



Carrying banners and chanting slogans against autocracy and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, thousands of students from all over the country yesterday gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka to join the "March for Unity" programme, called by the Students Against Discrimination. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Make July uprising proclamation by Jan 15

Students, Nagorik Committee issue ultimatum to govt, threaten to take to streets again demand justice, reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students Against Discrimination and Jatiya Nagorik Committee yesterday said they would take to the streets again if the government does not make the Proclamation of July Uprising by January 15.

At the March for Unity at the Central Shaheed Minar, they said their "revolution will end only when the nation gets justice and the

reforms are carried out".

People in droves joined the gathering with national flags, placards, festoons, and banners.

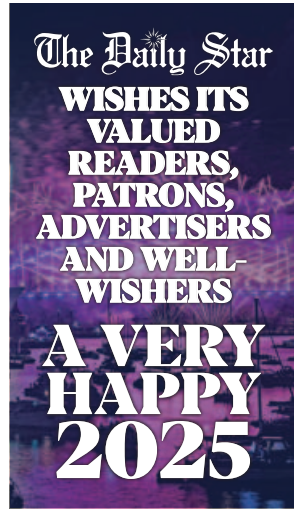
They chanted slogans like "Ei Muhurte Dorkar, Bichar R Sangskar" (now is the time for justice and reforms) since they began gathering there in the afternoon. Most of the speakers ended their speeches with the slogan "Inquilab Jindabad" (long

live revolution).

The programme was initially announced for making the Proclamation of July Uprising. But the government later said it would formally make the proclamation based on national consensus.

The students then renamed their programme "March for Unity".

Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Students Against Discrimination, SEE PAGE 2 COL 7



Govt decision caught student leaders by surprise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's decision to prepare a declaration of the July uprising came as a surprise to the leaders of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and Jatiya Nagorik Committee.

The students' platform that spearheaded the uprising scheduled the unveiling of their own proclamation at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka for Tuesday.

However, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus's press wing late on Monday evening announced the government itself would prepare a proclamation within a few days based on national consensus.

Soon after the announcement, the SEE PAGE 2 COL 7

Govt warns bureaucrats of stern action

Public admin ministry issues directive relating to protests over benefits

BAHARAM KHAN

The government yesterday issued a stern warning to the officials of 26 cadres, stating that disciplinary action will be taken for violating the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules 1979.

Referring to recent protests over promotion-related benefits, the public administration ministry said in a circular that the officials must adhere to the rules.

"Those who fail to comply with the rules will face actions under the Discipline and Appeal Rules 2018," the circular reads.

The directive follows protests triggered by a statement from the Administrative Reforms Commission that it was considering a proposal to revise the current promotion ratio for the post of deputy secretary.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Nation steps into a year of hope

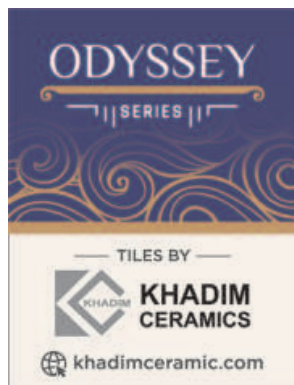
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As Bangladesh heads into 2025, it leaves behind a tumultuous year of colossal human loss that also saw the fall of oppression and the sparkle of a new dawn. Now, with resilience and cautious optimism, the nation ushers in the New Year, marking a pivotal chapter in its history.

To many, this feels like a rare breath of possibility – a chance to rewrite the story of a nation that endured so much in July and August. The atrocities of the past regime left deep scars, but out of that pain was born something powerful: a united, unyielding vow to roll back the dark legacy of the autocratic rule.

That's why calls for reform are no longer whispers on the sidelines – they are a clarion call resonating across society. The recommendations from six reform commissions, already in progress, are poised to serve as the foundation for future transformations. However, this moment demands visible and decisive action from interim leader Muhammad Yunus and his team. The machinery of government – from the police to the bureaucracy – must be reformed, if not rebuilt, to withstand the test of time.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



CYBER SECURITY Oppressive mechanism still there in draft law: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday said the recently-approved draft of the Cyber Protection Ordinance 2024 may threaten citizens' freedom of expression and dissent, and the right to organise as well as media freedom.

At a press conference in the TIB headquarters, it said the new draft largely preserves the regulatory and surveillance mechanisms of previous oppressive laws.

The organisation further criticised the ordinance for being rushed through approval without stakeholders being provided with adequate time to review it, saying the process was "deeply regrettable and unexpected".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



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4 dead, 3 injured in Akij factory explosion in Habiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Four workers were killed, and three others critically injured in a cylinder explosion at an under-construction factory of Akij Group in Habiganj's Bahubal upazila yesterday.

Two of the deceased, identified as Mizan Gazi and Mahfuz, are from Chandpur and were workers of the factory, said Azizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Bahubal Police Station.

The identities of the two other victims could not be known immediately.

Zahirul Islam, assistant superintendent of police (Nabiganj-Bahubal circle), said the cylinder exploded around 9:00am when the workers were checking gas pressure at the factory's sub-station.

The roof of the factory was blown away in the blast.

Two workers died on the spot, while the others were critically injured.

Five individuals were rushed to MAG Osmani Medical College in Sylhet, but two succumbed to their injuries on the way, OC Azizur said, quoting locals.

The rest of the injured were undergoing treatment in critical condition, he added.

PRY, SECONDARY EDUCATION New textbooks see changes over independence declaration

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The new textbooks for primary and secondary students will now state that Ziaur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh in 1971.

Earlier, the books mentioned that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made the declaration.

The new textbooks, which will have several changes, are currently being printed and will be distributed among the students from today (January 1).

Since 2010, a year after Sheikh Hasina came to power for the second time, the textbooks had mentioned that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared independence via a wireless message just before he was arrested by the Pakistan army on March 26, 1971.

Prof AKM Reazul Hassan, chairman of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, said the new textbooks for the 2025 academic year will state that "on March 26, 1971, Ziaur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh, and on March 27, he made

"The new textbooks for the 2025 academic year will state that 'on March 26, 1971, Ziaur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh, and on March 27, he made another declaration of independence on behalf of Bangabandhu'."

NCTB Chairman Reazul Hassan

another declaration of independence on behalf of Bangabandhu".

The information has been included in the free textbooks where the matter of the declaration was mentioned, he added.

Writer and researcher Rakkhal Raha, who was involved in the process of

making changes in the textbooks, said they tried to free the textbooks from "exaggerated, imposed history".

"Those who revised the textbooks found that it wasn't a fact-based information that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sent the wireless message [declaring independence] while being arrested by the Pakistani army, and so they decided to remove it."

Earlier, in the textbooks of classes one to 10, the information on who made the declaration of independence was changed according to the government in power.

It is widely believed among supporters of Awami League that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had made the announcement, and that Ziaur Rahman, who was an army major and later a sector commander of the Liberation War, merely read out the declaration upon Mujib's instructions.

Meanwhile, supporters of BNP believe their party founder and also former president of the country Ziaur

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Govt warns Nation steps into a year of hope

FROM PAGE 1

Currently, 75 percent of promotions to deputy secretary are allocated to administration cadre officials, with the remaining 25 percent going to other cadres.

The reform commission recently proposed changing this ratio to 50:50, sparking protests from both sides. Administration cadre officers are demanding that 100 percent of promotions be reserved for them, while officials from other cadres are calling for equal opportunities.

The protests have included rallies, work stoppages, human chains, and discussions.

Despite the ministry's warning, officials from the 25 non-administration cadres are planning a discussion at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh in the capital on January 3.

Mohammad Mofizur Rahman, coordinator of the non-administration cadre officials' movement, said, "We will hold a discussion that will not violate the code of conduct. Therefore, we will proceed with the programme as planned."

In its notice yesterday, the public administration ministry said some government officials had violated the code of conduct through activities such as protests, human chains, and inappropriate social media posts.

The ministry warned that such actions tarnish the image of government employees and emphasised the need to comply with Rule 30 of the code.

The Rule 30 prohibits publicly opposing or obstructing government decisions or orders, directly or indirectly, expressing dissatisfaction or discontentment publicly with government decisions; exerting undue influence to alter, revise, or cancel any government decision; and creating or inciting dissatisfaction or hostility among government employees.

According to the notice, violations of these rules will be considered misconduct under the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 2018, and the offenders will face disciplinary actions.

MINISTRY FOR ACTION AGAINST SEVEN OFFICIALS
The public administration ministry has recently written to several other ministries urging actions against at least seven cadre officials for violating the rules.

Among the seven, Sadiqur Rahman Sabuj, former regional executive officer (administration cadre) of Gazipur City Corporation, has already been suspended for making inflammatory remarks about other cadres on Facebook.

The public administration ministry has attached copies of the officials' controversial social media posts to the letters. The Daily Star has seen these copies.

Criticising the officials' actions, Firoz Mia, a former additional secretary and public administration expert, said, "They are behaving like trade union [CBA] leaders, which is unacceptable. The government should have taken stricter measures against them earlier."

Nation steps into a year of hope

FROM PAGE 1

Expectations weigh heavily on Yunus and his colleagues.

Their path is riddled with obstacles: simmering grievances, deep political divides, and a system burdened by the oppressive legacy of Sheikh Hasina's 15-year rule. Yunus's vision is bold, even audacious, but it will be judged against the harsh realities of governance more acutely in 2025. Then there are lingering echoes of vengeance and retribution that threaten to overshadow his aspirations.

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE
For some, 2025 offers a fresh slate – a chance to transcend political conflicts rooted in Hasina's rule and embrace a new, inclusive chapter. For others, it raises pressing questions: Will the political landscape stabilise, or will tensions deepen?

Can the BNP, a key political voice, rise above the entrenched culture of vengeance that has long defined the nation's politics? If the BNP hopes to lead the country towards a more stable and inclusive future, it must break free from the past government's toxic legacy and chart a new course. Rising above the politics of retribution is no easy task, particularly when grievances run deep and old wounds remain unhealed. However, the BNP has an opportunity to lead by example.

So far, the BNP has stepped forward with a voice of reason during a tumultuous time, firmly opposing the removal of Bangladesh's President Mohammed Shahabuddin from office and any move to ban political parties. In doing so, it positioned itself as a stabilising force, acting as a bulwark against the rising tide of mob justice and chaos.

To lay down its vision for the future, the BNP has submitted a comprehensive set of recommendations to the Constitution Reform Commission. It proposed constitutional reforms to foster democratic governance. One key

recommendation is the introduction of a bicameral parliament to ensure broader representation in state governance. To prevent the concentration of power and promote democratic leadership transitions, the BNP proposed amending the constitution to restrict any individual from serving as prime minister for more than two consecutive terms. The BNP calls for a recalibration of executive powers to enhance the system of checks and balances.

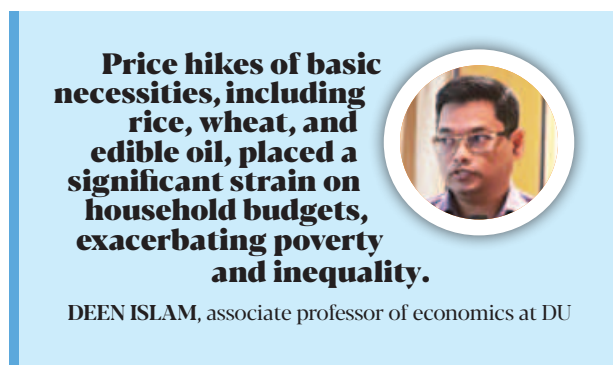
DIFFICULT ECONOMIC PATH
The year 2025 stands poised between optimism and caution, marked by contrasts. Politically, it

precarious environment, marred by the breakdown of law and order?

For the poorest and most vulnerable in Bangladesh, 2024 was a year of unrelenting hardship. The sharp rise in the cost of essential goods – food, fuel, and other daily staples – hit those with fragile finances the hardest, according to economists.

"Price hikes of basic necessities, including rice, wheat, and edible oil, placed a significant strain on household budgets, exacerbating poverty and inequality," said Deen Islam, associate professor of economics at Dhaka University.

Then came the floods.



Price hikes of basic necessities, including rice, wheat, and edible oil, placed a significant strain on household budgets, exacerbating poverty and inequality.

DEEN ISLAM, associate professor of economics at DU

promises high drama and significant turning points with a national election on the horizon. Economically, the path is far more difficult. The business and investment climate faces uncertainty and peril. Political transition often brings instability, and for the private sector, this could dampen confidence and growth. Inflationary pressures, a lingering energy crisis, and shrinking global demand for key exports, such as garments, create a challenging environment for local businesses. Foreign investors, wary of instability, are likely to adopt a cautious approach as they assess the interim government's progress on law and order.

Can the government revive the economy amid global and domestic uncertainties? And how will businesses navigate a

Two deluges swept through key agricultural regions, decimating crops, upending livelihoods, and plunging local food systems into crisis. For millions, the year wasn't just marked by rising costs but by the gnawing fear that tomorrow might bring even less.

Looking ahead to 2025, global market trends suggest that the prices of essential commodities are likely to rise further, driven by supply chain disruptions and climatic challenges.

"To prevent a deepening crisis, the interim government must adopt proactive policies to safeguard the food supply and protect vulnerable populations," Deen Islam said.

The past year will go down in history as a period of tests exposing deep economic wounds, data manipulation,

and the unravelling of a carefully constructed facade of development. The recently released White Paper reveals the full extent of the economic damage caused by years of mismanagement, corruption, and systemic flaws. Manipulated data, lax financial oversight, reckless macroeconomic policies, and the plundering of public funds have inflicted deep wounds on the economy – far deeper than previously suspected.

What was once hailed as a global success story has been unmasked as a fragile facade, built on unstable foundations. At the heart of the problem lies a grim truth: years of unchecked corruption, abuse of public resources, and a kleptocratic culture prioritising personal gain over public good. This legacy has weakened institutions and battered the economy.

While the challenges of 2024 exposed the vulnerabilities in Bangladesh's economic framework, they also provided an opportunity for transformative change. By prioritising the welfare of its most vulnerable citizens and addressing structural weaknesses, Bangladesh can emerge stronger and more prepared for future economic uncertainties.

NATIONAL CONSENSUS
In a bold move, Yunus announced the formation of six reform commissions in September to address some of the nation's toughest challenges. These commissions aim to reform the judiciary, overhaul the electoral system, strengthen state administration, restructure the police, root out corruption, and revise the constitution. Their recommendations are expected in January. Dialogues with political parties will follow, setting the stage for reforms.

Perhaps the greatest challenge will be the rebuilding of the nation's institutions, systematically hollowed out during Hasina's tenure. Under her leadership,

independence was sacrificed for subservience, and institutions were moulded to serve party interests rather than public needs. Rebuilding these pillars of governance requires not only structural changes but also a profound moral reckoning.

Adding to this ambitious agenda, Yunus has established a commission aimed at forging a national consensus. This commission seeks to bridge the deep divides fracturing Bangladesh's society and politics, fostering dialogue among parties to chart a shared vision for the nation's future – a vision rooted in unity rather than division.

For Yunus, the stakes are high. Success in building consensus could transform the fragile optimism of 2025 into a genuine turning point. Failure, however, risks reinforcing the cycle of missed opportunities. In a country scarred by political vengeance and distrust, this effort may be the most delicate – and decisive – of all.

The successful completion of a national election by the end of 2025 or early 2026 could mark a significant turning point. An election would signal a return to democratic processes, fostering political stability and restoring confidence across the economy. Stability is crucial for economic performance, as prolonged uncertainty deters investment, stalls growth and erodes public trust.

"In the long run, a democratically elected political government can foster a good business and investment environment in Bangladesh by implementing some of the reforms recommended by the interim government," said Zaved Akhtar, president of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The task ahead is monumental. Undoing the damage requires systemic reforms, transparency, accountability, and a renewed trust in governance.

Make July uprising

FROM PAGE 1

said, "We still do not have a document on the proclamation of the July mass uprising. It must be issued by January 15. That day we want to reunite here with the proclamation."

"Our struggle against fascism and the Awami League will continue. Many couldn't accept our uprising and that is why there are conspiracies afoot at the Secretariat, in the police, and even in the courts."

Hinting at government officials, he said, "Accept the reality. Killer Hasina, who had taken away the people's right to vote by torturing political parties, won't be rehabilitated."

Nasiruddin Patwary, the convener of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, said the proclamation should incorporate the spirit of July uprising that ousted the fascist government with the blood of hundreds of martyrs.

"We want a new Bangladesh that will not tolerate any intimidation by any country; we want a country without any tender manipulation and extortion. We want the government to immediately bring the Awami League and Sheikh Hasina to book," he said.

Mentioning that the gathering was a renewed effort to press home the demand for justice by the families of the martyred and the injured, Nasiruddin said, "We will fight until justice is ensured."

Akhtar Hossain, member secretary of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, said people want a new

constitution. "The next election will be held to elect a constituent assembly which will decide on the new constitution and later will play the role of the legislature."

He said the government's announcement that it would write the proclamation is a victory for the Students Against Discrimination.

Member secretary Arif Sohel of Students Against Discrimination said, "We learned from the uprising that the meaning of independence is the rights of farmers, labourers, the basic human rights of all people, their right to food, education and health. All these should be in the proclamation."

Sarjis Alam, an organiser of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, said the interim government should focus on breaking up the syndicates that have the markets in their grips.

Spokesperson of the Students Against Discrimination and the Jatiya Nagorik Committee Umama Fatima and Samantha Sharmin, and organisers of the platforms in the districts and universities also spoke at the event.

The event began with a one-minute silence in remembrance of those martyred in the uprising.

Abul Hasan, father of martyred Shahriar Hasan Alvi, made the introductory speech. He said, "We feel our children every moment. Our tears will never dry. Murderer Hasina, her cabinet members, and the helmet-forces must be brought to book."

Govt decision

FROM PAGE 1

student group and its organisation for citizens, the Nagorik Committee, sat for separate meetings at their offices in Bangla Motor around 10:00pm.

After intense drama for hours, they decided to hold a "March for Unity" instead of making the proclamation.

In the beginning, some of them became agitated and still wanted to go ahead with the programme while some wanted to call off the event.

Asif Mahmud, an adviser to the Yunus government and a key organiser of the student movement, was among the leaders who tried to calm the activists.

At the meeting of the student platform, the discussion started with an announcement by a top leader that the December 31 programme would be postponed, three leaders who were present at the meeting told The Daily Star, requesting to be unnamed.

Many resented his announcement, which he made "without consulting other leaders".

Organisers, who were entitled with responsibilities to bring activists from different districts and upazilas, presented a calculation of how many buses would bring how many people from each district.

Outside the office, the organisers were seen talking over their phones.

One of the organisers said buses had set off, but now they stopped midway, awaiting a decision. Nothing had been finalised yet.

At the other meeting, of the Nagorik Committee, a group of leaders expressed their dissatisfaction over being in the dark about the government's decision.

"They raised questions as to why Nagorik Committee Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain was not informed of the government's decision. However, at the meeting, Akhtar remained firm that the programme would be held at any cost," one member of the committee

told this newspaper.

They were holding repeated meetings separately and jointly at the two platform's offices.

Akhtar left the office around 10:45pm, followed by Joint Convener Sarwar Tushar shortly afterwards. Neither of them spoke to the media.

As per sources inside the two platforms, Adviser Asif Mahmud sat with the two groups and tried to explain the government's decision. He left the offices around 11:15pm.

Meanwhile, two groups were demonstrating outside the building. They chanted slogans demanding that the programme be held.

Hasnat Abdullah, the convener of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, arrived at the offices with Umama Fatema, spokesperson for the platform, at 12:30am on Tuesday.

The leaders sat again afterwards, and following an hour-long discussion, they decided the proclamation would not be announced.

However, since people from various districts were already on their way, the event would be held, but in a different pattern, they decided.

After their meeting, at 1:30am, Jatiya Nagorik Committee Chief Organiser Sarjis Alam told a press conference, "Through the initiative to prepare a declaration of uprising, the government has brought all of Bangladesh to a united stance. We applaud this effort."

The dramatic change of the plans about the proclamation came after the political parties gave mixed reactions over the issue.

The BNP and several other parties said they apprehended the move may delay the next election. They also wondered why the students wanted to make a proclamation five months after the uprising.

The Jamaat-e-Islami welcomed the student platform's decision to make a proclamation.

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YUNUS PAYS TRIBUTE TO JIMMY CARTER, MANMOHAN SINGH



Left, Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus writes a message of mourning in the condolence book opened at the US embassy in Dhaka marking the death of former United States president and fellow Nobel Laureate Jimmy Carter, who died on Saturday. Right, the chief adviser also wrote a condolence message for former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who passed away last week, at the Indian High Commission.



PHOTO: PID

ACC reopens Padma Bridge graft probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has reopened its investigation into alleged corruption conspiracies involving the Padma Bridge project.

The inquiry will focus on seven individuals, including former Bridges Division secretary Mosharrar Hossain Bhuiyan, ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain said.

The allegations date back to 2012, when the World Bank, a potential financier of the project, accused several parties of corruption in the awarding of contracts. This prompted the Sheikh Hasina-led government to launch a probe.

The ACC filed a case on December 17, 2012, accusing seven individuals following its initial inquiries.

Although then communications minister Syed Abul Hossain and former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury were implicated in the early stages, their names were left out when the case was filed. The allegations,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Rights situation worsened in 2024

Law enforcers resorted to firing on protesting students during uprising, killing hundreds, say 3 organisations in reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The human rights situation in Bangladesh deteriorated in 2024, with widespread fear gripping the population, according to reports from three human rights organisations.

They said law enforcement agencies resorted to indiscriminate firing on protesting students during the mass uprising, killing hundreds. Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF), and Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) released their annual reports yesterday, drawing on media sources to highlight the year's key issues.

The reports criticised excessive use of force by law enforcers during the protests, sparked by the controversial January 7 election, boycotted by the BNP and several other political parties.

They also highlighted the quota protests, which ultimately led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government.

ASK reported the use of disproportionate force during the mass uprising, resulting in hundreds of deaths. The organisation demanded impartial

investigations into allegations of disappearances, abductions, extrajudicial killings, custodial torture, and deaths to ensure justice and accountability.

MSF urged law enforcement agencies to adopt responsible measures to minimise casualties and avoid excessive force.

It also called for an end to obstruction of free journalism,

albeit at a reduced rate.

ASK recorded 21 such deaths. MSF documented 22 deaths in 16 incidents of crossfire or shootings involving police, Rab, and joint forces, alongside nine custodial deaths.

ASK commended the interim government's establishment of a Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances. However, it reported two cases of enforced disappearances in 2024, with one individual still missing.

MSF highlighted 13 cases of abduction, allegedly by law enforcement impersonators, with several victims later shown as arrested.

Minority communities faced targeted violence, with ASK documenting 521 attacks on homes or businesses, 92 incidents of idol vandalism, and four deaths, including three Hindu victims.

MSF reported 261 attacks on minority groups last year.

Mob violence also saw a sharp rise, with MSF recording 146 deaths and 126 injuries in mob beatings, up from 51 deaths in 2023. ASK reported 128 fatalities from mob beatings.

Both ASK and MSF noted that extrajudicial killings persisted,

stating that such actions violate the right to information and freedom of expression.

HRSS stressed the importance of protecting fundamental and constitutional rights by improving law and order, warning that failure to address these issues would further deteriorate the human rights situation.

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No need to repeal 1972 Constitution

Says Gono Odhikar Parishad president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Odhikar Parishad (GOP) President Nurul Haque Nur yesterday said rather than repealing the 1972 Constitution, it should be amended through discussions with all stakeholders to implement necessary changes.

He made these remarks during a press conference at the party office in Alrazi Complex.

During the conference, GOP leaders addressed the current political situation in the country, announcing a commitment to work together and set aside past divisions in their pursuit of building a new Bangladesh.

Nur emphasised the importance of unity, saying that the party has come together for the greater good, despite some lingering reluctance from a few individuals, whom he hopes will eventually join.

Nur highlighted that there is no need to repeal the 1972 Constitution, which has already been amended 17 times. He remarked, "A nation

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

2024: continued struggle against DENGUE

The year saw 575 deaths, 1,01,214 cases; 2nd in terms of fatalities, 3rd in cases

HELEMUL ALAM

The year 2023 was one of dengue devastation, breaking all previous records. As the new year approached, there was much discussion about improving the situation. However, it turned out to be all talk and no show, as dengue still claimed hundreds of lives in 2024.

In terms of fatalities, this year recorded the second-highest death toll, with at least 575 lives lost, coming second only to 2023. The number of cases ranked as the third-highest to date, with 1,01,214 new cases. Most of the deaths were recorded in Dhaka.

In 2023, a record 1,705 deaths and 3,21,179 cases were recorded. Experts had called for urgent, year-round measures, but 2024 proved those warnings went largely unheeded.

TOLL IN NUMBERS

Among this year's fatalities, 51.1 percent were female and



TOTAL DEATHS	: 575
Female deaths	: 51.1pc
Male deaths	: 48.9pc
TOTAL CASES	: 1,01,214
Female cases	: 36.9pc
Male cases	: 63.1pc

46TH ANNIVERSARY Leadership and structural issues plague JCD

SAJJAD HOSSAIN



Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the pro-BNP student wing which has been facing criticism for outdated leadership, is set to observe its 46th founding anniversary today.

Many believe relying on older leaders and irregular members could harm JCD's future.

JCD also faces issues like lack of democratic practices and internal conflicts, raising concerns among student leaders about a potential leadership crisis.

Founded in 1979 by Ziaur Rahman, JCD has operated under a draft constitution since the late 1990s, with no progress made in the past 28 years.

However, JCD General Secretary Nasir Uddin Nasir said the draft constitution will be finalised soon.

Over the last 24 years, JCD has held only one council - in 2019, highlighting a lack of democratic practices and the development of effective leadership.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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বীর উত্তম এ. কে. খন্দকার রোড
শুলশান, ঢাকা।

নতুন ঠিকানা:
মহাখালী শাখা
সিডিল সার্কিট টাওয়ার (১ম, ২য় ও ৩য় তলা)
৭০, বীর উত্তম এ. কে. খন্দকার রোড
শুলশান, ঢাকা।

সম্মানিত গ্রাহক ও পুষ্টিশিল্পকর্মে মহাখালী শাখার নতুন ঠিকানায় যোগাযোগ করে, সব ধরনের ব্যাংকিং সেবা গ্রহণ করার জন্য সর্বিনয় অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

2025, a new era for the judiciary

Hopes chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed has expressed optimism that 2025 will mark a new beginning for the judiciary in Bangladesh, following the implementation of reforms outlined in the roadmap he announced on September 21, 2024.

"The chief justice expressed his hope that in 2025, the judiciary of Bangladesh will be completely free from the influence of the executive and enjoy the benefits of its institutional independence and thus,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

আপনার আস্থাই আমাদের প্রেরণা

নিরাপদে ব্যাংকিং হোক আমাদের সাথে

বিশ্বের সর্বোচ্চ সংখ্যক প্রকল্পপূর্ণ ব্যাংকের সাথে রিলেশনশিপ ম্যানেজমেন্ট (আর এম) চুক্তির মাধ্যমে বৈদেশিক ব্যাংকিং সেবা নিশ্চিত করা হচ্ছে।

ডিজিটাল ট্রান্সফর্মেশনের লক্ষ্য অত্যাধুনিক প্রযুক্তির সহায়তায় আইটি, ক্রেডিট কার্ড, ডেবিট কার্ড, এমএফএস, এজেন্ট ব্যাংকিং, ইন্টারনেট ব্যাংকিং ও এটিএম সেবাসমূহ প্রদান করা হচ্ছে।

বিনিয়োগের বিপরীতে অর্জিত মুনাফা, কোম্পানি সুশাসন, নিয়মিতাত্মিক ঝুঁকি ব্যবস্থাপনায় শীর্ষ।

পঞ্চদশের ৩০ বছর, পরিপক্বতা, স্থিতিশীলতা এবং সুসংহত করণের প্রতীক।

সকল শাখায় ইসলামিক ব্যাংকিং সেবার জন্য নিবেদিত ডেস্ক।

সকল তারল্য সুতকে শীর্ষ স্থানীয় ব্যাংক হিসেবে ৩০ বছর সুবান বজায় রেখেছে।

গ্রাহকের আস্থার ফলস্বরূপে আমানত এবং বৈদেশিক ব্যাংকিং প্রতিবন্ধিতা বৃদ্ধি পাচ্ছে।



30 Years
Celebrating
Stability, Security and Growth

সাইথইস্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
একটি স্থানীয় ব্যাংক

No need to repeal 1972 Constitution

FROM PAGE 3
achieves independence only once; 71 cannot be compared to 24.”
He also called for comprehensive support for those injured during the Quota movement and the July uprising.

incidents like fires in the Secretariat.
Nur commended the chief advisor's initiative to universalise a declaration drafted by students, which he believes has prevented further division in the nation.
He concluded, “Unity is indispensable for building the new Bangladesh of tomorrow. Rash decisions in this situation could set the country back. The

maintain discipline and professionalism has led to violent incidents on campuses.
On December 24, JCD announced a 230 member convening committee, sparking protests from those excluded.
Following the announcement, tensions escalated at Dhaka College, as the college unit accused the president and general secretary of favouritism and mismanagement.
Protests were brought out, while seven cocktail explosions were reported on campus.
Amid such concerns, JCD is set to observe its anniversary. It will hold a discussion today, with BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman as the chief guest.

2025, a new era

FROM PAGE 3
by devoting itself to the service of the people as an independent organ of the state, the judiciary will be able to fulfill the aspirations of the people of July-August revolution of 2024,” a Supreme Court press release said yesterday.
The chief justice revealed that a comprehensive action plan for judicial reform will be adopted by 2025.
Significant strides have already been made toward this goal, including the establishment of a separate secretariat for the judiciary, the formation of an independent council for the appointment of SC judges, and the development of transfer and posting policies for subordinate court judges.
Furthermore, following the resolution of the review petition concerning the constitution's 16th amendment, the Supreme Judicial Council of Bangladesh has been reconstituted under the chief justice's leadership and is currently functioning at full capacity.
According to the SC press release, the chief justice has already taken various initiatives to ensure transparency and accountability of judicial services for the litigants by eliminating all forms of corruption from the judiciary as soon as possible.

Mustard offers hope for better days

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

As winter unfolds in Bangladesh, the landscape transforms into a vibrant canvas painted with fields of golden mustard flowers, signaling not only the beauty of the season but also the resilience of farmers seizing agricultural opportunities.

In Sirajganj, this annual spectacle reflects a surge in mustard cultivation, as local farmers expand their fields despite a national trend toward increased onion and other crop production.

Md Shamim Sheikh, a farmer from Baghabari in Shahzadpur upazila, said, “Mustard is always profitable due to its low production costs.”

This year, he has planted mustard on three bighas of land, facing rising labor and fertilizer costs that now exceed Tk 5,000 per bigha. “There's little risk of loss with mustard, especially since onions and other crops often lead to setbacks,” he said.

In flood-prone regions like Sirajganj, seasonal floods can wreak havoc, but farmers have adapted by preparing their land for mustard cultivation once the waters recede.

“After harvesting paddy, our fields are often under water, leaving us with no options for further crops. But once the water is gone, we turn to mustard on the vast riverbank lands,” said Md Sharif Hossain from Choto village in Sirajganj Sadar upazila.

Last year, Sharif was disappointed with his Amon rice harvest, prompting him to dedicate his entire five bighas to mustard this season. Now, his fields, along with many



others in the area, are a brilliant yellow, creating a striking contrast against the winter sky.

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) reported a significant increase in mustard cultivation this year, with 87,125 hectares allocated for producing 144,000 tonnes, a rise from 85,170 hectares in the previous year.

Md Ahsan Shahid Sarkar, deputy director of DAE, Sirajganj, said, “Farmers here have cultivated the largest area of mustard again this year. With 30 to 40 percent of fields submerged for months, we can only manage two crops a year.”

This shift towards mustard is not merely a trend but a necessity for many flood-affected farmers seeking reliable yields, he said.

While Sirajganj celebrates its achievements, neighbouring districts like Pabna are facing setbacks. “Last year, we cultivated 45,043

hectares of mustard in Pabna and aimed to maintain that level this year. However, we have only managed to cultivate 44,890 hectares,” said Md Ashikur Rahman, a development officer with DAE, Pabna.

He attributed the decrease to the rising popularity of onions, with an expected production of 66,867 tonnes of mustard this year.

At the national level, the DAE has set target of 1.164 million hectares for mustard cultivation, aiming for a total production of 1.726 million tonnes. Yet, as of December 23, only 1.014 million hectares have been cultivated, fulfilling 87.08 percent of the target.

Md. Nizamul Haque Patowari, deputy director of the crops wing at DAE headquarters, said, “Our goal is to increase mustard production to reduce reliance on soybean imports. We are actively working to enhance mustard cultivation nationwide.”

Leadership and structural issues

FROM PAGE 3
Younger members are now calling for fresh faces in leadership, but many senior leaders, mostly in their early forties, resist these changes, according to JCD insiders.

Nasir Uddin addressed concerns about older leadership, saying over the past 15 years, the organisation faced severe persecution under the previous government. This made it difficult to hold council meetings or form new committees.

“As we could not form committees regularly, we ended up with older leaders. Also, experience was prioritised to strengthen the leadership,” he said.

Student leaders said JCD's activities have significantly declined in last 15 years, largely due to restrictions on campus access imposed by Chhatra League, which was banned in October 2024.

JCD leaders have also faced harassment, lawsuits, and physical attacks, which have discouraged new recruits, they argued.

The current leadership is mostly made up of individuals who are no longer regular students.

Many members of the JCD central committee enrolled in university over a decade ago. While some still pursue irregular

courses at Dhaka University and other institutions, others have no active student status.

Among the women members, some are irregular students or have dropped out of their studies years ago.

JCD President Rakibul Islam enrolled at Dhaka University in the 2006-07 academic year, while Nasir Uddin joined in 2007-08.

Other senior leaders, such as Senior Vice-President Abu Afsan, enrolled in 2006-07, Senior Joint General Secretary Shyamal Malum in 2007-08, and Organising Secretaries Amanullah Aman and Sharif Pradhan in 2009-10 and Jahangir Alam in 2007-08.

A university degree is typically completed within eight years, meaning most senior JCD leaders' regular student life ended 6 to 9 years ago.

The committee formation process has also faced criticism regarding transparency.

On June 15 last year, a 257 member JCD central committee was announced. However, the declaration lacked the signatures of the JCD president and general secretary; it only bore the signature of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

Meanwhile, the organisation's inability to

maintain discipline and professionalism has led to violent incidents on campuses.

On December 24, JCD announced a 230 member convening committee, sparking protests from those excluded.

Following the announcement, tensions escalated at Dhaka College, as the college unit accused the president and general secretary of favouritism and mismanagement.

Protests were brought out, while seven cocktail explosions were reported on campus.

Amid such concerns, JCD is set to observe its anniversary. It will hold a discussion today, with BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman as the chief guest.

Journalist

FROM PAGE 6
Narail from Lohagara. When I reached Sheikh Russell Bridge, unknown criminals attacked me with sharp weapons, wounding my abdomen, legs, and hands. They fled immediately after the attack.”

Local journalists issued a statement denouncing the attack and demanding the quick arrest and prosecution of those responsible.

OC Sajedul said that they launched an investigation, and efforts are underway to identify and nab the culprits.

Rights

FROM PAGE 3
Journalists faced severe repression, with MSF recording 740 cases of assault and repression, including five fatalities. ASK reported 531 assaults, with seven journalists killed.

The organisations emphasised the need for accountability and structural reforms.

They called for compensation and medical treatment for victims of the mass protests, alongside protections for journalists and minority communities.

PRAYER TIMING
JANUARY 1

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:00	5:30	7:00
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:15	5:35	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

2024: continued struggle against dengue

FROM PAGE 3
48.9 percent male. Hospitalisation data revealed that 63.1 percent of patients were male, while 36.9 percent were female. Health professionals linked the high mortality rate to severe complications like multi-organ failure, shock syndrome, and delayed hospitalisation, often exacerbated by pre-existing conditions.

Dr HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, explained that many patients arrived at hospitals in critical condition. “Shock syndrome following fever often led to multi-organ failure. Persistent shock typically causes liver damage, followed by kidney failure, leaving patients with little chance of survival,” he said.

Patients with comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, or chronic lung diseases were particularly vulnerable, with delayed treatment compounding their risks.

Dr Tahmina Shirin, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, said

70 percent of fatalities this year were caused by the Dengue Den-2 virus, which is linked to more severe outcomes.

WHY THE NUMBERS REMAIN HIGH
Experts blame irregular anti-mosquito campaigns for this year's high numbers, a situation exacerbated by a vacuum in local government leadership.

Following the fall of the Awami League government in August 2024, 12 city corporation mayors, 330 municipality mayors, and numerous zilla and upazila parishad chairpersons were removed. Their absence led to disrupted mosquito control efforts, as interim administrators struggled to implement effective measures.

Climate change also played a significant role. Warmer, more humid conditions extended the breeding season of Aedes mosquitoes.

Entomologist Manzur A Chowdhury explained

that the ideal temperature range for Aedes mosquito activity is between 16°C and 30°C, conditions that persisted well into November.

Rainfall patterns have also shifted, contributing to year-round mosquito breeding.

Professor Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University said, “Extended rainy seasons and altered humidity levels have enabled Aedes mosquitoes to adapt, changing their seasonal dynamics,” he said.

A CALL FOR ACTION
As Bangladesh enters another year with dengue looming large, experts have stressed the need for proactive, comprehensive measures. Waiting until the monsoon season is no longer an option.

“Anti-mosquito drives must begin as early as January,” said Manzur A Chowdhury.

“Identifying hotspots and implementing targeted interventions like larviciding, adulticiding,

and public awareness campaigns are essential.”

Manzur also emphasised integrating surveillance for other mosquito-borne diseases like chikungunya and Zika into broader control strategies to prevent overlapping outbreaks.

Professor Kabirul Bashar underscored the importance of expanding mosquito control efforts beyond Dhaka. “Districts like Barishal, Chandpur, Manikganj, and Gazipur are likely to see rising cases next year. The government must act swiftly,” he warned.

Experts also advocated better protection for hospitalised patients and public education campaigns to help citizens recognise warning signs, such as severe abdominal pain, breathing difficulties, or reduced urination.

A sustained, year-round approach is essential to avoid repeating this year's tragic toll in the future, experts said.

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Position Vacancy Announcement
Position: Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, FSN-9

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Bangladesh is seeking applications from qualified Bangladeshi nationals for the position of **Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, FSN-9** in the Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA).

Location: USAID/Bangladesh, Deadline for application submission: January 16, 2025; 04:30PM.

For a complete job description, required qualifications and detailed information on how to apply please visit USAID/Bangladesh website: <http://www.usaid.gov/bangladesh/work-with-us/careers> and www.bdjobs.com

D-01

Flat Sale
@ Park Road, Baridhara Diplomatic Zone, 3800 sq ft (approx.) at 2nd floor. 2 car parks with servant room n wash. Genuine buyers only. Contact # 01896 111367 or 01713 120964

মিউচুয়াল ট্রাস্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি
Mutual Trust Bank PLC
you can bank on us

Corporate Head Office: MTB Centre, 26, Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka- 1212
E-mail: info@mutualtrustbank.com

DISCLOSURE OF MATERIAL INFORMATION

Syed Manzur Elahi **Rashed Ahmed Chowdhury**

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Mutual Trust Bank PLC (MTB), at its 314th meeting held on Thursday, December 26, 2024, have unanimously elected **Mr. Syed Manzur Elahi** as Chairman, and **Mr. Rashed Ahmed Chowdhury** as Vice-Chairman of Board of the bank, with effect from January 01, 2025.

By Order of the MTB Board of Directors
Sd/-
RAIS UDDIN AHMAD
GROUP COMPANY SECRETARY
MUTUAL TRUST BANK PLC.

Dated: Dhaka
January 01, 2025
www.mutualtrustbank.com

সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিভিশন
প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা

কম/বেশি ৫,৭৯২ (পাঁচ হাজার সাতশত বিরানকই) পিস কন্সল ক্রয় ও সরবরাহের টেন্ডার নোটিশ

কাজের নামঃ সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি এর কর্পোরেট সোস্যাল রেসপনসিবিলিটি (সিএসআর) এর আওতায় কম/বেশি ৫,৭৯২ (পাঁচ হাজার সাতশত বিরানকই) পিস কন্সল উল্লুখ দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ক্রয় ও সরবরাহের নিমিত্ত অগ্রাধী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের নিকট থেকে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি এর ওয়েবসাইট www.sonalibank.com.bd এর Tender Board এবং এ ডিভিশনের নোটিশ বোর্ড দেখার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

ফোনঃ ২২৩৩৮৪৬৪২ (অফিস)
মোবাইলঃ ০১৭০৮-১৫৯০১৯/০১৯৬৮৮৯৫১০৪

জিডি-০৩ মোঃ ফেরদৌস সেরনিয়াবাত
ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার

ACC reopens

FROM PAGE 3
however, led to Abul Hossain's resignation and Mosharrar Hossain being sent on forced leave.

In 2014, the ACC submitted a final report recommending that all seven accused be cleared, citing a lack of evidence. Despite this, the World Bank withdrew its 1.2 billion dollar financing for the project.

BANGLADESH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
National Science & Technology Complex, Agargaon, Dhaka 1207
Website: www.bas.org.bd, Email: office@bas.org.bd

Election of Associate Fellows (AF) of BAS 2024

Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS) announces the Election of Associate Fellows (AF) 2024 as below:

Young scientists who are below 45 (forty five) years of age on 31 December 2024 having Ph.D/D.Sc./FCS/FRCS/MRCP/MRCVS/MD/MS/MPHil or equivalent degree in science streams and are of exceptional talent and promise, and have contributed to science and technology in recognized field, are eligible for election as Associate Fellows (AF) of BAS. Application/nomination for the above Associate Fellows, with CV mentioning academic and professional record must reach the Secretary of the Academy by **30 January 2025** at the latest.

Nomination of young scientist for election as Associate Fellows (AF) can also be made by the Fellows of the Academy before the deadline.

Prof. Dr. Haseena Khan
Secretary

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ঃ বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় অন্যান্য ভাতাদিসহ টাঃ ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান হলের ১টি শূন্য এ্যাডমিনিস্ট্রাটিভ অফিসার পদ পূরণের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকার বিনিময়ে রেজিস্ট্রারের দপ্তরে প্রাপ্ত্যাব্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হইতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে। প্রার্থীদের এস.এস.সি/এইচ.এস.সি/সমমানের পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/জিপিএ ৫ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫ এবং সিজিপিএ ৪ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.০০ সহ স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী থাকিতে হইবে। প্রার্থীদের সরকারী বা সরকার অনুমোদিত প্রতিষ্ঠান থেকে কমপক্ষে ছয় মাসের কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণসহ কম্পিউটার পরিচালনায় দক্ষ হইতে হইবে। অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীর গোপনীয় প্রতিবেদন সন্তোষজনক সাপেক্ষে চাকরির অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া যাইতে পারে। প্রার্থীর বয়স অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ (ত্রিশ) বৎসর হইতে হইবে। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করিতে হইবে।

রেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা, কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণ ও অন্যান্য যোগ্যতার (যদি থাকে) সকল সার্টিফিকেট ও প্রশংসাপত্রের সত্যায়িত প্রতিলিপিসহ ৮ (আট) প্রস্থ দরখাস্ত আগামী ২৩-০১-২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রারের (২০তম নং কক্ষ) নিকট পৌছাইতে হইবে।

জিডি-১১

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
পূনঃ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় অন্যান্য ভাতাদিসহ টাঃ ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/- বেতন স্কেলে (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ক্রিমিনোলজি বিভাগ-এর ১(এক)টি ক্রাইম ল্যাব বিশেষজ্ঞ শূন্য স্থায়ী পদ পূরণের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকার বিনিময়ে রেজিস্ট্রারের দপ্তরে প্রাপ্ত্যাব্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হইতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে। প্রার্থীকে এস.এস.সি ও এইচ.এস.সি/সমমানের পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/জিপিএ ৫ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫ অথবা সিজিপিএ ৪ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.০০ সহ কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে মাইক্রোবায়োলজি/জেনেটিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/বায়োকিমিস্ট্রি/এপ্রাইড কেমিস্ট্রি বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী থাকিতে হইবে। প্রার্থীকে সরকারী বা সরকার অনুমোদিত প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে কমপক্ষে ৬ (ছয়) মাসের কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণসহ কম্পিউটার পরিচালনায় দক্ষ হইতে হইবে। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে দরখাস্ত করিতে হইবে। প্রার্থীর বয়স অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বৎসর হইতে হইবে। চাকরির অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীর গোপনীয় প্রতিবেদন সন্তোষজনক সাপেক্ষে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া যাইতে পারে। ইতঃপূর্বে যাহারা আবেদন করিয়াছেন তাহাদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নাই।

রেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, মার্কেসিট ও প্রশংসাপত্র, কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণ, অন্যান্য অভিজ্ঞতা ও যোগ্যতার (যদি থাকে) সত্যায়িত কপি সহ ৮ (আট) প্রস্থ দরখাস্ত আগামী ২০-০১-২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রার, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় (২০তম নং কক্ষ)-এর নিকট পৌছাইতে হইবে।

জিডি-০৬

Dear Patrons
Thank You
for believing in us since 1984
Happy New Year 2025!

"I am very grateful to bti for their guidance about all kinds of safety related issues & fire safety training."
Umme Mahfuza
Joint Venture Customer
Ferdale
Uttara

"Deepest thanks to bti for their organized coordination..."
Suman Saha
Homeowner
The Nest
Mirpur

"Everything was made as per our requirements, for which all credit goes to team bti..."
Shajida Akter
Homeowner
Green Valley
Jalalabad, Chattogram

"We were confident with bti's consistency of responsiveness and professionalism..."
Mr. & Mrs. Linkon Sarkar
Homeowners
Silver Wood
Aftabnagar

"Thanks to bti for handling our land with such great care."
Iftekhar Zaman
Joint Venture Customer
Dhanmondi R/A

"Thanks, dear bti, for your pleasant support in completing my apartment..."
Rezaul Hasan
Homeowner
Blue Sky Homes
Bashundhara R/A

"I commend the proactivity with which bti handles customers-an A+ in my book!"
Dr. Mohammad Zia Us-Sabur

"The honesty and integrity of every employee of bti made us feel proud to have chosen them as our developers..."
Zahid Hussain
Homeowner
The Palladium

"bti is cordial, committed & caring..."
Simky Afrin Islam
Homeowner
Finesse
Bashundhara

"bti's positive attitude & professionalism gave us faith in having chosen them."
Md. Salim Ullah
Homeowner
Meadowville

"Thanks to the guidance & support of bti, we are now proud owners of a lovely home."
Dr. Krishna Kumar Das
Homeowner
Shopnoneer
Uttarkhan

"bti was constantly compliant with all processes..."
Rasna Hasan
Homeowner

"bti's commitment towards the highest quality of service satisfied us..."
Kazi Shaela Akhter
Homeowner
Southern Heights
Uttara

"I am very pleased with bti for their consistent support."
Dr. M. A. Raquib
Homeowner
Divine Noor
Chattogram

"I sincerely appreciate bti's phenomenal customer service for exceeding my expectations..."
Sajib Mahmud
Homeowner
Annobilash
Savar

"I love bti's superb designs."
Mst. Mahmuda
Dolce Vita

"The commitment of bti is truly amazing..."
Md. Kamrul Hasan Sarkar
Homeowner, Ikebana
Uttara

"Regular follow-ups from bti helped us get our perfect home."
Mainuddin Chowdhury & Ferdousi
Sultana
Homeowners, Sorrento
East Nasirabad, Chattogram

"bti did everything according to my choices & preferences..."
Md Milon Mahbub
Homeowner
Glenwood
Wari

"bti's team maintained a close relationship with us, inspiring us to buy a second apartment!"
Aktaruzzaman Razib
Homeowner
Celestial Heights
Gulshan

"We appreciate the dedication from bti."
Dr. Rezina Yasmin
Homeowner
Park Panorama
Gulshan

"I am grateful to bti for promptly preparing my apartment..."
Mohammad Nazrul Islam
Homeowner
Happy Days
Bashundhara R/A

"bti's remarkable design & expertise made our apartment a stand-out..."
Farida Majid
Homeowner
Park Royale
North Gulshan

"bti's active, dynamic & friendly team of professionals always prioritized us."
Sakib Hasan
Joint Venture Customer
Summer
Bashundhara R/A

"Special thanks to bti for their constant cooperation in signing our land..."
Saira Islam & Shaila Shareef
Joint Venture Customers
Evolution
Dhanmondi R/A



Journalist stabbed in Narail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Somoy TV's Narail district correspondent Syed Sajibur Rahman Sajib was stabbed by unidentified assailants Monday night.

The incident took place on the Sheikh Russell Bridge when Sajib was returning to Narail on his motorcycle around 11:30pm, said Narail Sadar Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Md Sajedul Islam.

The attackers stabbed his abdomen, legs, and hands and then fled, he added.

Locals and police took him to Narail Sadar Hospital, he added.

According to Narail Sadar Hospital's emergency department, Sajib's condition is critical as his abdominal injuries are severe. He was later transferred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

While speaking briefly before his transfer, Sajib said, "I was on my way to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



As the sun sets on the last day of the year, a young boy finds joy in the simple act of flying a kite at Cox's Bazar sea beach. With boats gently swaying in the background and a clear sky above, this moment embodies hope and the promise of new beginnings. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Murals of Mujib, 4 leaders demolished in Tangail park



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The murals of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and four national leaders were demolished on Monday night at Tangail Municipal Park (Shahid Srity Pouro Udyan).

A group of unidentified individuals reportedly entered the park with an excavator around 10:00pm and destroyed the murals. The murals had previously suffered partial damage during the anti-discrimination student movement on August 5.

The park falls under the jurisdiction of Tangail municipality, but the murals were constructed a few years ago under the direction of the late Fazlur Rahman Faruk, then chairman of the Tangail Zila Parishad and president of the district Awami League.

Tangail Municipal Administrator Md Shihab Raihan said the demolition was not carried out by the municipal authorities. Tangail Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Tanvir Ahmed said police were unaware of the incident.

PADMA, GANGES

Combined water measurement begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Bangladesh and India are set to start measuring the water level in the Padma and Ganges rivers today as per the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty 1996.

A two-member Indian team comprising of India's Central Water Commission Executive Engineer Muttath Leo Franklin and Assistant Director Ritesh Kumar will begin measurement of the water in the 3,500 feet upstream of Harding Bridge point of the Padma.

A two-member team of Bangladesh led by Pabna Hydrology Executive Engineer Md Rezaul Karim will start the water measurement at the Farakka point in India.

Md Jahedul Islam, acting executive engineer of the regional hydrology department in Pabna, said, "Starting from tomorrow [today], both teams will continue monitoring of the water level until May 31."

"We have already given letters to the Pabna superintendent of police office and the Kushiya superintendent of police office for taking necessary security measures ahead of the joint monitoring work," he said.

HABIGANJ'S MADHABPUR UPAZILA Health centres grapple with staff shortage

40,000 people deprived of services

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The Health and Family Welfare Centre in Chaumuhani Union under Madhabpur Upazila, Habiganj, has been facing a severe manpower shortage, making it unable to provide adequate health services to around 40,000 residents.

At present, the centre operates with only one family welfare inspector, Roksana Akhter, who struggles to manage the overwhelming number of patients.

"A lot of patients come here daily, but I cannot provide services to all of them alone. On days when a patient comes for child delivery, I hardly manage to speak to another patient. I need at least one more person to assist me in child delivery," said Roksana Akhter.

This problem is not unique to Chaumuhani. Across Habiganj district, there are 52 Union Health and Family Welfare Centres, most of which are running with only one or two staff members, despite government rules stating that each centre should have at least 10 personnel.

These centres play a crucial role in promoting normal childbirth, an important alternative to the rising number of C-section deliveries encouraged by private clinics.

In 2022, the health centres collectively performed 8,737 normal deliveries, which increased slightly to 8,816 in 2023. However, this year's total

so far, 2,161, reflects the limitations imposed by inadequate staffing. Officials believe the numbers could be significantly higher if the centres were properly staffed.

Ali Hossain, a resident of Chaumuhani, said, "We are getting free medical services here. However, due to the shortage of manpower, services are not always available. There is no doctor here. There is only a female health inspector in charge of the centre. How much can she do all alone? Also, most of the time there is no medicine in the centre."

Similar issues are evident in other unions like Pail and Lukra. Nurjahan Begum, a family welfare inspector at Pail, said emphasized the difficulty of handling delivery patients without additional staff, while Monihar Begum, a patient in Lukra, reported being unable to receive necessary calcium supplements.

Sirajul Islam, deputy director (acting) of the District Family Planning Office in Habiganj, said, "We are trying to provide services with the limited manpower we have. However, it is true that more manpower is essential to improve our service quality."

"A circular was issued recently, but due to the current political situation, the recruitment process has been suspended. As a result, the recruitment of new manpower got stalled for the time being. The ministry must take prompt initiatives to recruit more staffers to mitigate the crises," he added.



New law to be formulated to protect trees

Says Rizwana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan



Announced that a new law is being formulated to protect trees, which will include special provisions against using nails on trees for advertisements. Stressing the need for public cooperation to stop this harmful practice, she said once the law is enacted, violators will face penalties.

She made the remarks while inaugurating a tree protection campaign by removing nails from trees on the road adjacent to the south gate of Abahani field in the capital. She said driving nails into trees disrupts their growth, ultimately leading to their death. Such actions harm the environment.

Rizwana also attended a workshop for executive magistrates involved in mobile court operations. She directed them to take strict measures against those responsible for air pollution.

FROM BANDARBAN TO BGB

Nukhingsai's journey of courage

Marma youth tops among 46 female recruits; passing out parade held



MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN, from Satkania, Chattogram

Since childhood, Nukhingsai Marma had admired the actions of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and dreamed of one day joining their ranks. That dream became a reality yesterday as she stood among the recruits at the BGB Training Centre and College in Satkania, Chattogram.

Nukhingsai, a young woman from Bandarban, secured the top position among 46 female recruits and ranked high among 695 recruits overall.

The youngest of three siblings from a farming family, Nukhingsai, 20, reflected on her challenging journey. Growing up in the hilly areas of Bandarban, education was an uphill battle, with schools miles away and resources scarce.

"My parents worked tirelessly to support my education, and their sacrifices, along with the encouragement of my extended family, motivated me to pursue my dream. Now, I want to protect the land of my country," she said.

The passing out parade was attended by Lt Gen (Retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, adviser to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

He urged the recruits to dedicate their lives to the nation's security.

He emphasised their critical role in safeguarding Bangladesh's 4,427 km-long border and ensuring the safety and security of its people.

The event also saw the presence of BGB Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddique, Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam, and other senior officials.

The recruits, who completed 23 weeks of training, officially began their journey with the oath-taking and parade. Among them, Nayem Mondol was recognised as the top performer in training, embodying the spirit of dedication and excellence.

During the event, the home adviser addressed concerns about ongoing border challenges. Regarding the Myanmar border, he assured that the area is under full control despite tensions arising from the conflict between the Arakan Army and Myanmar's military.

On the recent abduction in Teknaf, he said law enforcement agencies are actively working to rescue the victims.



GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
BANGLADESH TELEVISION
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
RAMPURA, DHAKA-1219.
www.btv.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contact Support desk Contact numbers.

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Office of the Senior Engineer (Tx & Optical), BTV:

Tender ID No. / Package No.	Name of Goods	Tender/ Proposal Publication Date and Time	Last date & Time for Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing date & Time
1	2	3	4	5
Tender/Proposal ID : 1055837 Invitation Reference No. : BTV/REV/24/25/EN/GHQ/OTM ICT/News Camera	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of News Camera, Memory Card & Adapter and allied equipment for BTV Dhaka Station on Turnkey Basis.	31-Dec-2024 21:00	13-Feb-2025 14:00	13-Feb-2025 15:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded from e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursue. e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list, accepted Tenders will be opened online immediately as stated in above list.

(Md Zillur Rashid)
Senior Engineer (Tx & Optical), BTV
Procuring Entity: Office of the Senior Engineer (Tx & Optical), BTV
Phone : +8802 55131985
e-mail: md.zillurrashid@yahoo.com

GD- 12

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC)
BARC Complex, Farmgate
Dhaka - 1215, Bangladesh

Vacancy Announcement

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) is inviting application for the position of **Project Program Officer** [to be recruited from the citizens of Bangladesh]:

Details of appointment notice, qualification and experience, terms and conditions, salaries/allowances, facilities and benefits, etc. shall be available at the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), BARC Complex, Farmgate, Dhaka - 1215, Bangladesh and in website: <http://www.sac.org.bd>.

Application with prescribed form and may attached with passport size photo, photocopies of all certificates and other documents (education, experiences, trainings, NID, etc.) should be submitted to Director, SAARC Agriculture Centre, BARC Complex, Farmgate, Dhaka - 1215 within **12 January 2025**.

Canvassing of any form will disqualify the candidate.

All rights reserved by the authority.

Director, SAC

GD-7

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বিভাগীয় পার্সোনেল অফিসার এর কার্যালয়
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, চট্টগ্রাম

তারিখঃ ২৮.১২.২০২৪

নং-৫৪.০১.১৫০০.২৫২.১৫.১৪৯.২৩

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ডিএসটিই/চট্টগ্রাম এর অধীনস্থ কর্মচারী জনাবা শামীমা হক রুমী স্টেটো-টাইপিষ্ট গত ০৬.০৮.২০১৮ তারিখ হতে কর্মস্থলে বিনা অননুমোদিতভাবে অনুপস্থিত আছেন। উক্ত কর্মচারী এক নাগারে ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছর এর অধিক সময় কর্তব্য কাজে অননুমোদিতভাবে অনুপস্থিত থাকায় চাকরী বিধিমালা (১ম খন্ড) এর বিধি-৩৪ এর বিধান এবং রেলওয়ে সংস্থাপন কোড ভলিউমের ধারা ২০১৪ (এফআর-১৮) এর বিধান মোতাবেক তার চাকরী অবসান করা হলো।

এ আদেশ ডিএসটিই/চট্টগ্রাম এর সম্মতি এবং ডিআরএম/চট্টগ্রাম এর অনুমোদনক্রমে জারী করা হলো।

এস(২৪)(২৮২)
৯৯৮-১০

মোঃ আমির হোসেন
বিভাগীয় পার্সোনেল অফিসার (অ.সা.)
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, চট্টগ্রাম

জরুরি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জ্বলাই-আগস্ট গণঅভ্যুত্থানকে উপলব্ধি করে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কেন্দ্রীয় ছাত্র সংসদ (জাকসু) ভবনের দ্বিতীয় তলার একটি কক্ষে 'জ্বলাই আন্দোলন স্মৃতি সগ্রহশালা' প্রতিষ্ঠার সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়া হয়েছে।

বেশমত্যাগীরাণী ছাত্র আন্দোলন ও গণঅভ্যুত্থানে শহিদ এবং আহতদের স্মৃতি রক্ষার্থে তাঁদের প্রতিষ্ঠিত, শক্তি, জ্ঞান, জামা-কাপড়, চশমা, বই-বাতা-কলম, ব্যাগ, পরিচয়পত্র, মানিওয়াল, মোবাইল সেট, লেখা ও ভাইরাসহ ব্যক্তিগত ব্যবহৃত জিনিসপত্র এই সগ্রহশালায় স্থান পাবে।

জ্বলাই আন্দোলনে শহিদ ও আহতদের নাম, ঠিকানা ও বিস্তারিত তথ্যসহ তাঁদের ব্যবহৃত জিনিসপত্র আগামী ০৭ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় চারুকলা অধ্যয়নের ডিন অফিসে জমা দেওয়ার জন্য সফটিক স্কপের প্রতি আহ্বান জানানো হচ্ছে।

(অধ্যাপক ড. আজহারুল ইসলাম শেখ)
ডিন
চারুকলা অধ্যয়ন
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
এবং
জ্বলাই আন্দোলন স্মৃতি সগ্রহশালা ফোকাল পয়েন্ট
মোবাইল: ০১৭৫০০৫০০২

GD- 10



Improving Financial Health of RMG Workers Policy Frameworks and Future Pathways

Swisscontact Bangladesh, in collaboration with the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, MetLife Foundation, and The Daily Star, organised a roundtable discussion titled, "Improving the Financial Health of RMG Workers in Bangladesh: Policy Frameworks and Future Pathways" on October 31, 2024. Here we publish a summary of the discussions.



Razik Fazle, Head of Programme, Swisscontact Bangladesh

The RMG sector has long been the backbone of our country's economy. Yet, despite its significance, the financial inclusion of 4.2 million workers within this industry—especially accessing appropriate, affordable and customized financial products has been a persistent struggle.

Over the past seven years, the Sarathi project has worked to promote the financial inclusion and well-being of RMG workers. Through our experience, we have learned that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work for this low-income segment. RMG workers have specific financial needs, from saving for emergencies to managing irregular income streams and accessing affordable credit. They also face unique barriers, such as limited financial literacy, lack of collateral, and the absence of a formal credit history. Addressing these challenges requires innovation, cross-sector collaboration, and a deep understanding of their lived experiences.

As the 'Sarathi - Improving Financial Health' project officially closes today, we want to use this roundtable as a platform to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders—our partners, financial institutions, regulators and experts—to continue the conversation on how we can design and offer financial products tailored to meet the unique needs of low-income RMG workers.

solutions to create alternative credit scoring models based on behavioural data can open access to nano-loans for workers without formal credit profiling. A successful example is Tanzania's MPawa platform, which provides mobile savings and micro-loans based on users' savings behaviours.

From a regulatory perspective, several actions could drive progress. Introducing a Credit Guarantee Scheme (CGS) to share credit risk between Bangladesh Bank and private banks would encourage more lending to lower-income groups. Allowing MFIs to engage in agent banking could reduce operational costs and increase outreach. Additionally, mandating banks to allocate part of their lending portfolio to nano-loans for low-income groups would also be a crucial step forward.



Md. Arfan Ali, Chairman, Zaytoon Business Solutions

There is a growing interest in ensuring financial security for RMG workers. However, studies show that 38 percent of RMG workers still believe that having a bank account is unnecessary.

One of the challenges is that our banking policies do not fully address the needs of marginalised populations, especially as private banks are primarily commercially oriented and not mandated to support these groups. Although the Central Bank has policies in place, enforcement remains limited. To promote financial inclusion, policy adjustments are needed. For example, all RMG



In terms of RMG workers, we need to find ways to engage owners to realise our vision of financial inclusion for them. We hope to see visible improvements on that front within 2 to 3 years.



Md. Forhad Mahmud, Head of Mobile Banking Division & Head of Financial Inclusion, Dutch Bangla Bank

We disburse the salaries of 2.5 million workers every month through Rocket. Recently, we have seen a notable improvement; the tendency of workers to withdraw their entire salary on the day of disbursement is decreasing day by day. A crucial aspect of our strategy to achieve this has been raising awareness of the various services offered by Rocket, such as cash transfers, bill payments, and mobile recharges.

In terms of affordability, while the market has grown, the commission structure for cash-out of mobile money has not kept pace. This needs to be improved to make financial inclusion more commercially viable for service providers and institutions. Simultaneously, customer charges and costs for banking and tailored products need to be reduced.



Mohammad Ziaul Hasan Molla, Deputy Managing Director, Bank Asia

Bank Asia, a leader in financial inclusion, has successfully extended real-time digital banking services to underserved communities through its agent banking model. It reaches last-mile customers, including RMG workers, via branches, agent points, micro merchant networks, and RMG digital banking booths, adapting its services to meet specific needs.

To further strengthen Bank Asia's financial inclusion efforts, additional support in areas such as technical assistance for product development, financial literacy tools for customer education, and ecosystem support for digital payments could greatly enhance impact and drive usage among low-income groups.

In addition, to promote financial inclusion in Bangladesh, partnerships between financial institutions and fintechs are essential to meet growing demands for personalised, digital financial services. Banks can leverage fintech advancements—like AI, blockchain, and big data analytics—to enhance customer satisfaction and streamline financial operations.



Mosleh Saad Mahmud, Head of Cash Management & Liability Marketing, Dhaka Bank

We collaborated with Sarathi to provide digital loans and nano-savings through MFS for RMG workers. One of the key obstacles we faced was that many workers did not have traditional banking accounts. This lack of access means they cannot save, build a credit score, or maintain banking data. Additionally, RMG workers often lack access to smartphones or other devices needed to utilise the tech solutions we aim to implement. Consequently, the approach needs to be simplified and accessible.

To address this, Bangladesh Bank introduced an e-KYC-based account opening process, which enabled us to open a substantial number of accounts directly from the field, totalling approximately 1.5 lakh accounts through an app without requiring any hard copy papers. While this progress is significant, other challenges persist. For instance, setting up ATMs operated by third parties could help reduce the cost for the banks and thus for the customers and increase the number of banking accounts.



Rumana A Tulee, AVP, Agent Banking Division, Bank Asia

We have identified four key factors for financial inclusion: accessibility, convenience, appropriate products, and literacy. Bank Asia currently serves 7 million customers, 64 percent of whom are women. Our Agent Banking has effectively addressed accessibility and convenience. For products, we have introduced low-ticket deposits starting from BDT 100, and we continue to develop tailored products to encourage usage. What we now require is a coordinated effort from

all fronts to comprehensively address all four factors.



Ahmed Shamsul Huda, National Business Manager (Rocket), Dutch Bangla Bank

We have successfully covered 50 percent of RMG workers through formal salary disbursement methods, and this progress will certainly continue. We are also simultaneously promoting financial literacy. I believe that we need more cross-industry collaboration, for example, with the telecom industry, to significantly enrich our database and help us with KYC-related challenges.

Meanwhile, regulatory bodies can establish specific guidelines to manage transaction costs and implement a ceiling to make it more consumer-friendly. Additionally, competition in the mobile payment services industry can drive consumer benefits under the significant market share policy.

In the context of Bangladesh, insurance remains largely a myth. The biggest hurdle is the mindset towards the concept of insurance.

We lack appropriate products, and there are significant operational inconveniences, compounded by regulatory challenges and trust issues. Nonetheless, there have been some wonderful initiatives since 2016, thanks to international organisations like Swisscontact, SNV Bangladesh, Brac, UNCDF and UNDP. These organisations have encouraged local insurers to think outside the box and move beyond the traditional perception of insurance. Now, the micro-insurance market is improving, and we are hopeful that we can reach a larger population through a commercially viable option. Regarding the RMG sector, we need to tailor our products to meet the needs of the population and align with those needs, and this is something we are willing to work on.



Parveen S Huda, Managing Director, Consulting & Research Gateway

The ground reality of financial inclusion for women is that they often do not have rights over their own income. We cannot include more marginalised women in financial inclusion without the social development of their rights and capacity development for managing their money. Tailoring products to address structural barriers—such as restricted mobility and limited financial literacy—can help enhance women's access to necessary financial services.

Recognising cultural norms, like women's privacy needs in mobile money services, is also crucial. By integrating features that ensure security and protect transaction alerts, financial products can empower women to retain control over their finances, reducing the risk of unauthorised access. To create lasting financial inclusion, however, we should not merely expand financial access for marginalised women without broader social development efforts.



Shariful Islam Chowdhury, Project Officer, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)

UNCDF has a strategic performance and policy tool—the Inclusive Digital Economy Scorecard (IDES), which provides a comprehensive tool to assess a country's digital economy. It evaluates four key building blocks: policy and regulation, infrastructure, innovation, and skills. According to the IDES, Bangladesh scored 82 out of 100, which indicates strong policy frameworks in place. However, the innovation and skills scores are 44 and 56 out of 100, respectively, which still have considerable opportunities for growth.

It is important to note that financial inclusion goes beyond just providing access to accounts. The initial step of opening an account is crucial, but achieving true financial inclusion is a more complex, long-term behavioural journey. We need to focus on innovation that reaches last-mile people through an assistive model and promotes behavioural change.



Tahmina Khan Majlish, CEO, Digital Finance Forum Bangladesh

For financial inclusion to be truly effective, it is crucial to approach the issue from the perspective of end users. Individuals must feel secure, confident, and empowered to engage with formal financial institutions. This can be achieved by simplifying services and providing them in local languages, as fostering awareness is key to building trust within diverse communities.

Additionally, considerations of cost, convenience, and accessibility (in terms of proximity and time) play a vital role in enhancing user engagement. A balanced approach that combines both bottom-up and top-down strategies is essential to address these needs comprehensively.

Financial institutions can play a key role in empowering users to manage their sensitive financial information independently, minimizing their reliance on intermediaries.

Additionally, services should prioritize data privacy by implementing measures such as password-protected SMS notifications. This combination of empowerment and security is crucial to building lasting confidence in financial systems. Telecom companies should also collaborate with us to enable users to manage sensitive financial information independently, without reliance on others. Furthermore, services should be password-protected to safeguard data privacy.



Tasmina Rahman, Managing Director, Grameen Trust

Grameen Trust, through its collaboration with local organisations across 44 countries, has been successfully implementing microcredit programs following the Grameen Bank's model. One of their key initiatives, the New Entrepreneur Program, equip rural unemployed youth with the right resources to start and run a sustainable business.

We found that designing financial products tailored to the specific needs of the target segment is critical for ensuring that financial services are accessible and relevant. Moreover, strong collaboration between banks and MFIs is also essential. Such partnerships can ensure that financial products reach the most underserved communities and help marginalised youth, particularly women, to access financial products and services.



Tanjim Ferdous, In-charge, NGOs and Foreign Missions, The Daily Star

Despite advancements, poor financial and digital literacy among RMG workers, combined with limited smartphone ownership and internet access, impedes the use of financial products. One of the core challenges stems from the informal nature of employment within the sector. The absence of formal contracts limits access to banking services, making it difficult for workers to secure loans or understand financial products.

To overcome these challenges, a shift in mindset is necessary among all stakeholders. Moreover, it's essential to convey to the RMG workers that formal banks offer a secure option for savings, particularly in terms of the time value of money. Additionally, addressing cultural and religious misconceptions about banking—such as concerns regarding interest rates for loan products—is vital for increasing trust and participation in the financial system. The path to resilience for Bangladesh's RMG workers is paved with policies that are inclusive and centred on their needs—ensuring they not only gain access to financial tools but also feel confident and secure in using them.



Md. Sajib Hossain, Senior Assistant Secretary, BKMEA

BKMEA has a strong, positive stance on the financial inclusion of RMG workers. We not only care for our business interests but also prioritise our workers' well-being. To this end, we established our social compliance cell in 2009, funded by GIZ. We hope to continue similar projects that cater to the financial inclusion of our workers and other aspects of inclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Offer SMS-based lessons at factories to teach workers about financial products e.g. mobile money, loans, savings and insurance.
- Require factories to pay wages through mobile banking or bank accounts to help workers save and manage money better.
- Set up a group from the government, factories, banks and NGOs to focus on financial inclusion for RMG workers and ensure solutions are put in place.
- Encourage banks to work with MFIs and NGOs (through agent banking) to reduce operational costs and create easy-access financial products tailored for RMG workers.
- Introduce a Credit Guarantee Scheme (CGS) where Bangladesh Bank and private banks share credit risks, making loans more accessible for

- workers.
- Promote automatic savings, where a small part of workers' earnings can automatically go into savings, helping them save consistently.
- Pair health insurance with savings plans to provide a financial safety net for workers.
- Utilize behavioural data from fintech tools to assess credit scores, making it easier for workers to access loans.
- Encourage factories to support financial institutions to offer emergency funds, payroll advances and savings plans to help workers improve their financial resilience.
- Identify and work on social barriers and cultural norms that discourage female workers from using financial services and promote inclusive financial products.

I would like to extend our gratitude to our partners and supporters, especially those of you who are here today and share your commitment with us. In the past years, your support has been invaluable, and I firmly believe that together, we can shape a future where RMG workers can easily access the financial products and services they need to achieve greater financial security and resilience.



Sajid Amit, Director - Center for Enterprise and Society, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

Over half of our RMG sector workers—54 percent—are already using digital wage payments. Digital financial services like bKash and Rocket have made it easier for workers to receive wages, remit money, and pay bills, offering greater convenience and security while reducing their reliance on cash and the associated risks. Banks such as Bank Asia, Dhaka Bank, Dutch Bangla Bank, and City Bank are also advancing by providing access to digital wallets, mobile banking apps and ATM networks. Despite these advancements, several significant challenges remain.

On the demand side, many RMG workers face obstacles in accessing formal financial services. One of the main barriers is the mismatch in timing between factory and banking hours, which prevents workers from accessing the services they need. On the supply side, the costs associated with infrastructure, staffing, compliance, and marketing can be prohibitively high when serving lower-income groups, which often leads to the neglect of tailored services for RMG workers. Banks, focused on efficiency and larger clients, struggle to apply traditional credit scoring methods to RMG workers, many of whom lack formal credit histories or collateral.

To bridge these gaps, several strategies can be implemented. Financial literacy interventions can improve understanding of financial products. Offering health coverage alongside a savings plan could provide a critical safety net for workers. Encouraging RMG factories to provide written contracts and pay slips would stabilize income and increase workers' access to financial services. Moreover, collaboration with microfinance institutions (MFIs) and NGOs to create accessible, low-cost savings accounts could improve savings and financial stability for RMG workers. Insurance providers also have a role to play by partnering with MFIs to integrate insurance into savings products specifically for the RMG sector.

For private banks, leveraging fintech

employers should ensure that their workers have bank accounts, especially with the banks from which the employers take loans, to facilitate easy disbursement of salaries.

To make this viable for banks, we need to introduce commercial incentives for them through technology and sustainable business models. Partnerships between fintech companies, banks, and MFIs could play a significant role, with the Central Bank establishing appropriate pricing regulations.

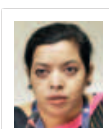


Mohammed Rashed, President, Digital Finance Forum Bangladesh

The Payment Settlement Systems Act was enacted in July 2024 and is set to strengthen digital payment regulations and governance, streamline the approval and piloting processes for fintech solutions, and provide for alternative credit scoring and private credit bureaus.

We know financial inclusion means offering more affordable financial solutions, particularly by addressing bank's high transaction costs. This is why legal provisions for alternative credit scoring are crucial; without a proper legal framework, a market for these solutions cannot fully develop. The new law permits data sharing across financial service providers and other data points for offering financial products.

Now, stakeholder engagement, collaboration and capacity building are crucial for fostering a healthy digital finance ecosystem. To achieve this, the Digital Finance Forum Bangladesh is actively partnering with both the public and private sectors.



Shoheli Afrin, Additional Director, Bangladesh Bank

Bangladesh Bank has made strides in content creation to promote educational material for financial inclusion. So far, we have produced six videos containing information on school banking, remittances, women entrepreneurs, SMEs, and other related topics. The content is easily accessible to reach the target group. However, there are some barriers to overcome, including issues related to digital security, which require attention from consumers as well.

Media has also played a role in raising awareness. For example, Bangladesh Bank has been awarded the "Global Youth Award" for financial inclusion after competing with 84 other central banks across the world. Success stories like these need to be highlighted by the media to build trust.

EMBRACING 2025

What to look forward to?

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

While 2024's July Revolution shook the showbiz industry, it still fights on in a battle of existence. What can we expect from various sectors of Entertainment in 2025? Let's have a look.

battle for control over immense wealth, involving mafia bosses, politicians, and businessmen. Featuring an impressive cast including Puja Chery, Rubel, Intekhab Dinar,

transformation. The series will also see celebrated Indian actor Saswata

unaware of the others. The series is currently listed in the 'coming soon' section on Hoichoi.

Music 2024 was a crucial year for musicians. More than the releases

Theater and Exhibitions
2024 has been a turbulent year for Bangladesh's theatre scene, marked by political unrest, cancelled plays, and leadership changes. The July uprising led to the resignation of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's longest serving Director General, Liaquat Ali Lucky, with Dr Syed Jamil Ahmed stepping in. As the year closes, the Academy, central to the country's cultural fabric, is preparing for a new phase of growth, initiating reforms to address long-standing challenges.

A new committee is working to ensure the Academy's regulations align with its mission as an autonomous institution for arts practice and research. Plans also include the establishment of a "Conservatory Cell" to nurture emerging talent and support indigenous communities.

Looking ahead, Shilpakala Academy has over 60 cultural events planned for January alone and countless others all throughout the new year around the country. Leading theatre groups such as Prachyanat, Swapnadal, and Aranyak Natyadal are preparing for an exciting year. Prachyanat's popular productions like *Achalayatan* and



The cast of 'Ghumpori'.

A major highlight for the year is the return of Allen Swapan, with director Shihab Shaheen and actor Nasir Uddin Khan teaming up once again. OTT is looking to register its strongest yet, with a newfound freedom of speech.

2025 seems to be the year for action packed cinemas. After a short hiatus, Afran Nisho will star in and as *Dagi* in Shihab Shaheen's redemption-themed film, sparking excitement among fans eager to see him reunite with Tama Mirza on-screen. Another highly anticipated project is Raihan Rafi's *Lion*, featuring Kolkata's superstar Jeet alongside Bangladesh's Sariful Razz. The film will mostly be shot in jungles and sea.

Other films like *Kobi*, *Chokkor 302*, *Jongli* and *Esha Murder* were supposed to be released in 2024, but they were mostly halted due to some technical issues. However, this year we might witness all this film coming together in theaters.

An Eid without Shakib Khan's film is unimaginable, and thus, we can look forward to two movies this year. Mehedi Hassan Hridoy's *Borbaad* is scheduled to be released on Eid-ul-Fitr. Raihan Rafi and Shakib Khan will be coming together once again for the high-octane film *Tandob*. It is set to be released on Eid-ul-Azha.

Salahuddin Lavlu, Pavel, Mukit Zakaria and Sumon Anwar, the film promises intense drama and action.

Another project to look out for is Vicky Zahed's *Ondhokarer Gaan*, starring Abul Hayat, Mosharraf Karim, Zakia Bari Mamo, and Shahnaz Sumi. The narrative revolves around Mosharraf Karim's character.

Chorki has unveiled an exciting lineup of content for audiences to anticipate. Leading the charge is the original series *Feu*, inspired by true events. The gripping storyline centers around a harrowing incident where four to five thousand people were killed within three days. Directed by Sukorno Shahed Dhiman, the series features a stellar cast including Chanchal Chowdhury, Tariq Anam Khan, and Mostafizur Noor Imran in key roles, alongside Tanvir Apurbo, Hossain Jibon, Tahmina Othoi, and local artistes from Khulna.

Another notable project is the web-film *Jaha Bolibo Mittha Bolibo*, which draws from real-life crossfire incidents. This film marks the return of acclaimed actor Zahid Hasan to Chorki, under the direction of Raihan Rafi.

Chatterjee making his debut as the lead in a Bangladeshi web project.

Audiences can soon witness a unique love story unfold on Chorki. Directed by Zahid Pritom, the film stars fan favorites Tanjin Tisha, Pritom Hasan, and Parsha Mahjabeen. The web film is titled *Ghumpori*.

Several more films from *Ministry of Love* are expected to release in 2025. Chorki has announced that content

themselves, the bravery of the musical fraternity in forming *Get Up, Stand Up* to rise against the authoritarian government was the highlight of the year. However, rising political uncertainty has led to the diminishing number of shows being hosted countrywide. January 2025



Hill Film Festival



Feu



Intersheep 2



Snippet from a play by 'Swapnadal'



A snippet from 'Khowabnama'.

OTT Raihan Rafi's *Black Money* is set to premiere on Bongo on January 2. The series explores the fierce and dangerous

Syed Ahmed Shawki joins forces with Chorki for the first time with his political thriller web series *Gulmohar*, exploring themes of power, politics, and

based on the July-August movements will also be produced.

A major highlight for the year is the return of *Allen Swapan*, with director Shihab Shaheen and actor Nasir Uddin Khan teaming up once again. Additionally, the hit series *Intersheep* will return for a second season. Directed by Rezaur Rahman, the new season promises to bring even more fresh comedic moments.

New content will start streaming on Chorki from the night of January 1. The platform's first release of 2025 will be *Antora*, the third episode of the Chorki original series *Dui Shaw*, directed by Nuhsh Humayun.

Meanwhile, under the direction of Amitabh Reza Chowdhury, *Bohemian Ghora* tells the story of Abbas, a truck driver played by Mosharraf Karim, who secretly maintains seven wives across seven districts. Each wife remains

will start with Bappa Mazumder's mellifluous voice, as he performs at the Yamaha Flagship center on the 3rd. Pakistani artiste Kaavish and Indian playback sensation Sunidhi Chauhan will perform in Dhaka on January 10 and 11, in an event called *Dhaka Dreams*. Bangladeshi acts Arnob, Armeen Musa and Level Five will also be a part of the concert. We also look forward to previously shadow-banned artistes, including the likes of Asif Akbar, Ethun Babu and Baby Naznin to integrate once again into the industry and give us new tracks. Rap music has been on the forefront of the July revolution, so we are sure to see more defiant hits from the likes of Shezan and Hannan. On the band music front, we are soon to get a new EP from Ershad Zaman's band, EZ. The former Artcell lead guitarist has confirmed the news to The Daily Star himself.

Kinu Kaharer Thetar will be staged nationwide. Swapnadal will also host the *Natyacharya Selim Al Deen Smaran Utsab 2025* festival to commemorate the 17th death anniversary of theatre legend Selim Al Deen. Swapnadal will also continue staging *Chitrangada*, *Helen Keller*, and *Macbeth* in the coming year with special arrangements on Hiroshima Day and International Women's Day.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka phase of the Hill Film Festival will run from January 2-5 at Shala: Neighbourhood Art Space and Drik, celebrating diverse cinematic voices, particularly Indigenous languages. The Alliance Française de Dhaka will present *Aubak Jolpan*, a puppet show by Jolputal Puppets, on January 7. Additionally, Edge Gallery and EMK Centre will host exhibitions showcasing the vibrant culture and creativity of Bangladesh.

'Squid Game 2' tops Netflix charts worldwide



Squid Game was expected to be a massive hit when it returned for Season 2, considering Season 1 was by far the most-watched Netflix series. However, it has created another massive record.

According to Forbes, while exact viewership numbers are yet to be determined, *Squid Game* Season 2 has made history as the first series to debut at #1 in all 93 Netflix regions, including the US, India, and Thailand, drawing unprecedented global attention in its own pace.

Squid Game Season 1 amassed 265.2 million views on Netflix, translating to approximately 2.2 billion hours watched. It holds the top spot on Netflix's list of the most popular shows, not only among non-English series but across the entire platform.

However, despite topping Netflix, *Squid Game* Season 2 has a lower audience score on Rotten Tomatoes, dropping to 65% compared to Season 1's 83%.

NO ROOM FOR EGO

Swastika on embracing new roles

"To grow as an actress, one must leave the city, set aside their ego, and be willing to go anywhere," said Swastika Mukherjee, whose 24-year career has seen her seamlessly transition between Tollywood and Bollywood, excelling across films and web series alike.

Swastika Mukherjee recently shared a heartfelt post alongside a collection of photos. She reflected, "Despite a 24-year-long career, I still attend auditions. I am thankful for my curious and eager nature. I continue to explore new roles in a different city, seeking opportunities to enrich my life."

Swastika is known as one of Tollywood's most outspoken actresses, a reputation shaped by critics. To her admirers, she is a powerhouse of talent, passionate about quality cinema and seeking compelling roles across the industry, regardless of geography.

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie settle divorce after eight years



Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt have finalised their divorce, reported Jolie's lawyer James Simon last Monday.

Marking the conclusion of one of Hollywood's most prolonged and controversial divorce battles, Simon

confirmed to The Associated Press that the duo reached an agreement.

Simon stated that Jolie filed for divorce from Pitt over eight years ago, and since then, she and the children have left the properties, with Jolie focusing on bringing peace and healing to their family.

Although their divorce settlement is final, the former couple are still in a legal battle over the Chateau Miraval vineyard, with Pitt alleging that Jolie sold her share to the Stoli Group without his approval.

Jolie filed for divorce in September 2016, two years after marrying Pitt following a decade of togetherness.

NEW YEAR'S
SPEECHRussia
will 'move
forward' in
2025: Putin

REUTERS, Moscow

President Vladimir Putin told Russians in a New Year address that the country would move forward with confidence in 2025.

He said that Russia had strengthened its unity in the first quarter of the 21st century, achieving significant goals and overcoming trials.

"And now, on the threshold of the new year, we are thinking about the future. We are confident that everything will be fine, we will only move forward. We know for sure that the absolute value for us was, is and will be the fate of Russia, the well-being of its citizens," he said.

'No one
can stop'
unification
with Taiwan
Says China's Xi

AFP, Beijing

China's President Xi Jinping said yesterday that "no one can stop" unification with Taiwan, as he addressed the nation in a New Year's speech.

Beijing claims the self-ruled island as part of its territory, and has said it will not renounce the use of force to bring it under its control.

China has intensified pressure on the democratic island in recent years, and has staged three rounds of major military drills since President Lai Ching-te came to power in May.

"Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait are one family. No one can sever our blood ties, and no one can stop the historical trend of the reunification of the motherland," Xi said in a speech broadcast on state media.



Displaced Palestinians try to keep themselves warm under the rubble of a building near a makeshift camp during a storm in Gaza City yesterday, amid the ongoing Israeli strikes on the Palestinian enclave.

PHOTO: AFP

Gaza hospitals have
become 'death trap'

Warns UN rights chief, says Israel's claims of armed groups using hospitals 'vague'

AFP, Geneva

UN rights chief Volker Turk said yesterday that hospitals in the Gaza Strip had become a "death trap", insisting that such facilities must instead be protected during conflict.

"As if the relentless bombing and the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza were not enough, the one sanctuary where Palestinians should have felt safe in fact became a death trap. The protection of hospitals during warfare is paramount and must be respected by all sides, at all times," the UN high commissioner for human rights said.

The UN human rights office report published yesterday found that Israeli strikes on and near hospitals in the Gaza Strip had left healthcare in the Palestinian territory on the "brink of collapse".

It said such strikes raised grave concerns about Israel's compliance with international law. Its 23-page report, entitled "Attacks on hospitals during the escalation of hostilities in Gaza", looked at the period from October 7, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

It said that during this time, there were at least 136 strikes on 27 hospitals and 12 other medical facilities, claiming significant casualties among doctors, nurses, medics and other civilians and causing significant damage to, if not the complete destruction

- Healthcare on 'brink of total collapse': UN
- There were 136 strikes on 27 hospitals since Oct 7, 2023: report
- Death toll in Gaza rises to 45,541

of, civilian infrastructure.

The report also found that Israel's repeated claims that Gaza hospitals were being improperly used for military purposes by Palestinian groups "vague".

"Insufficient information has so far been made publicly available to substantiate these allegations, which have remained vague and broad, and in some cases appear contradicted by publicly available information," it said.

Israel's military campaign has killed more than 45,541 people in Gaza, a majority of them civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry that the UN considers reliable.

The report concluded with a call for credible investigations into the incidents detailed, and said they had to be independent given the "limitations" of Israel's justice system in respect of the conduct of its armed forces.

'New resistance'
against Israel to
emerge in Syria
Says Iran security chief

AFP, Tehran

Iran's security chief Ali Akbar Ahmadian said a new group would emerge in Syria to fight Israel following the fall of president Bashar al-Assad, state media reported.

"With the occupation of Syrian territories by the Zionist regime, a new resistance has been born that will manifest itself in the years to come," said Ahmadian, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, IRNA news agency reported late Monday.

In a meeting with Oman's foreign minister, Ahmadian insisted that Iran's anti-Israel axis of resistance was "not weakened" after the December 8 fall of Assad, a longtime Tehran ally.

Ahmadian maintained that Iran has "not changed" its nuclear doctrine against pursuing atomic weapons, IRNA reported. Assad fled Syria after rebel forces led by the Sunni Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) seized the capital Damascus after a lightning offensive.

Since his fall, Israel has carried out hundreds of air strikes on Syrian military facilities since Assad's fall, saying it aimed to prevent them from falling into hostile hands.

Israeli troops also occupied strategic positions in a UN-patrolled buffer zone between Syria and the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights which it seized in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

New textbooks

FROM PAGE 2

had made the declaration.

Former NCTB officials said that when AL was in power from 1996-2001, the textbooks stated Sheikh Mujib made the declaration of independence and Ziaur Rahman read out the announcement. On the other hand, when the BNP was in power from 2001-2006, it was stated that Ziaur had made the declaration.

They, however, could not recall what was written in the textbooks before 1996.

Whether the change will spark new debates considering the difference of beliefs, Reazul said, "Of course not... This isn't a matter related to Awami League or BNP. This is a national issue. We want to give due recognition to individuals like Maulana Bhashani and Tajuddin Ahmed, who also played significant roles in the Liberation War."

"We're trying to make sure that focusing on factual representation remains consistent."

The former NCTB officials also pointed out that though the authorities in power kept changing the name of who declared independence, the constitution, in which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is mentioned as the "Father of the Nation", included the telegram of the Declaration of Independence of Bangladesh made by Bangabandhu on March 26, 1971, in the sixth schedule.

The constitution also included the Proclamation of Independence of the Mujibnagar Government on April 10, 1971, in the seventh schedule.

It says, "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of 75 million of people of Bangladesh, in due fulfilment of the legitimate right of self-determination of the people of Bangladesh, duly made a declaration of independence at Dacca on March 26, 1971, and urged the people of Bangladesh to defend the honour and integrity of Bangladesh..."

NCTB Chair Reazul said the telegram was introduced in the constitution through an amendment. "The documents of the Liberation War, the then Indian leaders, and the first post-independence documentary prepared by the then information ministry show evidence in favour of Ziaur Rahman making the declaration."

In this regard, Rakkhal Raha said, "The constitution can be amended through a two-third majority. You can do anything if you have that kind of [backing by] a majority. Any immoral act can't be justified by the constitution. The truth is above the constitution."

It is to be noted that among the changes in the textbooks, the NCTB has also removed the title "Father of the Nation" with regard to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Bangladesh thriving in meat

FROM PAGE 16

In the analysis, it was seen that the number of cow, buffalo, sheep and goat maintained a steady growth in the last decade.

The demand for meat was 76.21 lakh metric tonnes while the production was 92.25 lakh metric tonnes.

Yet, Bangladesh has a long way to go in achieving self-sufficiency in milk production.

In 2023-24, the demand for milk was 158.78 lakh metric tonnes, while the country produced 150.44 lakh metric tonnes.

Bangladesh has achieved visible success in agriculture despite being one of the most densely populated countries with limited

11 injured

FROM PAGE 16

Madrassa Ghat area, where a heated altercation broke out between the students and the passengers of the other bus. A clash ensued, resulting in the injuries of 11 people.

Students alleged that the attackers were aided by some locals. Although a police station was nearby, law enforcers did not intervene, they claimed.

Shafiqul Islam, the officer-in-charge of

land, said Mohammad Jahangir Alam, a professor of agribusiness and marketing at Bangladesh Agricultural University.

"Notable achievements include tremendous growth in fish and meat production."

While Bangladesh was heavily reliant on food imports post-independence in 1971, the dependency has significantly decreased.

"For instance, with a population of about 20 crore, reliance on local chicken varieties would have made poultry unaffordable for many. The country's success in broiler chicken production has ensured accessibility."

Alam attributed the progress to farm-friendly

policies introduced after 1990.

"Farm-friendly policies have not only boosted fish and broiler chicken production but also created jobs and addressed protein deficiencies," said Farida Akhter, adviser to the ministry of fisheries and livestock.

At present, fisheries account for 2.43 percent of GDP and livestock 1.80 percent.

Akhter identified institutional and tax-related barriers hindering production since taking her role as an adviser to the government.

"We are working on removing these barriers. If addressed effectively, production can increase further."

Mollahat Police Station, confirmed that 11 people, including eight students, were injured in the clash. The students left for Dhaka after receiving treatment in Mollahat.

Three other injured locals were treated at the Fakirhat upazila health complex, he added.

He said the bus convoy resumed its journey after police brought the situation under control.

Zahurul Tanvir, a

coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement in Khulna, said several students were injured in the incident.

"This attack was carried out by the collaborators of the ousted fascist government," he told journalists.

Minhajul Abedin Sompod, another coordinator of the students' platform, demanded the attackers be brought to book.

The year of BNP's

FROM PAGE 16

Overnight, the outside political victimisation that the party and its leaders were subjected to over the past 15 years went into thin air.

Within hours of Hasina's ouster, President Mohammed Shahabuddin commuted the prison terms of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and the TV channels, in defiance of a High Court order from 2015, started broadcasting the party's acting chairperson Tarique Rahman's speeches.

From August 5, the 57-year-old Tarique, the party's de facto leader since 2018, emerged as a leader in waiting, continually stressing religious harmony, national unity and calm.

In fact, he along with the party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir often comes across as one of the voices of reason in the new political landscape of charged rhetoric.

The party has also been acting as a ballast to the country's plunge into any sort of constitutional vacuum and political complications.

For instance, when the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, which initiated the quota protests, demanded the resignation of President Shahabuddin, the scrapping of the constitution and the proclamation of a second republic, the BNP vetoed the move and the other political parties joined in.

In the end, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus decided not to go along with the student leaders' demand.

Similarly, when the student leaders and their sister platform Jatiya Nagorik Committee insisted on banning the AL, the BNP tacitly expressed its reservations with the extreme step and prevailed.

Sensing the public pulse, the party relaunched its 31-point structural reform agenda, first presented in 2018.

The reform agenda includes limiting the tenure of any individual as prime minister to two consecutive terms to prevent the recurrence of authoritarian rule in Bangladesh and a bicameral parliamentary system for checks and balances of power between different parts of the government.

The party is now holding workshops countrywide on the 31-point reform agenda

for feedback from the grassroots level.

However, challenges remain for the BNP.

Despite warnings and disciplinary measures, the party has been unable to prevent its workers from thuggish activities like extortion and encroachment -- a big gripe with the previous AL regime of 15 years.

More than 1,000 party members have been expelled for their involvement in rent-seeking and illegal occupation of properties and businesses and more than 12 committees were dissolved after allegations against members proved true, according to the BNP.

Tarique, who has been living in London since 2008, has repeatedly urged the public to hand over to law enforcement agencies anyone seeking rent or engaging in unlawful activities using any BNP placeholder. Yet, there seems to be little correction in behaviour among the party workers.

Keeping party discipline intact will be crucial for the BNP to convincingly sell to the masses its vision of 'rules-based' society.

Its student wing Chhatra Dal has also failed to make any waves on the university campuses in the wake of the enormous vacancy created by the ban on Chhatra League.

Most importantly, the BNP's fight for a free and fair election has not ended either given the interim government's greater preference for reforms over polls.

Although Yunus has announced the election is likely to be held at the end of 2025 or in the first half of 2026, the BNP has demanded an election within four to six months, a timeframe the party deems adequate to carry out the reforms needed for free and fair polls.

So, it appears that the BNP will start 2025 in the same spirit that it kicked off 2024: continuing the fight to restore democracy in Bangladesh. But this year, the party has the clearest sight in 17 years at the goal.

"If a free and fair election were to be held, the BNP is the party best positioned to form the next government," said Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, retired professor of Jahangirnagar University's department of government and politics.

Uncertainty over Chinmoy's legal representation

FROM PAGE 16
It said lawyers from outside can still represent those accused in the Saiful murder case. The Bar also said no one filed any complaint over a threat, and action will be taken if such a complaint is filed.

Public Prosecutor Mafizul Haque Bhuiyan told The Daily Star yesterday that they will oppose Chinmoy's bail if a lawyer files a petition for him.

He said the court will then decide whether to grant Chinmoy legal aid.

Meanwhile, Chattogram Bar announced it would form a human chain on Wednesday demanding the arrest of the rest of the accused in Saiful murder case and the transfer of the case to a speedy trial tribunal.

Chinmoy alias Chandan Kumar Dhar, who is also the spokesperson for the Sammilita Sanatani Jagaran Jote, and 18 others were sued by a BNP leader on October 31 for allegedly disrespecting Bangladesh's national flag during a Hindu community rally in Chattogram's New Market area on October 25.

Police arrested him a month later, and the following day, he was produced before a Chattogram court that denied him bail and sent him to jail. At that time, his supporters burst into

protests and clashed with law enforcers and lawyers outside the court. Lawyer Saiful was beaten up and hacked to death during the violence.

According to court sources, lawyer Suvassish Sharma submitted a Vakalatnama for Chinmoy on November 26. A Vakalatnama is a document that authorises a lawyer to act on behalf of his/her client. Despite repeated attempts over several days, Suvassish could not be reached for confirmation if he would seek to represent Chinmoy again on January 2.

Since there was no lawyer to represent Chinmoy during the bail hearing on December 3, senior lawyer Rabindra Ghosh from Dhaka filed an application to advance the date for Chinmoy's bail hearing. However, the court rejected the application due to the absence of a Vakalatnama on December 11.

Regan Acharjee, one of the lawyers accused in the case filed by Saiful's brother, told The Daily Star that he and Saiful were very close. Regan alleged Regan was attacked by around 10 of his colleagues when he was with two of his clients in his chamber during the clashes. The attackers vandalised the chamber before the clients and other lawyers rescued him.

"I am physically unstable now and mental trauma. I have also been named in an FIR [First Information Report] and received threats through Facebook posts and comments. All of these make me feel unsafe to go to the court," said Regan.

"Many of us have the same fear. If someone becomes a victim of mob justice, no one will want to come forward to save them. Our senior lawyers are handling our bail issues in consultation with the Bar," he added.

On condition of anonymity, another lawyer who participated in Chinmoy's bail hearing on November 26 said, "This is the first time we are facing something like this over Chinmoy's issue. Lawyers fear being humiliated if they handle the case, so no one is coming forward."

Another lawyer who alleged threats via Facebook said the situation has affected their income.

However, many accused in Saiful's brother's case are still working in court. One of them, a senior lawyer, told The Daily Star, "I was not at the scene during the clash, and I did not stand for Chinmoy in court, but I have been implicated in the case."

"I have been coming to court and continuing my work. No one has threatened or obstructed me."

Chattogram Bar's IT Secretary Abhijit Ghosh is also an accused in the case. However, he has been working in the court. He said the bar association was looking into the issue of lawyers being implicated in the case filed by Saiful's brother.

"Many have been named as accused in the case while performing their professional duties. It is natural to feel fear when someone is accused in a case."

"However, no one has informed us about feeling insecure. If anyone notifies the bar association, we will take action."

Bar President Nazim Uddin Chowdhury refuted allegations that Chinmoy's lawyers were attacked on November 26.

"It's the conspiracy of the Indian media to establish fascism in the country once again. It's false news, and there was no such incident." He said reports of Chinmoy's lawyers feeling unsafe over threats were an "exaggeration by the Indian media to disrupt the peaceful environment."

"I have no information that someone was assaulted or threatened so far in Chinmoy's incident. It's true that some lawyers were made accused in a case, but I have seen several of them

doing their regular work in the court.

"If someone doesn't show up, that's their personal issue. I can't force them to come."

Nazim also said the Chattogram Bar requested its members not to defend the accused in Saiful murder case. "But I never said lawyers from outside couldn't come here and participate in the case hearing. We also have no issues with the other cases."

Rabindra Ghosh, the lawyer from Dhaka who sought to represent Chinmoy, said, "A member of the Bar, Sumit Acharya, had told me that he would sign a Vakalatnama in favour of me, but he later refused to do so following the pressure or threat from Bar leaders."

According to Nazim, there is a rule that a lawyer from outside requires a Vakalatnama from a local lawyer to represent a client.

Sumit told this newspaper, "It's true that lawyer Saiful's murder pains all the advocates of Chattogram court. The incident triggered anger among everyone in the court. However, I did not face any physical threat or any other bullying."

"I felt mental pressure, so I decided not to sign the Vakalatnama for Rabindra. No one asked me to do so," he added.

Electrical spark triggered fire at Secretariat

FROM PAGE 16
Bangladesh Army's bomb squad and sniffer dogs, and the Criminal Investigation Department.

"We all agreed that the fire broke out due to a loose connection heated the surrounding materials, eventually reaching ignition temperature, he explained.

He added, "The flames rose vertically, causing smoke to flow eastwards due to the building's design. This made it appear as though there were two fire sources, but it was only one."

The fire spread significantly within 12-14 minutes, making it difficult to extinguish.

He said laws make it mandatory to check and do maintenance of electric lines every year, but it is not being followed in government offices and homes.

Prof Helali said it is the administration that will take action against those responsible for the building.

Committee member Brig Gen Mahbub Rassel, an explosive expert of Bangladesh Army, confirmed that no explosives were detected. "Samples collected by the fire service and searches conducted by the dog squad yielded no residue of explosives."

However, Brig Gen Muhammad Zahed Kamal, director general of the fire service, said delays caused by obstacles such as collapsible gates and

building's interior design facilitated the spread of the fire.

The chief adviser has instructed the committee to propose both short- and long-term safety measures within 10 days to prevent future incidents. "We will recommend regular maintenance in compliance with the Bangladesh National Building Code," said Prof Helali.

However, he stressed that implementation lies with the administration.

The fire affected four floors of Building No 7, damaging files, computers, and furniture at Road Transport and Highways Division, two divisions under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives, the Posts and Telecommunications Division, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Nineteen fire engines extinguished the blaze after 10 hours of intense effort. A firefighter setting up hose pipes was run over and killed by a truck in the early hours.

Replying to a query from reporters, Nasimul Ghani said, "Some tests are being conducted at army labs, while others will be sent to Singapore and Indonesia."

Stop making excuses

FROM PAGE 16
an event in London, UK.

The BNP leader questioned the frequent "revolution" in reference to Bangladesh's recent political turnover.

"Nowadays, there's much talk about fulfilling the aspirations of the July Revolution and the blood of the martyrs to build a Bangladesh free of inequality and based on the rule of law. There's no disagreement on this."

"Revolution means complete change -- a total transformation of a society, an economic system, or a social system."

He went on to ask, "Has such a revolution happened in Bangladesh?"

"In simple terms, it was a 'democratic mass uprising' involving students, political parties, social groups, and people from all walks of life. The goal was to reclaim their constitutional and democratic rights."

Addressing young leaders, Salahuddin said, "To build a state with good governance, wisdom and experience are crucial. I urge the new generation to take time to acquire that wisdom, expertise, and experience."

"The future state, the future Bangladesh, will wait for this young generation, who have fought for democracy."

not participate in a mass uprising with an agenda to completely change the constitution and aspirations for a social revolution.

The BNP leader said his party has acted as a protector of democracy and the constitution, standing by the people.

"So, if the people want to trust the BNP and any group views this public trust as opposition, then we will consider those who see the BNP as an adversary today to be against democracy."

He said BNP's 31-point reform agenda, announced on July 13, 2023, is a complete roadmap for democratic change.

"We promised the countrymen that if we are freed from fascism, a national government will be formed based on unity and consensus among all political parties who fight against fascism in a united struggle. If given the responsibility to govern the state, we will rebuild it based on these 31 points."

"The constitution, which has almost turned into the Awami League's charter, will be amended through democratic reforms to fulfil the people's hopes."

Salahuddin said that the authority to amend the constitution is given by the people to the Parliament.

"I think those who think that rewriting, amending, or changing the

constitution can be done by any other body apart from Parliament are speaking unconstitutionally."

Criticising the government's inefficiency, Salahuddin highlighted the delay in removing bureaucrats appointed during Sheikh Hasina's tenure.

"It took two months and five days for the interim government to remove a cabinet secretary on contractual service. If it takes that long to remove one bureaucrat, what kind of reform can this government achieve?" he questioned.

Referring to the recent fire incident at the Secretariat, Salahuddin said, "Who is setting the Secretariat on fire today? You say it's the lackeys of the fascist regime. But you couldn't remove those lackeys."

"When it takes you two months and five days to remove top bureaucrats to protect your own position, how will you ensure the security of the people? I don't think it's possible."

Salahuddin emphasised that BNP's criticism is meant to provide constructive feedback.

"The chief adviser said we should criticise more and point out mistakes to keep the government on the right track. Now, when we criticise constructively, they see us as adversaries. We are in favour of democracy; we are not your adversaries."

Get ready to bring reforms to education system

FROM PAGE 16
who was killed during the uprising in Rajshahi.

During the closing session, names of the new president and secretary general of Chhatra Shibir, pro-Jamaat student body, were announced by Shibir chief election commissioner Matur Rahman Akand.

Zahidul Islam and Nurul Islam were elected as the president and secretary general of Chhatra Shibir central committee respectively.

At the inauguration, family members of some of those killed in the uprising, such as Abu Sayed, Faisal Mahmud Shanto, Wasim, and Osman, as well as the injured were also present.

Calling on Chhatra Shibir activists to take the responsibility for improving the education system, Shafiqur said, "Educational institutions should only focus on education and research. No machete-wielding groups, drug addicts, or armed individuals should be allowed there. Those who create 'Gono rooms' [where freshers were crammed] at university dormitories should not be allowed entry."

"Those who engage in tender manipulation and extortion have no place there. This responsibility is yours to take," he said. He urged everyone to refrain from any reckless actions that might cause confusion or disrupt national unity.

The Jamaat leader accused the Awami League of transforming educational institutions into "armouries filled with weapons and liquor bottles and targeting religious students."

"It [AL] cannot be called a political party. Those who sit with power and fail to act responsibly and kill people to protect their regime, can never be a political party."

Referring to the Liberation War, he claimed that the benefits of the independence had not reached the citizens.

He alleged that "a group hijacked independence and handed it over to a neighbouring country" and cited Indian prime minister's Victory Day greetings as evidence of India's undue influence.



Zahidul Islam Nurul Islam

Addressing the event, Sarjis Alam, a coordinator of the Students Against Discrimination, said Chhatra Shibir supported the July uprising both directly and indirectly by being present on the streets and playing the role of allies in crucial steps.

Calling for unity, he said, "If we remain united, we can collectively confront not only killer Hasina and people like her."

"We have found Islami Chhatra Shibir as allies in 2024. From our side, we want to make it clear that the truth can never be suppressed. It is only a matter of time before it is revealed."

"Over the last 16 years, killer Hasina has targeted anyone she perceived as a potential threat... We have witnessed so many innocent people, including religious scholars, were imprisoned, harassed, tortured, and even killed simply because she saw them as potential threats."

"We believe that many key figures and organisations, including Islami Chhatra Shibir, were made to endure unbearable circumstances by killer Hasina in this free country," said Sarjis, adding that the current conscious generation is enough to reject fascist Hasina and her prescriptions.

Among others, Jamaat Naye-b-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher, Secretary General Prof Mia Golam Parwar, Islamic scholar Mufti Kazi Ibrahim, Bangladesh Labour Party Chairman Mostafizur Rahman Iran, Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar) Chairman Mustafa Jamal Haider, Gono Odhikar Parishad (Reza Kibria) leader Faruk Hasan, Jatiya Ganotantrik Party Vice-President Rashed Pradhan, and Jatiya Nagorik Committee Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain, spoke on the occasion.

বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Water Development Board
 web: www.bwdb.gov.bd

প্রকল্প পরিচালক এর দপ্তর
 যমুনা নদী টেকনিক্যাল ব্যবস্থাপনা প্রকল্প-১:
 নদী তীর সংরক্ষণ ও নদী শাশন (কম্পোনেন্ট-১)
 পানি ভন, লেক-৪, ব্লক-এইচ, রুম নং-৪৩৭
 ৭২ গ্রীন রোড (পাথরগা), ঢাকা-১২০৫।
 ফোন: ৮৮-০২-২২২২-০০২২২
 ই-মেইল: pd.jrsmppwdb@gmail.com

Office of the Project Director
 Jamuna River Sustainable Management
 Project-1: Riverbank Protection and Riverbank Training (Component-1)
 Pani Bhaban, Level-4, Block-H, Room: 417
 72 Green Road (Pathargata), Dhaka-1205
 Phone: 88-02-2222-30222
 e-mail: pd.jrsmppwdb@gmail.com

Memo No: 42.01.0000.036.14.001.24-100 Date: 29 December, 2024

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

Jamuna River Sustainable Management Project-1: Riverbank Protection and Riverbank Training (Component-1) (JRSMP1(C-1)) under Bangladesh Water Development Board, Ministry of Water Resources is to identify appropriate structural measures for sustainable management of Jamuna River and to formulate a national level river management masterplan. The World Bank, the Kingdom of Netherlands & AIB are the Project Aid Partners and Bangladesh Water Development Board is the executing authority. JRSMP1(C-1) is seeking specialists through Selection of Individual Consultant (National) for its following consulting position.

Sl.	Name of the Consulting Position	No. of Position
1.	Individual Institutional Capacity Development & Training Co-Ordinator for PIU Support. Package No: JARSMP-WDB-PMO-SD-13	1(One)

The Last date of application is 20 January, 2025 before 03.00 pm at the office of the undersigned. The details of this REOI are available at website of BWDB www.bwdb.gov.bd and www.cptu.gov.bd. Only hard copy of the applications will be accepted.

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the applications/ proposals and to the procurement process at any stage without showing any reason.

পানি-৪৭৪/২০২৪-২০২৫
 ৬*খ৩
 Sd/-
 T. M. Rashidul Kabir
 Project Director

GD- 02

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 ০১ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

পুনঃ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাণিজ্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের ০২/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখের ২৬.০৬.০০০০.১০১.১১.০১৯.২৪.১৪০৬ নং হাটপত্রের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড এবং বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন বাংলাদেশ চা পুনঃব্যবহার ইনস্টিটিউট (বিটিআরআই) ও প্রথম প্রধান হাটপত্র (পিটিইউ) এর নিয়ন্ত্রণে শূন্য পদে অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে নিয়োগের জন্য যোগ্য এবং প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের কাছ থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা হলো।

ক্রম নং	পদের নাম, কর্মবর্তা ও বেতন স্কেল (আইটিআই বেতন স্কেল ২০১৪ অনুযায়ী)	পদ সংখ্যা	নিয়োগের সুসংগত শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাসহ অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা
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০২	অভ্যন্তরীণ রক্ষক (স্টোর কীপার) পিটিইউ, বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড, গ্রীমস্কাল, মৌলভীবাজার। বেতন স্কেল: ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০/৭. (গ্রেড: ১৪)	০১ (একটি)	মাত্রিক ডিগ্রির বৈশিষ্ট্য, প্রবেশিকা পরীক্ষার সফলতা, নিয়মিত ডায়েরি ও স্যানিটারি স্টোর রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ অভিজ্ঞতা।
০৩	হিসাব সহকারী পিটিইউ, বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড, গ্রীমস্কাল, মৌলভীবাজার। বেতন স্কেল: ১০০০-২৪৬৮০/৭. (গ্রেড: ১৬)	০১ (একটি)	মাত্রিক ডিগ্রি অথবা ২৪ বিসিএ উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সাংবিদ্যকোটা পঞ্জীকৃত পাস। সুস্থ স্বাস্থ্যকর প্রার্থীদের আবেদনকারী হওয়া হবে।
০৪	অফিস সহকারী কাম কম্পিউটার অপারেটর বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড, প্রধান কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম ও বিটিআরআই এবং পিটিইউ, গ্রীমস্কাল, মৌলভীবাজার। বেতন স্কেল: ১০০০-২৪৬৮০/৭. (গ্রেড: ১৬)	২২ (বাইসিটি)	উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সাংবিদ্যকোটা পাস হতে হবে। বাংলা ও ইংরেজী টাইপিং-এ যথাক্রমে ২০ ও ৩০ মিনিটসম্পন্ন প্রতি মিনিটে হতে হবে।
০৫	পার্শ্বদল বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড, প্রধান কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম এবং পিটিইউ, গ্রীমস্কাল, মৌলভীবাজার। বেতন স্কেল: ১০০০-২৪৬৮০/৭. (গ্রেড: ১৬)	০৪ (চারটি)	সরকারি অনুমোদিত কোন প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে জাতি/সামান্য/হিসাব/রাষ্ট্রীয়/লাইসেন্স প্রাপ্ত। কোন সরকারি বা স্বায়ত্বশাসিত অথবা প্রতিষ্ঠিত বাণিজ্যিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে প্রায়শ্চিত্ত সাংবিদ্যকোটা হতে হবে।
০৬	প্রশাসনিক পিটিইউ, বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড, গ্রীমস্কাল, মৌলভীবাজার। বেতন স্কেল: ১০০০-২৪৬৮০/৭. (গ্রেড: ১৬)	০১ (একটি)	প্রার্থীকে টাইপ অথবা মোকাবেলায় সাংবিদ্যকোটা থাকতে হবে। ওয়াটার স্ট্রাইক ও স্যানিটারি কার্বে কাজে অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
০৭	অফিস সহকারী বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড, প্রধান কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম ও বিটিআরআই, গ্রীমস্কাল, মৌলভীবাজার। বেতন স্কেল: ১২৪০০-২০০১০/৭. (গ্রেড: ২০)	১১ (এগারটি)	১-ম শ্রেণী পাস হতে হবে এবং সেই সাথে সুস্থতার অধিকারী হতে হবে।
০৮	নিরাপত্তা প্রকৌশলী (গার্ড) বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড, প্রধান কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম ও বিটিআরআই, গ্রীমস্কাল, মৌলভীবাজার। বেতন স্কেল: ১২৪০০-২০০১০/৭. (গ্রেড: ২০)	০২ (দুইটি)	১-ম শ্রেণী পাস হতে হবে। সেই সাথে সুস্থতার অধিকারী হতে হবে। সামরিক বাহিনীর অফিসারের পিআই পদের কর্মচারীদের ক্ষেত্রে আবেদনকারী হওয়া হবে।
০৯	পরিষ্কারকারী (পুইসিটি) বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড, প্রধান কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম ও বিটিআরআই, গ্রীমস্কাল, মৌলভীবাজার। বেতন স্কেল: ৮২৪০০-২০০১০/৭. (গ্রেড: ২০)	০২ (দুইটি)	১-ম শ্রেণী পাস হতে হবে এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অভিজ্ঞতা সুস্থতার অধিকারী হতে হবে।

শর্তাবলী

- ০১) চাকরির আবেদন ফরম বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ডের ওয়েবসাইটে: www.teaboard.gov.bd-এ পাওয়া যাবে। প্রার্থীদের চাকরির নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরমে নির্দেশিত অনুযায়ী প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য-উপাত্ত প্রদান করতে হবে। অনসূচক ভাষা সন্নিহিত আবেদন বাতিল হবে পদ হবে। আবেদনের সাথে সংযুক্ত কোন কিছুই কেমনে রাখা যাবে না।
- ০২) চাকরির আবেদন ফরমের সাথে অস্থায়ী নিয়োগের আবেদন সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- ০৩) চাকরির প্রার্থীর স্নায়ু সিস্টেম (৪) কপি ৩২-৫৫ মে. সি. সাইন্সের স্কিন ছবি আবেদন ফরমের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে (প্রথম শ্রেণীর ছবি)।
- ০৪) চাকরির প্রার্থীর স্নায়ু সিস্টেম (৪) কপি ৩২-৫৫ মে. সি. সাইন্সের স্কিন ছবি আবেদন ফরমের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে (প্রথম শ্রেণীর ছবি)।
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- ২০) চাকরির প্রার্থীর স্নায়ু সিস্টেম (৪) কপি ৩২-৫৫ মে. সি. সাইন্সের স্কিন ছবি আবেদন ফরমের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে (প্রথম শ্রেণীর ছবি)।

GD- 01

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Upazila Health and Family Planning Office
Kaliganj, Jhenaidah.
E-mail: kaliganj@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd

Ref No. UHC/KALI/JHE/MSR/2024-25/1069

Date: 31/12/2024

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/ Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contact support desk contact numbers.

e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Dr. Md. Alamgir Hossain, UH&FPO, Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex, Jhenaidah for the Procurement of;

Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/Proposal Publication Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing/Opening Date & Time
1055929	Procurement of Medicine (Non EDCL) for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex, Jhenaidah.	01-Jan-2025 12:00	15-Jan-2025 16:00	16-Jan-2025 12:00
1056051	Procurement of Surgical Instrument for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex, Jhenaidah.	01-Jan-2025 12:00	15-Jan-2025 16:00	16-Jan-2025 12:00
1056052	Procurement of Linen for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex, Jhenaidah.	01-Jan-2025 12:00	15-Jan-2025 16:00	16-Jan-2025 12:00
1056053	Procurement of Gauze, Bandage & Cotton for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex, Jhenaidah.	01-Jan-2025 12:00	15-Jan-2025 16:00	16-Jan-2025 12:00
1056054	Procurement of Chemical Reagent for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex, Jhenaidah.	01-Jan-2025 12:00	15-Jan-2025 16:00	16-Jan-2025 12:00
1056055	Procurement of Furniture for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex, Jhenaidah.	01-Jan-2025 12:00	15-Jan-2025 16:00	16-Jan-2025 12:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursuer.

e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list; accepted tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

(Signature)
(Dr. Md. Alamgir Hossain)
UH&FPO
Kaliganj, Jhenaidah

GD-9

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
1012, CDA Avenue, Sholahahar
District: Chattogram
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.1500.000.99.010.24.6120,

Dated: 31/12/2024

e-Tender Notice-26/2024-25

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.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following Packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches.

SI No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID	Procurement method	Last date & time of selling documents	Last date & time of submission documents
1	SupRB/Chott/Rehab/24-25/W-22	Rehabilitation of 19.0m RCC Slab Bridge on Fultala (DR)-Khodar Hat GC (Chandanaish) Road at Ch: 4026m [415822005] Satkania.	1049704	OTM	22/01/2025 17:00 BST	23/01/2025 13:00 BST
2	SupRB/Chott/Rehab/24-25/W-23	Rehabilitation of 10.20m RCC Slab Bridge on Demsha UPC-Jut Pokuria Bazar via Gholar Ghat Road at Ch: 1050m [415823011] Satkania.	1049705	OTM	22/01/2025 17:00 BST	23/01/2025 13:00 BST
3	SupRB/Chott/Rehab/24-25/W-24	Rehabilitation of 14.20m RCC Box Culvert on Senar Hat-Lohagara UPC via Alurghat Bridge Road at Ch: 1760m [415823024] Satkania.	1049707	OTM	22/01/2025 17:00 BST	23/01/2025 13:00 BST
4	SupRB/Chott/Rehab/24-25/W-25	Rehabilitation of 8.60m RCC Slab Bridge on Choto Darogar Hat RHD-Habib Ahmaded Chowdhury Road Hasu Bari via Hajari Hat (Labanakra Sea Road) Road at Ch: 970m (Old Ch: 1500m) [415863002] Sitakunda.	1049706	OTM	22/01/2025 17:00 BST	23/01/2025 13:00 BST

GD-08

Md. Hasan Ali
Executive Engineer
Local Government Engineering Department
District: Chattogram. Phone: 02334454402
E-mail: xen.chattogram@lged.gov.bd

Call for Papers on "Accelerating Inclusive Development Through Effective Development Administration for a Prosperous Bangladesh"

The National Academy for Development Administration (NADA) invites submissions for its **1st Development Dialogue**, to be held in the mid-February 2024. This flagship event aims to explore innovative approaches, policies, and practices to accelerate inclusive development through effective development administration and governance. This dialogue will bring together policymakers, researchers, development practitioners, and stakeholders to exchange knowledge, views and solutions for building a prosperous Bangladesh.

Background

Bangladesh has achieved remarkable progress in socio-economic development over the past decades, yet challenges remain in ensuring equitable growth, sustainable development, and efficient and public service delivery. Effective development administration and good governance are critical to addressing these challenges while fostering innovation and resilience in the face of future uncertainties. This Development Dialogue provides a platform to discuss practical strategies, share knowledge, and drive impactful reforms.

Conference Themes

The overarching theme of the conference is **"Accelerating Inclusive Development Through Effective Development Administration for a Prosperous Bangladesh."**

Submissions should align with the following topics:

1. Governance and Development Administration

- Strengthening Institutions for Inclusive Development.
- The Role of Good Governance in Accelerating Development in Bangladesh.
- Accountability and Transparency in Public Sector Administration.
- Decentralized Governance: Opportunities for Local Development.

2. Inclusive Development Strategies

- Public-Private Partnerships for Inclusive Growth.
- The Role of Digital Transformation in Bridging the Development Divide.
- Social safety nets and poverty alleviation: Administrative Approaches.

3. Sustainable Development and Resilience

- Aligning Development Administration with SDGs in Bangladesh.
- Disaster risk reduction and management through effective administration.
- Sustainable urbanization: Administrative strategies for inclusive cities.

4. Public Service Delivery and Reform

- Enhancing Service Delivery through E-Governance.
- Bureaucratic Reform for Accelerating Inclusive Development.
- Public Sector leadership in driving development outcomes.
- Citizen-Centric Approaches in Development Administration.
- Addressing corruption: building trust in governance.

5. Economic Growth and Development Administration

- Development Administration's role for prosperous Bangladesh.
- Effective Resources Mobilization for Public Investment.
- Economic Governance: Balancing Growth and Equity.
- Foreign Aid and Development Partnerships: Administrative Perspectives.

6. Education, Health and Human Capital Development

- Strengthening Education Administration for equitable access.
- Effective Health Governance for Universal Health Coverage.

7. Future Directions in Development Administration

- The Role of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in Modern Development Administration.
- Innovative Financing Mechanisms for Development Projects.
- Lessons learnt from Global Best practices in Development Administration.
- Bridging Aspirations and Realities: Meeting the Expectations of the New Generation in Building a Modern Bangladesh.
- Visionary Governance: Preparing for Bangladesh's Future Challenges.

Submission Guidelines

- Abstracts:** Authors are invited to submit an abstract (maximum 300 words) that outlines the research objectives, methodology, key findings, and relevance to the conference theme.
- Full Papers:** Selected abstracts will be invited for submission of full papers (up to 6,000 words, including references) by the specified deadline.
- Format:** Submissions should follow APA citation style and be submitted in Word or PDF format.
- Eligibility:** Submissions are welcome from academics, policymakers, practitioners, and development partners. Collaborative papers are encouraged.

Selection Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on in the following criteria:

- Relevance to the Theme:** Alignment with the conference theme and subthemes.
- Originality and Innovation:** Contribution of new ideas, perspectives, or solutions to development administration and governance.
- Rigor and Methodology:** Clarity, depth, and appropriateness of research methodology.
- Policy Implications:** Practical relevance and potential impact on public policy or administrative practices.
- Clarity and Coherence:** Logical structure and readability of the abstract or paper.

Authors of selected papers will be notified and invited to present their work during the Development Dialogue.

Invitation to Authors and Accommodation

Selected authors will receive an official invitation from NADA to attend the Development Dialogue. To ensure their full participation, NADA will provide:

- Complimentary accommodation for the duration of the event.
- Meals and transportation between the venue and accommodation.
- Networking opportunities with policymakers, development partners, and other key stakeholders.

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission Deadline:** January 10, 2025
- Notification of Acceptance:** January 20, 2025
- Full Paper Submission Deadline:** February 5, 2025
- Conference Date:** Mid-February 2025 (Exact date to be announced)

Publication Opportunity

Accepted papers will be considered for publication in the conference proceedings. Selected papers may also be featured in a special issue of the **NADA Development Review Journal**.

Submission and Inquiries

Please submit your abstracts and inquiries to:

Email: papers@nada.gov.bd, ddpublication@nada.gov.bd

Subject Line: Call for Papers – NADA Development Dialogue 2024

We look forward to your valuable contributions to this landmark event. Join us in shaping the future of development administration and governance in Bangladesh.

GD-5

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

পরিচালকের দপ্তর
শহীদ সোহরাওয়ার্দী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল
শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা
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তারিখঃ ৩০/১২/২০২৪ইং

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

শহীদ সোহরাওয়ার্দী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা এর ২০২৪-২০২৫ইং অর্থ বছরের জন্য এমএসআর (মেডিসিন, যন্ত্রপাতি ও লিনেন সামগ্রী) গ্রুপের মালামাল দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে সঞ্জহের নিম্নে পিপিএ-৬ এবং পিপিআর-২০০৮ এর ছক মোতাবেক প্রকৃত ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

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(Signature)
ডাঃ মোঃ শফিউর রহমান

পরিচালক
শহীদ সোহরাওয়ার্দী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, ঢাকা
E-mail: ssh@hospi.dghs.gov.bd Phone: 02-55026700

জিডি-০৪

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Moving ahead with everyone in 2025

New year brings new opportunities for Bangladesh

We welcome the new year with the belief that it will bring fresh opportunities for Bangladesh. Following the transformative events of 2024, including the historic July uprising that ousted the autocratic regime of Awami League, Bangladesh now has the chance to move towards a freer, more democratic future. While our political achievements last year were remarkable, they outpaced our economic progress. In 2025, therefore, the focus must shift significantly towards revitalising our economy.

Despite the accolades of 2024, including being named "Country of the Year" by *The Economist*, the challenges facing the economy cannot be overstated. Inflation, for instance, has remained above 9 percent since March 2023, despite policy tightening by the authorities, causing immense hardship for ordinary citizens. The strain on foreign exchange reserves and external accounts also persisted, as exports failed to grow enough to bolster forex inflows, even with a contraction in imports. Moreover, private investment remains lacklustre, and non-performing loans have surged to a multi-year high. Amid these challenges, there is a perception that the interim government has not prioritised the economy adequately. Without urgent and sustained efforts in this regard, it will be difficult to return to a sustainable growth trajectory.

On a brighter note, with the various reform commissions set to present their recommendations by the end of January, we expect significant legal and electoral reforms aimed at improving the country's overall governance structure. The timeline for the next general election—likely between late 2025 and early 2026—will also be a topic of extensive debate. A smooth and transparent election process could help mitigate political tensions. In this context, the formation of the consensus commission, which Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus is set to lead himself, is a promising development. Political consensus among all parties and stakeholders is vital, and an early, well-structured national dialogue should be a priority. Achieving this will likely be the interim government's greatest challenge in 2025.

If the government follows this roadmap, we urge all political parties to refrain from disruptive, agitational activities that could undermine the unity we so desperately need to move forward as a nation. The enormous sacrifices made in 2024 have opened a rare window of opportunity to build a peaceful, prosperous nation. It is now the responsibility of the interim government, political parties, and other key stakeholders to seize this moment and deliver meaningful progress.

With that said, we extend our heartfelt wishes for a happy 2025. Let us remember that the future we aspire to is only achievable through collective effort and unity.

Rescue those trapped in Mozambique

Govt must explore ways to ensure the safety of Bangladeshis there

We are deeply concerned about the safety of around 8,000 Bangladeshis who have been caught in the middle of an ongoing conflict in Mozambique. Violent protests have erupted in the southeastern African nation since its top court upheld a disputed election result on December 23. According to a report published by this daily, some Mozambicans, exploiting the volatile law and order situation, are attacking and looting the homes and businesses of Bangladeshis and other foreign nationals.

Mozambique has been experiencing some form of political tensions since its 16-year-long civil war ended in 1992. The latest spate of violence began after the ruling Frelimo party won the October election that the opposition rejected on charges of vote rigging. According to Bangladeshis living there, they could not anticipate that the situation would get so dire. Failing to move to safer locations pre-emptively, they have now become the targets of violence. Many had to leave their homes and take shelter with locals, in exchange for money, to ensure their safety. They also said that local law enforcement is unresponsive to their calls for help unless bribes are paid. Under the circumstances, they wish to return home as soon as possible, but cannot do so as there is no direct flight to Bangladesh.

Most Bangladeshis in Mozambique are small entrepreneurs who initially arrived on tourist visas and later converted them to investor visas. One Bangladeshi national, whose shop was looted along with 10 others, told our correspondent that our government does not have a list of Bangladeshis in Mozambique as it is not considered an overseas labour export market for Bangladesh. There is no diplomatic mission there either. The chargé d'affaires of the embassy in Portugal, which is more than 7,000 kilometres away, is responsible for Mozambique. An official in Portugal stated that they are preparing an area-wise list of Bangladeshis in Mozambique with the help of community leaders, and will send support in case of an emergency.

In light of these developments, we urge the government to explore all diplomatic avenues to ensure the safety of Bangladeshis in Mozambique and facilitate their safe return home. The government should consider coordinating with other countries that are evacuating their citizens from Mozambique to arrange for the safe passage of our nationals. Overall, this situation should serve as a reminder for the authorities to proactively gather data on all expatriate Bangladeshis, not just in known labour markets but across all countries.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Lincoln signs Emancipation Proclamation



On this day in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed enslaved people in the Confederacy states of the US.

BANGLADESH'S ECONOMIC TRANSITION Lessons from 2024 and prospects for 2025

MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun

is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council. Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN



The economy of Bangladesh faced sustained stress throughout 2024, with macroeconomic stability continuing to deteriorate—a trend from the past few years—due to a series of challenges. The first half of 2024 unfolded under the autocratic regime of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government, which systematically undermined the economy through rampant misappropriation of public resources. The interim government, which assumed power three days after the fall of the Awami League regime, inherited a fragile economy plagued by high inflation, declining foreign exchange reserves, stagnant private investment, mounting debt, inefficiencies in public project implementation, and a weak financial sector.

After nearly five months of the interim government's leadership, public expectations for an economic turnaround remain high, particularly regarding issues directly impacting livelihoods. While some positive changes are becoming evident, most economic challenges persist, complicating the path to recovery. Addressing these issues effectively in 2025 will require prioritising urgent actions.

Firstly, to tackle inflation, the new Bangladesh Bank governor adopted a contractionary monetary policy, raising the policy rate to 10 percent. Despite this measure, point-to-point inflation climbed to 11.38 percent in November 2024, with food inflation soaring to 13.8 percent during the same period.

Although monetary policy measures typically take 6-12 months to show results, complementary fiscal policies and enhanced market management are critical. In Bangladesh's current context, inflation must be addressed through monetary, fiscal and market management measures. Due to an increase in the policy rates in recent months, lending rates have increased. This hurts businesses as the cost of funds has increased. Additionally, private investment has been stagnant for about a decade. Small and medium enterprises face a liquidity crisis as they cannot afford costly bank loans. This situation is not conducive to employment generation—a cause for which the students staged a movement back in July. While the interim government has reduced or withdrawn duties on essential items like rice, edible oil, sugar, onions, potatoes and eggs, poor market management has

prevented consumers from reaping the benefits.

The government should take multiple measures to enhance the supply of products in the market. These could include enough government procurement from farmers at a fair price, facilitating farmers' connection with the markets, providing them with financial and technical support to enhance their resilience to price shocks, eliminating rent-seeking and extortions during the transportation of products through improved law and order situation, enhancing supply chain efficiency through better logistics and transportation infrastructure, allowing more importers to enter the market, and extending trade partnerships for



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

importing essential items.

Secondly, the current national budget requires revision to reflect the current economic challenges. Politically motivated and low-priority projects under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) should be postponed to address financial constraints. In view of high inflation, the government should enhance support for poor and low-income households by expanding the open market sale (OMS) of commodities at an affordable price. Support for those affected by severe floods in August and September this year has been inadequate compared to their needs. They should be provided with financial support to recover their losses, at least partially.

The budget for FY2025-26 will be challenging. In view of the high

inflationary trend and limited fiscal space, the next budget has to be contractionary. However, development expenditures cannot be controlled too much since the government has to consider the need for employment generation. The upcoming budget will be an opportunity to make a balanced allocation across all sectors. Health, education, and science and technology sectors should receive more allocations.

Third, the banking sector has been mired in mismanagement and corruption over the past decade and a half. The Awami League government issued bank licences based on political considerations, enabling embezzlement by directors under lax regulatory oversight. The new governor dissolved and reconstituted the boards of 11 private banks, temporarily halting fund mismanagement. However, these banks now face acute liquidity crises. The Bangladesh Bank has provided liquidity support of Tk 22,500 crore to bail out six weak banks. While this measure has been unavoidable in order to meet depositors' needs, it risks further inflationary pressure. The central bank has to take harsh

steps to resolve the structural problems of the banking sector. Though the task is arduous and time-consuming, the country eagerly awaits the recommendations of the three task forces and their implementation to restore discipline and good governance in the sector.

Fourth, the free fall of the forex reserves has stopped in recent months. As of December 24, 2024, the country's gross international reserves stood at \$20.18 billion, following the BPM6 method. As part of a \$4.7 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Bangladesh Bank has to maintain a certain level of forex reserves following the BPM6 method, an internationally accepted standard to calculate forex reserves. After repeated failure since the loan approval in January 2023, the Bangladesh Bank

was able to meet the IMF target in the June and September quarters of 2024. It is expected to meet the target in December 2024 as well. The remittance flow has increased substantially in recent months. Maintaining this trend in the coming months will require a continued focus on boosting remittance flows and ensuring exchange rate stability. Transparency in currency market operations is essential to sustain investor confidence.

Fifth, Bangladesh's graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status to a Developing Country status in 2026 offers opportunities and challenges. While the transition will enhance the country's global image and attract investments, it also entails the loss of duty-free, quota-free (DFQF) market access, concessional loans, and other benefits. Therefore, Bangladesh must prepare for a smooth transition from the LDC status to absorb the initial shock of losing various flexibilities, including the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). It must prepare for the GSP-plus facility by achieving various stringent compliances. The government and the private sector should work together to formulate a pathway to overcome the challenges of LDC graduation.

The economic crisis left by the Awami League government is profound, and resolving it will require sustained efforts. A multi-pronged approach involving coordinated efforts across ministries and agencies is essential.

The current law and order situation remains precarious, adversely affecting production in industrial zones. Both domestic and foreign investors are waiting and closely monitoring political developments. It is unlikely that significant new investments will occur before the national elections. Therefore, it is imperative for the interim government to present a clear roadmap for the elections, enabling economic stakeholders and partners to plan their investment strategies accordingly.

Equally importantly, the interim government must assert its authority in managing day-to-day governance. This critical responsibility appears to have received low priority amid the focus on drafting medium- to long-term reform agendas. A balanced approach that prioritises immediate governance alongside future reforms is essential for stabilising the economic environment.

Flawed political, social, and economic systems have hindered the realisation of Bangladesh's full potential. While comprehensive reforms across all sectors are crucial, and while the interim government can initiate this process by consulting experts and stakeholders, the responsibility for implementation lies with future elected representatives. The nation watches closely as the interim government navigates these challenges, striving to address present needs while laying the groundwork for a sustainable future.

Comrade Moni Singh and opposing neofascism

Hasan Tarique Chowdhury
is a lawyer at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

HASAN TARIQUE CHOWDHURY

If you ask a young person in 2024 what fascism is, they may directly answer that fascism means dictatorship. If you ask what Nazism is, some may try to correlate. This is how the traditional narratives—and terminologies—of politics change. In today's Bangladesh, the old form of politics has resurfaced in a new shape. What we're witnessing is 21st century fascism: politics based on some form of supremacy. Where the accountability of the state, democracy and justice are missing. Traditional politics became all about repeating the same rhetoric and idealising personality cults. The ongoing discourse greatly irritated the youth. Party politics and blind allegiance to a party were failing to properly utilise the talents of the youth. So the youth of 2024 put their faith in their own strength. They aimed for the complete renovation of traditional politics.

On the one side, there were the helmet gangsters of authoritarianism. On the other, a student-led mass movement fighting in mortal combat. The state's oppressive forces were swept away like a grasshopper by the tsunami of the people. The power centre of

misrule escaped and survived.

Today's youth must not fall victim to the fallacies of fantasy, fascism and consumerism. That is why it is crucial to understand the aspects of fascism in the 21st century. The trace of Benito Mussolini's fascism of the 1940s cannot be found now. A new brand of bloodthirsty fascism has taken root. But the youth of Bangladesh has not just uprooted this new brand of fascist misrule—they have made the agenda of state reform inevitable. They have demanded we raise our voices—from the hills to the plains, in groups and in communities. The youth have issued a clarion call for inclusiveness.

In the aftermath of the July uprising, I was reminded of the revolutionary Moni Singh, who raised his voice for justice on behalf of the oppressed people of Bengal. In the courtyards of the Hajongs and Bengalis, in the rice fields, he crafted his own weapon to fight the British colonial rulers wielding modern arms.

Moni Singh honed his life of struggle during his youth. Fascism relies on the cult that survives. He struck a great blow at the root of that cult.

At that time, he spoke about a new revolutionary political system, a social system without discrimination—that is, socialism. Standing in front of a leader like Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Moni Singh strongly protested against the discrimination towards workers committed by factory owners. If we look at his life of struggle, the brutal image of fascism and state authoritarianism is exposed in every chapter.

Today, in this era of great technological advancement, fascism has not changed its nature. It remains the same—oppressive of the people. It is important to note that today's fascism also uses modern technology and the power of AI to oppress people. The fascism of today's ruling class is therefore old in nature, but novel in its brutal expression. As a result, the face of the popular uprising against it is also unique. The movement is advancing by rejecting the narratives of traditional politics and political party structures. Hence, conventional calculations, thinking methods, and civil society actions stumble here.

The BBC recently cited the opinion of American political scientist Lawrence Britt and his work "The 14 Characteristics of Fascism." This includes continuous promotion of nationalism, human rights abuses, fraudulent elections, corporate interests, benefits for the army,

arbitrary control over the media and more. Remarkably, all these elements are present in Bangladeshi politics, albeit in a renewed form. Farical elections, the so-called "midnight voting," looting of banks and financial institutions, handing over national oil and gas resources to foreign corporations, extrajudicial killings, nepotism, skyrocketing commodity prices and extensive benefits for government officials are all aspects of neo-fascism.

Now, the question is being raised as to whether the uprising has lost its momentum. Traditional politics failed to transform itself as expected. It could not contain the feelings of the masses. There has been no tested philosophy to build a society free from discrimination to guide today's anti-fascist rhetoric. On the other hand, the philosophy of a discrimination-free society was fully embodied before the revolutionary Moni Singh. That philosophy was Marxism, which all forms of fascism have repeatedly attempted to destroy.

Nevertheless, the revolutionary Moni Singh, like a phoenix, has returned to the ranks of the masses. In the guise of a winner, he has started a new level of struggle, in the streets, in the prison.

Remembering him on his 34th death anniversary with utmost respect. Red salute, Comrade Moni Singh!

Why 2025 is a crucial year for Bangladesh



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

This New Year is dramatically different from any other New Year we have celebrated. Our nation has gone through a profound transition, one that has brought with it unimaginable possibilities and extraordinary opportunities. The most remarkable part is that one of the least empowered and apparently most politically apathetic sections of the population—the youth—has become a serious political force.

What began as a student-led uprising—sparked by the injustices of an entrenched and repressive government—became the rallying cry for freedom. These young people, some of whom paid the ultimate price for their convictions, have done what seemed impossible: they have united the people, toppled a government that turned into a grotesque parody of power, and forged a path towards a new political order. Standing in the face of live ammunition, willing to sacrifice their lives, they showed a courage that will resonate in the nation's memory for generations. We cannot—and must not—forget the lives lost in this struggle, or the thousands whose bodies bear the permanent scars of their fight for justice.

Against the backdrop of such intense events that include the people's uprising led by students in July-August, and the four months that followed with the interim government taking the helm, let us recap some of the most critical lessons of 2024 as we look forward to 2025.

We are not powerless

The events of last summer were a stark reminder: we are not a powerless people. The uprising demonstrated, in the most instinctive way, that when a critical mass of people are determined, when they come together in unity, anything is possible. Change does not happen by accident, nor does it come through patience in the face of injustice. When pushed to the brink, people will rise. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's downfall

came not just because of her own moral bankruptcy or the unbridled corruption of her government and her cronies, but because she underestimated the anger of her own people. Her late—disgraced, detested, and discarded—was sealed by her indifference to the people's suffering.

Time for political parties to evolve

As we move forward, our political parties must face a stark truth: their old ways will no longer suffice. The political culture of the past—built on patronage, fear, and opportunism—must be dismantled if democracy is to flourish in Bangladesh. The BNP, though temporarily revived after years of repression, is no exception. While figures like the Acting Chairperson Tarique Rahman or Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir have displayed a considerable maturity and political restraint, their party, and others, must look inward. They must rid themselves of the old guard's habits, including the pernicious tendency to “take power” rather than earn it. The public has no appetite for the politics of territorial control—whether it is about controlling the markets, transport unions or courtrooms. As history has shown, no regime that rules through fear and lies will ever hold true power. Once the people's fear is broken—once they recognise their own strength—no amount of repression can stop them. The last 15 and a half years of the Awami League regime bleeding the economy dry with financial corruption have made people intolerant of corruption.

Political parties must accept, moreover, the central role that students have played in this struggle. Without their courage and commitment, there would be no opportunity for political activity at all. Which is why political parties must be connected to the spirit and aspirations of these young people.

The vital role of women

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the recent uprising was the role of women. It was the young female

students at Dhaka University who first became the catalysts of the movement. Later, hundreds more female students from other universities played the same role. Yet, as the movement progressed, their voices began to fade into the background. After August 5, the bold, fearless women who had led the protests found themselves sidelined,

Investigations into violence must be fair, transparent, and decisive, and the individuals responsible must be held accountable. These groups deserve equal representation, not just in the media but in our political institutions as well. No democracy can claim to be just while its most vulnerable citizens live in insecurity.

The interim government's reform commissions will be handing in their reports soon, and we look forward to their recommendations, which are to be implemented through dialogue with political parties and other stakeholders. The reforms in the Election Commission, police force, judiciary, and Anti-Corruption Commission will be of

have disastrous consequences.

A grip on the economy, law and order

The economy and law and order will largely influence which way the political breeze will blow. No political transformation can survive without economic stability. As we move into the new year, the interim government must focus on ensuring that businesses, both large and small, can function without fear of disruption or uncertainty. The financial sector must be stabilised—dollar prices should be kept in check, trade must be able to flow. For the poorest among us, food inflation must be mitigated with subsidies so they don't bear the brunt of an economy in crisis. Migrant workers, who contribute to the economy with the vital remittances, must be protected from exploitation, both by unscrupulous agents and employers. The government's diplomatic missions abroad must be responsive, offering real help to those in distress.

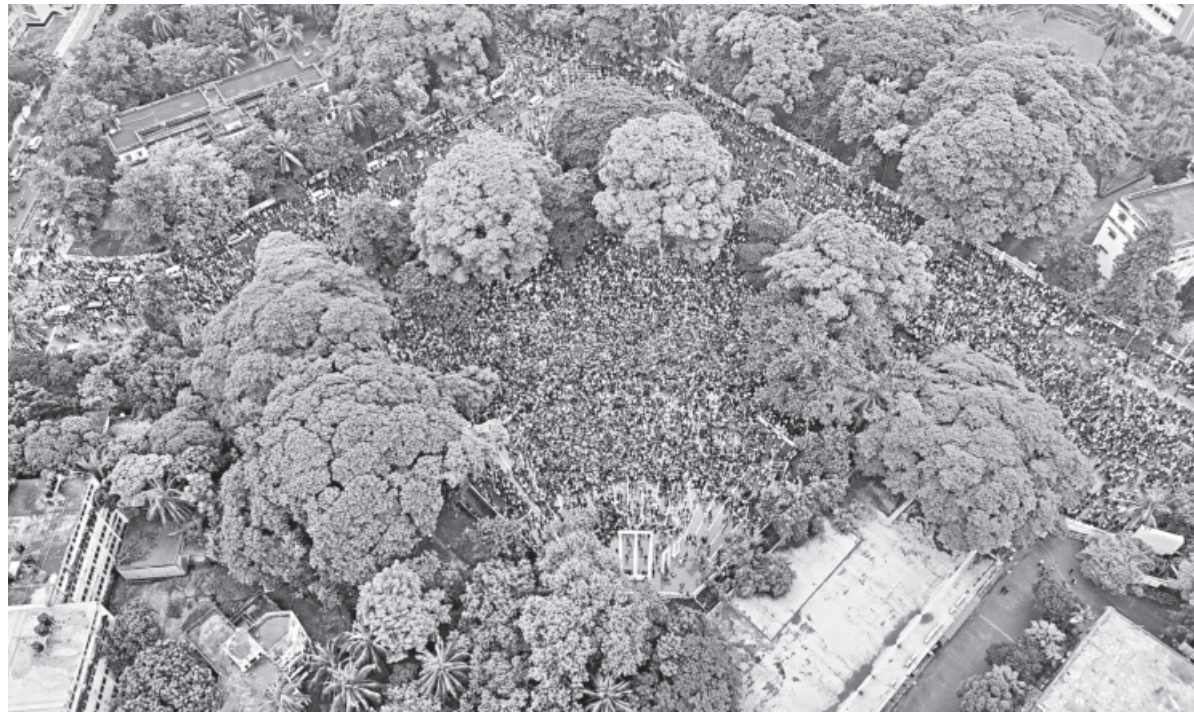
The police force, too, must undergo a serious reform. No longer can they serve as instruments of political repression. They must be transformed into protectors of the people and guardians of public safety, not agents of a ruling party. Only through such reform will we restore faith in our justice system.

A free press is non-negotiable

A democracy cannot function without a free and independent media. In the years ahead, we must ensure that the press is not choked by political pressure or fear. It is only through a robust, fearless media that the people can remain informed and engaged. Only a free press can ensure that a government is accountable to the people.

A call for unity

In the end, survival as a nation will depend not just on political or economic reforms, but on a return to basic human decency: empathy, compassion, altruism, and honesty. We must embrace inclusivity—the strength of our nation lies in our diversity, not in our uniformity. The events of August 5 were a powerful testament to what we can achieve when we stand together, united despite our differences. As we enter 2025, let us carry that unity forward. Because, as history has shown, when we are divided, we fall. But when we are united, we are unstoppable.



FILE PHOTO: NAIMUR RAHMAN

In 2024, we once again showed what we can achieve when we stand together, united despite our differences.

their leadership diluted. Women must reclaim their leadership roles—not just in student movements but across all political and social spheres. In a democracy, their full participation is not an option—it is essential for its survival. This must be acknowledged by all stakeholders, the interim government and political parties including those started by student leaders as well as politically influential Islamist groups.

The vulnerability of marginalised groups is real

We must acknowledge that marginalised groups and minority communities are still vulnerable. These groups face both direct and indirect violence, which erodes their sense of belonging and safety. The interim government, and society at large, must take swift action to protect these citizens, ensuring that they are seen and heard.

Embrace inclusivity and religious harmony

Islamist parties in the country have to accept that ours is a pluralistic society and democracy is the only way forward. They must choose inclusivity over exclusivity, dialogue over division. The language of hate—whether aimed at religious, political or ideological opponents—has no place in a democracy. The hatemongers, the “influencers” who stir unrest and target journalists, government officials or ordinary citizens, must be held accountable. To allow them to propagate violence and division is to undermine the spirit of the 2024 uprising.

Reforms: The essence of real change

Elections alone will not bring about the change we so desperately dream of. The reforms we need are systemic, rooted in institutions.

special interest as these institutions must be restructured to operate independently, free from political influence. Until this happens, we cannot expect truly free and fair elections. Without reforms, democracy would be an empty shell.

Youth's power must be wielded with caution

The youth, who has so forcefully reshaped our political landscape, must now approach their newfound power with humility. They must never be susceptible to hubris. Their strength lies not in domination but in serving the people who have entrusted them with the power to bring about change. Their political actions, their strategies, and their ideologies must always reflect the collective will, and never the ego of a single generation. Youthful idealism must be tempered with wisdom, for power without responsibility can

Dhaka's footpaths are a battleground



Farzana Islam Toma
is an architect and road safety professional working as a consultant for the sustainable city programme at World Resources Institute. She can be reached at Farzana.Toma@wri.org.

FARZANA ISLAM TOMA

The footpaths of Dhaka are always busy with commercial activity. Street vendors line the walkways, selling everything from fruits and clothes to mobile accessories and snacks. For many, these vendors are a lifeline, offering affordable goods and services, conveniently. Yet, this same vibrant economy is a source of frustration for pedestrians, who find their paths obstructed and their safety compromised. According to a study by the Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), 60 percent of the footpaths of Dhaka are illegally occupied. But this occupation of footpaths by vendors is simply not an issue of right and wrong—it is a deeply human story, one that reflects the complexities of urban poverty, survival, and the need for inclusive solutions.

Dhaka, a city of over 20 million people, already struggles with a lack of adequate infrastructure for pedestrians. Footpaths are meant for safe walking but pedestrians are forced onto the congested roads as vendors have taken over Dhaka's footpaths. This results in a chaotic mix of people and vehicles, increasing the risk of road crashes. It also creates difficulties for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children since navigating these cluttered spaces is not only inconvenient but can be life-threatening for them too. Moreover, the unregulated nature of these street markets leads to sanitation issues, traffic congestion, and loss of aesthetic appeal in many neighbourhoods.

But beneath this apparent disorder lies an uncomfortable truth: the vendors are not villains. They are individuals trying to survive in a city where formal employment

opportunities are limited. Street vendors play a vital role in Dhaka's urban ecosystem. Selling goods on the street is a primary source of income for thousands of families in the city. Many street vendors are rural migrants or individuals displaced by poverty, who have turned to street vending as a means of survival. Vendors provide affordable goods and services to millions of



FILE PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka's footpaths are battlegrounds between livelihoods and mobility.

Dhaka's residents. These small businesses sell inexpensive meals for workers and budget clothing for students, serving those who can't shop at malls or supermarkets. Vendors bring goods directly to people's doorsteps, saving time and transportation costs for those who rely on them. For many in Dhaka, they are an essential part of daily life. The street markets of Dhaka reflect the city's entrepreneurial spirit and cultural diversity. They are part of

what makes Dhaka, Dhaka.

It is essential to find a balance between the needs of pedestrians and the livelihoods of vendors and the task is not easy. Evicting vendors outright would ignore the socio-economic realities they face, but leaving the current situation unchecked would exacerbate the problems of urban chaos and safety. Providing solutions requires a combined approach of actions such as: i) designing designated vending zones; ii) creating time-based access; iii) licensing and regulation; iv) creating pedestrian-centric design; v) support vendors; and vi) engaging community.

Dhaka can allocate specific areas as vending zones, especially near busy markets, bus stops, and residential neighbourhoods.

These zones should be planned to minimise pedestrian disruption while maximising vendor visibility. For time-based access, vending could be allowed in certain footpaths during specific hours of the day, such as evenings or weekends, when pedestrian traffic is lower. This would create a balance between commerce and accessibility. Introducing a licensing system for street vendors would help regulate their numbers and ensure

compliance with sanitation and safety standards. This could include rules on how much space each vendor can occupy. To create pedestrian-centric design, footpaths should be widened, where possible, and new infrastructure projects should incorporate vending-friendly designs. For example, shaded areas or small kiosks integrated into sidewalks could accommodate vendors without obstructing pedestrian flow.

Furthermore, vendors should be given access to microfinance, training, and alternative employment opportunities to reduce their dependency on informal street vending. Programmes to integrate them into formal markets or co-ops could uplift their economic prospects. Finally, solutions must involve dialogue between pedestrians, vendors, local communities, authorities, implementation agencies, and technical personnel. This guarantees that policies are effective, fair, and comprehensive. It's not that no initiative ever took place to regulate these vendor activities and provide pedestrian facilities, but continuous monitoring and a permanent policy are needed for effective results in the long run.

The story of Dhaka's footpaths is not only about conflict; it is also about survival, resilience, and the urgent need for compassion. It is about acknowledging the humanity of both pedestrians and vendors and designing solutions that allow both to thrive. These walkways, now battlegrounds between livelihoods and mobility, hold the dreams of vendors striving to make ends meet and the frustration of pedestrians seeking safety and dignity. Imagine a Dhaka where footpaths breathe with life and purpose—wide, clean, and welcoming, where vendors thrive in organised, vibrant spaces, and pedestrians move freely and safely. This is not just a vision; it is a call to action that requires strong political will. To reclaim our walkways is to reclaim our humanity, creating a city that honours both its people's struggles and their right to a better future.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Forgoes food
- 6 Christmas song
- 11 Improvised
- 12 Supreme Court justice Kagan
- 13 National park in California
- 15 Shade tree
- 16 “My country — of thee”
- 17 Pub pint
- 18 Decree beforehand
- 20 Road sealer
- 21 Blackjack card
- 22 Painter Magritte
- 23 Edge
- 26 Pondered
- 27 Eye part
- 28 Mass of gum
- 29 Frequently, in poems
- 30 Response delay
- 34 “My word!”
- 35 Belief, in brief
- 36 Smelter supply
- 37 National park in Arizona
- 40 Spine-tingling
- 41 Rental contract
- 42 Takes it easy

43 Foot parts

DOWN

- 1 Like old photos
- 2 “Hello” singer
- 3 Pillow covers
- 4 Youngster
- 5 Show biz routine
- 6 Halt
- 7 The whole shebang
- 8 Feels empathy
- 9 Like some rural bridges
- 10 Like skiers' clothing
- 14 Arbor climber
- 19 Earth tones
- 22 Ill-mannered
- 23 Online journal writer
- 24 Game official
- 25 Distraught
- 26 Playtypi and pandas
- 28 Minn. neighbor
- 30 Sea motions
- 31 Faithful
- 32 Stool
- 33 Trait carriers
- 38 Tiny complaint
- 39 “The Matrix” hero



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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How to not be pretentious on LinkedIn



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

Keep your CV to yourself, even when there's an option to upload it: The best way to communicate your skills is to tailor your CV for each job you're applying to, ensuring it meets the specific requirements of the role, instead of having it up on your LinkedIn.

SAMEEHA RAHMAN

LinkedIn has become a modern rite of passage into adulthood. The moment you start searching for a way to earn money, the pressure to create a LinkedIn profile kicks in. It's brandished as the ultimate social media for professionals and a cornerstone of networking - a portal where employers and employees alike mingle to share common interests, life updates, and of course, job offers. After all, bills have to be paid.

However, while parading yourself as the best possible fit for that lucrative opening you have been pining for, it is easy to get lost and end up as your worst nightmare: a pretentious hustler. As such, here are some things you should be wary of if you want to keep a fresh, clean image on this tumultuous platform.

Everyone can see you stalking them. No, really. They get notifications: Did you know LinkedIn notifies people when you view their profiles? Unless you enjoy the idea of someone knowing you've been snooping, switch your profile viewing to anonymous mode. Go to your Privacy Settings > Visibility > Turn Page Visit Visibility off.

Keep your CV to yourself, even when there's an option to upload it: The best way to communicate your skills is to tailor your CV for each job you're applying to, ensuring it meets the specific requirements of the role, instead of having it up on your LinkedIn. A great tip

professionals tend to share is to customise your CV to better align your skills with the job description. Many companies use software to automatically filter out CVs that lack specific keywords. By tailoring your CV, you increase your chances of meeting those criteria and making it through the initial screening.

Figure out what you want to use LinkedIn for before you use it: LinkedIn is essentially just a social media platform for professionals. It's not just about landing a job - it's a powerful tool for networking and connecting with others in your industry. It allows you to find like-minded professionals, learn from their experiences, and build connections that might come in handy down the road. So use it to appeal to people in the industry you want to get into.

But then, what are you actually supposed to do on LinkedIn?

A great way to use LinkedIn is by building a community, and the first step to doing that is creating an appealing profile. Think of it like a firm handshake—it sets the tone for a strong first impression. A professionally crafted profile not only encourages the connections you want to check out your work but also increases the likelihood of receiving meaningful responses.

Another key advantage is visibility. HR professionals often use LinkedIn to search for candidates, and a well-structured profile that clearly showcases your skills and experiences

can put you on their radar.

You can also leverage LinkedIn to connect with professionals in your field, follow companies you aspire to work with and stay updated on industry trends. Plus, seeing what others share can inspire ideas for your own content.

What does original LinkedIn content look like?

It can be anything—from sharing life updates and job experiences to showcasing hobbies you're passionate about. Remember, LinkedIn is essentially social media for professionals, so your content should reflect who you are in a way that resonates with your network.

Before posting, ask yourself: What does this post say about me? Do I have enough expertise to weigh in on this topic? Unlike other platforms, LinkedIn isn't a free-for-all for opinions. Posting about topics unrelated to your field—like a BBA graduate commenting on medical conspiracies—might raise eyebrows.

With that in mind, here are some ideas for what you can post:

Celebrate achievements: Landed a new job? Got a promotion? Participated in a competition? Post about it! Highlight what you learned or how it helped you grow. Even failures can make great posts—share what you learned and how you're applying those lessons.

Life updates: Moving to a new city? Share the journey. If you're in a creative field, even a viral TikTok or Instagram post can become a LinkedIn highlight. Just tie it back to analytics or lessons learned.

Showcase your hobbies: Believe it or not, hobbies make for engaging content. Whether it's cooking, gardening, or ghost-hunting (yes, really), share how these hobbies tie into skills like patience or focus.

Data and analysis projects: From political data to cricket stats, analysis projects are LinkedIn gold. Marketers can post about SEO trends or viral campaigns. The key is to share insights and post topics relevant to current trends.

Failures and lessons: Just like any other platform, even on LinkedIn, people love relatable content. Sharing your struggles can make you more authentic and approachable, and can turn your failures into memorable reads.

Focusing on topics you genuinely care about instead of trying to be something you're not is the key to success, whether it be on LinkedIn or in life. Everything about you doesn't have to be still, pretentious, or all about chasing money - it can be more than that. And showing others you're human, and not just another cog in the 'grindset' machine may give you the edge you need to stand out.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

HSBC
Transaction Services
Analyst, Global Trade
Solutions



Deadline: January 6

Eligibility:
Bachelor's degree from a public/private university with experience in banking operations, particularly in trade.
Minimum experience: N/A

SELISE Digital Platforms



QA Specialist

Deadline: N/A

Eligibility:
Working experience in software testing (manual and/or automated) and UI automation tools (e.g. CYPRESS, Selenium).
Minimum experience: 4 years

RTI International



Data Officer

Deadline: N/A

Eligibility:
Bachelor's/Master's degree; experience with Bangladesh national health information systems - DHIS2, DGFP MIS, Surveillance, eLMIS, SCMP, HRIS, etc.
Minimum experience: 1-3 years



MJL Bangladesh PLC.

Executive/Senior Executive - PP, QM & PM (SAP)

Deadline: January 9

Eligibility:
BBS/BSc in any discipline, or BBA with a Minor in Information Systems or similar.
Minimum experience: 1-4 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



EMK Center launches Small Grant 2025

EMK Center has launched its Small Grant 2025 program. According to a press release, the EMK Small Grant provides funding to projects that "inspire change, celebrate innovation, and strengthen the ties between the people of the United States and Bangladesh".

As per EMK Center, this year's program focuses on five themes: democratic values, economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, STEM education, and arts and culture. The amount of the grant award will be between BDT 200,000 and 500,000, with the project running

from February to August 2025.

Selected applicants will participate in a final pitch session to showcase their ideas and negotiate budgets. Winners will be announced in February 2025, with funded projects launching immediately thereafter. Applications are accepted online until January 15, 2025.

Realistic work resolutions to make 2025 your best year yet

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Let's face it: New Year's resolutions often lose steam after the first week. But progress, no matter how small, is a victory. As such, it is important to keep realistic goals in mind when charting out your New Year's resolutions, especially when it involves your work.

Here are some down-to-earth career resolutions you could work towards to boost your professional life - one small step at a time - in 2025.

Revisit an old skill

"Pick up a new skill" is one of the most common goals in any New Year's Resolutions list. However, instead of diverting your time and energy towards forcefully honing a new skill, maybe go back and pick up a skill you practised before but haven't fully learned yet. Familiarity will ease the process, and mastering it could bring fresh opportunities.

Reassess your goals

The new year is a great time to reflect on where you want to be in the next five years. Identify any skills or training you need to pursue, both old and new ones. If you feel you need a career switch, the new year is a good time to think about alternate options as well.

Take a digital detox

In today's screen-driven world, our eyes are glued to our phones and computers almost 24/7. However,



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

taking small moments away from the ever-consuming screens will refresh both your eyes and mental well being. In the new year, try taking short exercise breaks during work, catching up with friends, or even reading a book - anything to get some much-needed digital detox.

Delegate what you can

This new year could be the best time to decrease pressure on yourself, especially if you are in a managerial or supervisory role. While your job might be to look over others, you should start delegating responsibilities, especially the ones of lesser importance, to your team members. With a more controlled workload, you will be able to focus

better on the tasks that require the utmost attention.

Remain committed to your resolution

Whatever resolution you choose, stick with it. Instead of tackling all resolutions at once, choose one goal at a time and work towards it, so you don't get overwhelmed by the self-imposed pressure. Enlist the support of colleagues or loved ones when needed, and remember: progress on even one resolution is better than none.

This year, focus on progress over perfection. With small, deliberate steps, you can make resolutions that drive meaningful growth in your career.

Apple is closing in on \$4 trillion valuation

NEXT STEP DESK

Apple is nearing an unprecedented \$4 trillion stock market valuation due to investor optimism surrounding its recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and hopes for a revival in iPhone sales, according to a report by Reuters.

The tech giant's stock has surged approximately 16% since early November, adding \$500 billion to its market capitalisation. At the time of writing, Apple is valued at \$3.86 trillion.

This marks a significant lead

over competitors such as Nvidia and Microsoft. Analysts have pointed to Apple's integration of OpenAI's ChatGPT across its devices earlier this month as a key factor in boosting sentiment, as per the report.

Apple's fiscal first quarter revenue forecast indicates modest growth in the "low- to mid-single digits", raising questions about the momentum of the iPhone 16 series during the holiday shopping season. However, analysts expect a rebound in iPhone revenue by 2025, driven by expanding AI capabilities and wider geographic availability.



PHOTO: KEMING TAN/UNSPLASH

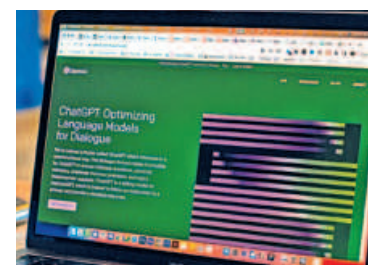
OpenAI to turn for-profit from non-profit

NEXT STEP

OpenAI announced on Friday that it plans to restructure as a public benefit corporation (PBC) - shifting to a for-profit company from its previous non-profit structure.

According to the company, this change is aimed at helping the company raise more money to fund its efforts in developing advanced AI systems, including artificial general intelligence (AGI)—AI that could potentially surpass human intelligence.

The new structure will turn OpenAI's for-profit branch into a



PBC based in Delaware. This type of company is required to balance making money with benefiting society. OpenAI says this move will make it easier to attract investors who need a simpler setup to invest

large amounts of money, as per a recent report by Reuters.

OpenAI's last funding round in October raised \$6.6 billion, valuing the company at \$157 billion. However, the funding came with conditions—OpenAI had to promise to remove profit limits for investors within two years.

Even with the restructuring, OpenAI's nonprofit branch will still play an important role. It will own a large share of the new PBC, based on evaluations by financial experts, making it one of the best-funded nonprofits ever, says the company.

Ankon seizes chance to showcase natural game

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahidul Islam Ankon had been on the national team radar for some time, and his big break came during South Africa's tour of Bangladesh this year after Jaker Ali Anik suffered a concussion. Fresh off the back of a ton in the National Cricket League, he did not quite capitalise on the two innings he played against the Proteas. Yet, he was drafted into the Test squad against the West Indies.

In the tour match, Ankon demonstrated that his 2,078 first-class runs were not in vain, showing his ability to graft and stick to the crease. There were some clean hits during that match in Antigua, and even though he did not make the playing eleven in the Tests, his power-hitting yesterday in the Bangladesh Premier League proved to be the difference for Khulna Tigers against Chittagong Kings in Mirpur.

He came to the crease in the 15th over after the departure of Afif Hossain. With his side aiming for a substantial score, acceleration was the need of the hour, and in his 22 ball innings, laced with six sixes, Ankon delivered just that.

After hitting Shamim Hossain for back-to-back sixes, he took on pacer Shoriful Islam, hitting three sixes in the 17th over, which yielded 20 runs. In Shoriful's next over, he pounced again, completing his fifty in just 18 deliveries.



In doing so, Ankon recorded the fastest fifty by a Bangladeshi batter in the BPL, overtaking Rony Talukdar. He also equalled Liton Das's record for the fastest fifty by a Bangladeshi in recognised T20s, matching the 18-ball fifty Liton scored against Ireland in 2023. What made Ankon's feat even more impressive was that he achieved it in the death overs with a softer ball.

Khulna coach Talha Jubair explained the rationale behind selecting Ankon for the team.

"When we took Ankon, we had it in our minds that he has the ability to score runs quickly," Talha said.

Ankon had spent the last three BPL seasons with the star-studded Comilla Victorians, often struggling for opportunities. However, he seized his chance yesterday, coming in ahead of Pakistan's Mohammad Nawaz.

"In last year's BPL, he would come at the end and get quick runs. This helped us [pick him] as he took 180 scores towards 200 or even more. Ankon worked on his power-hitting and his confidence level is there for all to see," remarked the former Bangladesh pacer.

Ankon finished unbeaten on 59 off 22 balls, and for Talha, the difference was that Ankon stuck to his "natural game".

"We had the belief given the mentality that he has shown in practice... One shouldn't get out of their natural game," Talha said.



Miraz's 'big heartedness' in time out retraction

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) almost witnessed its first time out dismissal yesterday in the match between Khulna Tigers and Chittagong Kings.

Khulna captain Mehedi Hasan Miraz appealed for time out against Chittagong batter Tom O'Connell after he was late to the middle and not ready to face the bowler inside the allotted two minutes.

The on-field umpire gave O'Connell out but Miraz then had a change of heart and recalled the batter, who then proceeded to get dismissed for a golden duck.

For opposition skipper Mohammad Mithun, Miraz calling the batter back was a show of great sportsmanship.

"Miraz gave an example of his big heartedness and you have to give him credit. In a T20 match, this shouldn't happen as the batter needs to be ready. He [O'Connell] was late in getting ready, maybe he didn't expect that the wickets would fall so quickly," Chittagong skipper Mithun said.

"It's a rule in cricket. If you don't go out in time, the fielding side will appeal. You have to give credit to Miraz for retracting it."

Faruque's venture with wickets

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed made a guest appearance in commentary yesterday



Shahid Afridi, Pakistani legend and mentor of Chittagong Kings, watches his team in action against Khulna Tigers yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

during the first match and later spoke with reporters at the press box about what instruction he gave the groundsmen regarding preparing wickets in BPL.

The BCB president said he relayed specific instructions to the groundsmen upon watching the wickets at St Kitts

during Bangladesh's recent Caribbean tour.

"The wicket there [St Kitts] was better than a cement wicket. Batters could play shots so effortlessly," Faruque told the reporters.

"I told the groundsmen I want to see

good wickets in BPL. If the wicket is good, the bowlers learn how to bowl on good wickets. There is some lateral movements on this pitch. The grass on it is 2.5mm. otherwise else it will turn and become slower.

"We saw a 200+ today [yesterday]... there are runs in the wicket. It's better if we can keep this trend going," he said."

One ball, 15 runs

Khulna Tigers pacer Oshane Thomas did not have the best of days yesterday, conceding 15 runs in just one delivery after overstepping multiple times and bowling a couple of wides.

Opening the bowling, he got a wicket in the first delivery but it was a no ball. The free hit was a dot and then he was hit for six off another no-ball. The sequence did not end there as he next bowled two wides and another no-ball which was hit for four as the scorecard read 15-0 after 0.1 overs.

He finished the over in 12 deliveries, conceding 18 and also picking up a wicket!

"I have never seen this before, 15 runs in a delivery. Obviously, bowlers go through bad days. But I feel there are lackings in his fitness as a fast bowler and he didn't find his rhythm. Maybe he didn't work on this specific problem [with run-up]. Still, it's very odd to concede 15 in one ball," Khulna coach Talha Jubair said.

Djokovic, Sabalenka win season-openers

AFP, Brisbane

Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka launched their Australian Open preparations with straight-sets wins on Tuesday at the Brisbane International but Nick Kyrgios lost on his return from injury.

Former world number one Djokovic, who is chasing a record 25th Grand Slam crown in January in Melbourne, eased to a 6-3, 6-3 victory over wildcard Rinky Hijikata.

The 37-year-old Serb broke Hijikata once in the first set and twice in the second for a comfortable 74-minute win.

Djokovic, now ranked seven in the world, was all business against the young Australian and always looked in control as he set up a second-round clash against fellow veteran Gael Monfils.

Australian firebrand Kyrgios lost in three tight sets in his first singles match since June 2023.

Kyrgios went down 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/3) to Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard in almost two and a half hours as serve dominated.

The 2022 Wimbledon finalist Kyrgios, 29, is making his comeback following wrist reconstruction and other injuries over the past couple of years.

Women's world number one Sabalenka kickstarted her bid to win the Australian Open for a third consecutive time with a straight-forward win after a sluggish start.

The Belarusian appeared bothered by the high humidity on Pat Rafter Arena in Brisbane, but after breaking Mexico's Zarazua at 5-4, the 26-year-old surged through the second set to wrap up the match 6-4, 6-0 in 65 minutes.

Kings, Fortis edge closer to Round 2 of Fed Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings and Fortis FC bolstered their chances of progressing to the second round of the Federation Cup after winning their respective Group A matches yesterday.

Kings notched up a hard-fought 3-2 win over Bangladesh Police FC in Dhaka, while Fortis posted an emphatic 3-0 win over Dhaka Wanderers Club in Cumilla.

These results kept Fortis FC at the top of Group A with seven points from three games, while second-placed Kings stay second with six points from as many games. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Police FC and Brothers Union, with one and three points respectively from two games, still have a chance to advance to the next round.

Kings got off to a sparkling start by taking the lead in the sixth minute at the Kings Arena, following a brilliant flick from Tapu Barman on a Miguel Ferreira corner.

Police, however, levelled the score in the next minute. Left-back Isa Faysal ran down the left flank to enter the box before releasing a low cross for Al Amin, who raced in to tap the ball between defenders Isaiah Ejeah and Saad Uddin.

Kings, though, restored their lead in the 11th minute when Miguel drove a left-

footer home inside before a close-range tap in from Jonathan in the 52nd minute gave them a 3-1 lead.

Two minutes later, Al Amin reignited the contest by reducing the margin with a marvellous goal. The 20-year-old winger, receiving a through pass from Quazem Kirmancee, ran past the onrushing goalkeeper Mehedi Hasan Srabon and, despite finding himself in a difficult position inside the box, he struck from a



tight angle to make it 3-2.

At Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium, Fortis took the lead through Joy Kumar just before the interval. Joy doubled the advantage in the 75th minute before Piash Ahmed Nova sealed the win in the 89th minute.

Midseason review of Premier League

AFP, Manchester

Liverpool have one hand on the Premier League title as 2024 draws to a close, while it was a first half of the season to forget for Manchester City and Manchester United. A season of unexpected twists has featured Nottingham Forest making an astonishing surge to second place, with United and Tottenham wallowing in the bottom half of the table.

No Klopp, no problem for Liverpool

The emotional departure of Jurgen Klopp had dampened expectations of a title challenge before the campaign began.

But Klopp had crucially rejuvenated his squad before passing the reins to Arne Slot, who has made a near flawless start.

The former Feyenoord boss has won 23 of his 27 matches in all competitions, which also includes a 100 percent record to top the Champions League and progress to the League Cup semifinals.

Mohamed Salah has been the catalyst with 17 goals and 13 assists in 18 Premier League games.

Arsenal, nine points back, appear their most serious challenger, but Liverpool are well on course to match Manchester United's record of 20 English top-



flight titles by May.

Man City's fall from grace

City's run of two wins in their last 14 matches has been the story of the season so far, with Pep Guardiola admitting their record streak of four consecutive titles will not extend to a fifth.

The defending champions are 14 points off the top, down in sixth and look in need of an overhaul if they are to return to their former glories.

The loss of Ballon d'Or winner Rodri to a season-ending knee injury in September has been pivotal to City's collapse, while Guardiola's defence has been ravaged by injuries.

Now they face a fight just to extend their 14-year run of qualifying for the Champions League.

Forest lead surprise packages

Forest only secured survival on the final day of last season but are enjoying a dream campaign under Nuno Espirito Santo.

Famous victories at Anfield and Old Trafford have been the highlights as the two-time European champions have their eyes on a return to the Champions League next season for the first time in 45 years.

The struggles of the traditional giants has also opened the door for other unlikely contenders for Europe. Bournemouth sit sixth, with Fulham in eighth.

Man Utd sink to new depths

Much has changed at Old Trafford over the past 12 months, but results have only got worse.



Since buying a minority stake in the club, Jim Ratcliffe has implemented a new sporting structure off the field, sacked manager Erik ten Hag and overseen another expensive spending spree in the transfer market.

United's eighth-placed finish last season was their worst for 34 years.

After 19 games they are 14th and closer to the relegation zone than the top four, with just seven points separating them from the bottom three.

Ruben Amorim has won just twice in the league since arriving from Sporting Lisbon in the worst start of any new United manager in nearly 100 years.

Promoted trio in trouble
For just the second time in the history of the Premier League, all three promoted sides were relegated last season.

That feat is on course to be repeated with Southampton, Ipswich and Leicester ending the year in the bottom three.

The trend raises concerns over the growing gulf between the Premier League, which boasts the world's most lucrative TV revenue streams, and the second-tier Championship.

Stop making excuses, don't delay election

Says Salahuddin, urges govt to take criticism gracefully



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP standing committee member Salahuddin Ahmed has said while a new political party is always welcome, it should be formed independently of government support.

"You'll be an advisor and do politics from within the government. And you'll form a party and waste time for the sake of it and keep making excuses until you are ready for elections — people understand what you are doing," he said yesterday while addressing

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



IT'S A NEW DAY, A NEW DAWN... As soon as the sun rises, Matur Rahman gets busy collecting date palm sap. After collecting the juice, he boils it down to produce jaggery, a popular winter delicacy, which he sells for Tk 350-400 per kg to buyers from all around Khulna city. The photo was taken in the Daulatpur area.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

The year of BNP's possible second coming

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

It is often said that patience pays off. For BNP, 2024 is the year its 17 years of perseverance started showing signs of bearing fruit.

However, 2024 started bleakly, with the Awami League helping itself to a fourth consecutive term in an election shunned by the BNP.

The BNP had banked that the Western nations would reject the results given the election was not free, fair and participatory and follow through with punitive measures. Ultimately, the Western world came around, stretching the BNP's bid to come to power by perhaps another five years.

But by the middle of the year, with soaring inflation, a fraught economy and routine reports of AL men amassing vast amounts of wealth illegally, the public sentiment against the Sheikh Hasina-led government began to sour and the BNP sensed an opening to jumpstart its activities.

Before the BNP could get back on the field to mobilise the aggrieved masses came the university students' protests centring on quota reform in government jobs.

The protests snowballed into a mass uprising and ultimately toppled the Hasina regime on August 5 — and turned the tide for the BNP. The party said at least 422 of its activists lost lives in the 36 days.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Get ready to bring reforms to education system

Jamaat ameer tells Chhatra Shibir; Sarjis says Shibir directly backed July uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday urged Islami Chhatra Shibir to prepare for a "new battle" for reforming the country's education system.

He described the initiative as crucial to addressing the "substandard and purposeless education system" in Bangladesh.

"Education, being the nation's backbone, has been targeted the most. The current system lacks research, excellence, morality, and alignment with global standards. Everything has been destroyed."

He made the remarks as the chief guest at a members' council organised by Chhatra Shibir at the Suhrawardy Udyan.

The event was inaugurated by Md Musleh Uddin, father of Ali Raihan, organising secretary of Rajshahi Metropolitan Islami Chhatra Shibir,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Bangladesh thriving in meat, fish production

PINAKI ROY and SUKANTA HALDER

Bangladesh is now in a comfortable position in fish and meat production, bringing comfort to the government in ensuring food security.

For instance, the country has moved up from third to second place globally in freshwater fish production, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024 report.

Bangladesh produced 1.32 million tonnes (13.22 lakh tonnes) of freshwater fish, accounting for 11.7 percent of global production, it said.

The growth came particularly in the last two years thanks to the expanded production of species such as hilsa, pangas, boal and air.

Bangladesh also leads 11 countries in hilsa production, thanks to government measures.

In the 2002-03 season, hilsa production slumped to 1.99 lakh tonnes, creating a nationwide crisis of the fish. This prompted the government to take on a project to conserve jatka fish in 2004.

In the 2022-23 season, hilsa production reached 5.71 lakh metric tonnes, which is about 12 percent of Bangladesh's total fish production.

Globally, the country ranks 8th in Crustacean (crab and shrimp) production, 14th in coastal and marine fish production and fourth in Tilapia production, according to FAO data.

The government aims to produce 65 lakh tonnes of fish by 2030 and 85 lakh tonnes

FISH PRODUCTION EXPANDED CONSISTENTLY OVER THE DECADE (in lakh metric tonnes)

FY14	35.5
FY15	36.5
FY16	38.8
FY17	41.3
FY18	47.8
FY19	43.8
FY20	45.0
FY21	46.2
FY22	47.5
FY23	49.2
FY24	50.2

SOURCE: FISHERIES AND LIVESTOCK MINISTRY

by 2041.

In the 2023-24 season, fish production was 50.2 lakh tonnes.

The daily average fish intake per capita has increased to 67.8 gm, exceeding the daily per capita demand of 60 gm.

Meanwhile, livestock production has also risen by 24 percent in the last decade to 4.53 crore animals, as per data from the Department of Livestock Services.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

'MARCH FOR UNITY' 11 injured as students and locals clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

At least 11 people, including eight students, were injured in a clash between students and locals over overtaking on the Dhaka-Khulna highway in Bagerhat's Mollahat upazila yesterday morning.

The students from Khulna were on their way to Dhaka to participate in the "March for Unity" programme. They were travelling on a bus in a convoy of 25.

The incident, which occurred near the Madrasa Ghat area around 11:30am, disrupted traffic on the highway for about two hours.

Witnesses said the bus carrying the students attempted to overtake another one. When the bus ahead refused to leave space, the students became angry.

At one point, both buses pulled over in the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Uncertainty over Chinmoy's legal representation

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

With the bail hearing in a sedition case set for January 2, uncertainty looms over the legal representation of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari.

The complications arose after a lawyer named Saiful Islam Alif was killed amid clashes between Chinmoy's supporters and police in the court area when Chinmoy was denied bail on November 26.

Saiful's father later filed a murder case, while his brother started a case on charges related to explosives, attacks on justice-seekers and vandalism. Police also filed three cases and arrested dozens of people over the deadly violence.

Many of the nearly 60 counsels who had argued for Chinmoy during the hearing on November 26 have been made accused in the case filed by Saiful's brother.

The Daily Star contacted six of these lawyers and another who stood for Chinmoy.

They said that although there is no direct threat, they would not represent Chinmoy in court on January 2 since they came under attack on social media.

Chattogram District Bar Association said it asked its members not to defend the accused in the Saiful murder case, but there was no bar on them to represent the accused in any other case.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PHOTO: BCB

Pace sensation Nahid Rana celebrates a wicket during Rangpur Riders' 34-run win over Sylhet Strikers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Rana starred with four wickets for 27 runs, removing Sylhet's key batters to restrict them to 121 for nine after Rangpur posted 155 for six.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Electrical spark triggered fire at Secretariat

Finds probe body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fire at a building of the Secretariat last week originated from an electrical spark, according to the preliminary findings of the government committee formed to investigate the incident.

These findings were revealed during a press conference at the state guesthouse Jamuna yesterday.

Earlier, the committee submitted its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

The committee members also disclosed that no evidence of use of explosives was found during primary investigation. They also said the structural damage caused by the fire is repairable.

Senior Secretary Nasimul Ghani of the home ministry, who is leading the probe, said the investigation involved multiple teams, including specialists from Buet, Fire Service and Civil Defence,

আমরা শোকাহত

আলহাজ্ব আবু নাসের মোহাম্মদ ইয়াহিয়া

আমরা অত্যন্ত দুঃখের সঙ্গে জানাচ্ছি যে, আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক পিএলসি এর সাবেক ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান, পূর্বাচল স্টিল মিলস লিঃ এর চেয়ারম্যান ও ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক, পূর্বাচল ডিলার্স লিঃ, পূর্বাচল এক্সক্লুসিভ লিঃ এবং বেকো ফিড লিঃ এর ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক আলহাজ্ব আবু নাসের মোহাম্মদ ইয়াহিয়া; ৩১ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪, মঙ্গলবার দুপুরে রাজধানীর একটি হাসপাতালে ইন্তেকাল করেছেন (ইয়ালাল্লাহি ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহি রাজিউন)। মৃত্যুকালে তাঁর বয়স হয়েছিল ৫৪ বছর। তিনি স্ত্রী, ২ ছেলে, ১ মেয়ে সহ বহু আত্মীয় স্বজন ও অসংখ্য গুণগ্রাহী রেখে গেছেন।

এই মহান উদ্যোক্তা ও সমাজসেবক ব্যক্তিত্বের বিদায়ে আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক পরিচালনা পর্ষদ এবং সমগ্র আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক পরিবার গভীরভাবে শোকাহত। আমরা তাঁর শোকসন্তপ্ত পরিবারের প্রতি সমবেদনা প্রকাশ করছি। মহান আল্লাহ রাক্বুল আলামীন মরণহুমকে জামাতুল ফেরদৌস নসিব করুন, আমীন।

আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.