His effort followed goals from Kawsar Ali Rabbi and Mustapha. The Gambian forward completed his hatrick with strikes in the 65th and 70th minutes, while Sazzad added two more goals in the 45th and 82nd minutes to secure his own. Eleta Kingsley rounded off the scoring in stoppage time to complete the rout.

“It has always been a happy moment to get a goal and a hatrick is something more than that. However, it was not possible without the assistance from the teammates. Both the local

and foreign players combined well to deliver this big win,” Sazzad told The Daily Star while returning to Dhaka.

The experienced forward also expressed his ambition to make a return to the national team by maintaining his form throughout the season and scoring consistently.

“This hatrick has boosted my confidence, and I will try to score in every match if I get the chance. Scoring goals not only helps the team but also strengthens my case for a recall to the national team,” he concluded.

Meanwhile, at the Kings Arena, Fortis resisted early spell of pressure from the three-time Federation Cup champions before Uzbek defender Jasur Jumaev broke the deadlock in the 71st minute, powering in a drop header. Seven minutes later, Mohammad Abdullah latched onto a clever pass from Piash Ahmed Nova and outsmarted the onrushing goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico to double the lead.

The outcome marks Fortis’ maiden win over Kings since their introduction in the top-tier football.



Bangladesh players celebrate a Malaysia wicket during their crushing 120-run victory in the U-19 Women’s T20 Asia Cup at the Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Defending 150, Bangladesh bowlers made quick work of the Malaysian batters, bowling them out for a mere 29 in 14.5 overs. The win helped the women in red and green to qualify for the Super 4 stage as group winners.

PHOTO: ACC



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Govt prepared to hold polls by mid-2026

Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday assured that the government is fully prepared to hold the national election.

He said the focus at this moment is solely on the parliamentary polls and there were no immediate plans for local elections, he told the media at the Election Commission Office in the capital's Agargaon.



Earlier, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in Victory Day speech, mentioned a potential timeline for the next national election, saying it would be held either by the end of next year of the first have of 2026.

In this connection, the CEC said, "We've been working towards the national election from day one. All necessary preparations have been

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Workers pack winter vegetables into sacks at Mohasthan Haat in Bogura's Shibganj upazila. Prices of vegetables have been falling over the last few days due to a surge in supply there. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

Killings at Pilkhana to be probed afresh

Committee to be formed in 5 working days: home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said that a committee would be formed within five working days to re-investigate the killings during the BDR mutiny at its headquarters in Pilkhana.



Speaking at a special press conference at the Secretariat, the adviser said that the committee would comprise retired judges, retired administration officials, retired police officers, and armed forces personnel.

Just two days back on December 15, the home ministry informed the

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DEPUTY, JOINT SECRETARIES Promotions to be based on exams

Reform commission to recommend 50:50 ratio between admin and other cadres for promotion to the rank of deputy secretary, says its chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Public Administration Reform Commission will recommend promotions to the posts of deputy secretary and joint secretary be based on exams conducted by the Public Service Commission.

However, sitting for the exams will not be required for promotions to additional secretary and secretary.

The commission will also suggest 50:50 ratio between officials of administration cadre and other cadres for promotions to deputy secretary instead of the current 75:25 ratio.

This was revealed by Commission Chairman Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury during a views-exchange meeting with journalists at the Secretariat yesterday.

"We are considering creating specialisations within the cadre services. We are recommending changes to the health and education cadres because

officials under these cadres cannot continue to be structured as traditional cadres. These two cadres will be restructured into specialised departments.

"Are ophthalmologists, dentists, and general physicians being promoted at the same pace? That's why we propose they no longer remain part of the cadre system. Keeping them within the cadre system has been illogical. These cadres must be separated and transformed into specialised departments, with enhanced salaries and benefits."

Mueyed said except for these two cadres, the rest can remain under the current cadre system. "We plan to have more discussions on this matter."

Mokles Ur Rahman, senior secretary of the public administration ministry, said the commission will recommend separating the education and health cadres, similar to how the Judicial Service

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The commission will recommend eliminating the police verification requirement for government jobs and passports.

Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury
Chairman, Public Administration Reform Commission

Nothing wrong in demanding election

Tarique tells BNP event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is nothing wrong in political parties demanding election, said BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

"As a political party, we will participate in elections, we will campaign, we will want elections -- there is nothing to hide. It's normal and simple. The ones who have more public support will run the country," he said, addressing his party activists via video link yesterday.

The BNP is not a party that resorts to sham elections in which votes are cast at midnight, he said.

"We believe in free, fair, and transparent elections where people vote without fear."

He said it would be wrong for the BNP activists to assume that the next election would be easy to win just because the main rival is not there.

"This election will be a lot harder than any other election in the past. Make preparations to win with people's support."

BNP's public support has made

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Top Russian general killed in Moscow blast

Ukraine claims responsibility; Kirillov was in charge of chemical weapons unit

REUTERS, Moscow

A top Russian general accused by Ukraine of being responsible for the use of chemical weapons against Ukrainian troops was assassinated in Moscow by Ukraine's SBU intelligence service yesterday morning in the most high-profile killing of its kind.

Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov, who was chief of Russia's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troops, was killed outside an apartment building along with his assistant when a bomb hidden in an electric scooter went off, Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes serious crimes, said.

An SBU source confirmed to Reuters that the Ukrainian intelligence agency had been behind the hit. "The liquidation of the chief of the radiation and chemical protection troops of the Russian Federation is the work of the SBU," the source said.

The source said that a scooter containing explosives was detonated, killing both Kirillov and his aide, as they stepped into the entrance of a house on Ryazansky Prospekt in Moscow.

Kirillov, 54, is the most senior Russian military officer to be assassinated inside Russia by Ukraine and his murder is likely to prompt the Russian authorities to review security protocols for the army's top brass and to find a way to avenge his killing.

Former president Dmitry Medvedev, now a senior Russian security official, was cited by the state RIA news agency as saying that Ukraine's military and political leadership now faced imminent revenge for Kirillov's murder.

Moscow holds Ukraine responsible for a string of high-profile assassinations on its soil designed to weaken morale and punish those Kyiv regards guilty of war crimes. Ukraine, which says Russia's war against it poses an existential threat to the Ukrainian state, has made clear it regards such targeted killings as a legitimate tool.



Israeli strikes kill 14 in Gaza

Tanks push deeper into south; Israeli team in Doha talks on potential truce deal

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 14 Palestinians yesterday, at least 10 of them in one house in Gaza City, medics said as tanks pushed deeper towards the western area of Rafah in the south.

Medics said the Israeli airstrike on the house in the Daraj suburb of Gaza City destroyed the building and damaged nearby houses. Four other people were killed in two separate airstrikes in the city and the town of Beit Lahiya north of the enclave said medics, medics added.

In Rafah, near the border with Egypt, Israeli tanks pushed deeper towards the western area of Mawasi, known as a humanitarian-designated area, residents said.

Heavy fire from tanks rolling into the area forced dozens of families sheltering there to flee northwards towards Khan Younis.



Palestinians stand in line to collect food at a distribution centre south of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, amid the ongoing Israeli offensive in the Palestinian enclave.

PHOTO: AFP

Vinicius Jr wins FIFA Best award

REUTERS, Doha

Brazil and Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr was named FIFA men's player of the year in Doha on Tuesday, with Spain and Barcelona midfielder Aidan Bonmati winning the women's award for the second year in a row.

Vinicius scored 24 goals in 39 appearances across all competitions to help Real Madrid clinch the LaLiga and Champions League double, and he also netted in their Champions League final win over Borussia Dortmund.

The Brazilian won the award ahead of Spain and Manchester City midfielder Rodri and his teammate at Real, England's Jude Bellingham.

The 24-year-old, who narrowly missed out on the Ballon d'Or to Rodri in October, was in Doha to collect the award, with Real in Qatar for Wednesday's FIFA Intercontinental Cup final against Mexico's Pachuca.

"It seemed impossible when I played barefoot in the streets of Sao Goncalo and now I'm here," Vinicius said.

Bonmati retained the FIFA women's player of the year award ahead of Zambia's Barbra Banda and Norway's Caroline Graham Hansen, having also won the women's Ballon d'Or for the second consecutive year in October.

Real Madrid's Carlo Ancelotti won the best men's coach award, after the Italian led his club to the league



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