



1972 ‘Mujibist’ constitution will be buried

Say student coordinators about proclamation of July Revolution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The “Mujibist” constitution of 1972 will become invalid through the proclamation of the July Revolution by the Anti-discrimination Students Movement on December 31, leaders of the platform said yesterday.

“From the very place where the one-point movement was declared, the grave of the Mujibist 1972 constitution will be dug -- we want the Mujibist constitution to be buried,” Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the platform, told a press briefing at its central office in the capital’s Banglamotor.

The platform is all set to unveil the proclamation of the

“The proclamation will clarify how the ‘Mujibist’ constitution has destroyed the aspirations of the people and precisely how we intend to replace it.”

HASNAT ABDULLAH
Convener of Anti-discrimination Students Movement

July Revolution on December 31 at 3:00pm at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Hasnat further said that the proclamation should have been made on August 5 after the fall of the Awami League government.

“Better late than never. The delay has allowed pro-fascist forces to continue conspiring from abroad and questioning the legitimacy of the revolution through the media, intellectual circles and various other platforms.”

These efforts undermine the sacrifice of more than 2,000 martyrs and more than 20,000 injured, he said.

“We hope that the proclamation will make the Nazi-like Awami League irrelevant in Bangladesh.”

The proclamation will outline the dreams, aspirations, intentions, goals and manifesto for the future of Bangladesh, he mentioned.

“It belongs to no specific party or class. Over the course

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Postgraduate trainee doctors block the Shahbagh intersection in the capital yesterday, demanding that their monthly stipend be raised to Tk 50,000. Story on Page 3.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

STUDENTS’ PROCLAMATION MOVE BNP, others raise questions, Jamaat welcomes it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP and several other political parties raise questions about the Students Against Discrimination’s decision to proclaim what it calls the July Revolution while Jamaat welcomes it.

Sources in the BNP say their leaders apprehend that this move may delay the next election. They also wonder why the students are doing this five months after the uprising.

The BNP wants an election at the earliest and believes that only an elected government can run the country.

Ganosamhati Andolon and Gono Odhikar Parishad leaders say the Students Against Discrimination is trying to make it seem like it alone led to the ouster of Sheikh Hasina on August 5.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Polls should be govt’s priority, not lowering of voting age

Say leaders of several political parties

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Emphasising the urgency of general elections, political party leaders cautioned against lowering the voting age. They argued that such a move could spark controversy and push back the polls date in the process.

On Friday, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus suggested a minimum voting age of 17 and expressed his willingness to accept

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Police struggling to get back on their feet

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

In the beginning of the year, the police were accused of being a tool implementing “Sheikh Hasina’s engineered election”, then they became the heavy hand attempting to crush the mass uprising. Days after Hasina’s ouster, the force appeared to have disintegrated. And now, they are trying to gain public trust in combating crime.

Although senior police officials refreshingly admit their shortcomings and promise better days ahead, the challenges facing the force are steep.

Many officers have been transferred for their alleged role in backing the Awami League regime.

A large number of those who replaced them have no experience in working in crime divisions, resulting in the sluggishness of the force’s transition into what the people desire.

Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret’d) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury acknowledged this on several occasions over the last few months. He said it would take the police some time to become acquainted with the alleys of Dhaka. The police members would need time to build an intelligence network before they could become effective crime fighters.

The police are dealing with multiple problems. Equipment deemed essential, like teargas canisters, stun grenades, transport vehicles, and walkie-talkies, which were damaged or destroyed during the uprising, have not all been replaced.

Over 450 of the country’s 664 police stations were attacked and some of them were set on fire.

Abdul Malek, inspector (investigation) of the Adabor Police Station, said, “Everything was burnt, including patrol cars, furniture, case dockets, and walkie-talkies ...”

“We have so far received two patrol cars, some furniture and weapons, but these are not enough ... We are trying to do the job with what we have,” he said.

According to the Police Headquarters database, 5,750 police firearms and 6,51,609 bullets were looted during the uprising. The weapons and ammunition include small machine guns, light machine guns, pistols, shotguns, gas guns, teargas launchers, and tear gas shells.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Fire and smoke rise from the tail section of a Jeju Air Boeing 737-800 series aircraft after the plane crashed and burst into flames at Muan International Airport in South Jeolla Province, some 288 kilometres southwest of Seoul, South Korea yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

One or 2 parties trying to fish in troubled waters

Says Rizvi; Jamaat terms his remarks ‘baseless’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi has alleged that “one or two political parties” in the country are trying to “fish in troubled waters to make gains”.

He said these parties, including an Islamist party that opposed Bangladesh’s independence in 1971, were conducting anti-BNP propaganda to deflect the people from the parties’ own misdeeds.

The Islamist party, he said, accuses the BNP of extortion despite itself being involved in taking control of a bank and tenders after the fall of Sheikh Hasina’s Awami League government.

Although Rizvi did not name any political party, the Jamaat e-Islami issued a statement condemning Rizvi’s remarks as “misleading, baseless and politically motivated”.

The BNP senior joint secretary general made the remarks while speaking to reporters after paying respect to BNP

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

179 dead in South Korea plane crash

Two rescued; cause of crash unclear

REUTERS, Muan County

The deadliest air accident ever in South Korea killed 179 people yesterday, when an airliner belly-landed and skidded off the end of the runway, erupting in a fireball as it slammed into a wall at Muan International Airport.

Jeju Air flight 7C2216, arriving from the Thai capital Bangkok with 175 passengers and six crew on board, was attempting to land shortly after 9:00 am (0000 GMT) at the airport in the south of the country, South Korea’s transport ministry said.

Two crew members survived and were being treated for injuries. South Korea’s acting President Choi Sang-mok declared a national mourning period until January 4.

The deadliest air accident on South Korean soil was also the worst involving a South Korean airline in nearly three decades, according to the transport ministry.

The twin-engine Boeing 737-800 was seen in local media video skidding down the runway with no visible landing gear before crashing into navigation equipment and a wall in an explosion of flames and debris.

The two crew members, a man and a woman, were rescued from

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

- ➔ Jeju Air flight skidded without gear down before exploding
- ➔ Investigators recover both black boxes
- ➔ S Korea declares 7-day national mourning

FIRST TIME EVER

Just for Baby

PARACHUTE JUST FOR BABY

FACE & BODY BABY WIPES

Gentle Care of Almond Milk & Olive Oil

So Safe, Recommended by Moms

*Based on independent consumer survey

MY DHAKA

Reviving Dhaka's classic cane furniture traditions

RBR

Hollowed cane chairs with pillowy cushions in white cotton covers surrounded a cane centre table with a glass top, on which, there would be a brass flower vase, posing with beautiful pink roses or gardenias from the garden -- this was how verandas looked years ago in Dhaka, or casual day rooms. Cane furniture was a timeless and vintage home décor style in Dhaka homes of the sixties.

"I remember my mother had a cane basket to put the flasks and milk bottles for my younger brother, sort of like the baby diaper bags we carry now. That square basket with compartments and a hooked cover, was my favourite plaything. I had one chamber to stow my dolls when we went out," says Tripti Reman, a homemaker.

"Our rare Dhaka visits always meant taking a rickshaw ride to Green Road, the only street selling such merchandise. Those beautiful cane items, like the lidded wicker baskets for picnics, the sprawling divans, and daybeds with hand-embroidered sheets, the ball chairs, highchairs for babies, bar chairs, and room partitions are all reminders of the colonial influence on our home styling,"



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Reman remembers fondly. Planters' chairs made from cane and timber, with the wicker woven in a criss-cross pattern on the back and bottom, were a common choice of our yesteryear interiors. And now, Dhaka people are once again opting for classic wood and cane furniture. Old-world charm is in; an impression you seem to gather if you browse through some e-commerce sites offering antiques.

"Rustic, and very homely cane products were common in our household before the plastic and wooden boards took over our interiors," says Masudul Islam Gias, the current owner of Yamim Furniture Fair, the famous cane furniture store in Green Road,

which has been in operation since the sixties. Gias a second-generation manufacturer and dealer of all kinds of cane and bamboo products, explained that the main difference between cane, wicker, and rattan is that cane and rattan are materials, while wicker is a weaving technique.

"The trend of using cane-bound wood furniture is on the rise, but unfortunately, we manufacturers cannot cash in on this new demand. Our business dipped sharply since the early 2000s and never regained momentum. The skilled craftsmen for cane binding took to other professions and those in profession charge Tk 800 for a day's work, while imports became a tedious process, and the government imposed a 15 percent VAT on handicrafts. With all these issues plaguing the sector, it is in dire straits now," Gias laments.

Police struggling to get back on their feet

FROM PAGE 1

Even though a joint operation launched on September 4, a total of 1,419 weapons and 2,63,153 bullets were yet to be recovered, as of December 3.

On top of this, around 700 convicts who escaped from prisons during the uprisings remain at large.

However, Adviser Jahangir recently said, "Initiatives have been taken to revive police activities. I hope everything will go well. Change takes time, I cannot alter the morale within two days. It requires patience."

UNDER PREVIOUS REGIME

In January 2024, law enforcers, including the police, were busy completing the parliamentary elections, which the BNP and Jamaat boycotted.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik, said, "There is no doubt that the police played a questionable role during the last general election, but the level of their complicity varied by location. At some places they played a neutral role and at some others, they acted with vested interest."

Hasina's government faced persistent criticism for allegedly politicising and compromising the independence of the police force to consolidate power and suppress dissenting voices.

Over the years, reports have detailed how the police have been used as a tool to silence voices, restrict free speech, and maintain control over the political landscape.

These not only undermined the integrity of police, but also eroded public trust in law enforcement agencies.

The police were used for targeting the opposition parties, especially the BNP and its allies. Opposition leaders and activists were arrested frequently and charged in what the critics say were politically motivated cases.

UPRISING

At the fag-end of Hasina's rule, the police were deployed against unarmed protesters, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

Following the indiscriminate shooting and killing of protesters and the ouster of Hasina, numerous police members, including top officials, went into hiding fearing the public wrath.

For weeks after August 5, the police were not on the ground in the true sense. Various types of crimes including theft, robbery, and extortion became rampant.

Neighbourhoods were protected at night by students armed with sticks.

Despite efforts by the interim government to stabilise the force, crime statistics from the Police Headquarters (PHQ) reveal an uptick in certain offences.

At least 464 robbery cases were filed between August and November. The number was 395 in the corresponding months of 2023.

Murder cases showed a particularly striking disparity. At least 1,937 murder cases were filed during these months this year. In the same months of 2023, a total of 976 murder cases were filed.

The Chief Adviser's Press Wing, citing PHQ data, recently said the higher numbers of cases filed in September, October, and November this year was due to those being filed over previous incidents.

Tawohidul Haque, associate professor at the Dhaka University's Institute of Social Welfare and Research, explained that the police continue to have a crisis of morale due to their controversial role during the uprising.

"At the same time, criminals are taking advantage as police are hesitant to take immediate action. But this cannot be allowed to continue," he said.

Enamul Haque Sagor, assistant inspector general at the PHQ, told The Daily Star, "One of the prime challenges is restoring operational activities. Initially, we focused on relaunching 999 services and restarting police stations' work in rented buildings, as many stations were damaged. Now, the police chief is holding meetings with field

officials to improve law and order and intensify operations to recover firearms."

Sagor added, "Our aim is to reduce crime, and hopefully the new year will be a good one for safety and security."

INSECURITY

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali, speaking at a programme on December 21, warned that mugging incidents have increased recently and that the muggers mainly target mobile phones.

At the programme, he told foreign students to exercise caution when using mobile phones. "As per the reports I have got, mugging incidents have increased recently, and muggers mainly target mobile phones," he said.

On December 15, Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury also said muggings have increased in the city and that such incidents occurred mainly in the early hours.

The fear of such crimes has had an impact on businesses.

An owner of a coffee shop in Gulshan blamed the poor presence of police on the streets for him losing half of his customers. "People are not coming out of their homes after sun down as they used to.

"Usually, we close the shop after midnight, but many of our customers have complained about theft from their cars parked on the streets near the shop," the owner said.

The owner of a confectionery chain with 25 outlets reported a 35 percent drop in sales, particularly in the evenings.

On police not being seen on the streets at night, Assistant Inspector General Sagor said, "We may be able to provide a proper answer if a specific area is mentioned, but it cannot be said that there are no police at night.

"We are currently gathering equipment and providing necessary support to police units to conduct operations and ensure services. The procurement of equipment is an ongoing process."

led the mass uprising against the fascist Awami League government.

"We will express our formal reaction after we know what is in the proclamation. We think the students can make such a proclamation. There is nothing wrong with it."

Gono Odhikar Parishad General Secretary Rashed Khan said, "It is a whimsical decision by the students. If the students make any decision without consulting with political parties and other stakeholders, their move will raise questions. Before making decisions, the students should talk to others."

Rashed also said making the proclamation so late defied logic. "It should be declared before the movement," he said, adding that students now want to take all the credit although many political parties, organisations and individuals were behind the movement.

A leader of Ganosamhati Andolon, wishing anonymity, said students were making the move for political gains.

1972 'Mujibist' constitution

FROM PAGE 1

of history, our dreams have been betrayed at various levels. Through this proclamation, we aim to ensure that such deprivation does not recur."

The foundational principles of the 1972 constitution facilitated Indian aggression, Hasnat said.

"The proclamation will clarify how the Mujibist constitution has destroyed the aspirations of the people and precisely how we intend to replace it," he added.

A draft of the proclamation has already been prepared by taking opinions from individuals from various political ideologies, religions and age groups who participated directly in the revolution, said Sarjis Alam, former coordinator of the student platform and currently the chief organiser of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee.

"We believe that the way the revolution united all anti-fascist forces, this proclamation will contain the hopes and aspirations of everyone -- we have crossed only the first phase of the revolution," he added.

One or 2 parties

FROM PAGE 1

founder Ziaur Rahman at his grave in Dhaka yesterday.

"After Sheikh Hasina's rule, didn't we witness the embezzlement of a bank by the successors of looters like S Alam?" he asked.

"Do they think we don't understand who they are referring to when they claim that one extortionist has left, and they don't want to see another?" he said.

He further alleged that the same political party is engaged in widespread corruption at local levels.

"In every district and village, your people are involved in occupying CNG stands, controlling river ports, and tenders," he said.

Referring to violence during Hasina's tenure, Rizvi said, "We witnessed groups like 'Chhapati League', 'Helmet League', and 'Gun League'. Now, people also know about the 'Khur Party' and the 'Payer Rog Kata Party'. Do you think people don't recognise who these individuals are?"

The BNP leader accused the party of distorting history and undermining the BNP's contributions to the country's independence and democracy.

"What is your achievement from 1971? You opposed 1971. It is a matter of pride for the BNP that Ziaur Rahman declared independence. The glory of 1971 and 1990 belongs to the BNP," he said.

Rizvi also criticised the Islamist party's decision to participate in the 1986 election under HM Ershad's regime. The BNP refused to participate in elections under the autocratic rule of Ershad.

"You joined Ershad's elections with Sheikh Hasina in 1986, betraying the

people," the BNP leader said. Rizvi also accused the party of misusing religion for political purposes.

"You do politics in the name of Islam ... but the core value of Islam is to keep one's commitments," he said.

About the anti-BNP propaganda, Rizvi said, "Not just a neighbouring country is spreading propaganda and misinformation and trying to stigmatise [the BNP], but one or two political parties in the country are also trying to fish in troubled waters to make their political gains."

"You want to improve relations with India, which means you don't care about right and wrong. You engage in racketeering in the name of politics. They (Awami League) killed key leaders of your party in the name of judicial process, and now you are saying you will grant them amnesty."

"All democratic forces should have been united today. Instead, these political parties are creating divisions to exploit the situation for their gain," Rizvi said. "The people of this country know who are the patriots, and who believe in independence, sovereignty, and multiparty democracy," he added.

Later at night, the Jamaat in a statement quoted the party's Assistant Secretary General Rafiqul Islam Khan as saying that it was not clear what Rizvi was trying to achieve with such allegations against Jamaat.

"Jamaat was never involved in 'Rog Kata' politics and fishing in troubled waters," it said and added that Jamaat is always against fascism and India's hegemony.

land, the official said.

Experts said the bird strike report and the way the aircraft attempted to land raised more questions than answers.

"A bird strike is not unusual, problems with an undercarriage are not unusual," said Airline News editor Geoffrey Thomas. "Bird strikes happen far more often, but typically they don't cause the loss of an airplane by themselves."

Hours after the crash, family members gathered in the airport's arrival area, some crying and hugging as Red Cross volunteers handed out blankets.

Families screamed and wept loudly as a medic announced the names of 22 victims identified by their fingerprints. Papers were circulated for families to write down their contact details.

Polls should be

FROM PAGE 1

such a proposal if it reflects popular consensus.

The next day, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir disapproved of this suggestion, saying that it had sparked controversy and raised concerns about delays in the polls.

People will now be worried about a potential delay in elections as preparation of the voter list will require more time if the voting age is lowered, he said while speaking at an event in the capital.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Spokesperson Advocate Matiur Rahman Akanda told this newspaper yesterday that the party believes that the minimum voting age should align with international standards while also taking into account the maturity of young citizens.

Also while speaking to this newspaper, Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said the chief adviser's suggestion of 17 as the suitable voting age becomes effectively binding, influencing the Election Commission's decision-making process.

Expressing the same sentiment, Razekuzzaman Ratan, assistant general secretary of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, said lowering the voting age to 17 is "unnecessary".

This has broader implications related to citizens' rights, which could invite further complications in the process, he added.

As of yet, no official proposals have been submitted to the Election Reform Commission regarding lowering the voting age, said sources.

According to Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, head of the Election Reform Commission, the matter of determining the minimum voting age falls within the jurisdiction of the Constitution Reform Commission.

When contacted, Prof Ali Riaz, head of the Constitution Reform Commission, said the commission has received multiple proposals for both lowering the voting age to 17 and keeping the existing minimum age of 18.

"We are considering all the proposals that we have received. Our decision regarding this particular matter will be reflected in our draft proposals scheduled to be submitted on January 7."

According to EC officials, around 25 lakh voters will be added if the voting age is lowered to 17.

They said there are both upsides and downsides to lowering the voting age to 17.

On the one hand, the decision would increase democratic participation by allowing more young people to engage in the political process. While, on the other hand, a 17-year-old might not possess the necessary experience to make informed political decisions, they added.

Furthermore, several EC officials also pointed out that if the voting age is lowered, then changes will need to be made to the constitution, the Electoral Rolls Act, 2009, and the Children Act, 2013.

According to the constitution, the elections to Parliament shall be on the basis of adult franchise, and a person shall be entitled to be enrolled on the electoral roll if that person is not less than 18 years of age.

The Electoral Rolls Act, 2009 also says that a person shall be entitled to be enrolled on the electoral roll if they are not less than 18 years of age.

The Children Act of 2013 in Bangladesh defines a child as anyone under the age of 18.

According to the Unicef website, in around 90 percent of countries and territories, the voting age is 18 or above.

Today, countries and territories where children aged 16 and or 17 are allowed to vote in all elections include Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Guernsey, Greece, Indonesia, Isle of Man, Jersey, Nicaragua, North Korea, and Timor-Leste.

Some countries and territories allow 16- or 17-year-olds to vote in at least some elections, such as local or state elections, as in Estonia, Germany, Israel, Puerto Rico, Scotland, and Wales. Children aged 16 in Belgium, Austria, Germany, and Malta, and those aged 17 in Greece, are allowed to vote in European elections.

Mortuary vehicles lined up outside to take bodies away, and authorities said a temporary morgue had been established.

Before the crash, a passenger texted a relative to say a bird was stuck in the wing, the News1 agency reported. The person's final message was, "Should I say my last words?"

The passengers included two Thai nationals and the rest are believed to be South Koreans, according to the transportation ministry.

The crash is the worst by any South Korean airline since a 1997 Korean Air crash in Guam that killed more than 200 people, according to transportation ministry data. The worst on South Korean soil was an Air China crash that killed 129.



After a long wait, a man manages to purchase daily essentials from a TCB truck in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday. As market prices remain high, hundreds of individuals flock to these trucks daily, hoping to buy essentials at subsidised prices.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Have full support for the youth
Farhad Mazhar tells event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poet and writer Farhad Mazhar has expressed his support for the programme organised by students and citizens at Dhaka's Central Shaheed Minar tomorrow.

Speaking at an event titled "Honouring and Rehabilitating Those Injured during the Uprising in Chattogram" yesterday afternoon, he said, "The youth will present a charter on December 31. I fully support the youth's leadership in building a new Bangladesh."

The event, held at the District Shilpakala Academy auditorium in Chattogram, was jointly organised by the Conscious Citizen Society, Chattogram, and the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, Chattogram.

Farhad Mazhar asked the injured activists at the event, "A declaration is coming on December 31. Do you know what the declaration will be? Have you discussed it?"

The injured activists replied that they were unaware. To this, Mazhar responded, "This lack

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

SURGE IN ROAD CRASHES

Patient overflow pushes NITOR beyond capacity

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and NILIMA JAHAN

The National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) is struggling to manage an overwhelming number of patients, far exceeding its 1,000-bed capacity, leaving many to receive treatment on the floor or in overcrowded corridors.

As of Saturday, the hospital reported over 1,100 patients, an increase from 1,069 on Friday.

Most cases involve road accident victims, alongside others injured in falls or various accidents.

During a visit yesterday, 70-year-old Ahsan Ullah, a grocery shop owner from Narayanganj, was found lying on the floor near the emergency operation theatre.

He was hit by a motorcycle last Monday while crossing the road, resulting in a fractured left leg and injuries to his right arm.

Despite arriving at the hospital the same night, he remains on the floor awaiting surgery. "We came here immediately, but there's no space," said his daughter, Khadija Begum.



Yasmin Begum, 35, from Sunamganj, suffered a severe injury to her right leg after being run over by a bus near Jamuna Future Park yesterday while attempting to board. She was seen waiting on a stretcher near the emergency room, awaiting surgery.

On Saturday, 55-year-old Babul Hossain, a vegetable vendor from Lakshmipur, was found lying on the floor.

He suffered a broken leg after being hit by a motorcycle on December 18 and came to NITOR on December 26. Despite requiring surgery, he remains on

the floor after receiving primary treatment due to the severe bed shortage.

"I've begged the staff for help, but they told me there's none. How long can we wait like this?" said his wife, Sajeda Begum.

Similarly, Mohammad Nannu, a 35-year-old battery-driven auto-rickshaw driver from Kurmitola Bihari Camp, sustained a left leg fracture in a road accident on December 26.

He was being treated on the floor, but on Friday, he received a bed and underwent surgery to insert a rod in his leg.

However, he was told to leave the hospital due to the bed crisis. "They told me I had to go home because others needed the space more. However, I've been asked

to come back every three days to dress my wounds," he said.

One-year-old Mohammad Rafi from Narsingdi fractured his left leg on December 25. Despite being admitted, he has been lying on the floor near the emergency operation theatre.

"We brought him here immediately, but there were no beds available. It breaks my heart to see him on the floor, but we have no option but to wait," said Tania Akter, Rafi's mother.

Seven-year-old Al Amin, a madrassa student from Netrokona, fractured both arms and his left leg after falling from a tree.

He is in critical condition. His mother, Shahida Begum, pleaded for a bed but was told to be grateful for the floor treatment.

"We came all the way from Madan, Netrokona, hoping he'd get proper care. But dust is entering his wounds while he lies on the floor. I don't know anyone here, and I feel so helpless," she said.

Seventy-year-old Arifa Begum fractured her hip in a fall inside the bathroom on October 7 and was brought to the hospital by her family from Gazipur's Kaliganj.

Initially unable to afford the surgery, they had to return home untreated. With her condition worsening, they returned to the hospital, and now her daughter

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Road blockades at 2 points leave commuters stranded

Postgrad doctors block Shahbagh for stipend raise while dismissed armed forces members protest at Jahangir Gate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Roadblocks at two key points of Dhaka led to severe traffic congestion across major areas of the city yesterday morning.

Trainee doctors blocked Shahbagh intersection, while armed forces members who were dismissed or forced to retire during the previous government's regime staged a sit-in in front of Jahangir Gate, leaving commuters stuck in long tailbacks for hours.

Areas including Mohakhali, Banani, Tejgaon, Bijoy Sarani, and Dhaka University experienced significant disruption.

The Shahbagh protest began around 11:45am when trainee doctors affiliated with BSMU and BCPS postgraduate private programmes blocked the intersection, demanding an increase in their monthly allowance to Tk 50,000.

Currently, the allowance stands at Tk 30,000 following a recent government revision

from Tk 25,000 for those who passed the FCPS Part I exam.

Despite staging a similar demonstration last Sunday, the doctors vowed to continue their protest until their demands are met. As of 5:30pm, the blockade at Shahbagh remained, exacerbating traffic woes in the



Shahbagh

surrounding areas.

Shahbagh Police Station Officer-in-Charge AKM Shahabuddin Shahin said efforts were underway to manage traffic by rerouting vehicles, but congestion

persisted. Around 3:45pm, Mehedi Hasan, an employee at a private

organisation, was travelling by motorcycle from Shyamoli to Karwan Bazar. Speaking to Prothom Alo, he said the entire route from Khamarbari to Karwan Bazar was clogged with traffic. "It took me nearly 25 minutes to cover this stretch, which usually takes about seven



Jahangir Gate

minutes. Vehicles are moving very slowly," he added.

Meanwhile, earlier in the day, forcibly retired and sacked armed forces personnel blocked the road near Dhaka Cantonment's Jahangir Gate around 11:00am.

Demonstrating under the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

'Saiful murder probe not being conducted properly' Says Gonotantrik Odhikar Committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Gonotantrik Odhikar Committee yesterday at a briefing expressed concern, saying the investigation into the murder of lawyer Saiful Islam (Alif) is not being conducted properly.

Saiful was hacked to death on the premises of a Chattogram court on November 26.

The organisation claimed that vested sections aiming to profit from mass arrests and communal tensions are actively exploiting the case.

The organisation presented its findings in a press conference titled "Post-Murder Situation of Lawyer Alif in Chattogram: Observations and Recommendations" held at the Jatiya Press Club.

Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammilito Sanatani Jagaran Jote, was arrested on November 25 in Dhaka.

The following day, while he was being produced in a Chattogram court, his followers engaged in a clash with police and lawyers.

Saiful was hacked to death at the time.

A delegation from the Gonotantrik Odhikar Committee visited Chattogram on December 23 to observe the situation firsthand. Based on this visit, the committee shared its observations and proposals at the briefing.

According to the committee, six cases have been filed so far related to the murder of lawyer Saiful and subsequent clashes. These cases have accused 390 named individuals and over 2,400 unnamed persons.

Allegations of "arrest-trade" have surfaced

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

We are witnessing activities aimed at creating divisions in the name of religion. These provocative actions are alarming.

Prof Anu Muhammad

18,000 DENIED ENTRY TO MALAYSIA

Workers demand refunds after missing deadline



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers who paid hefty amounts of money to go to Malaysia but couldn't leave within the specified time frame held a human chain yesterday in front of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in Eskaton.

They raised a seven-point demand at the human chain, including a refund of their money.

The aspiring migrants began the protest programme around noon and ended around 6:30pm.

The protesters alleged that, although the deadline for entering Malaysia expired on May 31, the agencies failed to send them there for unknown reasons.

Despite multiple assurances from the government about refunding their

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Bangladesh calls for swift resolution

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has urged for a swift resolution to the issue of 18,000 Bangladeshi workers unable to enter Malaysia by the deadline of May 31, 2024.

This call was made during a meeting between Chief Adviser's Special Envoy on International Affairs, Lutfe Siddiqi, and Malaysian High Commissioner Mohd Shuhada Othman yesterday at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka.

Siddiqi called for a possible solution on this issue at the earliest. Both the dignitaries assured to work together to eliminate the corruption caused by recruitment syndicates involving Bangladeshi and Malaysian nationals and loopholes in the system that allow for the mistreatment of workers, causing harm and losses for both nations.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Piles of cardboard -- abandoned on the roadside after the truck that was carrying them had an accident a couple of days ago -- occupy part of the footpath and road in front of the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the capital's Gulistan area. Despite the truck being removed, the cardboard remains, causing inconvenience to pedestrians and traffic movement. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Monsur Ahmed new chair of TIB trustee board



Monsur Ahmed

Tahera Yasmin

Manzoor Hasan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent rights activist and founder trustee of Impact Foundation Bangladesh, Monsur Ahmed Choudhuri, has been elected chairperson of the trustee board of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

He will succeed outgoing chairperson Sultana Kamal, TIB announced in a media release yesterday.

TIB's founding executive director Barrister Manzoor Hasan and women's empowerment and governance expert Tahera Yasmin have been appointed as new members of the trustee board.

Additionally, TIB trustee board member Faruque Ahmed has been named chairman of the TIB audit committee, while former controller general of Defence Finance Motaahar Hossain has been appointed as another member of the committee.

Choudhuri is the founder of the renowned floating hospital "Jibon Tori".

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Khulna town

FROM PAGE 5
flooding the city and causing widespread devastation. He urged the government to implement long-term solutions instead of temporary fixes.

Abirul Jabbar, chief planning officer of the KCC and project director for the city protection dam, highlighted the deteriorating state of the 8-kilometre-long dam, with many sections in critical condition.

He identified the 2-kilometre stretch from Boro Bazar to Forest Ghat as the worst affected, noting that repair attempts in 2011

were thwarted by resistance from traders who feared losing their livelihoods.

Jabbar said a calamity in this area could lead to the submergence of the entire city.

He said efforts have now shifted to a 700-metre stretch from BL College to Flower Mill in Khulna's Daulatpur area. With an estimated cost of Tk 23 crore, the project has completed its initial survey, and the design phase is expected to begin shortly. However, progress on the broader 8-kilometre dam remains uncertain, he added.

Monsur Ahmed new

FROM PAGE 3
He has been a long-time advocate for human rights, particularly for individuals with disabilities, working to improve their livelihoods.

He played a key role in establishing the National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled and served as its chairperson. From 2009 to 2012, he was a member of the UN Human Rights Commission's Committee on the Rights of Disabled People.

His efforts have earned him numerous accolades, including the Nirafat Anam Memorial Inclusion (NAMI) Award.

Manzoor Hasan is currently the executive director of the Centre for Peace and Justice at BRAC University. He previously served as the founding executive director of TIB, deputy executive director at BRAC, and a member of Transparency International's international

advisory council.

In 2003, Queen Elizabeth II awarded him the Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his contributions to good governance.

Tahera Yasmin has held senior leadership roles in international organisations such as Oxfam, CARE, and GLZ. She is known for her expertise in strategic planning and programme implementation in both the private and development sectors.

The trustee board is TIB's highest policy-making body. Prof Tasneem Arefa Siddiqui serves as the secretary general of the board, while The Daily Star's Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam is the treasurer. Other board members include journalist Abul Momen, Prof Fakrul Alam, Advocate Susmita Chakma, development activist Philip Gain, and rights activist Banasree Paul.

Bangladesh calls

FROM PAGE 3

Both sides also discussed key areas to enhance their longstanding bilateral relationship, including trade, labour, and economic cooperation.

Siddiqi highlighted the importance of the Bangladesh-Malaysia relationship, referencing the recent official visit of Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Dr Anwar Ibrahim to Bangladesh on October 4, 2024.

This visit, the first by a head of government since the interim government took office, has given a fresh boost to their cooperation.

The special envoy briefed Othman on the July uprising and ongoing reforms in Bangladesh, focusing on the country's commitment to

democracy and justice.

He stressed the importance of expanding trade and economic relations between the two nations, with potential areas of collaboration including manpower movement, data science, artificial intelligence, health, agriculture, energy, and the halal economy.

Both leaders also discussed cooperation in various sectors, such as SMEs, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, education, and disaster management. Siddiqi congratulated Malaysia on its upcoming ASEAN Chairmanship and reiterated Bangladesh's support for Malaysia's bid to become a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN.

Patient overflow pushes

FROM PAGE 3

Parul Begum says they've been waiting for six days without admission.

"We've spent nights sitting on the floor, and my mother is in terrible pain. We are forced to keep her in the corridor while waiting for a bed," Parul said.

The overcrowding has turned hospital corridors into makeshift treatment zones. Staff are struggling to move trolleys and equipment, with patients lying along the floors from the emergency department to the operation theatre.

A nurse at the hospital said they are forced to discharge patients early to manage the influx. "Patients who need 15 days of care are being sent home after 7-8 days. It's not ideal, but we have no choice," she said.

Dr Md Abul Kenan, director of NITOR, acknowledged the crisis. "Very recently, patient numbers have surged, particularly road accident victims from all over the country. On Friday, we had 1,069 patients, and by Saturday, it exceeded 1,100," he said. "While treating patients on the floor is not standard practice, we are trying our best to ensure no one is sent back untreated."

A senior official, speaking anonymously, said, "For every 10 discharges, 20 new patients arrive. Some patients stay for months, and it's impossible to maintain empty beds for emergencies. We are forced to discharge those who can manage follow-ups at home."

Man beaten to death

FROM PAGE 5
Later, around 50-60 locals gathered and beat him, he added.

Md Asadujjaman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Faridpur Sadar Police Station, confirmed the man was beaten to death on suspicion of theft. Police arrived at the scene and recovered the body. The body was sent to Faridpur

Medical College Hospital for autopsy, said the OC.

Millat Chowdhury has three cases against him, including one under the Narcotics Act and two under theft, he added.

As of 4:00pm, no complaint has been filed and no detentions have been made in connection to Millat's death, the police official confirmed.

Road blockades

FROM PAGE 3

banner of "Sohojoddha," they demanded reinstatement of their jobs, inclusion in the pension scheme with full benefits, and reforms to the legal framework that facilitated their dismissals.

The blockade caused significant traffic congestion, bringing vehicles to a complete halt in parts of the area. The protesters withdrew at 1:15pm following assurances

from a high-level armed forces delegation.

Naimul Islam, chief coordinator of Sohojoddha, said the delegation promised to form a committee within five working days to discuss their demands.

While the Jahangir Gate blockade ended relatively quickly, the lingering Shahbagh protest left many Dhaka residents grappling with hours of delays and disrupted routines.

Workers demand

FROM PAGE 3

money, most of them are yet to receive it, they alleged.

"Complaints lodged have also remained unresolved. As a result, we have decided to continue our protest until our demands are met," said Md Ratan, from Tongi, who paid Tk 4 lakh to a recruiting agency but could neither go to Malaysia nor get a refund despite repeated assurances.

Their demands include cancellation of licenses for the 100 agencies involved in the syndicate and imposing travel bans on their owners, seizing money siphoned abroad by fugitive owners and distributing it among the affected workers, and the immediate arrest of agents, sub-agents, and brokers acting as shields for recruiting agencies.

Other demands include providing explanations for

why complaints filed with the ministry and the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training have remained unresolved for three to four months, establishing a system where migration costs are deposited in government banks, holding the government accountable for its failure to ensure compensation, and arranging cost-free employment in other countries for the affected workers.

When this correspondent and another journalist tried to enter the ministry to inquire about the issue, four Ansar members stationed at the gate said journalists cannot enter the office without prior permission. The ministry secretary did not respond to this correspondent's call when he tried to contact him for in this regard.

7 injured as workers

FROM PAGE 5

The Ulka-4 driver, Jagadish, was among the most severely injured.

"They broke my hand, injured my body, and even struck my eye. I demand justice for this unprovoked assault," Jagadish said.

Md Omar Faruk, the university's transport administrator, said, "Our driver is in critical condition, and we fear he may lose vision in one eye. Several students were also hurt. Such attacks on university buses are unacceptable."

In response to the incident, leaders of the Dhaka District Bus-Minibus Road Transport Workers' Union met with JnU's proctorial body.

Gias Uddin Bhuiyan,

office secretary of the union said, "We strongly condemn the attack on the university bus. Initially, the driver and helper involved in the incident have been dismissed from their jobs. An amount of Tk 12,900 will be provided for vehicle repair, Tk 1,00,000 for the treatment of the injured driver, Tk 30,000 for the treatment of the injured helper and students, and Tk 20,000 as a penalty."

Md Tazammol Hoque, proctor of JnU, said discussions led to an agreement to repair the damaged bus, cover medical expenses for the injured, and ensure those responsible are brought to justice.

No arrests have been reported as the attackers fled the scene.

Saiful murder probe

FROM PAGE 3

as nearly 2,500 individuals have been listed as unnamed accused, the committee said.

The committee said 10 persons from the Harijan Colony have been arrested, leaving their families, especially women and children, in a dire state. Most male residents of the area have fled their homes to avoid arrest.

Speaking at the conference, economist Prof Anu Muhammad, a member of the committee, said, "When there are so many unnamed accused, anyone can be targeted. This has led to widespread harassment."

The former Jahangirnagar University teacher said, "We are witnessing activities aimed at creating divisions in the name of religion. These provocative actions are alarming."

The committee said on the day lawyer Saiful was killed, two temples and eight houses in the Harijan

Colony were vandalised.

On November 29, two days after the incident, a group of miscreants vandalised and looted the Harijan Colony following Friday prayers.

These incidents did not receive media coverage, and no cases have been filed regarding the vandalism of Harijan temples and houses.

Samina Luthfa, associate professor of Sociology at Dhaka University, said, "Even five months after the mass uprising, a community is being marginalised simply because of their religious identity."

Lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua read out the written statement.

The committee noted that identifying Saiful's killers is not impossible. There are 20 to 25 CCTV cameras between the court's main road and the crime scene, with three to four cameras located near the spot.

FOR SALE
Interested persons are requesting to contact for purchase of established and running Pharmaceuticals industry.
Mob.: 01711-217111
E-mail: apcpharma@gmail.com

D - 41

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 1700 OF 2024


Kamrun Nahar alias Kazi Kamrun Nahar Hoque
Petitioner

-VERSUS-
Orion Infrastructure Ltd. Change from Belhasa Accom and Associates Ltd and others-----

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 81(2) read with section 85(3) of the Companies Act 1994 was filed by the petitioner mentioned earlier before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh praying for admission of the said application. Mr Justice Ahmed Soheli of the Hon'ble High Court Division vide order dated 15 December 2024 was pleased to admit the same.

Any person interested in the said application may appear either personally or through his duly authorized Advocate. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned.

Muhammad Nawshad Zamir
Advocate
Supreme Court of Bangladesh
For the petitioner
Room 107
Supreme Court Bar (Main Building)
Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh

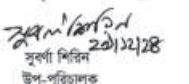


গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কবি নাজরুল ইনস্টিটিউট
সম্মতি বিষয়ক মহলাসহ
ওপের সাইট : www.nazrulstitute.gov.bd


নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি
কবি নাজরুল ইনস্টিটিউটে প্রায়তন দুটি (একটি ২৫ টন) এগির ফ্যানশের মূল গেটের প্রায়তন ধীর রয়েছে। ফ্যানশের মূল গেটের প্রায়তন ধীর প্রকাশ্যে নিলাম ডাকে (যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে) বিক্রয় করা হবে। উক্ত নিলাম ডাকে ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তি/প্রতিদানের আগামী ০৭/০১/২০২৫ খ্রি: তারিখ বেলো ১১.০০ টায় কবি নাজরুল ইনস্টিটিউটে উপস্থিত হয়ে প্রকাশ্যে নিলাম ডাকে অংশ গ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

মাল্যমানের বিবরণী
প্রায়তন দুটি (একটি ২৫ টন) এগির ফ্যানশের মূল গেটের প্রায়তন ধীর সরঞ্জাম।

শর্তাবলী:
১. নিলাম ডাকে ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তি/প্রতিদানের যথা সময়ে কবি নাজরুল ইনস্টিটিউটের নিচ তলার উপস্থিত হয়ে প্রকাশ্যে নিলাম ডাকে অংশ নিতে হবে।
২. অক্রেতার ও প্রায়তন মাল্যমানের প্রাপ্তি মূল্যের ২০% (বৈধবোধ্য ও সম্মতিবোধ্য) নগদ অংশ/টাকা ডাকের সময়ে নিলামকারীর নিকট অর্থ দিয়ে অগ্রিম প্রদান করতে হবে।
৩. নগদ অর্থ বা ব্যাংক ড্রাকট বা পেমেন্টের মাধ্যমে মূল্য পরিশোধ সাপেক্ষে মাল্যমান সরিয়ে নেয়ার অনুমতি পর প্রদান করা হবে। উক্ত নগদ সাথে ডাক ও অক্রেতার যোগ্য হবে।
৪. অনুমতি পর পাওয়ার ০৩ (তিন) দিনের মধ্যে মাল্যমান সরিয়ে নেয়ার কাজ শুরু করতে হবে এবং কাজ করে ০৫ (পাঁচ) দিনের মধ্যে সম্পূর্ণ মাল্যমান সরিয়ে নিতে হবে।
৫. নিলাম অংশ গ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তি/প্রতিদানের প্রতিদিনিধি নিম্নলিখিত তথ্য জানার জন্য অফিস চাকরাদীন সময়ে যোগাযোগ করতে পারবেন।
৬. অফিস কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ বশীর্বে ব্যক্তিগতভাবেই নিলাম বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। নিলাম ডাকে শর্ত বিধিগত কোন সমস্যা উদ্ভব হলে সে ক্ষেত্রে ইনস্টিটিউট কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।


সুভোজিৎ
উপ-পরিচালক

GD- 1294



SUMMIT POWER LIMITED (SPL)
Summit Centre, 18 Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION (PSI)




This is to inform to all shareholders that, with reference to our application under reference No. SPL/BSEC/2024/09/6082 dated 30 September 2024 and subsequent clarifications submitted thereafter, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC), via its letter under reference BSEC/CAD/CRD/243/2005/part-6/312 dated 26 December 2024, has granted consent for an extension in the submission timelines for the following financial statements:

- Audited Financial Statements** for the year ended 30 June 2024 (extended from 28 October 2024).
- First Quarterly Un-audited Financial Statements** for the period ended 30 September 2024 (extended from 14 November 2024).
- Second Quarterly Un-audited Financial Statements** for the period ending 31 December 2024 (extended from 30 January 2025).

We assure all stakeholders that the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2024, including the completion of the audit, as well as the first-quarter and second-quarter statements, will be prepared and submitted/published within the approved extended timeframe of **31 March 2025**.

By order of the Board of Directors,
S/-
Swapon Kumar Pal, FCA
Company Secretary

Dhaka, 29th December 2024

www.summitpowerinternational.com/spl  [summitpowerintl](https://www.facebook.com/summitpowerintl)  [summitpowerintl](https://twitter.com/summitpowerintl)  [Summit Power International](https://www.youtube.com/SummitPowerInternational)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Regional Director
Directorate of Technical Education
Sylhet Region, Technical Road
Sylhet-3100.
<https://rdo.sylhet.gov.bd>
e-Mail: rdosylhet@gmail.com

Memo No: 57.03.9131.102.07.002.24.1321

Date: ০৯ পৌষ ১৪০১ বঙ্গাব্দ
24 December 2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender Notice will be invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.procure.gov.bd>) for following procurement.


Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Description	Tender Security	Online Notice Publication Date & Time	Online Tender Opening Date & Time
1	1050655	Supply of Office Equipment	10000.00	30-Dec-2024 23:30	20-Jan-2025 11:30
2	1050697	Supply of Furniture	10000.00	30-Dec-2024 23:30	20-Jan-2025 11:30

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.procure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for selling / downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd), +8809609112233, +8801762625528, +8801762625529.

Sd/-
(Rathindra Nath Datta)
Regional Director (Joint Secretary)
Phone : 02-996632529

GD- 1292



GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
HEADQUARTERS BORDER GUARD BANGLADESH
MEDICAL BRANCH, PEELKHANA, DHAKA

Reference No : 44.02.1205.006.07.027.24/01
Reference No : Med Br, Dhaka Ltr No. 44.02.1205.006.017.024.24/1002

Dated : 08 July 2024
Dated : 01 Dec 2024


e-Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method)

e-Tender in invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement goods as stated below :

Package No.	Name of Goods	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of Goods	Tender ID
Medicine-73	Procurement of Medicine-73 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056964	Medicine-87	Procurement of Medicine-87 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056978
Medicine-74	Procurement of Medicine-74 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056965	Medicine-88	Procurement of Medicine-88 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056979
Medicine-75	Procurement of Medicine-75 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056966	Medicine-89	Procurement of Medicine-89 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056980
Medicine-76	Procurement of Medicine-76 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056967	Medicine-90	Procurement of Medicine-90 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056981
Medicine-77	Procurement of Medicine-77 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056968	Medicine-91	Procurement of Medicine-91 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056982
Medicine-78	Procurement of Medicine-78 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056969	Medicine-92	Procurement of Medicine-92 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056983
Medicine-79	Procurement of Medicine-79 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1057355	Medicine-93	Procurement of Medicine-93 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056984
Medicine-80	Procurement of Medicine-80 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056971	Medicine-94	Procurement of Medicine-94 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056985
Medicine-81	Procurement of Medicine-81 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056972	Medicine-95	Procurement of Medicine-95 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056986
Medicine-82	Procurement of Medicine-82 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056973	Medicine-96	Procurement of Medicine-96 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056987
Medicine-83	Procurement of Medicine-83 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056974	Medicine-97	Procurement of Medicine-97 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056988
Medicine-84	Procurement of Medicine-84 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056975	Medicine-98	Procurement of Medicine-98 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056989
Medicine-85	Procurement of Medicine-85 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056976	Medicine-99	Procurement of Medicine-99 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056990
Medicine-86	Procurement of Medicine-86 for the F.Y 2024-2025.	1056977	Pathology-10	Procurement of pathological reagents-10	1056863

- This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
- To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP protal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and form e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
- The Tender Notice will be available on the webiste: www.bgb.gov.bd

GD- 1299


SAKAWAT SULTAN
Dir (CMSD)
For Director General

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

A total of 99,761 patients were released till yesterday across the country.

GD- 1298



LOOKING BACK AT 2024

OTT content that kept us subscribed

As 2024 comes to a close, it leaves behind a trail of events and milestones, including notable contributions from Bangladesh's OTT platforms (Over-the-Top). Let's revisit some of the year's most talked-about works on the interweb.

SAEED KHAN SHAGOR

Web-films

KACHER MANUSH DURE THUIYA

Part of Chorki's much anticipated *Ministry of Love* anthology series, this Shihab Shaheen directorial explores the intricacies of long-distance relationships, portraying their merits and challenges in a unique manner. The narrative delves into the complexities of relationships through various characters' perspectives, making it a commendable romantic project rooted in realism. Featuring Pritom Hasan and Tasnia Farin, the film's humour resonated widely on social media throughout the year, with memes and relatable storylines connecting viewers to its themes.

FORGET ME NOT

Premiering on Chorki in September, *Forget Me Not* received critical acclaim

for its exploration of how modern relationships are shaped by factors like economic disparities, political ideologies, familial conflicts, career aspirations, and varying ambitions. It also highlights the dynamics between partners with differing goals and aspirations, offering audiences a fresh perspective on familiar dilemmas. Starring Yash Rohan and Mehazabien Chowdhury, the Robiul Alam Robi directorial captivated audiences with its emotional depth and aesthetic appeal.

LAST DEFENDERS OF MONOGAMY

This *Ministry of Love* entry by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki follows the story of a seemingly ideal man—a devoted husband, loving father, and respected boss—who unexpectedly finds himself infatuated with a new colleague. While the relationship never fully blossoms, the film uses the metro rail as a central metaphor, symbolising the duplicity and moral compromises of urban relationships.

experimental narrative critiques modern mediocrity with the poignant observation: "We are modern, but mediocre." Featuring Chanchal Chowdhury and Xefar Rahman, the film offers a thought-provoking take on contemporary love.

OSHOMOY

Released on Bongo, *Oshomoy* delves into the struggles of middle-class families, capturing the disconnect between aspirations and reality, power imbalances, and societal challenges. Directed by Kajal Arefin Omi, this family drama examines the evolution of familial crises from the 1990s to the 21st century. While the rushed courtroom scenes and occasional plot loopholes detract slightly, Tasnia Farin's portrayal of a university freshman anchors the film, vividly depicting middle-class struggles and transitions.

MAYA

Binge released *Maya*, marking Sarika's dazzling return after a long hiatus. Directed by Raihan Rafi, the film begins with a woman's determined quest to find her disappeared husband at a police station. The narrative evolves into a tale of resilience, exploring the societal and familial adversities faced in her husband's absence. Imon and Sarika deliver compelling performances, supported by a dynamic background score that heightens suspense. Despite minor narrative flaws, Rafi's storytelling strikes an emotional chord, leaving a lasting impression.

Web-series

KALPURUSH

Directed by Salzar Rahman, *Kalpurush* is a gripping three-hour web series. With a unique take on time travel, it features Chanchal Chowdhury's enigmatic performance alongside contrasting portrayals by Imtiaz Barshon and FS Nayeem as police officers. Tanzika Amin's role as a family-oriented character adds depth to this intricately designed series, which captivates viewers despite some logical gaps.

GOLAM MAMUN

A spin-off from *Buker Modhye Agun*, this Shihab Shaheen directorial tells the story of Golam Mamun (Ziaul Faruque Apurba), a police officer turned fugitive implicated in double murders. The series unfolds into a gripping narrative of crime, betrayal, and political intrigue. Imtiaz Barshon's portrayal of Officer Robin received widespread acclaim, while Sabila Nur, Rashed Mamun Apu, and Masum Bashar delivered notable performances. However, the series' commentary on the supremacy of syndicates and systemic flaws risks leaving viewers with the misleading message: "A qualified ruler is a myth."

RONGILA KITAB

Directed by Anam Biswas, this Hoichoi

series centres on Pradip, a Barishal-based goon who promises his pregnant wife to abandon his life of crime. However, a high-profile murder and ensuing riots force him into a tragic decision. The series tackles themes like political power struggles and border conflicts, with Mostafizur Noor Imran excelling as Pradip and Pori Moni delivering a stellar performance as his wife, Shupti.

SINPAAT

Touqir Islam's *Sinpaat*, a seven-episode series on Chorki, continues his exploration of the Rajshahi region. Following the criminal escapades of Fazu and Shohel, the story unfolds with raw intensity as the duo struggles to escape their past. Real-life former criminal Soheli Sheikh and actor Rifat Bin Manik received acclaim for their authentic portrayals in this gritty narrative.

FRENZY

Directed by Jahid Pritom, *Frenzy* is a Binge Original that offers a refreshing departure from violence-centric Bangladeshi web series. Balancing moments of joy and sorrow, it explores relationships, red flags, and friendships in a feel-good narrative. Featuring Abu Huraira Tanvir, Sabrin Azad, Partho Sheikh, and Aisha Khan, the series transitions from a family-focused story to the lives of four young people navigating new beginnings, delivering a heartwarming tale of connection and growth.

APURBA to star in 'Chaalchitro' sequel

Ziaul Faruq Apurba made his Tollywood debut last week with Pratim D. Gupta's film *Chaalchitro*. Just a week after its release, the sequel has been announced, and according to reports by Hindustan Times Bangla, the director has confirmed that Apurba will reprise his role.

In *Chaalchitro*, released on December 20, Apurba portrays a mysterious character who adds twists and turns to the plot.

Not only Apurba, but actors from the first part—Tota Roy Chowdhury, Anirban Chakrabarti, Bratya Basu, and Shantanu Maheshwari—will also return for the next instalment.

Apurba is currently in the United States. According to the director, he will join the shooting for the new instalment of *Chaalchitro* as soon as he returns. The director also mentioned that, for now, the film is scheduled for release around next year's Durga Puja or Christmas.



TAYLOR SWIFT'S record-breaking 2024

Taylor Swift had an extraordinary 2024, solidifying her position as a global icon. From winning the Grammy for Album of the Year with *Midnights* to releasing her 11th studio album, *The Tortured Poets Department*, she made headlines throughout the year. In addition, her historic *Eras Tour*, high-profile appearances alongside Travis Kelce, and her title as Spotify's most-streamed artiste made her a dominant force in music and pop culture.

Taylor's meteoric rise this year has taken her

fame to unprecedented heights, reaching a level of stardom rarely seen in recent times.

The *Eras Tour* was undoubtedly the highlight of Taylor's year. Starting in Glendale, Arizona, in March 2023 and resuming in Paris in May 2024, the record-breaking tour made a significant impact on global economies. According to Forbes, her London shows alone generated £300 million, while her Melbourne stops contributed an estimated AUD \$1.2 billion.



James Gunn defends 'THE BATMAN' sequel delay

DC Studios co-chairman James Gunn defended the delay of *Batman 2*, describing it as a typical part of sequel production. Gunn pointed to the long gaps between sequels of major films like *Alien*, *The Incredibles*, *Terminator*, *Avatar*, and *Top Gun* to justify the decision.

Warner Bros has officially postponed the release of *Batman 2* by a year, with the film now set to hit theatres globally on October 1, 2027, according to Deadline.

James Gunn defended the delay, noting that long gaps between sequels are common. "To be fair, a 5-year gap or more is typical for sequels," he wrote, citing examples like *Alien* (7 years), *The Incredibles* (14 years), *Terminator* (7 years), *Avatar* (13 years), *Top Gun* (36 years), and *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2 and Vol 3* (6 years).

H-1B VISA DEBATE

Trump sides with Musk

Says he’s always been in favour of the programme

REUTERS, West Palm Beach

President-elect Donald Trump on Saturday sided with key supporter and billionaire tech CEO Elon Musk in a public dispute over the use of the H-1B visa, saying he fully backs the programme for foreign tech workers opposed by some of his supporters.

Trump’s remarks followed a series of social media posts from Musk, the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, who vowed late Friday to go to “war” to defend the visa programme for foreign tech workers.

Trump, who moved to limit the visas’ use during his first presidency, told The New York Post on Saturday he was likewise in favour of the visa programme.



“I have many H-1B visas on my properties. I’ve been a believer in H-1B. I have used it many times. It’s a great programme,” he was quoted as saying.

Musk, a naturalised US citizen born in South Africa, has held an H-1B visa, and his electric-car company Tesla obtained 724 of the visas this year. H-1B visas are typically for three-year periods, though holders can extend them or apply for green cards.

The altercation was set off earlier this week by far-right activists who criticized Trump’s selection of Sriram Krishnan, an Indian American venture capitalist, to be an adviser on artificial intelligence, saying he would have influence on the Trump administration’s immigration policies.

Musk’s tweet was directed at Trump’s supporters and immigration hard-liners who have increasingly pushed for the H-1B visa program to be scrapped amid a heated debate over immigration and the place of skilled immigrants and foreign workers brought into the country on work visas.



Palestinians carry a dead body at the site of an Israeli strike on Al-Wafaa Hospital in Gaza City yesterday. At least seven people were killed and several others injured in the strike, the Palestinian civil emergency service said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

CRACKDOWN ON ASSAD LOYALIST

300 arrested in Syria

AFP, Beirut

Syria’s new authorities have arrested nearly 300 people, including informants, pro-regime fighters and former soldiers, in a crackdown on loyalists to ousted former president Bashar al-Assad, a monitor said yesterday.

Since rebels led by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group toppled Assad three weeks ago, ending more than five decades of family rule, the new authorities in Syria have intensified efforts to consolidate control.

The security forces of the new administration launched a large-scale operation on Thursday against Assad’s militias.

“In less than a week, nearly 300 people have been detained in Damascus and its suburbs, as well as in Homs, Hama, Tartus, Latakia and even Deir Ezzor,” said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor.

The official Syrian news agency SANA, also reported arrests this week targeting

“Assad militia members” in Hama and Latakia provinces, where weapons and ammunition were seized. It did not provide any figures.

Among those arrested, according to the Observatory, were former regime informants, pro-Iranian fighters and lower-ranking military officers accused of killings and torture, Abdel Rahman said.

The Observatory, which is based in Britain, relies on a network of sources across Syria.

Abdel Rahman said that “the campaign is ongoing, but no prominent figures have been arrested” except for General Mohammed Kanjo Hassan, the former head of military justice under Assad, who reportedly oversaw thousands of death sentences following summary trials at Saydnaya prison.

Referring to social media videos showing armed men abusing detainees and even carrying out summary executions, Abdel Rahman said: “Some individuals, including informants, were immediately executed after being detained,” he added.

3 migrants die attempting to cross Channel

AFP, Lille

Three migrants yesterday died in an attempt to cross the English Channel from France to Britain, a local mayor told AFP.

The deaths take this year’s casualty toll from failed clandestine crossings to a confirmed 76.

The boat that was to take the migrants yesterday ran into trouble near Bleriot Plage, a public beach in Sangatte close to the French Channel port of Calais, at around 6:00 am (0500 GMT), an emergency services source said.

Several people fell into the water trying to board the overcrowded vessel, French maritime services told AFP.

Around 50 people were given emergency help on the beach by government services or NGOs, with many in a state of hypothermia.

Journos

FROM PAGE 12

and reassessment of the accreditation policy.”

Explaining their decision about the restriction, Nahid said that using the names of name-only newspapers, some individuals have gained access to the Secretariat with accreditation cards.

This issue needs thorough evaluation and examination, which will require some time, he added.

The adviser also mentioned plans to introduce permanent passes for journalists based on new applications. “Until then, a limited number of temporary passes will be issued. All previous passes will be invalidated, and changes will be made to the accreditation policy.”

Asked about the criteria for getting temporary passes, he stated, “We will consult with journalist associations and media offices in this regard.”

Responding to a query from journalists regarding accreditation cards, Azad Mazumder, chief adviser’s deputy press secretary, yesterday said, “All the existing cards remain valid. No card has been cancelled. Until new cards are issued, these cards will remain valid.”

Talking to reporters in front of state guesthouse Jumna, he said that around 2,900 cards are currently active. However, the government is not entirely sure who are using the cards. It is believed that, apart from genuine journalists, many are using the cards for lobbying and other activities within the Secretariat. Besides,

many political activists who are not journalists also hold these cards, Azad added.

For this, the government has decided that only genuine journalists should hold these cards so that they can carry out their work, he said.

It is necessary to make decisions regarding those who falsely claim to be journalists, Azad said, adding that this is the reason behind the decision to review the cards.

Meanwhile, the Press Information Department (PID) yesterday said that it was clarified that entry to the Secretariat was restricted after a devastating fire broke out in Building-7. Visitors and journalists were temporarily barred from entry to facilitate the fire probe.

The information and broadcasting ministry is now reassessing the old accreditation cards, and new permanent or temporary passes will be issued shortly, PID said in a press release.

In another development, a 21-member delegation of the Bangladesh Secretariat Reporters Forum (BSRF), led by its President Fosh Uddin Mahtab and General Secretary Masudul Haque, yesterday met Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret’d) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury at his ministry office.

During the meeting, the adviser confirmed that journalists covering the Secretariat beat, including BSRF members, would be granted temporary passes from today, said a statement of BSRF.

On Friday night, the home ministry announced that access to the Secretariat was barred for journalists and other non-government visitors.

India may not

FROM PAGE 12

Rafiqul Alam said Dhaka would remind New Delhi about the issue in writing after waiting for a “certain period” if there was no reply.

While speaking about the request for Hasina’s extradition, Bangladesh officials have cited a 2013 treaty, which was later amended in 2016, providing a legal framework for such requests.

In July 2016, Bangladesh and India amended Article 10 (3) of the treaty to facilitate the swift extradition of fugitive criminals between the two nations.

Hasina is facing over 100 cases with a wide range of charges, including murder, genocide, and crimes against humanity over killings during the July uprising that led to her ouster and flight to India on August 5.

On December 8, Chief Adviser’s Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said they would formally approach India seeking Hasina’s extradition after completing the required legal procedures.

“Our government’s position on the extradition of Sheikh Hasina is very clear. We want to bring Sheikh Hasina back to the country to face the law,” he said.

BPL 11 kicks off in Mirpur today

FROM PAGE 12

bottles on match days as the BCB, along with Pusti, will set up six counters around the stadiums for the spectators.

The board has also painted the stadium galleries and premises with graffiti, highlighting the July Uprising.

The build-up to the event has been marked by three concerts in Dhaka, Sylhet and Chattogram between December 23 and 28 and as part of Music Fest to reach out to the fans of the host divisions.

However, not everyone was convinced that the concerts were absolutely necessary, with so much scope for improvement in other sectors of the tournament.

Tamim Iqbal, captain of defending champions Fortune Barishal, felt that more investments should have been made on cricketers and cricket infrastructure than on concerts.

“I feel that if we want to arrange a different type of BPL, we need to invest in cricket. That’s the most important thing. We need to invest in the tournament, not in the concerts or anything else. If we invest in cricket and also in the tournament, we can say that it’s a new type of BPL,” the dashing batter said in a press briefing ahead of the tournament opener.

BCB’s ticketing system, too, came under scrutiny from fans as a large number of them protested in front of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium’s

Gate-1 yesterday after failing to secure match tickets.

Initially, the BCB had agreed in principle to introduce a full-fledged e-ticket system for the BPL, aiming to streamline the ticketing process but later changed the idea. Only 30-35% tickets went for sale online while rest will be sold through Modhumoti Bank PLC branches and their ticketing booths. This announcement, though, was made at the eleventh hour, after things had already gotten out of hand.

Away from the controversies, the teams will be eyeing to showcase good performances and Tamim expects his side to defend the title.

“We are defending champions and of course

we will try to defend the title. Individually, I will try to do my best. It’s a long tournament and tomorrow I hope to start well like any other batsman. But at the moment, team always comes first,” said Tamim.

Barishal are the most balanced team on paper, with a bunch of good local and international players, but Tamim didn’t rule out the other team’s chances. “This year there are few teams who might not have big names but they are well balanced teams. When the tournament will start, we will understand which team is in which condition. It’s difficult to predict. After the first round, everybody will understand which are teams will be challenging,” Tamim opined.

FROM PAGE 12

conducted by the Obhimbashi Karmi Unnayan Program (Okup).

The study indicated that over 53 percent of the returnees afflicted with mental health issues are male, and 47 percent are female.

Of those suffering from physical health problems, over 56 percent are male and 44 are female.

The study also found that over 19 percent of those suffering from severe mental health issues were domestic workers, followed by construction and agriculture workers.

Over 55 percent of returnees came from Saudi Arabia, followed by 10 percent from Oman, seven percent from Jordan, five percent from the UAE, four percent from Qatar, and 19 percent from other countries.

The study further revealed that returnees who had stayed abroad for two to four years often returned with severe health issues.

The most common ailments included back pain (25 percent), tumours (12 percent), cardiac and injury-related complications (11 percent), and other severe conditions such as cancer (nine percent), kidney issues

(eight percent), uterine infections (eight percent) and hypertension (six percent).

The study also pointed out policy gaps and a lack of efforts by the Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry and Wage Earners Welfare Board to provide health services to migrants.

The study surveyed 1,096 returnees from seven migrant-heavy districts – Cumilla, Dhaka, Faridpur, Narsingdi, Narayanganj, Manikganj, and Munshiganj – between 2021 and 2023, all of whom received health and mental support from Okup during this period.

Of the respondents, 39 percent were male, and 61 percent were female.

At the event, three victims who went to Saudi Arabia in good health but returned with physical and mental health issues shared their experiences.

Shefali Begum, a resident of Narsingdi, went to the middle eastern country as a domestic worker. She returned in just 48 days with physical illnesses.

“A broker lured me with promises of good pay. For a better future for my three daughters, I went to Saudi Arabia, paying a hefty amount to the broker. I was

provided only one meal a day for lunch. The male members of the employer’s family used to harass me. Whenever I complained or asked for food, they would beat me. They burned my hand with acid and kept me locked in a room.”

She demanded reimbursement for her treatment costs, but the employer refused. Later, she was forced to return home.

Md Hanif, a resident of Narayanganj’s Araihaazar upazila, spent Tk 4 lakh to go to Saudi Arabia. Once he was there, he was kept in a room with 20 to 25 others.

“I was not given a job for a month, had no access to food, and was kept in an unhygienic environment with no drinking water or toilet facilities. This led to me developing type-2 diabetes and urinary problems.”

Eventually, he managed to return to the country.

Speaking to The Daily Star, migration expert Prof CR Abrar noted that the health issues of migrant workers have long been neglected.

“The insurance we currently have for migrants has no value, as it doesn’t cover most health issues. Those who work under private employers are in

the worst condition, as they do not have access to healthcare, which is a glaring example of gross unfairness.”

He highlighted the key problem: “We don’t address this issue at the global forum, either individually or collectively, to find solutions.”

Prof Abrar emphasised that the responsibility of bearing the healthcare costs of migrant workers must be taken by the employer or the state. “Otherwise, this critical issue will remain unaddressed.”

Shariful Hasan, associate director of the BRAC Migration Programme, opined that if the government becomes a little cordial about migrant workers’ health and prioritises the issue, the problem can be solved.

“The income of migrant workers in the Gulf countries is so low that they cannot afford access to healthcare. Additionally, the language barrier is another significant challenge. To address this, embassies can conduct special campaigns in areas with high numbers of migrant workers. When they return home, the government can provide them with treatment at specialised, dedicated hospitals. This would greatly help solve the problem.”

Suspension of accreditation cards

FROM PAGE 12

access. In a statement, it said that, considering the security of the Secretariat, the administrative hub, journalists’ entry using the current accreditation cards had been limited along with all other non-government passes.

The government also announced plans to review the existing press accreditation cards soon, it added.

Yesterday, a press note from the Department of Information stated that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is reassessing the accreditation cards.

The note further mentioned that permanent and temporary accreditation cards/passess will be reissued soon, and temporary passes for journalists will be provided

starting today.

While welcoming the initiative to reassess and review the accreditation cards, the Editors’ Council said that there is room for collaboration, if necessary, to identify unprofessional journalists.

However, it emphasised that imposing a blanket restriction on journalists’ access is perceived globally as an attack on independent journalism, the statement said.

“Such tendencies were also evident during the fascist rule of the Awami League. When financial irregularities were rampant, journalists’ access to regulatory institutions like Bangladesh Bank was restricted. During that time, journalists’ stance on such activities was clear and unequivocal, as seen

during the pre-uprising era leading to the downfall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5,” the statement said.

The statement further added that after the interim government took office, demands arose for the reform or repeal of the Cyber Security Act.

On November 7, the interim government made a policy decision to repeal the act, and subsequently, on December 24, the advisory council of the interim government approved the draft of the Cyber Protection Ordinance, 2024.

“The new ordinance retains the same powers for the police as before, particularly outlined in Sections 35 and 36. Notably, the repealed Cyber Security Act also granted similar powers to

the police, which was one of the major concerns raised by the Editors’ Council regarding the misuse of police authority under the law,” the statement read.

The Editors’ Council said that the unwarranted cancellation of journalists’ accreditation cards and access to the Secretariat is unjustified.

Moreover, it noted that the unilateral adoption of the ordinance without consultation with relevant stakeholders is disappointing and reflects an authoritarian mindset.

“Alongside protesting the cancellation of access, the council called for appropriate steps to address the concerns raised about the provisions in the draft Cyber Protection Ordinance, 2024, based on the opinions of all relevant stakeholders,” it stated.

FROM PAGE 12

Mymensingh road in Sherpur’s sadar upazila around 12:00pm, it collided head-on with a bus coming from the opposite direction.”

Five people died on the spot while Nina succumbed to her injuries on the way to a hospital, he said.

The police, on information, rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies.

The bus was seized, but

the driver managed to flee after the incident.

Mahbubul Alam Shaheen, a relative of the deceased siblings, said Mim, an honours student, and her brother Emon were going to Sherpur Government College to collect Mim’s admit card for their final exams.

Their father, Mohammad Shahjahan, is a farmer of Ganipaddi village in Nakla upazila.

“Shahjahan toiled from

6 lives lost as bus hits autorickshaw

dawn to dusk so that he could provide a good education for his children. His daughter [Mim] dreamed of getting a good job to lift the family out of poverty.

“But Shahjahan lost his young daughter and son. His whole life has been ruined,” Shaheen told The Daily Star.

Shahjahan has an older daughter who lives with her in laws.

Family members of

Moklesur said he and his wife Umme Kulsum were on their way to Sreebodi upazila to attend the namaz-e-janaza of one of their relatives.

“Now, we’re having to prepare for their namaz-e-janaza,” Moklesur’s son-in-law Nazmul Haque told this correspondent.

Meanwhile, Md Jobaidul Alam, officer-in-charge of Sherpur Sadar Police Station, said a case was being filed in this regard.

Will our roads remain death traps?

Mawa expressway crash exposes state failure to ensure road safety

We are horrified by the tragedy that occurred at the toll plaza of the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway on December 27, where a speeding bus rammed into three vehicles—a private car, a motorcycle, and a microbus—killing six people from two families. The CCTV footage of the incident shows a bus speeding towards the toll plaza and colliding with the vehicles waiting in queue there. Reportedly, the bus from Bepari Paribahan was operating without a fitness clearance for over a year, and the 26-year-old driver had no valid driving licence. The transport sector in Bangladesh has been mired in chaos and a lack of discipline for decades, fuelled by a corrupt network of transport leaders, police, and politicians. This network has allowed unlicensed and unskilled drivers to operate vehicles, ultimately leading to an increase in road crashes and fatalities. According to the Road Safety Foundation, at least 37,000 lives have been lost in road crashes in the country over the last five years. While several measures, such as establishing lifespans for commercial vehicles, drafting regulations for illegal three-wheelers and enforcing speed limits, were taken by past authorities to enhance road safety, these decisions could not be implemented due to pressure from transport owners and associations.

The bus involved in the Mawa expressway crash reportedly had brake problems, and the driver had asked the owner to fix it. But the owner, instead of doing that, told the driver to “drive slowly.” The bus also lacked a valid route permit and updated tax documents. And to operate it, the bus owner bribed a close associate of the imprisoned Shajahan Khan, a top transport leader and former Awami League lawmaker. This is a prime example of the lawlessness that pervades the transport sector. This unholy nexus of transport leaders, police, and politicians must be broken up. The government must make this a priority. While it should take steps to immediately implement the Road Transport Act, 2018, it should also take decisive actions to completely overhaul the sector. The adviser to the road transport and bridges ministry recently mentioned that they would take a “whole new approach” to reduce road crashes and deaths. We would like to see some concrete action from the ministry now. They can start by establishing a road safety commission to bring about the much-needed reform to the sector. As for the toll plaza crash, we hope the government will do everything in its capacity to ensure justice to the victims. No more lives should be lost on our roads and no more families should suffer lifelong devastation due to crashes caused by unfit vehicles and unskilled drivers.

Address corruption in labour migration

Govt must diversify markets and upskill our workers

We are concerned about the decline in the number of our migrant workers going abroad this year, given the fact that remittance remains one of the major sources of foreign currency earnings for Bangladesh. According to a recent report by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), labour exports from Bangladesh have dropped by 30.8 percent—from 1,305,453 in last year to 906,355 this year. What’s worse is that the number of female migrant workers going abroad has gone down by 22 percent this year compared to last year.

According to the RMMRU report, persistent corruption, irregularities, and fraud have led to a contraction of foreign labour markets for Bangladesh. Italy and Serbia, for example, suspended labour recruitment from Bangladesh because some workers were found to have used fake documents. In Malaysia, a syndicate together with its Bangladeshi cohorts has embezzled \$2 billion from Bangladeshi migrant workers by overcharging them, taking syndicate fees, and carrying out a “visa trade” since 2021. As a result, many workers could not find the jobs they were promised in Malaysia and had to return home empty-handed, losing their life savings and being pushed into poverty in the process. Because of this, Malaysia shut down labour imports from Bangladesh in May this year.

The challenges facing labour migration must be faced with timely, effective actions. The government must take strict legal steps against those accused of embezzling migrant workers and conducting labour export through unlawful means. To this end, it must also engage with the authorities in the destination countries. Failure to ensure workers’ safety and rights is another huge factor. The physical, mental and financial abuse that they face in the destination countries, compounded by our society’s failure to reintegrate them, can be demotivating enough. If this issue is not addressed promptly, the number of migrant workers, especially women, is unlikely to rise. Proper diplomatic efforts are needed to ensure that countries recruiting Bangladeshi workers are committed to ensuring their rights and safety.

Finally, since our labour exports are still mostly in the low- and semi-skilled categories, we must invest into upskilling the migrant workers with various training so they can meet the global demands. This will help us expand and diversify the labour export market, as well as ensure steady remittance earnings.

Hence, we urge the authorities to prioritise resolving these issues and bring order in labour export, so that our migrant workers can go abroad without much worry, and continue to contribute to the economy.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

USSR established

On this day in 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), more commonly known as the Soviet Union, was formed with its capital in Moscow, eventually incorporating 15 republics and constituting (in area) the largest country in the world until its dissolution in 1991.



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

UPRISING, UNITY, AND UNCERTAINTY

Power, protest, and politics in 2024



Dr Azfar Hussain
is director of the graduate programme in social innovation and associate professor of integrative/interdisciplinary studies at Grand Valley State University in Michigan, U.S. He is also vice president of the US-based Global Center for Advanced Studies (GCAS).

AZFAR HUSSAIN

The year 2024 has emerged as the most significant conjuncture in the political history of Bangladesh since its independence in 1971. To state the obvious: on August 5 this year, we witnessed the fall of the longest-serving fascist ruler in the country’s history, brought down by the largest mass uprising in the history of Bangladesh. Also known as the July uprising, it was led by none other than students themselves. Indeed, the uprising was an epic of resistance—what some have even metaphorised as a “political earthquake”—that morphed the mundane prose of daily life into the vibrant poetry of broad-based unity, particularly in July and August.

This epic was written with the blood, sweat, and tears of the people themselves as they came together across classes, genders, professions, occupations, political parties, organisations, groups, even generations. For instance, even children—cradled in their mothers’ arms or perched on their fathers’ shoulders—were visibly present on the streets, embodying the collective spirit of our resistance. And, of course, the costs of this uprising were staggering. At least 1,500 people were brutally killed, with nearly 20,000 wounded, many suffering devastating injuries such as the loss of eyes, arms, legs or other limbs. Those who were murdered came from all walks of life—children, youth, the middle aged, the elderly, women, workers, and more—each a poignant reminder of the immense sacrifices made in the pursuit of freedom and justice.

But to grasp the significance of the year 2024 in political terms, I believe, requires accounting for its radiant singularity as well as understanding its determinate web of connections—direct or indirect—to preceding years. In other words, it is essential to envision a dialectic of continuity and discontinuity that encompasses a broad temporal horizon—a framework that underscores the imperative to historicise. Rabindranath Tagore, although on a different register, tells us in a poem, “O time past, you wander from world to world, continuing to work in silence” (translation mine). I particularly align with my favourite Black writer James Baldwin, one who instructively asserts that “history is literally present in all that we do.” To speak of politics in 2024, then, is also to recall the entire history of political culture that has unfolded since 1972, and—dialectically—with the history of people’s resistances to that very culture. So, what does politics look like in 2024? And what is politics, after all?

Politics is often understood as the art and science of governance, involving the administration of government, public policymaking, and control within a formalised state apparatus. This includes the actions of political parties, elected officials, bureaucracies, and legislatures, as well as formal mechanisms like laws, elections, and diplomacy. However, politics ranges beyond the zodiac of formal institutions to encompass all

spaces where power relations, power struggles, and decision-making processes and practices obtain and operate—from families and communities to workplaces and even global interactions. It also embraces informal practices, resistance movements, and cultural norms (as the Italian Marxist revolutionary Antonio Gramsci rightly contends, culture is political). In this piece, I address politics in both its formal and broader senses while exploring political culture.

Of course, understanding politics and even *Realpolitik* requires grasping the underlying political culture. And the mainstream ruling-class political culture that has evolved from 1972 to 2024 can be characterised by *at least* five broad and distinct yet interconnected trends: 1) the commodification and commercialisation of politics and politicisation of plundering business elites, driven by the logic of capital; 2) the bureaucratisation of politics and the politicisation of bureaucracy; 3) the militarisation of politics and the politicisation of the military; 4) the class driven politicisation of religion, often divorced from religious principles; and 5) the criminalisation of politics and the politicisation of criminals, as Badruddin Umar aptly described. Together, these trends characterise at least part of what I term the “fascisation of politics,” exemplified in practices like extreme nationalism, authoritarianism, corporatism, media monopolisation, cult fetishism, masculinist idolisation or even deification of a singular leader, and repression through organised state violence and surveillance—all continuing to remain decisive hallmarks of Sheikh Hasina’s regime in 2024 (more on Hasina’s brand of fascism later). Clearly, the trends I have categorically described here egregiously ran counter to the core principles of our Liberation War of 1971—*equality, human dignity, and justice*—principles that the July uprising sought to reclaim repeatedly with exemplary fervour and brio. Within this framework, then, Hasina’s 2024 election (January 7), the year’s first major political event, must be understood.

Indeed, from 2008 to 2024, Bangladesh’s elections under Sheikh Hasina’s leadership were marked by the abolition of the caretaker government system and the establishment of an electoral process that lacked genuine competition. Opposition parties faced repression, electoral fraud, and exclusion, with the ruling Awami League securing unopposed or manipulated victories. Formal elections every five years turned out to be merely symbolic, bereft of public participation. This monopolistic governance led to severe declines in human rights, the rule of law, and economic stability, leaving the people in crisis, its so-called economic growth notwithstanding (more on economic growth later). Kallol Mustafa’s 2024 book titled *Sheikh Hasina Sarkar: Durnitee o Nipironer Khotian* (*Sheikh Hasina’s Government: A Chronicle of*

Corruption and Oppression) usefully anatomises and analyses Hasina’s electoral authoritarianism. Drawing on his rigorously researched work, I have identified 18 key areas of the fascist Hasina regime’s actions, most, if not all, of which continued through 2024: 1) deprivation of voting rights; 2) dismantling democratic norms; 3) suppression of dissent; 4) enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings; 5) judicial impunity; 6) politicisation of state institutions; 7) corruption and money laundering; 8) bank looting and scandals; 9) stock market manipulation; 10) reliance on foreign loans for costly projects; 11) rising inequality; 12) jobless growth and unemployment; 13) severe labour exploitation; 14) business cartels and rising commodity prices; 15) fabricated statistics; 16) plundering in the energy sector; 17) environmental destruction; and 18) a submissive foreign policy with India, compromising sovereignty. And, undeniably, 2024 emerges as the bloodiest year in our history since 1971—a year soaked in violence and despair. Pablo Neruda’s haunting lines resonate powerfully, “Come and see the blood in the streets/ Come and see/ Blood in the streets.” At least 1,500 lives were mercilessly taken, and countless others left maimed and shattered, as already noted. This is a year that surely calls for reckoning, not mere remembrance.

Owing to space constraints, I will briefly focus on inequality and the marginalised populations who have

As others and I have written elsewhere, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities—particularly Indigenous communities, Bangalee Hindus, Ahmadis and Shias, Urdu speakers—have faced multifaceted marginalisation since 1975, when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s one-party authoritarian rule sowed the seeds of fascism. For these groups, land rights have always been a critical issue, compounded by unjust, discriminatory laws—an issue that remains insufficiently addressed to this day.

The July uprising and the subsequent formation of the interim government on August 8, 2024 must be viewed in this broader context. While I can’t recount the full narrative of the uprising here, its significance deserves brief but categorical reflection. First, the movement inaugurated a collective political subjectivity and new historical agency, made possible by the creative, non-hierarchical, non-partisan leadership of young students and the oppressive history of fascism and failed resistances. Second, it heightened political consciousness among the people like never before. Third, it immediately secured certain freedom of speech. Most importantly, through the students’ *anti-discrimination* platform, the movement repeatedly reclaimed the three core principles of our Liberation War: *equality, human dignity, and justice*. Finally, it led to the formation of the interim government, a necessary but increasingly fragile outcome.

The interim government, led by Prof Muhammad Yunus, identifies as reformist, establishing commissions to propose democratic restructuring of state institutions. Student leaders from the uprising, alongside the military and political parties, helped negotiate its composition. However, most of its members, lacking political expertise and experiences (in the hardest sense) and even ties to mass uprisings, do not position the government as “revolutionary.” It is unrealistic to expect it to extend beyond limited democratic reforms within the existing undemocratic systems.

To be effective, the Yunus government must reprioritise instead of restlessly moving in numerous directions. First, it must compile a full list of those killed and injured during the uprising and provide financial support to their families. Second, accountability demands that those responsible for the mass killings—especially Sheikh Hasina and her cabinet—be brought to justice. Third, the police and bureaucratic system must be restructured and made efficient. Fourth, the government must address soaring prices of essential goods. Lastly, of course, it must ensure conditions for free and fair elections.

There are immense challenges ahead, both for the government and for us—the people. Let 2024 not drag on but give way to a truly new year of meaningful action and intervention. A new Bangladesh cannot emerge from old ideas and from old, unreformed political parties. Democracy and the country’s future decisively rest on *centring*—not tokenising—the agendas and aspirations of the most exploited and marginalised: poor peasants, workers, women, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, who together constitute the majority. Our real struggle begins now—after the uprising—as we confront the question of how to use our newfound freedom.

The generation that swipes right on revolutions



Barrister Noshin Nawal
is an activist, feminist and a columnist with a knack for sharp, satirical takes on social and societal issues. She can be reached at nawalnoshin@gmail.com.

NOSHIN NAWAL

As we flip through the last pages of 2024, Bangladesh finds itself, once again, caught in its favourite hobby: a political game of musical chairs between some new and old players. The Awami League's authoritarian waltz has been interrupted, the interim government is stumbling through like a fervent wedding DJ, and somewhere in the shadows, BNP waits, polishing its "comeback kid" routine. Amid this chaos, one thing has become glaringly obvious: Millennials and Gen Z aren't just the audience anymore; they're here preparing to rewrite the whole set from scratch. The July uprising was just the soup with a side of crispy wontons. The main course is yet to be served.

This year, the youth of Bangladesh proved that they're more than just bystanders scrolling through their Instagram feeds handing out likes. When the streets filled with protests, they weren't just out there holding placards; they were live-streaming democracy in action, combating even the internet blackout. These are the people who turned Dhaka's streets into a full-blown episode of *Black Mirror* during the student protests; they rallied against the atrocities of the "decade of disappearance" while handing out water bottles and some solid graffiti.

Though the older generations previously may have dismissed their efforts as fleeting or superficial, let's not mistake their digital activism for passivity ever again. This is a generation that refuses to be defined by the failures of the past. They don't

have all the answers, but they're asking the right questions—albeit with a side of sarcasm, a sprinkle of cynicism, and a whole lot of memes, because you know we all need the pookie-ness.

In a nation where leaders still argue about who owns 1971, Millennials and Gen Z are already debating 2071. They know the political dinosaurs of the Awami League and BNP don't have the answers for Digital Bangladesh. They see Hasina-era authoritarianism as cancelled and extend cautious positivity to the Khaleda-era nostalgia, in hopes that BNP learns from their previous follies and rises from the ashes as the phoenix they claim to be.

Meanwhile, the interim government? Let's just say it feels less like a bridge to the future and more like a rickety wooden plank. It's functional, sure, but there's no denying that it lacks the dynamism to address the systemic rot that brought us here. It's the political equivalent of a power cut during a Dhaka summer—you're sweating,

Though the older generations previously may have dismissed their efforts as fleeting or superficial, let's not mistake their digital activism for passivity ever again. This is a generation that refuses to be defined by the failures of the past.

you're annoyed, and no one's really sure when the lights will come back on or when the national elections will be underway.

So, what do these two generations of youth want? The answer is beautifully chaotic. Millennials want reform, but they'd like it delivered on time, like a Foodpanda order with better tracking, obviously. They

care about tiptoeing around the status quo. They'll burn it down, but not before posting a well-edited video about it on TikTok. For them, the idea of blind allegiance to any party—Awami League, BNP, or the interim side characters—is laughable. They don't want empty speeches or token gestures; they want accountability, transparency, and leaders who don't

the past decade. Millennials and Gen Z may have different approaches, but both are determined to create a Bangladesh wherein getting things done doesn't require sacrificing your sanity (or your soul).

Millennials, bless their hearts, will start by drafting polite, well-structured emails with subject lines like *"Suggestions for Governance*

diplomacy is just an unnecessary detour to get to the much-needed insurgency. They'll plaster memes on TikTok and create hashtags so catchy that even the politicians they're criticising will accidentally trend for it. Their version of a political movement comes with theme songs, merch, and maybe a diss track aimed at the establishment.

But here's the thing—these two generations *together* are unstoppable. Millennials bring the detailed spreadsheets and PowerPoints; Gen Z brings the chaos and charisma. It's like combining a long-term investment strategy with a cryptocurrency pump-and-dump—dangerous but oddly effective. Millennials temper Gen Z's radical ideas with just enough logic. Gen Z are revving to make sure Millennials don't die of boredom from writing another manifesto no one will read.

And what do they want for Bangladesh? Oh, nothing big—just a country that isn't perpetually stuck in "buffering" mode. They dream of a government that functions as seamlessly as their Netflix subscriptions, where public debates aren't just reruns of the same 1990s political soap operas, and wherein stepping out into Dhaka traffic doesn't feel like auditioning for *Fast & Furious II*.

As the year draws to a close, Millennials and Gen Z remind us that the future isn't just coming—it's already here. They're not waiting for the older generation to step aside; they're gently but firmly shoving them off stage. The question isn't whether they're ready. The real question is whether the country is ready for them.

So, here's to 2024, the year our youth traded despair for determination, memes for movements, and silence for a seat at the table. The baton is now in their hands. Let's hope they run with it—and maybe, just maybe, make this country the place we've always known it could be: our *Shonar Bangla*.



These youth revolutionaries are nothing if not resourceful; they're ready to take over where the political system falters.

FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

dream of governance that works: an infrastructure that doesn't collapse after two inches of rain, education that isn't a glorified rat race, and job markets that value skill over nepotism. They're tired of politicians acting like they're doing us a favour just by showing up and doing their job.

Gen Z, on the other hand, don't

think "consulting the youth" means setting up a Facebook poll.

These youth revolutionaries are nothing if not resourceful. Armed with Wi-Fi passwords and Canva templates, they're ready to take over where the political system falters. An overpriced latte in hand, they have arrived to address the latches that have been leeching our economy for

Reform—complete with bulleted lists, footnotes, and maybe a TED Talk link for inspiration. They'll propose five-year plans, schedule Zoom meetings, and patiently wait for their turn to speak, hoping someone in power still reads emails in 2024.

Gen Z, on the other hand, will take one look at those five-year plans and say, "Five years? Lol, no." To them,

End political influence on the banking sector

Md Mehdi Hasan Khan and Md Kamrul Hasan
are currently pursuing an internal auditor certification with the Institute of Internal Auditors Bangladesh (IIA).

MD MEHDI HASAN KHAN and
MD KAMRUL HASAN

The banking industry of Bangladesh is going through a critical period marked by significant challenges, including the largest amount of non-performing loans (NPLs) ever, extreme liquidity problems in stressed banks, capital flight through trade-based money laundering, a substantial lack of corporate governance, provisioning shortfalls, and a foreign currency crisis. The ongoing crisis has been caused by the last one and a half decades of grand-scale deviation of governance in the banking industry. Since inception, the Bangladesh Bank has issued licences to 62 scheduled banks (including six state-owned commercial banks, three specialised banks, 43 private commercial banks, one digital bank, and nine foreign commercial banks) and 34 non-bank financial institutions. However, there is a controversy regarding whether the size of the economy can sustain so many banks. In this context, unipolar decisions made by different political regimes, without considering the sector's sustainability, are primarily responsible for the current crisis.

If we look at other Asian countries, in Malaysia, there were 42 banks operating against a GDP size of \$399.71 billion in 2023. In Indonesia and Thailand, the numbers are 106 and 30, respectively, against GDP sizes of \$1,371.17 billion and \$514.97 billion. Similarly, India has 95 scheduled banks with a GDP size of \$3,567.55 billion. In Pakistan,

the number of banks stood at 41 in 2023, with a recorded GDP size of \$337.91 billion. Meanwhile, in Bangladesh, there were 62 banks in 2023, against a GDP size of \$437.42 billion. Similarly, Myanmar has 48 banks against a GDP size of \$66.76 billion. Myanmar and Bangladesh have the highest numbers of banks with respect to their GDP sizes in the South Southeast Asian region.

Since Bangladesh's independence and its transition to an open market economic system through trade liberalisation (1971-1990), the banking industry experienced a slow pace of growth. However, after globalisation and the advent of technological advancements, the industry gained momentum. After the independence, the banking industry started its journey with six nationalised commercial banks, three state-owned specialised banks, and nine foreign banks. In the 1980s, the sector saw a significant expansion with the launch of private banks, starting with the licensing of the Arab-Bangladesh Bank Limited in 1981. The Awami League-led government approved the licence of 26 private commercial banks throughout their entire tenure, while the BNP-led government licensed eight banks, and nine banks were approved under other governments.

Issuing licences for banks under political consideration has caused a significant havoc in our banking industry. Previously, the minimum paid-up capital for a bank licence was Tk 400 crore, which has now been raised to Tk 500 crore, paid in white money by the directors. If a bank has assets worth Tk 20,000 crore, it effectively generates 40 times more assets than the paid-up capital injected by its real owners. It is the prime responsibility of banks to safeguard public money rather than prioritise loaned clients. When a bank licence is granted to a politically

affiliated individual who assumes the role of a director or chairperson of the board, and that individual simultaneously holds a legislative or cabinet position, they can influence the bank through state mechanisms, often overriding even the central bank's regulatory norms. Such a scenario creates an extreme conflict of interest, undermining the bank's ownership structure, corporate governance, and management integrity. Furthermore, due to the lack of strong demutualisation in banking, the board of directors often interferes with the bank management's decision-making, ultimately undermining professional governance. Over the last one and a half decades, a significant number of banking professionals have left the profession

In Bangladesh, over the last decade, there has been a troubling practice of bank directors sanctioning loans for their own business ventures, prioritising personal interests over the bank's interests.

prematurely due to this lack of professional freedom.

According to a World Bank report titled Bangladesh Development Update (October 2023), the total of NPLs, rescheduled loans, and outstanding written-off loans rose to nearly Tk 3.78 lakh crore by the end of 2022, compared to Tk 3.14 lakh crore in 2021. The report also shows the stressed asset ratio (including NPLs, rescheduled loans and written-off loans) to be 20.5 percent in 2018, 24.2 percent in 2019, 23.6 percent in 2020, 23.1 percent in 2021, and 22.8 percent in

2022. Very recently, the White Paper on the State of the Bangladesh Economy revealed that the total amount of stressed assets stood, as of June 2024, at Tk 6.75 lakh crore. It includes recognised NPLs of Tk 2.11 lakh crore, rescheduled and restructured loans of Tk 2.73 lakh crore, outstanding written-off loans of Tk 75,389 crore, special mention accounts (SMA) worth Tk 39,209 crore, and loans under court stay order worth Tk 76,185 crore.

In Bangladesh, over the last decade, there has been a troubling practice of bank directors sanctioning loans for their own business ventures, prioritising personal interests over the bank's interests. The board of directors, which holds the highest authority to approve loans in a bank, has often been involved in such conflicts of interest. The Chattogram-based S Alam Group, for example, has reportedly exercised exclusive controls over six banks, one insurance and one NBFIs over the last decade. Through this influence, the group allegedly diverted Tk 2 lakh crore from the banks under their control by creating shell companies or falsifying corporate identities, using intercompany fund transfer, and undermining the legal framework and due diligence process of credit sanctioning.

Through trade-based money laundering in the forms of under-invoicing, over-invoicing, multiple invoicing, and false invoicing, significant amounts of money were syphoned off through cross-border transactions. According to a report by the Global Financial Integrity (GFI), \$61.6 billion was smuggled out of Bangladesh from 2005 to 2014. Bangladesh loses \$8.27 billion annually to trade misinvoicing. By 2030, GFI predicts this could exceed \$14 billion per year.

During the aforementioned crisis,

the Bangladesh Bank, the apex banking regulatory body in the country, failed to play a decisive role in rescuing the sector. Notably, the tenure of one former governor was controversially extended through an amendment of the Bangladesh Bank Order. Similarly, the role of the immediate last governor was widely criticised, as he disappeared from public view following the fall of the Awami League government in August. These two controversial appointments undermined the regulatory integrity of the central bank. Furthermore, lenient policies, particularly circulars on loan classification and restructuring, facilitated easy credit access for oligarchs, exacerbating the situation. During the pandemic, the monetary stimulus provided by the central bank disproportionately benefited businessmen and bank owners, which further deepened the financial inequities.

Most fourth generation banks are in critical financial health. A corrupt nexus of oligarchic politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen is primarily responsible for the dire state of the banking sector. What's encouraging is that the new authorities have taken immediate bold steps to rescue the financial sector, such as disbanding the boards of directors of banks controlled by S Alam Group, imposing limits on cash withdrawals to balance liquidity, introducing market-determined interest rates, abolishing LC margins for essential commodity importers, maintaining strong provisions against impaired assets, and issuing a master circular aligned with IFRS-9 and international best practices for loan classification and guidelines. Now is the time for the Bangladesh Bank to strengthen the financial sector and elevate it to greater heights, setting an example of resilience.

CROSSWORD

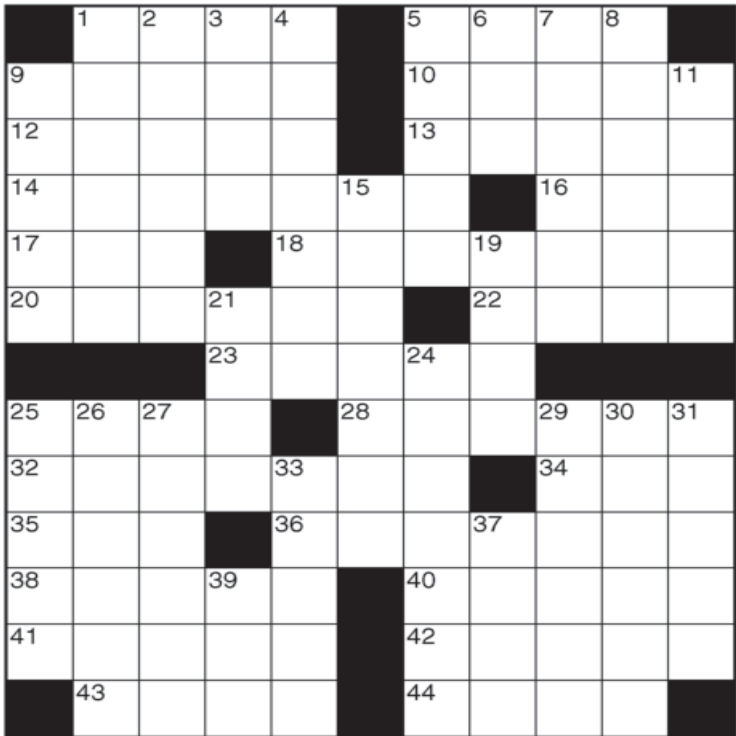
BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- Mausoleum
- Tater
- Racer Andreotti
- Surgery tool
- Even a little
- Be penitent
- Tear up the dance floor
- Card spot
- G.I. fare
- 'Don't be ridiculous!'
- Give one's okay
- Sole
- Passionate dance
- Diva's piece
- Start
- 'Beat it!'
- Verb for you
- Gardner of film
- Avenge oneself
- Like the icecaps
- Choose
- Select group
- Anarchic events
- Scots' toppers
- Lacking

DOWN

- Spuds
- Gives an address
- Not too spicy
- Deli buy
- Bias
- Contrived
- Annual golf event
- Turndown
- Molten stuff
- Answer
- Sign of a healthy dog, maybe
- Plant part
- List-ending abbr.
- Edges of alleys
- Clearly stunned
- Rise up
- Venezia's nation
- Get for less
- Puts up
- Campout sights
- Story meanings
- Lamb's alias
- Cash dispenser



4-15

SATURDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
dsopinion@gmail.com.



Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant. It is difficult to name a single country, other than Bangladesh, that has built a nuclear power plant using foreign loans and foreign supervision without having its own world-class nuclear physicists or engineers.



Curzon Hall, Dhaka University. Bangladesh's premier institution of higher education is witnessing a significant decline in its standing within international university rankings.

BRAINS BEFORE BRIDGES

Prioritising Human Capital Over Infrastructure

By focusing on constructing nuclear power plants, satellites, bridges, and metro rail systems without first developing a pool of skilled local experts, Bangladesh has become heavily dependent on foreign engineers, consultants, and technology.

KAMRUL HASSAN

A glance at the recent history of the world's most developed nations reveals a compelling truth: no country has ever achieved sustainable development without first investing in education and research. The stories of South Korea, China, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Singapore stand as powerful testaments to this principle. These nations prioritized human capital development over physical infrastructure, understanding that educated minds and innovative ideas are the true engines of progress. Instead of focusing solely on roads, bridges, and skyscrapers, they built world-class educational institutions,

country, other than Bangladesh, that has built a nuclear power plant using foreign loans and foreign supervision without having its own world-class nuclear physicists or engineers. Likewise, launching a national satellite without the backing of skilled, homegrown engineers is nearly unheard of. Consider India as a case in point. India's rise as a technological powerhouse was not accidental — it was the result of deliberate investment in human capital. Instead of rushing to build monumental infrastructure, India focused on creating a foundation of knowledge and expertise. The establishment of world-class educational and research institutions like the Indian Institutes

vital truth: nations and cities that prioritise education and invest in top-tier institutes do not just compete — they lead. Institutes are not mere buildings; they are crucibles of innovation, talent, and discovery. Without them, no nation can hope to achieve lasting progress or global influence in science, technology, or industry.

The Power of World-Class Research Institutions

The backbone of any nation's scientific and technological progress lies in its research institutions. Take India, for example, where institutions like the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS), S.N. Bose National Center for Basic Sciences, Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), and Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics have played a pivotal role in propelling the country's scientific standing. These institutions boast world-class researchers, robust PhD and postdoctoral programs, attractive research facilities, competitive salaries for scholars, and collaborative research environments. Their contributions are consistently recognized in leading international journals like Physical Review Letters, Nature, and Science, underscoring their global impact.

In stark contrast, Bangladesh does not have a single world-class research institute. The absence of strong PhD and postdoctoral programs and a limited pool of internationally competitive researchers has hindered the country's ability to make a mark in the global scientific arena. This is a critical gap in development strategy. Nations like the United States became superpowers not merely because of natural resources but because they built educational and research giants

in the country. In addition to these universities, over 800 colleges under the National University offer honors and master's degrees, essentially functioning as universities themselves. For perspective, consider Imperial College London — though it is called a "college," it ranks among the world's top 10 universities due to its world-class faculty and research resources. In Bangladesh, however, there is a growing trend to convert large colleges into universities under the misguided belief that a name change alone will ensure academic excellence.

But where are the qualified teachers to support this expansion? Without creating a robust pipeline of highly trained faculty members, no university can hope to achieve world-class status. Bangladesh needs to focus on developing world-class research institutes that can train scholars who will eventually become the next generation of professors. The key to this transformation lies in nurturing excellence, not merely expanding quantity.

What Kind of Institute Do We Need?

To build a world-class research institute, Bangladesh needs to create an environment conducive to deep thinking, research, and reflection. Here's a vision for what such an institute should look like:

- Natural Setting:** The institute should be designed like a serene park, filled with trees, birdsong, and tranquil spaces. Research and creativity thrive in natural, peaceful environments.
- Collaborative Spaces:** Outdoor benches under trees where researchers can reflect and engage in deep intellectual conversations should be a feature of the campus. Genius often emerges from moments of quiet reflection.

and world-class post-docs. These resident scientists, post-docs together with guest scientists will supervise PhD and take classes at the graduate levels.

How Will This Help Bangladesh?

Supply of Teachers for Universities: With strong PhD and postdoctoral programs, the institute will create a continuous pipeline of highly qualified faculty members for universities and colleges. This will address Bangladesh's chronic shortage of competent university teachers.

Attracting Global Talent: By establishing world-class facilities and offering competitive research opportunities, Bangladeshi researchers living abroad will be more inclined to return, even for short-term assignments. Additionally, international scholars can be invited to join collaborative research projects.

Promoting Research Publications: If the institute fosters research that is published in top-tier journals like Nature and Science, Bangladesh's visibility in the global scientific community will increase. This recognition can attract international grants and partnerships.

Postdoctoral Programs: Strong postdoctoral programs will ensure that PhD graduates remain in Bangladesh, contributing to local innovation instead of seeking better opportunities abroad. This will help retain the country's brightest minds.

Fostering a Research Ecosystem: The creation of this institute will spark an ecosystem of collaborative research and innovation. Such a research ecosystem has the potential to drive progress in various sectors, from technology to healthcare, ultimately benefiting the entire nation.

Instead of focusing solely on physical infrastructure, Bangladesh



A grim view of a Dhaka university dormitory, where students are forced to huddle together in overcrowded, substandard living conditions, offering minimal and wholly inadequate residential support.

The lesson is clear: nations that prioritise education and research institutions create a self-sustaining cycle of innovation, skilled human resources, and technological independence.

fostered a culture of research, and invested in technology and knowledge-driven industries. This strategic approach enabled them to create self-sustaining economies with skilled workforces capable of driving innovation from within. Today, these countries are global leaders in manufacturing, technology, and advanced research — a testament to the transformative power of prioritizing education before infrastructure. Their success offers a clear lesson for other developing nations: lasting development is not built with bricks and mortar alone but with minds and ideas that shape the future.

While Vietnam is currently following the proven path of prioritising education and research as the foundation for development, Bangladesh remains an exception. Over the past 14 years, Bangladesh has pursued a development strategy that places physical infrastructure ahead of human resource development. The fundamental flaw in this approach lies in its misplaced priorities — infrastructure requires skilled people to build, operate, and sustain it, not the other way around. By focusing on constructing nuclear power plants, satellites, bridges, and metro rail systems without first developing a pool of skilled local experts, Bangladesh has become heavily dependent on foreign engineers, consultants, and technology. These large-scale projects, financed by foreign loans, are operated and supervised by foreign experts, leaving little room for local capacity building. This approach creates a cycle of dependency, where the nation's pride in grand infrastructure is overshadowed by its reliance on external support. True progress lies in empowering local human capital, for it is skilled people who create self-reliant nations — not merely bricks, steel, and concrete.

It is difficult to name a single

of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) enabled the country to produce a generation of engineers, scientists, and innovators. This approach allowed India to develop and launch its own satellites, build its metro systems, and develop its nuclear technology, all with minimal reliance on foreign expertise. The lesson is clear: a nation must first build its people before it builds its infrastructure. Without skilled human resources, infrastructure becomes a borrowed achievement — impressive to look at, but dependent and fragile at its core.

Why Do We Need Institutes?

The recent Nature Index ranking of the world's top 200 science cities offers a profound lesson in the power of education and research. Beijing holds the top spot, followed by Shanghai and New York, with five of the top 10 positions occupied by Chinese cities. This dominance is no coincidence. For over 30 years, China has relentlessly invested in education, research, and the development of world-class institutions. Today, multiple Chinese universities are counted among the world's top 20, reflecting the tangible returns on this long-term strategy. But the story doesn't end with China. In India, Kolkata has re-emerged as the country's No. 1 science city, ranking 84th globally — ahead of Bangalore (85th), Mumbai (98th), Delhi (124th), and Hyderabad (184th). Surprisingly, Kolkata also surpasses renowned scientific hubs like Tel Aviv, Uppsala, Glasgow, and Leipzig. How did this happen? The answer lies in the presence of well-established research institutions like the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS), and Jadavpur University, which have cultivated a rich academic and research ecosystem. The success stories of Beijing, Shanghai, and Kolkata underscore a simple but

like MIT, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Caltech, and Stanford. Similarly, South Korea has the Institute for Basic Science (IBS), Japan has the National Institute of Natural Sciences, and India has the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR). Even Vietnam, once seen as a developing nation, has established advanced research institutions and is already reaping the benefits.

The lesson is clear: nations that prioritise education and research institutions create a self-sustaining cycle of innovation, skilled human resources, and technological independence. For Bangladesh to break free from its reliance on foreign expertise and loans for major projects, it must invest in building its own world-class research institutions. Without them, the dream of self-sufficiency in science, technology, and industry will remain out of reach.

What About Bangladesh's Universities?

Bangladesh currently has around 150 universities, but do we have enough competent faculty members to staff even 50 of them? The shortage of qualified teachers is a critical issue that threatens the quality of education

- Comfortable Accommodation:** The institute should have a world-class guest house to host visiting scholars from abroad. Comfortable accommodation is essential to attract and retain international collaborators.
- State-of-the-Art Research Facilities:** Advanced research infrastructure like supercomputer laboratories are essential to attract the best researchers, both local and foreign. Cutting-edge equipment and modern technology are prerequisites for high-impact research.
- Residency Programmes:** The institute should invite top Bangladeshi researchers from abroad to return to the country for 2-3 months a year. This would create a dynamic research environment where local and international researchers can collaborate on high-impact projects. In addition, the institute should invite foreign scholars, and organise schools and conferences around the year.
- Degree it may offer:** The institute will offer world-class MS and PhD degrees. It must have its own renowned resident scientists

must prioritise human infrastructure. No nation has ever achieved sustainable development without first investing in education, research, and knowledge creation. Countries like China, South Korea, India, and Vietnam have all demonstrated this path to progress. Without world-class research institutes, Bangladesh will remain dependent on foreign expertise for major development projects like nuclear power plants, satellites, and metro rail systems.

Bangladesh must establish at least one world-class institute for natural or fundamental sciences to achieve truly sustainable development. Such an institute would act as a hub for nurturing the next generation of scholars, engineers, and innovators. While this path may not yield immediate results, it will, over time, produce a self-sufficient, knowledge-driven nation capable of sustainable and independent development. Only through cultivating human potential can Bangladesh achieve the status of a truly developed nation.

Kamrul Hassan is a professor in the Department of Physics at Dhaka University.



The AL government prioritised costly ventures like the Tk10,000 crore Karnaphuli Tunnel over higher education. Despite its hefty price tag, the tunnel stands as an underutilised and inefficient infrastructure project.



Rangpur Riders' in-form off-spinner Sheikh Mahedi trains alongside his teammates, including pace sensation Nahid Rana, at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday. The 30-year-old, who had a remarkable West Indies tour with the national team earlier this month, will look to extend his purple patch when Rangpur go up against Dhaka Capitals. Liton Das, who has been on the other side of the form spectrum, having struggled for months, will be in-charge of making sure Dhaka's batting gets off to a sound start.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Five of the seven teams named their captains yesterday, on the eve of the 11th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League. On Sunday, Thisara Perera of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh's Mohammad Mithun, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Anamul Haque Bijoy, and Ariful Haque were named captains of Dhaka Capitals, Chittagong Kings, Khulna Tigers, Durbar Rajshahi, and Sylhet Strikers respectively.

Fortune Barishal, to be led by Tamim Iqbal, and Rangpur Riders, to be led by Nurul Hasan Sohan, had named their captains earlier.

No captain's photoshoot was held before the start of the tournament.

In the sole team-swapping this year, left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny has been allowed to join Chittagong Kings from Sylhet Strikers. Sunny, who was initially picked by Sylhet from the players' draft, has been given NOC by the franchise to play for Chittagong.

For the first time since BPL's inception in 2012, fans will be provided with free water, courtesy of the tournament's official drinking partner, Pusti Drinking Water. In memory of one of the earliest martyrs of the July Uprising, Mir Mugdho, 'Mugdho corners' will be set up in six counters around the stadium from where fans will be able to drink water.

Onus on local players to make BPL 2025 SUCCESSFUL



"It's an honour to be named captain of such a franchise. I never expected that because I have played in the BPL a number of times before and this will be my first as a captain."

Thisara Perera, Dhaka Capitals skipper



"We have a good young team. Also, there are some experienced cricketers as well who played for Bangladesh. So, we have a good combination of young and experienced cricketers."

Ijaz Ahmed, Durbar Rajshahi head coach



"This is my first time in Bangladesh. I think all three venues are very different. I am going with an open mind and open approach to assess conditions and have as much fun as possible."

George Munsey, Sylhet Strikers' Scottish opener



"We have a good collection of local players. Apart from that, the foreign players we have, if they are free for most of the time, we can really do well."

Alif Hossain, Khulna Tigers batter



"It's inspiring that we became GSL (Global Super League) champions recently. For it, there will be a good vibe in the team. But we have to start fresh in this tournament."

Nurul Hasan Sohan, Rangpur Riders skipper



"I think we have missed Shakib [Al Hasan] enough. We don't miss anyone when we go to the field. We will focus on not having any lacking in the team just because he [Shakib] is not playing."

Mohammad Mithun, Chittagong Kings skipper



"I feel that if we want to arrange a different type of BPL, we need to invest in cricket. That's the most important thing. We need to invest in the tournament, not in the concerts or anything else. If we invest in cricket and also in the tournament, we can say that it's a new type of BPL."

Tamim Iqbal, Fortune Barishal skipper

Fans protest after failing to purchase BPL tickets

Fans protested in large numbers in front of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium Gate-1 after failing to secure Bangladesh Premier League match tickets. Some fans said they waited for hours for physical tickets in front of the stadium but were unable to reach anyone in that regard. Later, some protesters tried to break Gate-1 of the stadium before Police and Ansar members dispersed them. There were still reports of protests around the BCB headquarters late into the evening. BCB decided to not have any designated booths for tickets around the stadium for the matches, meaning fans will have to secure tickets online or from Modhumoti Bank PLC branches.



Read the full story on The Daily Star website

SPORTS REPORTER

The onus will be on the local players to make the 11th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), scheduled to start today in Mirpur, a successful one as this year's tournament will see fewer foreign stars compared to the previous editions.

In previous years, star cricketers like Sunil Narine, Andre Russell, Jason Holder, and Imran Tahir, who are generally seen ruling the franchise tournaments across the world, featured for different BPL franchises but this year, none of

these players will be playing in the country's sole franchise-based T20 tournament.

Even two of Bangladesh's biggest stars -- Shakib Al Hasan and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, both of whom were lawmakers of the ousted Awami League government -- are unlikely to participate in the tournament following the change in the political atmosphere in the aftermath of the July uprising.

However, according to Tamim Iqbal, skipper of defending champions Fortune Barishal, the tournament can still be a success, but only if the players are able to step up.

"Cricket on the field depends on how the players are performing," said Tamim during a pre-tournament press conference yesterday.

"The organisers are here to give the best of the facilities, to provide the best of the wickets and to make sure you get the best commentators in the world and to ensure the best technology.

"But they can't decide whether the matches will see 200 runs or only 60 runs. Teams and players have to take the responsibility. If we can do our job properly, I think it will be a successful tournament," Tamim added.

Although there are foreign stars like Shaheen Shah Afridi of Pakistan, England's Jason Roy and Alex Hales, and Afghan star Mohammad Nabi, they will not be available for the entirety of the tournament. They will be leaving to participate in other foreign leagues such as ILT20, SA20, and Big Bash League, which are clashing with BPL this year.

What will lend some hope to franchises that will lose big names during the tournament is that the National Cricket League T20, held in Sylhet ahead of the BPL, saw a number of local players come up with brilliant performances.

Mohammad Naim, Jishan Alam, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Habibur Rahman Sohan, and Azizul Hakim Tamim showcased their batting prowess while Alauddin Babu, Ahmed Sharif, Rakibul Hasan, Aliss Al Islam, and Abu Hider proved their mettle with the ball in the NCL T20, played as a prelude to BPL.

Most of the national players, who failed to participate in the NCL T20 due to their national team commitments, will also be available for the BPL. And the expectations on them will be to take the tournament forward in the absence of star foreign players.

Bumrah gives India GLIMMER OF HOPE

AGENCIES

Jasprit Bumrah unleashed more destructive bowling but Australia stubbornly battled back to reach 228-9 on Sunday, leading by 333 runs in an absorbing fourth Test. Bumrah scythed through the middle order on day four in Melbourne to record figures of 4-56 off 24 overs and hand India an outside chance of victory in a match the home side have mostly dominated. However, India's hopes were diminished by a stubborn, unbeaten final-wicket stand of 55 from 17.5 overs. Nathan Lyon was at the crease on 41 while number 11 Scott Boland had seen off 65 balls to be 10 not out at the close. Up by 105 runs on the first innings, Australia were rocked by losing four wickets for 11 midway through the second session to slump to 91-6. Marnus Labuschagne (70) and Pat Cummins (41) responded with a vital partnership of 57, taking the steam out of Bumrah's assault.



Bumrah reached the 200-wicket landmark with the lowest average - 19.56 - amongst any bowler in the format. He is the first bowler to concede fewer than 4000 runs for his first 200 wickets.

Bumrah became the fastest Indian player and the fourth-fastest bowler overall to take 200 wickets (in terms of balls bowled), behind Waqar Younis (7725 balls), Dale Steyn (7848 balls), and Kagiso Rabada (8154 balls).

India will have to defy the odds to win this Test as the highest fourth-innings total for a win at the MCG is England's 332 for 7 which they achieved in 1928.

A crowd of 299,329 has watched the match across the first four days, the highest-ever attendance for a Boxing Day Test.

Unlikely batting hero Rabada takes South Africa to WTC final

REUTERS

Fast bowlers Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen turned batting heroes on Sunday as South Africa edged Pakistan by two wickets to win a thrilling first test at Centurion and book themselves a place in next year's World Test Championship final in June 11-15.

Rabada scored 31 and Jansen 16 in an unbeaten partnership of 51 off 50 balls to see South Africa over the line and deny Pakistan a dramatic comeback victory after Mohammed Abbas took six wickets as he shredded through the home batting order.

The test had a finish more like that of a T20 match as the tailenders delivered success after South Africa had slumped dramatically before lunch and offered Pakistan



"It is an emotional moment for me. As a team, we have overcome a lot. We haven't been super-dominant with our performances, we haven't been ruthless but we have always found a way to ensure the result was on our side."

South Africa captain Bavuma

South Africa's win meant that only one of Australia and India can qualify for the final at Lord's in June.

the chance to win a test in South Africa for the first time in 18 years.

Rabada, who is ranked second best test bowler, emerged, however, as an unlikely batting hero while Jansen delivered the winning runs with a classy drive to the boundary, amid scenes of delirious celebration.

It was heartbreaking for Pakistan as Abbas had brought them close with four wickets in a marathon spell of 13 successive overs before lunch as South Africa made heavy work of chasing a modest target of 148.

Abbas, whose overall figures were 6-54 off 19.3 overs, engineered a dramatic collapse when South Africa looked headed for a comfortable victory with 50 runs needed and six wickets in hand as the Proteas slumped from 96-4 to 99-8.

THE NATION'S
LARGEST ROD
MANUFACTURER

★★★★★

WITH MORE CAPACITY, WE ARE MORE READY TO BUILD TOMORROW'S BANGLADESH

BSRM
building a safer nation

COMPLETE GUIDANCE APP FOR HOME BUILDING

GET IT ON
Google Play

Download on the
App Store

Suspension of accreditation cards a threat to free press

Says Editors' Council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council, in a statement yesterday, strongly condemned the suspension of journalists' accreditation cards and access to the Secretariat, stating that such an order poses a threat and obstacle to independent journalism.

On Friday, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order through a press release, which stated that the decision was made in the wake of security concerns arising from a fire incident at the Secretariat.

The order said that journalists' access to the Secretariat via accreditation cards has been suspended until further notice.

The next day, the Chief Adviser's Press Wing expressed regret over the restriction of journalists' access.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



A crowd in front of gate-1 of the Secretariat on Abdul Gani Road as ID cards of officials were being checked before their entry yesterday morning. Security has been beefed up following a fire in a Secretariat building on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

6 lives lost as bus hits autorickshaw



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Six people were killed when a CNG-run autorickshaw collided head-on with a bus on the Sherpur-Mymensingh road in Sherpur Sadar upazila.

The victims were identified as Maisha Jesmin Mim, 20, her brother Kamruzzaman Emon, 24, Moklesur Rahman Master, 75, his wife Umme Kulsum, 65, Nina Rani, 45, and the autorickshaw driver Lokman Hossain Babu, 55. They were all from different areas of Sherpur.

Quoting locals, Sherpur Superintendent of Police Md Aminul Islam said the autorickshaw, with five passengers onboard, was headed towards the district headquarters.

"When it reached Bhatshala area on Sherpur-

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

Journos to get limited access to Secretariat from today

Says Nahid



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just two days after suspending journalists' entry to the Secretariat, the government yesterday said they would get limited access there from today.

"Journalists will be granted limited access to the Secretariat from tomorrow [Monday]. Restrictions were imposed to ensure a proper investigation of the recent fire incident," said Nahid Islam, information and broadcasting adviser, while speaking to reporters in front of the Secretariat yesterday.

"Over 3,000 accreditation cards have been issued to journalists, but many of them are reportedly held by non-professionals. This has necessitated a review

SEE PAGE 7 COL 7

MIGRANT RETURNEES

When dreams turn into debts

At least 57pc had taken loans worth Tk 90,000 for medical care

MD ABBAS

Migrant workers leave their homeland with dreams of securing a better future for their families, often financed by hefty loans.

However, many return home afflicted by illness, only to face a double burden -- additional loans to cover their medical expenses.

This grim reality was highlighted in a recent study conducted by the Oviabashi Karmi Unnayan Program (Okup), shedding light on the hidden costs of migration and the harsh challenges faced by returnees.

According to the report, over 57 percent of the returnees had taken loans worth an average of Tk 90,000 for medical care at home after being denied abroad.

In addition to the Tk 4-6 lakh migration cost, many of these returnees incurred additional medical expenses, a financial burden that had previously been overlooked in migration cost analyses.

The study showed the significant yet underappreciated costs of medical treatment for returnee migrants.

Only 30 percent of migrant workers were able to receive medical treatment in their host countries, forcing the remaining 70 percent to return home.

The study added that over 27 percent of the migrant workers said their employers deducted the medical expenses from their salaries.

It also showed that the highest amount paid by male migrants for migration was over Tk 6

COMMON HEALTH ISSUES OF MIGRANT RETURNEES

- BACK PAIN: 25 PERCENT
- CARDIAC ISSUES: 11 PERCENT
- INJURY-RELATED ISSUES: 11 PERCENT
- CANCER: 9 PERCENT
- KIDNEY ISSUE: 8 PERCENT
- UTERINE INFECTION: 8 PERCENT
- HYPERTENSION: 6 PERCENT

lakh, while female migrants spent between Tk 3-4 lakh.

Shakirul Islam, lead researcher and chairperson of Okup, presented these findings at a programme -- "Health of Bangladeshi Migrant Workers: A Hidden Cost of Migration Burdening Socioeconomic Development" -- at a city hotel yesterday.

Over 52 percent of returnee migrants have physical health issues, while 48 have mental health problems, according to a new study

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

'India may not return Hasina as we heard'

Says Adviser Mahfuj Alam

UNB, Dhaka

When Bangladesh awaits India's reply to a request for former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's extradition, Adviser Mahfuj Alam has said the government thinks India would not return her.

"Our observation is that they have made a political decision that they will not return her. We are hearing as such," the adviser said when asked whether the issue was discussed or whether they have any observations regarding Hasina's stay in India.

Mahfuj was talking to reporters after attending a dialogue titled "Establishing New Bangladesh: Internal Reforms and Foreign Policy" in Dhaka yesterday.

Information and Broadcasting Adviser Nahid Islam also joined the dialogue moderated by Foreign Secretary Md Jashim Uddin.

After Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain on December 23 revealed the government sent a note verbale requesting Hasina's extradition, India's Ministry of External Affairs confirmed it received the diplomatic message. Its spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, however, said they would not comment on the matter for now.

A day later, Bangladesh foreign ministry's spokesperson Mohammad

SEE PAGE 7 COL 7

Hydrogen trapped in Earth can power world for 200yrs

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Earth's subsurface holds trillions of tonnes of hydrogen gas, enough to fuel human activities for nearly 200 years and break our dependence on fossil fuels, a new study suggests.

US Geological Survey researchers say there could be 5.6 trillion tonnes of hydrogen in rocks and underground reservoirs.

While the study, published in the journal Science, acknowledges that most of this hydrogen reservoir could be inaccessible, it estimates that harvesting just 2 percent could power humanity for about two centuries.

A growing body of research is touting hydrogen as a clean energy source that could well replace fossil fuel in vehicles, industrial processes and in electricity generation.

The gas is projected to make up nearly a third of the future energy supply in many sectors with its global demand expected to rise fivefold.

Previous studies have shown that hydrogen can be produced by splitting water molecules using electricity, leaving behind oxygen and hydrogen. Natural chemical reactions in rocks are known to release hydrogen but, until recently, very little was thought to be produced this way.

This changed when geologists found huge natural reservoirs of hydrogen gas in Albania and West Africa.



AZERBAIJAN JET

Crashed plane was shot at from Russia

Says Azerbaijan president, claims some in Moscow tried to cover up

REUTERS, Baku

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said yesterday that a passenger plane that crashed last week, killing 38 people, had been damaged by shooting from the ground in Russia, and he said some in Russia had lied about the cause of the disaster.

President Vladimir Putin on Saturday apologised to Aliyev for Wednesday's "tragic incident" in Russian airspace involving the plane after Russian air defences engaged Ukrainian attack drones. A Kremlin statement did not say Russia had shot down the plane, only noting a criminal case had been opened.

"Our plane was shot down by accident," Aliyev told state television yesterday, adding that the plane had come under some sort of electronic jamming and had then been shot at while it was approaching the southern Russian city of Grozny.

"Unfortunately, in the first three days we heard only absurd versions from Russia," Aliyev said, citing statements in Russia that attributed the crash to birds or the explosion of some sort of gas cylinder.

"We witnessed clear attempts to cover up the matter," said the Azerbaijani leader, who has close ties to Russia and was educated at one of Moscow's top universities.

Aliyev said he wanted Russia to accept it was guilty of downing the plane and punish those responsible for fatally damaging the aircraft.



(From L to R) Najmul Hossain Shanto, Towhid Hridoy and Mushfiqur Rahim -- three of the stars of defending champions Fortune Barishal -- enjoy a light moment with team manager and CEO Sabbir Khan during a practice session at the BCB Academy Ground in Mirpur yesterday ahead of today's opening match of Bangladesh Premier League T20.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BPL 11 kicks off in Mirpur today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 11th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League T20, the country's only franchise-based T20 tournament, will get underway at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur today.

In opening day's fixtures, reigning champions Fortune Barishal will take on newcomers Durbar Rajshahi at 01:30pm while Rangpur Riders will face Dhaka Capitals in the second match at 06:30pm.

Like the previous editions, the matches will be held in Sylhet [January 6 to 13] and Chattogram [January 16 to 23] as well. A total of seven franchises, including three brand new ones, will take part in the competition, which will conclude in Mirpur on February 7.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is leaving no stone unturned to make the event a grand success. The BCB has ensured DRS technology will be available for the entire tournament while digital perimeter boards will add a different vibe to the grounds.

Fans will be offered free water

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1