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Urban-rural
digital divide
widens

B1



Avian guests
flock to
Brahmaputra

P5



Russia
launches drone
attack on Kyiv

P8



No black and
white in BPL,
only grey areas

P15



Army won't
interfere in
politics

Says Gen Waker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Having learnt its lessons from the past, the army resolves to stay out of politics, army chief General Waker Uz Zaman has said.

"Meddling in politics is harmful for the army. Such things have happened in the past and we have learned from them," Gen Waker said in an exclusive interview with the daily

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Remittance hit all-time high in 2024

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Expatriate Bangladeshis sent home a record \$26.9 billion, up 23 percent year-on-year, in a development that will bring a huge sigh of relief to policymakers as they endeavour to shore up strained dollar stockpile.

The inflows saw a spike after the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, with more than \$2 billion coming in every month since, as per the latest statistics published by the Bangladesh Bank.

In December, a record \$2.63 billion came in, up 33 percent from a year earlier.

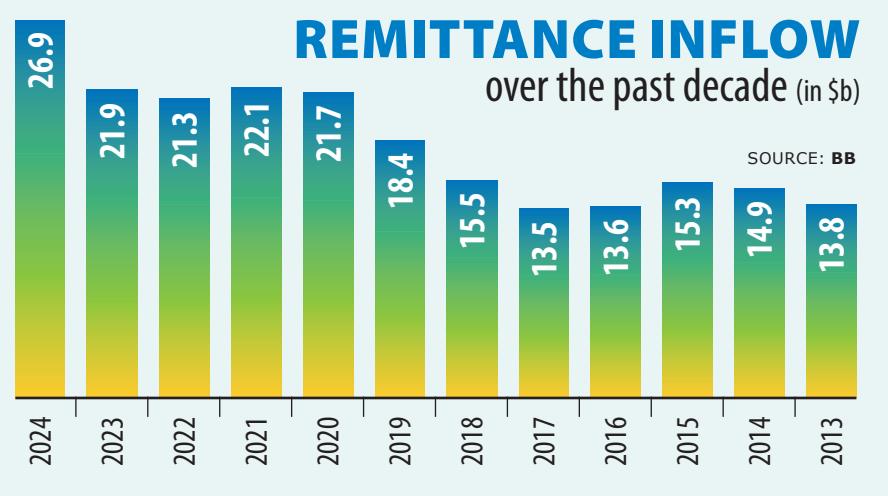
A large portion of migrant workers had declared emotionally that they would not send remittance through formal channels amid the tenure of the previous government -- they have been sending

office. The flexible exchange rate or the narrow difference of exchange rate between the formal and informal markets accounts for the spike in remittance upturn, he said, adding that the repatriation of export earnings has increased.

In 2023, the exchange rate gap between the formal and informal channels was Tk 7 to Tk 10 per dollar. Last year, the gap came down to Tk 3 to Tk 5 per US dollar, industry insiders said.

Rahman hopes that the external sector will not face huge pressure in the coming days due to the rising trend of remittance and export, the two main sources of foreign currency.

"The signs are already there that the external sector is making a turnaround," said Hussain, who was part of the



remittance after the political changeover," said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank.

Previously, there was a growing demand for hundi, an illegal cross-border transaction mechanism. Typically, the demand for hundi rises when a large volume of money is siphoned out from the country.

This stopped after the interim government took charge, said Rahman, also a former chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh, a forum of banks' MDs.

"The business people and politically influential individuals who siphoned off money from the country are now in jail, some are fugitives and some are in hiding," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka

12 member committee that prepared a white paper on the Bangladesh economy.

The repatriation of export earnings has become more frequent now, he added.

The growing trend of dollar inflows will give a breathing space to reserves, which crossed the \$21 billion-mark after several months despite making regular payments for imports.

When Ahsan H Mansur took charge of the central bank, the overdue payment for letters of credit was at more than \$2 billion. This has now come down to only \$400 million, according to BB officials.

In December, Islami Bank received the highest amount of remittance (\$366 million), followed by Agrani (\$264 million), Janata (\$147 million), BRAC Bank (\$193 million), and Trust Bank (\$184 million), central bank data showed.

Govt's failure to prioritise reforms may embolden conspirators

Says Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

If the government fails to prioritise its reform initiatives, conspirators will seize the opportunity to destroy the spirit of the 2024 mass uprising, BNP leader Tarique Rahman has warned.

Speaking at Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal's 46th founding anniversary event virtually from London yesterday, he said plotters already made repeated attempts to destabilise the country.

The BNP acting chairman urged everyone to remain vigilant so that imprudent decisions cannot destroy the hopes created by the uprising.

"The pro democratic forces do not want to see the failure of the current government, which was founded on the blood of thousands of students. This is why the BNP has continued to support this government as a pro people political party."

Tarique said the BNP considers the debate over prioritising reforms or elections as "ill-motivated and malicious".



Wait for textbooks gets longer

Most schoolchildren return empty-handed on first day of year; authorities say books to reach all by Jan 30

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ARAFAT RAHMAN

Most students did not receive new textbooks on the first day of the year mainly because of printing and shipping delays.

Only 4 crore against a need of 9.19 crore copies of primary school books, and 1.9 crore against 30.96 crore secondary books have been delivered, said officials of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).

Siddiq Zobair, senior secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division, yesterday said secondary school students will get all of their textbooks by January 30.

Our correspondents from 15 districts report students of classes 1, 2 and 3 received all of their textbooks, classes 4 and 5 got two or three new textbooks, and no secondary school student received full sets of books.

Teachers of at least five primary schools in Cumilla gave out old books to 4th and 5th graders so that they would not feel disappointed.

In Narayanganj, no student of class 7 and upwards received any book while the 6th graders were given textbooks only on four subjects.

Education Ministry and NCTB officials say printing made almost no progress in the tumultuous months of July and August

and caused delays. The move to an older curriculum, last-minute changes, hiring of a contractor, and a shortage of paper have also led to the fiasco.

Education Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud apologised to the students and parents while announcing that PDF versions of the books were available on the NCTB website.

He also promised that the children will find

In Narayanganj, no student of class 7 and upwards received any book while the 6th graders were given textbooks only on four subjects.

the books more beautiful and durable when they receive them.

DISAPPOINTMENT

Raabsa Islam, who is in class 6 at a school in the capital's Mirpur, returned home empty-handed. Her teachers asked her to read the PDF books.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Dhaka-Delhi ties won't get stuck on single issue

Says foreign adviser; set to visit China on Jan 20

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain today said maintaining good ties with three powers -- India, China and the United States -- and addressing the Rohingya issue are among the government's top priorities in 2025.

He also said that no single issue will hinder the Dhaka-Delhi ties.

"Resolving the Rohingya crisis, maintaining good relations with the three important countries and creating a more stable position on economic and diplomatic fronts are the priorities," he said while talking to reporters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Asked what will be the impact on Dhaka-Delhi ties

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Beside a wall adorned with the graffiti of the July uprising, a homeless man warms himself by a small fire on a cold winter night. The photo was taken recently near Dhaka Residential Model College in Mohammadpur.

Gap widening between BNP, interim govt

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Unresolved issues, including delays in declaring a polls roadmap and resolving politically motivated cases, are creating a distance between the BNP and the interim government.

Some comments made by government advisers and the BNP's apprehension of a new "government-backed political party" in the works are making things even worse, party insiders said.

To narrow the gap, the BNP has been calling for dialogue with the interim government since it assumed office.

The BNP has been sharpening its criticism recently.

The party says it is not happy with the draft of the cyber protection ordinance. It believes the new law grants law enforcers excessive powers.

The party said the government failed to set a clear election roadmap and provide a timeline for reforms.

It has also expressed concern over the chief adviser's proposal to set the minimum voter age to 17 and said such a move could delay the polls further.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir voiced disappointment after Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in one of his addresses to the nation did not specify, according to the BNP, when the polls would be held.

He said that there is a public perception that the interim government is intentionally delaying the election process.

"We can't delay the election for the sake of reforms. An

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Man lands in jail for vandalising idols, theft

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A man was sent to jail yesterday on charges of vandalising idols and looting money, gold ornaments from the Sri Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu temple in Moulvibazar's Barlekh.

Suspect Zakkir Hossain Tipu, 31, was arrested shortly after the incident, said Barlekh Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Abdul Qayum.

Kripasindhu Dutta, president of the temple (Sevashram) in the Aditya Mahal area, filed a case with the police station.

The OC said Barlekh police detained the suspect within three hours of the crime. Some of the stolen money and ornaments have been recovered.

Tipu confessed to the crime during initial questioning, the OC said, adding that a court later sent him to jail.

Tipu entered the Sevashram premises during morning prayers. As he attempted to enter the temple, the temple priest, Leela Rani Dutta, stopped him and questioned whether he had bathed according to the temple's protocol.

Tipu then struck Leela on the head and vandalised two idols of Mahaprabhu. He also looted cash from the donation box and gold and silver ornaments from the idols before fleeing on a motorcycle.

Dhaka-Delhi ties won't get stuck on single issue

FROM PAGE 1
if India refuses to return former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Touhid said the two countries have many bilateral issues and this is just one of them.

"We have many issues of mutual interest. We will deal with those simultaneously," said the adviser.

On December 23, Dhaka sent a diplomatic letter (note verbale) to Delhi seeking the extradition of Hasina. The interim government is yet to receive a reply from the Indian side.

BILATERAL VISIT TO CHINA

Meanwhile, the foreign adviser said he would pay a visit to China on January 20 to discuss bilateral issues.

"Our relationship with all the three countries [India, China, US] is important. I am going there on China's invitation," he said.

Touhid, however, did not go into details about the issues to be discussed during his visit to China.

He said Foreign Secretary Md Jashim Uddin has convened an inter-ministerial meeting to fix the agenda. TIES WITH INDIA, CHINA, US Touhid said maintaining strong ties with India, China and the United States are Bangladesh's priorities.

"We want good relations with our neighbour. We want good relations with the United States. We also want good relations with China," he said, referring to mutual interest Bangladesh shares with these three countries.

Touhid hoped that ties with these countries will improve and strengthen by the end of the year.

Touhid said the country can expect better days as some sort of stability has returned to Bangladesh after the recent turmoil.

He also said things will become smoother in terms of economic and foreign relations.

Touhid said the Rohingya issue will be very challenging considering the ground reality. He said their aim is to make sure the Rohingyas can return to Myanmar with safety and dignity.

ACC seeks info on govt employees

FROM PAGE 16
Banking Companies Act, 1991, according to the letter.

The laws are applicable to all government employees, it said.

Meanwhile, the ACC has found evidence of unexplained wealth amounting to Tk 146 crore belonging to former law minister Anisul Hu-

He acquired the wealth from December 1, 2014, to December 16, 2024, by abusing his power, according to the statement of a case lodged yesterday by ACC Deputy Director Md Jahangir Alam at its integrated district office in Dhaka.

Besides, evidence of suspicious transactions of Tk 665 crore has been uncovered.

He deposited Tk 349.15 crore and withdrew Tk 316.49 crore from 29 bank accounts through shady transactions, according to the case statement.

In another development, the corruption watchdog filed a case against ex-Awami League lawmaker Shahidul Islam Bakul on charges of possessing illegal assets worth Tk 2.27 crore and conducting unusual and suspicious transactions of Tk 29.14 through eight bank accounts.



Workers unloading goods from a truck blocking the Sadarghat Ghati Road near Ahsan Manzil. The road sees persistent traffic congestion due to this activity. Additionally, the footpath remains occupied during the loading and unloading process, further hindering pedestrian movement. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Gap widening between BNP, interim govt

FROM PAGE 1
unelected government cannot stay for a long time under the pretext of reform," Fakhrul said.

On December 23, Fakhrul at a rally in Thakurgaon said people would have to take to the streets again for the right to food and vote.

BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said, "The most important issue is the upcoming election, but there has been no discussion with us on this matter."

The party also came down heavily on the way the government was handling politically motivated cases.

Several BNP leaders pointed out that cases against Prof Yunus were quickly withdrawn, but those filed against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and acting chairman Tarique Rahman remain unresolved.

Moazzem Hossain Alal, an adviser to the BNP chairperson, claimed that the government positioned itself as pawns in a political game.

Govt's failure to prioritise reforms

FROM PAGE 1

He explained that reforms are an inevitable and continuous process to make the existing system more relevant and up-to-date. "Similarly, elections are the most important and effective way to make the democratic system sustainable and institutionalised."

He said the opportunity to exercise the right to vote through elections ensures the political power of both the state and the people. "BNP believes that if the political and economic power of the people in the state is not secured, democracy, human rights, or political reforms will ultimately not be sustainable."

Tarique said the important reform initiatives taken by the government are undeniably needed. "But if the daily suffering of the people is ignored under the guise of these reform programmes, the people may be forced to speak out in anger about the government's reform initiatives."

The BNP leader pointed out that people were already questioning what steps the government took to dismantle the market syndicate created during the Awami League regime and bring the prices of essentials within the purchasing capacity of the people.

He also questioned why people still have to crowd the courts daily to deal with the lakhs of cases filed during the previous government's rule.

Mentioning that there is no reason to be worried if a few more political

The party is also concerned that the interim government may support the formation of a new political party by leaders of the Students Against Discrimination.

BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed said, "A new political party is always welcome, but it should not be formed with government support."

He said, "Being an adviser you 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."

The BNP held discussions with leaders of like-minded parties on December 21 last year and expressed concerns over the government's potential involvement in forming a new political party.

It recently criticised comments of advisers Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan and Syeda Rizwana Hasan. The

parties emerge in Bangladesh, Tarique said those who fear the people's rights are spreading confusion about the next national election.

"More new political parties may emerge in the country, if necessary. This is a democratic practice and there is nothing to be upset about. BNP welcomes all democratic initiatives that serve the needs of the state and politics," he said.

Addressing the discussion at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, Tarique said the BNP has always favoured the practice of multi-party politics and diverse opinions.

"BNP's stance is very clear -- the people will give their verdict through the election, determining which party they accept or reject. But those afraid to face this verdict or who have ulterior motives create confusion about the arrangement of election," he observed.

As the "chief of the Awami League's mafia regime" has fled the country, he said, it is now time for every political party to make efforts to transform Bangladesh into a democratic and humane country, free from discrimination, in line with people's desires, Tarique said.

To achieve this goal, the BNP leader said, the political parties must now present their respective political programmes and ideologies to the people, seeking public support in accordance with democratic practice.

The BNP's student front JCD

two had said that the politicians in the past failed to carry out reforms.

Some demands made by the Students Against Discrimination, like "proclamation of July uprising," banning the Awami League, and removing the president, irked the BNP.

According to party sources, Fakhrul met Prof Yunus on Sunday and warned that making the proclamation without consulting political parties could lead to chaos and instability.

The BNP believes that the label "proclamation" should be avoided in any announcement regarding the mass uprising.

The party's top leaders want such a declaration to acknowledge not only the July uprising but also the struggles and sacrifices made by people over the last 16 years.

According to party leaders, the BNP is determined to ensure that the next election is held this year.

observed the day with various activities, including placing a wreath at the grave of party founder Ziaur Rahman, organising a blood donation camp at the IEB, and holding an inter-hall badminton competition at Dhaka University.

Addressing the programme, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir hoped that the government would hold a credible election by completing the necessary electoral and financial reforms.

He said BNP seeks reforms, as the party was founded on the principles of state reforms and the introduction of multi-party democracy.

"It is not true that BNP does not want reforms. We have presented reform proposals at various times. Reform is an ongoing process, but elections cannot be delayed in the name of reforms," he said.

Fakhrul said the persisting problems in the country can be resolved only by establishing an elected government through a fair and acceptable election.

The BNP leader also said various conspiracies are being hatched against the country and against the BNP both at home and abroad, similar to the past. "No conspiracy can split or weaken the BNP like in the past."

He urged BNP and JCD leaders and workers to confront all conspiracies with their intellect. "We must mount strong resistance against all conspiracies."

stayed in the alcove until the gunfire stopped, came out into the street, and came across a lot of -- several people who had been hit, (we) wanted to see what we could do to help," he said.

"People we came across were unfortunately deceased."

New Orleans is one of the most heavily visited destinations in the United States and the incident came shortly before the city hosts the Sugar Bowl, a major college football game featuring teams from the University of Georgia and Notre Dame.

Policing had already been heavy over the New Year's holiday, according to the city, as authorities braced for big crowds.

The city police department had announced staffing at "100 percent, with an additional 300 officers assisting from partner law enforcement agencies," including on horseback and using unmarked units.

"We were in the middle of the road and managed to run off the road onto the sidewalk and into the doorway of a building for cover. We did hear gunfire, saw police running," he said.

"Once the gunfire stopped, we

20 migrants missing off Italy's Lampedusa after shipwreck

AFP, Rome

Twenty migrants were missing Tuesday off the coast of Italy's Lampedusa in a shipwreck in which seven people, including an eight-year-old Syrian child, were rescued, news media reported.

Among those missing were five women and three children, Italian news agency ANSA reported, with the mother of the eight-year-old among those unaccounted for.

Searches were under way by the coast guard and police, who were not immediately available for comment.

The boat had departed from Libya and those rescued were two Syrian men, two migrants from Sudan, two from Egypt and the child, according to ANSA.

"They didn't manage to touch the ground," Lampedusa Mayor Filippo Mannino was quoted as saying by ANSA.

"I hope so much, I say it every time, but today, coinciding with the end of the year, it's a very strong hope, that this tragedy will really be the last," Mannino said.

Last month, Italy's government pledged to push ahead with a contested plan to detain asylum seekers in centres built in Albania and said it would work with allies on "innovative" ideas to curb flows of irregular migrants into Europe.

Wait for textbooks gets longer

FROM PAGE 1

"I am sad. I wanted to read the new books on the first day," she said.

Parul Akhter, a class 8 student in Char Kulaghat village, Lalmonirhat, also didn't receive any book.

"How will I study if I don't have the books?" she asked.

Harichand Biswas, headteacher of Kalibati Secondary School in Dumuria, Rangpur, said none of his 206 students received books.

In Chattogram, 5.7 lakhs copies were distributed against a demand of 1.7 crore, said Uttam Khisa, secondary education officer in the district. At primary schools, 17.50 lakh were given against a demand of 44 lakh.

In Sunamganj, no textbooks had been delivered to secondary schools. In Sylhet, seven out of 13 upazilas received no secondary school books, said Jahangir Alam, education officer in the district.

In Khulna, only 1.54 lakh primary textbooks out of 10 lakh reached. In Lalmonirhat, most of the primary school books had been delivered, while secondary schools received nothing.

Primary and secondary schools in Panchagarh received 20,548 books against a demand for 6 lakh; in Dinajpur, 5 lakh against 19.56 lakh; in Nilphamari, 7.49 lakh against 18 lakh; in Pirojpur, primary schools got 27,000 against 6 lakh and secondary schools got 5 lakh against 11 lakh.

Mostofa Alam, secondary-level education officer in Rajapur upazila

of Jhalakathi, said only 9,000 copies of Bangla, English, and maths had been received against a need for 3 lakh.

WHAT CAUSED THE DEBACLE

"The decision not to print books abroad added complexity. Additionally, the number of books increased this year due to curriculum changes," Adviser Wahiduddin said.

"We had a short time, and many books had to be revised to ensure political impartiality. We also prioritised high quality printing, paper, and cover."

NCTB Chairman Prof Reazul Hassan said the process began in September, which was already late.

Sources said that in 2024, around 31 textbooks were printed for this year. After the July mass uprising and the formation of the interim government, it was decided that the curriculum must be changed. This increased the number of required books.

A number of old contents had to be replaced with new ones, especially about the July mass uprising.

And to accommodate the changes, new vendors had to be hired as late as December, NCTB officials said, adding that the process usually ends by June or July and the books get ready for shipment by October, and students get brand new books on January 1.

[Correspondents from the districts contributed to this report]

Army won't interfere in politics

FROM PAGE 1

Prothom Alo published yesterday.

The army must not interfere in politics, he said.

The four-star general was answering a question hinting that there were apprehensions within the people about the army's interest in politics and that this had happened before.

The army boss said the army's interference in politics has never been good for them. "So, it is my pledge that during my tenure as army chief, I will not let the military interfere in the political affairs."

He continued saying, "We wholeheartedly believe only politicians can replace politicians. The army can't be an alternative to politicians."

When the newspaper pointed out that the army's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) had interfered in political affairs before, the army chief noted that the DGFI was an autonomous agency, and said the army did not want to do anything of that sort. "We won't do anything that damages the army's reputation."

Gen Waker recalled his experience from the 2007-2008 military-controlled caretaker government, saying the 1/11 event, which had led to the formation of the caretaker administration, was "not so pleasing".

"Long-term deployment in the field creates the risk of army personnel breaching discipline. Although the number of such incidents is very low, the occurrence of such incidents is

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'Their financial security state's responsibility'

Says Yunus about families of uprising victims

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the ensuring financial security of the families of the martyrs and the injured in the students' people's uprising is the state's responsibility.

"It is the responsibility of the state to ensure medical care for the wounded fighters. We will do that. The government will ensure their financial security," he said while inaugurating the distribution of health cards for them at the State Guest House Jamuna.

Yunus said having this health card means that cardholders will get treatment at any government hospital in the country at any time, be it after a year or two. "This card will always be there."

He said they also have to think about the mental and social rehabilitation of the fighters injured in July.

According to the Ministry of Health, health cards will be distributed to specific districts every week among those injured in the July uprising.

'Don't try to hijack ownership of the movement'

Says BNP leader Khasru

STAFF REPORT

BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said a vested quarter is trying to "hijack" the uprising and warned that people who are tussling over the "ownership" of it to stay in power will face the same fate as Sheikh Hasina.

"New narratives of the movement are coming up. They want to hijack the movement," he said at a rally in Chattogram's Sholoshahar marking the 46th founding anniversary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

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Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus inaugurated the health card distribution programme of the Ministry of Health to ensure free health treatment to the victims of the July uprising in the country's all public hospitals. The chief adviser launched the programme at the State Guest House Jamuna yesterday evening. At the event, Prof Yunus handed over health cards to two students, who were injured in the uprising.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

Workplace accidents claimed 707 lives in 2024

Says BILS report; transport sector sees highest deaths, agriculture second

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SECTOR-WISE BREAKDOWN

Transport	273
Agriculture	102
Construction	91
Rickshaw pullers	43
Migrants	38
Day Labourers	32

At least 707 workers were killed and 292 injured in workplace accidents in 2024, with transport workers suffering the highest number of fatalities, according to the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS).

Additionally, 229 workers faced workplace torture, resulting in 113 deaths.

Based on an analysis of newspaper

reports from January 1 to December 15, BILS released a report yesterday showing that 273 transport workers lost their lives in accidents.

The agriculture sector recorded 102 fatalities, the second highest, followed by the deaths of 91 construction workers, 43 rickshaw pullers, 38 migrant workers, and 32 day labourers.

Among the deceased, 705 were men

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3 more additional IGP sent into forced retirement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three additional inspectors general of police (IGPs) have been sent into forced retirement.

They are YM Belatur Rahman, additional IGP at the Police Telecom; Selim Md Jahangir, additional IGP at the Police Headquarters and Mallick Faqrul Islam, rector (additional IGP) at Police Staff College Bangladesh.

The Public Security Division of the home ministry issued three separate notifications in this regard on Tuesday.

According to the ministry circulars, signed by Senior Secretary Nasimul Ghani, the move was taken in public interest. The circulars invoked section 45 of the Public Service Act 2018.

PCJSS REPORT ON CHT
2024 saw over 200 incidents of rights violations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 200 incidents of human rights violations were committed last year in the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) by security forces, law enforcement agencies, communal and fundamentalist groups, Bangladeshi settlers, and land grabbers, according to the annual report of the Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) yesterday.

These incidents violated the human rights of 6,055 Jumma people, the report stated, adding that 21 individuals were killed, and 119 houses and shops were set on fire or looted.

Additionally, 2,314 acres of land were illegally occupied by external companies, influential individuals, and settlers.

In 2024, there was no improvement in the fragile overall situation of the CHT. On the contrary, the situation further deteriorated. No progress was made in implementing the CHT Peace Accord during the year. Instead, activities

These incidents violated the human rights of 6,055 Jumma people, the report stated, adding that 21 individuals were killed, and 119 houses and shops were set on fire or looted.

opposing the accord and harming the interests of the Jumma people were intensified," the report noted.

It added, "One of the most brutal and horrific incidents of 2024 was the violent communal attack, arson, and massacre against the Jumma people in September, as well as the burning down of 17 houses belonging to the Tripura community in Loma in December."

The report further said, "As with previous communal attacks, none of the individuals involved in these incidents were brought to justice, and no proper legal measures or accountability were ensured for these crimes."

The report added that no initiatives were taken to implement the CHT Peace Accord last year.

"Even after 27 years since the signing of the CHT Peace Accord, two-thirds of its provisions,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Nothing beats the warmth of a mother's embrace on a chilly Dhaka morning! Wrapped up snug and cozy, a child heads out with his mother to take on the day together. The photo was taken in Mohammadpur Bus Stand area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

2,229 families received financial assistance so far
Says July Shaheed Smriti Foundation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The families of 2,229 people killed or injured during the July uprising have received financial assistance from the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation, said its chief executive officer, Mir Mahbubur Rahman Snigdha.

While speaking at a press conference at his office yesterday, Snigdha said financial assistance for the families of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

267 excluded from 43rd BCS protest at Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Candidates who were excluded from the latest 43rd BCS gazette yesterday protested in front of the Secretariat, demanding their inclusion and issuance of a fresh gazette.

Despite successfully completing all stages of the BCS examination and receiving recommendations from the Public Service Commission (PSC), 267 candidates have been excluded from the gazette notification issued by the Ministry of Public Administration.

On December 30, the ministry issued a new gazette for the recruitment of candidates from the 43rd BCS. Among the recommended candidates by the PSC, 168 individuals were excluded from this gazette. The notification stated that 1,896 candidates recommended by the PSC have been appointed to entry-level positions in various cadres. These candidates are required to join by January 15.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

SC gets 55 complaints in 2 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court administration has received a total of 55 complaints from justice seekers through its helpline in the last two months regarding various irregularities including bribery, negligence, delayed service and misconduct, and taken appropriate action against the irregularities.

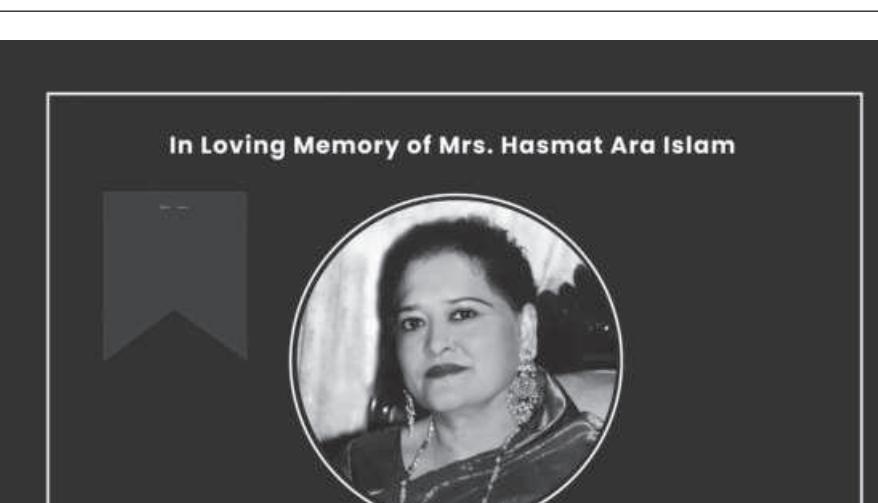
Out of the total complaints, 22 were lodged for receiving legal service in delay. However, all the complaints have already been settled and the officials and employees concerned have been held accountable, a SC press release said yesterday.

Besides, 33 complaints were received regarding various irregularities, bribery, negligence, misconduct, etc.

Out of these complaints, 12 were made against judges of district courts, three against officials and employees of the High Court Division, 12 against employees of district courts and six against lawyers.

Legal steps have already been taken to take appropriate action regarding those complaints.

The press release said 1,003 calls have been received regarding legal advice, case-related information and complaint submissions. Out of these, SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



With heavy hearts, we announce the departure of our cherished mother, Mrs. Hasmat Ara Islam, a steadfast pillar and devoted wife to the late Mr. M.N. Islam. (Inna illahi wa inna ilayhi raijun)

Mrs. Islam departed this world on 30th December, 2024, at 7:30 pm at United Hospital, Dhaka, Bangladesh, following a courageous battle with cardiac illness, surrounded by love and deep affection.

A visionary pioneer, she was the founding Director of Flora Limited. Alongside my late father, Mr. M.N. Islam, she played a crucial role in shaping this trailblazing IT Company since its inception in the early 1970s. Her unwavering commitment and gentle guidance left an indelible mark on all who had the fortune to work with her.

Her legacy of kindness and love endures through her four devoted children, eight adoring grandchildren, four cherished great-grandchildren, and the countless family members and friends whose lives she touched with grace and warmth.

We invite all who knew and loved her to join us in her memory. Her Kulkhan will be held at her residence, House-19, Road-47, Gulshan-2, Dhaka, following Magrib prayers at 6:00 pm on Friday, 3rd January, 2025. Your presence would be a true homage to the love and respect she garnered throughout her life.

We respectfully ask her family, friends, and well-wishers to grace this occasion with your cherished presence, as we gather to honor a life beautifully lived.

Mustafa Rafiqul Islam
Managing Director

FLORA TELECOM

FLORA SYSTEMS

Avian guests flock to Brahmaputra

S DILIP ROY, *Salmonirhat*

As the chill of winter settles over the Brahmaputra, a spectacular visitor graces its waters: the Chakoa, or Red Crested Pochard.

These migratory birds arrive from India each year, transforming the river basin in Kurigram into a lively sanctuary. Travelers and locals are treated to the breathtaking sight of flocks taking flight, their movements painting an ever-changing portrait against the serene backdrop of the Brahmaputra.

Shariful Islam, a boatman at Jatrapur Ghat, finds his daily commute enlivened by these seasonal guests. "During the monsoon, you won't find a single Chakoa bird here," he says. "But as winter begins, they come in flocks, filling the river basin with life."

For Shahadat Hossain, who travels by boat from Char Narayapur to Jatrapur daily, the Chakoa birds provide a welcome distraction during his 50-minute journey. "I see them at eight or nine spots along the way, searching for food in the water," he shares. "When the boat approaches, they rise in unison, their flocks filling the sky. It's a sight that stays with you."

The river basin, with its vast, scattered char areas, becomes a haven for these birds during winter.



Mobarak Hossain, a farmer from Char Bhagabatipur, says, "These birds spend the daylight hours hunting for food, then return to their nests in the evening. It's a routine we've come to associate with winter here," he explains.

Abdur Rashid, a schoolteacher and avid bird lover, said, "The char people never disturb the Chakoa birds. The Brahmaputra basin is adorned with their presence every winter. If you want to see these beautiful birds, this is where you need to be."

Kurigram District Livestock Officer Dr Habibur Rahman said locally called Chakoa, their proper name is the Red Crested Pochard, or Rangamuri. "These migratory birds come here at the start of winter in search of food, but they don't breed in Bangladesh."

Their journey across borders underscores the interconnectedness of ecosystems, with the Brahmaputra basin playing a vital role in their survival, he said.



Workers collect various types of harvested Aman rice from the fields, piling it up in the courtyard in front of the warehouses to dry in the sun. Depending on the variety, rice is purchased at prices ranging from Tk 1,100 to Tk 1,400 per maund. The photo was taken in the Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali district yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

North shivers in cold

STAR REPORT

Dense fog and biting cold winds have gripped the northern districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Panchagarh, Joypurhat, and Naogaon, causing immense suffering.

The Dinajpur Meteorological Office reported a temperature of 10.6 degrees Celsius at 6:00am yesterday, marking one of the season's coldest mornings.

Later in the day, the temperature was recorded at 11.1 degrees, which dropped further within three hours.

Although no official cold wave has been declared, chilling conditions are severely affecting daily wage earners and marginalised communities.

Md Tofazzal Hossain, officer-in-charge of the Dinajpur Meteorological Observatory, said, "Dense fog often results in slightly higher recorded temperatures, but the cold feels harsher due to

persistent fog and icy winds."

Abdur Razzak, a day labourer from Dinajpur, said, "The cold is unbearable, especially with the icy winds cutting through the fog. I have to leave for work late because of the weather, but staying home isn't an option as my family depends on me."



In Panchagarh, residents are resorting to lighting straw fires to combat the cold.

Roads and highways remain blanketed in thick fog, forcing vehicles to operate with headlights even during the day. Similar scenes are reported in Joypurhat and

Naogaon. Farmers and farm labourers report being unable to work for long in the fields due to the intense chill, particularly in the mornings and at night.

In Rangpur Division, the minimum temperature was recorded at 11 degrees Celsius in Kurigram and 11.5 degrees in Lalmonirhat at 9:00am yesterday.

Villagers in these districts, especially those living on the Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dharla, Dudhukumar, and Gangadhar river basins, are enduring severe suffering due to the cold.

Amina Bewa, 62, a resident of Fulgach village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila said, "We are suffering immensely due to the cold and fog. I don't have enough warm clothing and must rely on burning straw at home for warmth."

Day labourer Meser Ali, 55, from the Char Jorgach area in Chilmari

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

32 BNP men discharged from vandalism case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday discharged 32 BNP leaders and activists from a case filed over vandalising vehicles and assaulting policemen in 2018.

BNP Executive Committee Member Habibur Rashid Habib, its Dhaka South City Member Secretary Rafiqul Alam Majnu, Jatiyatobadi Jubo Dal President Sultan Salauddin Tuku, and its former president Saiful Alam Nirob are among the accused.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mahbubul Islam passed the order after their lawyers submitted petitions for discharging them from the case.

According to the case statement, a group of BNP leaders and activists led by Tuku gathered in front of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital's Paltan around 1:45pm on April 23, 2018 protesting the conviction of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case on February 8, 2018.

At one stage, they obstructed people, vandalised vehicles and prevented policemen from discharging their duties, leaving three policemen injured.

THE SUNDARBANS

2-month ban on crab harvesting begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

The Forest Department has imposed a two-month ban on crab harvesting in the Sundarbans, effective from January 1 through February 28.

The ban is designed to protect the breeding season of crabs and preserve the biodiversity of the mangrove forest.

During this period, catching, selling, storing, or transporting crabs from the rivers and canals of the Sundarbans is strictly prohibited.

According to the Forest Department, the breeding season is a critical time for crabs to lay eggs, and unregulated harvesting disrupts their reproduction, threatening the ecological balance of the region.

Mihir Kumar De, divisional forest officer of Khulna, said, "Crabs are not only economically significant but also essential for maintaining the Sundarbans' food chain. Protecting them during their breeding season is vital for the long-term health of the ecosystem."

The Sundarbans, home to 14 species of crabs in Bangladeshi waters, supports nearly 10,000 crab harvesters annually. These harvesters operate under permits issued by forest offices in the eastern and western Sundarbans.



রাষ্ট্রীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ
শাহজাদপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জ

স্থানক: রবিবা/পওত/আসবাবপত্র ত্বয় (২০২৪-২৫)/ক্ষেত্র/১৯১/২০২৪/৩০

তারিখ: ০১.০১.২০২৫

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা পিপিআর ২০০৮ অনুসরে নির্মাণিত দরপত্রের যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন ঠিকানার নিকট হাইকোর্টে সিলমোহরকৃত থামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১. মৃগালয়/ বিভাগ	শিক্ষা মন্ত্রালয়				
২. এজেন্সি	বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মহাশীল কমিশন				
৩. সংযুক্তকীয় বস্তুর নাম	রাষ্ট্রীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ, শাহজাদপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জ				
৪. সংযুক্তকীয় বস্তুর ক্ষেত্র	বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হচ্ছে				
৫. সংযুক্তকীয় বস্তুর জেলা	সিরাজগঞ্জ				
৬. কি কাজের জন্য সরপত্র আহ্বান	রাষ্ট্রীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ-এর ব্যবহারের জন্য আসবাবপত্র ত্বয় সংজ্ঞান				
৭. আহ্বানের স্মরণ	রবিবা/পওত/আসবাবপত্র ত্বয় (২০২৪-২৫)/OTM/১৯১/২০২৪/৩০				
৮. তারিখ	০১.০১.২০২৫				
৯. সময়সূচি	উন্নত দরপত্র সময়সূচি				
১০. বাজেট এবং সোর্স অফ ফাট	জিএন্ডি				
১১. দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নথি	০১/২০২৪-২৫				
১২. দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	০২.০১.২০২৫				
১৩. দরপত্র প্রিন্টের সময়সূচি তারিখ	১৫.০১.২০২৫ (অফিস সময়সূচি)				
১৪. দরপত্র এবং প্রয়োজনীয় তারিখ	১৬.০১.২০২৫ তারিখ দুর্দল ১২.০০ টা পর্যন্ত।				
১৫. দরপত্র প্রেসের তারিখ ও সময়	১৬.০১.২০২৫ তারিখ দুর্দল ১.০০ টা।				
১৬. দরপত্র প্রেসের তারিখ ও সময়	১৬.০১.২০২৫ তারিখ দুর্দল ১.০০ টা।				
১৭. দরপত্র প্রিন্ট বিদ্যুক্তকারী	উপরিচালক (চেম্পিট দায়িত্ব), পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন দপ্তর-এর কার্যালয়, অস্ত্রায়ী অফিস ফাইল ম্যানসন (বাড়ি ৭/১, কাদাগাঁড়া, শাহজাদপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জ)।				
১৮. দরপত্র নথি প্রেসের নথি	উপরিচালক (চেম্পিট দায়িত্ব), পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন দপ্তর-এর কার্যালয়, অস্ত্রায়ী অফিস ফাইল ম্যানসন (বাড়ি ৭/১, কাদাগাঁড়া, শাহজাদপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জ)।				
১৯. দরপত্র দাতাদের যোগাতা	১. দেখান সরবাবকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান যাতের অন্যন্যান্য ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, মৃত্যু সংযোজন কর নিবন্ধকরণ, টিআইএন ও বাংক সলিডিসি সনদপত্র রয়েছে। ২. আসবাবপত্র সরবাবার কাজে কমপক্ষে ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। ৩. আসবাবপত্র সরবাবার কাজে সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/যায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের বিগত (চার) বছরের মধ্যে ১৩,৫০,০০০.০০ (তেরো লক্ষ পাঁশ হাজার) টাকার একক কার্যালয়ে ও কার্যালয়ে, অস্ত্রায়ী অফিস ফাইল ম্যানসন (বাড়ি ৭/১, কাদাগাঁড়া, শাহজাদপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জ)। ৪. কমপক্ষে ১৮,০০,০০০.০০ (আঠারো লক্ষ) টাকার ক্ষেত্রিক লাইন/ওয়ার্কিং ক্যাপিটাল থাকতে হবে। ৫. দরপত্রের সব ক্ষেত্রে দাখিল করলে এবং প্রমাণিত হলে জামানতের অর্থ বাতিলসহ ঠিকানার প্রতিষ্ঠানকে দেবার জন্য সুযোগ করা হচ্ছে।				
২০. কাজের বিদ্যুতি বর্ণনা	সিডিউল যোতাবেক				
২১. কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বর্ণনা	--				
প্রাক্কেজ নথি	কাজের নাম	অবস্থান	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ (টাকা)	দরপত্র মূল্য (টাকা)	কাজ সম্পত্তির সময় দিন/সপ্তাহ
প্রাক্কেজ ০১	রাষ্ট্রীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ-এর ব্যবহারের জন্য আসবাবপত্র ত্বয়	রাষ্ট্রীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ, শাহজাদপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জ	৬০,০০০.০০ (ষাট হাজার)	১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) (অফেরবেগো)	৩০ (শিশু) দিন
২২. দরপত্র আদানকারীর নাম ও পদবি	মোঃ শিবলী মাহবুর, উপরিচালক (চেম্পিট দায়িত্ব), (পওত), রাষ্ট্রীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ, শাহজাদপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জ				
২৩. দরপত্র আদানকারীর যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা	টেলিফোন/মোবাইল: ০১৮৫৯-৮০১১০৬, ইমেইল: pndrub@gmail.com				
২৪. দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ হাইকোর্টে প্রবর্তী ৬০ (ষাট) দিন পর্যন্ত দরপত্র বহাল থাকবে। কোন কারণ দর্শনীয় ব্যক্তিকেই কর্তৃপক্ষ যে-কোন বা সকল দরপত্র এবং বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।					

থাক্কিত/-
(মোঃ শিবলী মাহবুব)
উপরিচালক (চেম্পিট দায়িত্ব)
পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন দপ্তর
রাষ্ট্রীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়,

Aurthohin announces new guitarist

On New Year's Day, Aurthohin shook their fans with an exciting announcement, introducing young guitarist Ehtesham Ali Moeen as the band's newest member.

"Happy New Year, everyone! Please join us in welcoming our new guitarist, Ehtesham. We'll be going live on Thursday night with some big announcements. Stay tuned," the post stated.

In a press release, Aurthohin wrote, "We strive to work with young musicians, and 23-year-old guitarist Moeen has now joined the band." As a permanent member, Moeen will feature in their albums.

The current lineup of Aurthohin features Bassbaba Sumon, Mark Don, and Ehtesham Ali Moeen.



Farooki's '840' to air as drama series on TV

For the first time in television history, the film **840** will debut as a drama series. Alongside its theatrical run, audiences will be able to watch the film as an eight-episode extended series on television — marking a first for simultaneous screening.

Directed by Cultural Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, this film-turned-series will air from January 3 to 10, across various time slots and channels.

The series will air at 8:20pm on Channel i, with a repeat at 12:05pm. RTV will air it at 8:00pm, with a repeat at 8:00am. Deepo TV will show it at 10:30pm, with a repeat at 1:30pm the next day.



I HOPE FOR EVERYONE'S WELL-BEING

JAYA AHSAN

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Jaya Ahsan's new **Nakshi Kantha Jamin** was recently released and she is also busy shooting for her first Bangladeshi web series **Jimmi**.

The actress is excited about the new year. She said, "I hope that the new year brings blessings for everyone. May it bring happiness and peace to everyone's lives. I wish for everyone's well-being. As for work, I want to continue being involved in good projects. I want to stay immersed in work — work is everything."

Meanwhile, Jaya Ahsan's new **Nakshi Kantha Jamin** based on the renowned author Hasan Azizul Haque's story **Bidhobader Kotha** was released on December 27.

"The narrative in **Nakshi Kantha Jamin** is very strong. The younger generation should watch this film, as they will learn a lot

about the Liberation War. Before its release in Bangladesh, **Nakshi Kantha Jamin** was featured in several international festivals. It has received praise from acclaimed filmmakers and critics worldwide. Audiences have also appreciated it. This recognition adds an extra layer of satisfaction," said the actress.

At the end of last year, Jaya Ahsan began shooting for Ashfaque Nipun's new web series, **Jimmi**. The series is expected to be released this year.

The actress remarked, "I am hopeful that it will turn out to be a great project. The audience will get to see something good. Let the work be completed first, then I will reveal everything. Let there be some surprise. Ashfaque Nipun is a talented director, so I believe it will be something worthwhile."

Regarding new films in both countries, Jaya Ahsan said, "Discussions are ongoing for new projects. I will share more once things are finalised. There are also new projects in India. Additionally, several films, including **OCD**, are awaiting release in India."

Dighi to headline Tagore's 'DENA PAONA'

Prarthana Fardin Dighi has landed the coveted role of Nirupama in the upcoming film adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's iconic short story **Dena Paona**.

Directed by Sadek Siddique and backed by a government grant, the film promises to bring a fresh perspective to Tagore's timeless narrative.

Dighi shared her excitement with local media, stating, "The director's narration convinced me that Nirupama would challenge my acting skills, and the film's basis on a Rabindranath Tagore story makes it even more exciting."

Miron Mohiuddin crafted the screenplay for the film, with Sadek Siddique personally adapting it into the final script.



Sitar Soundscape with Nishit Dey



Satori Academy of Arts will feature an intimate exchange between sitar artiste Nishit Dey and listeners, as he is set to share his knowledge and experience in classical music on Saturday. Nishit, a fourth-generation musician from Mymensingh's renowned 'Dey' family, has been performing globally for over 15 years and is dedicated to teaching sitar through modern techniques.

Date: Saturday, January 04, 2025

Time: 7:30pm - 9:30pm

Venue: Satori Academy of Arts, Banani

COUNTRYWIDE

BHOLA'S ELISHA LAUNCH GHAT

Passengers suffer for lack of gangways

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Several thousand passengers, who use the Elisha launch terminal in Bhola regularly, have been suffering for months due to the lack of gangways, connecting the pontoon.

Passengers and launch employees said launch services from the terminal are under threat due to the situation.

Despite the danger, thousands of daily passengers still use the launch terminal risking their lives.

Sources said about 10,000 passengers use the launch terminal every day.

In the absence of gangways, passengers often face minor accidents as they are compelled to use the concrete cement blocks (CC blocks), dumped along the riverbank.

Passengers said the situation is gradually deteriorating as the authorities are yet to take the necessary steps to resolve the issue.

The situation arises after the Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB), under the Bhola Riverbank Conservation Project, started dumping CC blocks along the riverbank at the launch terminal and close to the pontoon about six months ago, they said.

Since then, passengers have been

forced to cross the uneven CC blocks to reach the terminal.

Although the terminal currently has a makeshift gangway, locals say it is fragile and risky.

During a recent visit to the launch terminal, this correspondent saw passengers were using the CC blocks to reach the terminal.

Zakir Hossain, manager of Sundarban Launch Service, blamed the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) for the trouble of passengers.

They have requested the authorities concerned on several occasions to build small makeshift stairs so that passengers can easily get the services, but to no avail, he said.

Mamun, a passenger travelling on Bhola Barishal route, said people often suffer minor accidents crossing the CC blocks.

Emergency patients, elderly people, women and children are the worst sufferers, he added.

According to Bhola WDB, the riverbank conservation project to protect three-kilometre stretch of the Meghna riverbank including 880-metre portion under Elisha launch terminal, at a cost of Tk 689 crore, started in 2023 and will continue till 2027.



In absence of gangways, CC blocks dumped along the riverbank serve as passage for passengers to get on and down from launches at Elisha launch terminal in Bhola.

PHOTO: STAR

Wrong name of July martyr printed

FROM PAGE 12

workers, mothers and pedestrians were not spared," reads the relevant section.

When this correspondent sought details of Nafiz, Nahiyani and Anas, sources at the textbook board said that they had picked the three — two male protesters and one female — for their extreme sacrifices for the country.

However, they admitted that Nahiyani's name was mistakenly printed in place of Nafisa. She was an HSC candidate at Shahajuddin Sarker Model Higher Secondary School in Tongi.

"We did not decide to include anyone named Nahiyani," the source said.

It could not be independently verified whether anyone named

Nahiyani was martyred during the July uprising.

The source said all the fifth-grade textbooks are already at the printer's.

Contacted, NCTB Chairman Professor AKM Reazul Hassan admitted the mistake.

"We will look into the matter," he said, "We will correct it in the PDF versions that will be sent to the schools today."

The photo of Golam Nafiz, a 16-year-old fresher at Noubahini College, was featured in several newspapers during the July uprising. That photo of a bloodied Nafiz — shot by the police lying motionless in the footwell of a rickshaw while his head, with the Red and Green tied like a bandana, fell back and lolled in the air — became

one of the iconic images of the uprising alongside those of Sayed and Mugdha.

Anas, who was a 10th grader, was killed on

August 5, while protesting near Dhaka's Chankharpul.

Before going to the protest, he had left a letter for his mother saying, "Ma, I am going to the protest. I cannot sit back at home anymore. It's better to die on the streets like a hero than stay at home like a selfish person, fearing death."

The chapter also discusses people who have made supreme sacrifices for the country. It includes the names of revolutionaries like Titu Mir, who resisted the oppression of the local zamindars and the British indigo planters during the colonial era and Pritilata

Waddedar, another revolutionary from the British era.

It includes Amanullah

Mohammad Asaduzzaman and Matiur Rahman who

were both shot by police during the 1969 mass

uprise and Sergeant

Zahirul Haque, an accused of Agartala conspiracy case, killed by Pakistan military in 1969.

The same chapter also

includes sections on Noor

Hossain, Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon and Nazir

Uddin Zehad, who had

been killed during protests

against military dictator

Hussein Muhammad

Ershad.

The chapter has sketches

of Sayed, Mughdo, Titu

Mir, Pritilata, Asad, Matiur,

Noor Hossain, Dr Milon and

Pritilata.

Yunus said the export

trade is playing a significant

role in cutting poverty and

unemployment in addition

to earning foreign currencies.

He said Bangladesh's

readymade garment (RMG)

has already secured a leading

position in the global apparel

market.

Yunus said the export

trade is playing a significant

role in cutting poverty and

unemployment in addition

to earning foreign currencies.

Like the previous years,

the Ministry of Commerce

and the Export Promotion

Bureau (EPB) have jointly

organised the fair.

The spaces for stalls or

pavilions of various categories

have been allocated online for the first time in this trade fair.

The e-ticketing system has

also been arranged for the

first time in the fair.

Apart from this, BRTC's

dedicated bus service would

be available alongside Uber

service at a special discount

to facilitate the travel of

buyers and visitors to and

from the fair venue.

Besides, "July Chattar"

and "Chhatris Chattar"

were created at the fair venue

in honor of the sacrifices

of students in the anti-

discrimination students'

movement.

The trade fair is being

held for the fourth time in a

row at the Bangladesh-China

Friendship Exhibition Center

in Purbachal.

According to the layout

plan of the fair, some 361

pavilions/stalls/restaurants

of different categories have

been allocated in favor

of local producing and

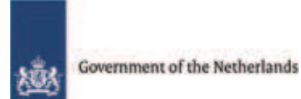
exporters firms, general

business establishments and

foreign business entities in

a cent percent transparent

CREATING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES for Women Entrepreneurs



The Daily Star

UN Women, in collaboration with The Daily Star and Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, organised a roundtable titled "Ensuring an Inclusive and Gender-Responsive Environment for Women-Owned Businesses" on November 12, 2024. The event was held under the Women's Empowerment for Inclusive Growth (WING) project. Here is a summary of the discussion.

Md. Siddikur Rahman,
Programme Analyst,
Women's Economic Empowerment, UN Women

The Women's Empowerment for Inclusive Growth (WING) project seeks to ensure women's dignified and formal inclusion as employees and entrepreneurs in local economies. This initiative aims to challenge and dismantle entrenched discriminatory attitudes, norms, and stereotypes perpetuating inequities across social, political, and economic spheres. The programme, implemented in ten Upazilas across Manikganj, Thakurgaon, Jashore, Cox's Bazar, and Kurigram in Bangladesh, runs from November 2020 to December 2024. Its primary objective is to enhance women's participation in the formal economy while fostering sustainable improvements in income and economic security at the local level.

WING is centred on contributing to three outcomes. Outcome one focuses on the implementation and enforcement of policies supportive to women's economic empowerment. The outcome two focuses on increasing women's participation in local economic development activities. The third outcome seeks to unlock and access larger volume of domestic capital for women-led enterprises to expand their economic space.

Access to finance is one of the most significant barriers faced by women in realising their full economic potential. Women are often required to demonstrate ownership of physical business entities, collateral linked to property ownership, two guarantors, and outdated legal documentation which often work against women seeking credit. Social perceptions of women's capacity to manage finances and businesses further hinder their access to financial resources.

Gender-specific challenges also abound. Many women entrepreneurs face gaps in skills and lack access to relevant education and training opportunities. This is compounded by limited knowledge of local and global markets, as well as insufficient awareness of international import compliance and export quality standards. Access to quality raw materials locally is often unavailable, leading to a reliance on neighbouring countries. The scarcity of skilled labour and difficulties related to market access, technology adoption, and innovation exacerbate the situation. Broader issues such as financing, logistics, certification in global value chains, and cyberbullying—including unwanted calls, explicit content, and harassment—add further layers of complexity.

Despite these challenges, several government policies and initiatives provide a supportive framework for women's entrepreneurship. These include the National SME Policy 2019, the Eighth Five-Year Plan, the National Women Development Policy (NWDP) 2011, and the associated National Action Plan (NAP) 2013. Additionally, the National Industrial Policy 2016, the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2021–2025), and the National Strategy for Social Security (NSSS) aim to create a conducive environment for women entrepreneurs. SME-focused circulars from the Bangladesh Bank, such as the SMESPD Circular Letter No. 01 and CMSME-specific directives, also play a key role in promoting women-led businesses.

The WING programme serves as a cornerstone initiative for gender-inclusive economic development. By addressing these multifaceted challenges and implementing targeted solutions, Bangladesh can unlock the full potential of its women workforce, driving sustainable and equitable growth for the nation.

Khadija Khush,
Entrepreneur,
Kallyani Nari Kallyan Shomaboy Samiti,
Kurigram
I'm a WINGentrepreneur

and secretary of a women's cooperative from Kurigram, working with menstrual hygiene products, surgical belts, and boutique items under a women's cooperative. In 2021, we launched our menstrual hygiene package, marking a significant milestone for us.

Despite having the capacity to procure raw materials and utilise our skilled workforce for production, one of our major challenges lies in marketing and selling these products in a small town like Kurigram. Many women here still consider menstrual hygiene products an unnecessary expense. Therefore, they rely on clothes during menstruation, unaware of the serious health implications associated with poor menstrual hygiene.

Selling our products to local pharmacies is another obstacle. Due to the stigma surrounding menstruation, we often face harassment and shame during these interactions. Despite these hurdles, we have made notable progress. Currently, we are capable of supplying our products to every town within the Kurigram district as well as to Lalmonirhat and Thakurgaon. Additionally, this year, during the floods, we supplied 10,000 sanitary napkin packets to Sylhet through UNDP under this WING project.

I believe that challenges will always persist for women entrepreneurs, but we must continue working regardless. Recently, we secured an SME grant under the WING project to acquire advanced sanitary production machines. Although the first installment of the grant was received smoothly, complications arose when we discovered an unexpected condition: to receive the remaining grant as we were required to show a certain amount as a deposit in our

bank account.

Unfortunately, multiple banks refused to grant a loan to our cooperative, leaving me with no choice but to secure the loan in my name with a mortgage. This has made managing finances significantly more challenging for us. However, we remain determined to overcome these obstacles and expand our impact.

Anupama Mitro,
Entrepreneur, Jashore

As a woman entrepreneur, the challenges we face are particularly difficult to navigate. When it comes to securing loans or grants, financial institutions often demand guarantors operating on a larger scale, which creates significant hurdles for small entrepreneurs like us.

Our work involves hiring and supporting underprivileged, marginalised women from our local community. To enhance our operations, we must focus on developing our skills and adopting a more organised approach to planning. Such efforts would significantly improve both the quality and quantity of our production. Although our business is export-oriented, we struggle with limited access to informational resources that could guide us through the complexities of the export process.

Unfortunately, women entrepreneurs are not given enough respect or recognition at various levels, which often hampers the assistance we receive. This mindset must change across the board.

Political factors also play a role in the challenges we face. For instance, although I was awarded and shortlisted for multiple grants, a lack of political backing meant I was frequently excluded from final consideration. On several occasions, the absence of lobbying on my behalf undermined my eligibility.

Addressing these issues requires a focus on psychosocial change. Creating a supportive environment for women entrepreneurs is essential for fostering growth, equality, and success in this field.



Chandana Ghosh,
Entrepreneur,
Karopponno,
Thakurgaon

Despite running a successful business for 28 years and earning significant milestones and awards, societal recognition as a businesswoman remains elusive. Recognition is not just about accolades but also carries responsibilities. Since 2013, I have trained women in Thakurgaon in crafts and business and provided employment to 450 families through my company.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, when work was nearly at a standstill, I received an offer from WING. Their support helped me stay organised during that challenging period. Thanks to their assistance, I was able to continue offering crucial benefits to my workers, including maternity leave. I also supported many budding entrepreneurs during this time.

I firmly believe that training facilities and support for women entrepreneurs should be long-term initiatives rather than one-off sessions. Sustainable support builds confidence in women and equips us to navigate our entrepreneurial journeys successfully.

Banks and financial institutions need to recognise that women entrepreneurs play a vital role in social development. They should assist us accordingly, rather than doubting our abilities. Proper encouragement, alongside transparent monitoring systems, can help foster greater progress for women-led businesses.

empowerment. This is an excellent tool for anyone working with women entrepreneurs to ensure a conducive environment for women.

A major issue with collateral stems from the absence of property documentation. This is an area that requires urgent attention. Inheritance laws must be reformed to ensure equality.

Effective communication regarding Bangladesh Bank's collateral-free loans up to BDT 2.5 million and tax exemptions for women entrepreneurs must be disseminated to enhance opportunities for women entrepreneurs.



Laboni Akter,
Entrepreneur, Different Beauty, Manikganj

The challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, particularly from family and society, remain deeply personal and require a solution-oriented approach in the process. Digital solutions, e.g., Facebook marketing, have proven to be immensely helpful for selling products, and more training should be provided, with follow-up and continued support.

Additionally, organising district-level fairs to promote local crafts is imperative to showcase our products and help expand our profit margins.



Nazma Akter,
Entrepreneur,
Palongky Konna, Cox's Bazar

Despite receiving support from NGOs and other organisations, the same individuals receive assistance repeatedly. The complicated process



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Addressing these issues requires a focus on psychosocial change. Creating a supportive environment for women entrepreneurs is essential for fostering growth, equality, and success in this field.

Asim Karmaker,
Coordinator, UNCDF

Women entrepreneurs are growing by 25% annually, driven by support from development organisations and improved access to finance. Bangladesh Bank regulations now enable women to secure loans as individual entities, using cooperative collateral for eligibility. These efforts empower women at every stage of their entrepreneurial journey.

To address the challenge of guarantors, the Women's Initiative for Growth (WING) project has introduced a revolving fund to support women entrepreneurs in the area. This fund offers loans at a low interest rate of only 4 percent, without requiring collateral or guarantors. So far, we have successfully disbursed funds to several applicants, and the results have been encouraging. If this success continues, it could serve as evidence to recommend that Bangladesh Bank makes its women's SME lending product entirely guarantor-free.

Equipping women entrepreneurs with skills and confidence is crucial for their success. Facilitating training for them to articulate detailed business pitches empowers them to confidently engage with financial institutions, increasing their chances of securing vital financial support.

Shahnaz Sumi,
Director, BNPS

The increase in women entrepreneurs is reflected in recent gender-responsive budget plans, supported by numerous policies and partnerships.

UNDP, UNCDF, and Bangladesh Bank, in collaboration with local governments, have improved financial access and training opportunities for women. UN Women and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs have also played pivotal roles, driving the success of women entrepreneurs.

Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), initiated by UN Global Compact and UN Women, contribute to enhancing women's economic

of obtaining NIDS restricts many entrepreneurs like myself from applying for loans and grants. Access to finance is a significant barrier when it comes to expanding and exposing products to a larger market.

Additionally, the lack of human resources has compelled me to relocate my manufacturing facility to my home. This has become an obstacle when applying for loans, despite providing the necessary documents and machinery needed for production. On top of that, we lack the resources required for effective marketing.

Larger companies come to us seeking supplies of our innovative products, but they often fail to give us the proper credit. If the issues surrounding financing were addressed and training on sourcing raw materials was provided, entrepreneurs could make significant progress.



Sharmin Islam,
Gender Team Leader,
UNDP

One of the major barriers faced by women entrepreneurs is the discriminatory social norms and practices that persist in society. Both families and markets are often unwilling to accept a woman running her own business. The extent of this acceptance largely depends on the support provided by local elected representatives. Unfortunately, the entire social ecosystem is not conducive to the growth of women entrepreneurs.

WING has worked with medium-sized enterprises that have significant growth potential and the ability to generate employment. We need to focus on unlocking local funds for these businesses. We aim to develop the capacities of entrepreneurs by sharing the knowledge and resources necessary to access financing.

During the pandemic, by creating the "Anandamala" platform, more women were included in digitalising their businesses and increasing their digital exposure and access. However, digital security emerged as a major issue for women, hindering their progress.

While WING has been effective on

a small scale, covering five districts, scaling up the project is essential for greater impact. The government is a key ally in this effort, and valuable lessons can be learned from smaller-scale initiatives. The resilience of women entrepreneurs, who have successfully overcome numerous barriers, serves as inspiration in addressing ongoing challenges.

Musfiqa Zaman Satiar, Senior Policy Advisor - Gender and Civil Society, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

While collaborating with multiple organisations, the inclusion of women is imperative to the country's development. The progress made by women entrepreneurs is a result of their resilience and commitment. We do not focus only on sharing the successes of the WING beneficiaries but also on addressing the challenges so that we can achieve our ultimate goal of gender equality.

Creating services for society brings immense value, ultimately benefiting the welfare of all. We have to facilitate equity to ensure equality.

As local government plays a vital role, I urge local institutions to come forward and support us in our training initiatives for entrepreneurs. We must also explore ways to ensure that women are contributing actively to this mission by having a regulatory framework that supports our entrepreneurs. Cooperation and collaboration among entrepreneurs further contribute to creating a supportive environment for everyone.

Mosharraf Hossain, Director, Social Safety Net, Department of Social Services

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has currently taken the initiative of a special loan scheme designed exclusively for women entrepreneurs. For anyone facing difficulties accessing this, the SWD will assist. I strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of these opportunities.

Additionally, the six-month skill development training programme offered by SWD contributes to reducing skill gaps. By coming together as a group, we can make these small initiatives even more impactful.

Anwar Hossain Chowdhury, Managing Director, SME Foundation

We all share a common goal: to move forward by leaving obstacles behind. The SME Foundation, established in 2007, has been dedicated to relentlessly developing entrepreneurs ever since. While we have strong aspirations, we have yet to overcome all the challenges we face. During such times, we rely on each other's support the most. I am both hopeful and satisfied with the progress we have made thus far.

We are working to create entrepreneur friendly regulations through workshops with banks and entrepreneurs, enhancing business knowledge and practices. Our fairs, with 75% women participants, offer a platform to showcase products and expand market reach. We also support women by sending them to international fairs, increasing their exposure.

Shararat Islam, Communication Analyst, UN Women

We are nearing the end of WING, and today's goal is to reflect on our experiences, challenges, achievements, and the potential for future work. Your indomitable spirit has inspired us to work even harder. We are here to support you in the goals and commitments you have outlined in today's discussion.

Tanjim Ferdous, In charge, NGO and Foreign Missions, Business Development Team, The Daily Star

The WING Project, initiated in 2020, is a collaborative effort implemented by UN Women, UNDP, and UNCDF, with support from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Today, we aim to discuss the challenges women entrepreneurs face at the policy level. Additionally, we will explore the implications and effectiveness of various funds and mechanisms designed to support and empower women entrepreneurs.

Population declines slightly over 10 years
Says Myanmar citing 2024 census

REUTERS

Myanmar said its 2024 census found a population of 51.3 million, slightly smaller than 10 years ago, as the junta prepares for promised elections amid ongoing conflict and unrest across the country, state media reported yesterday.

The census, which was held in October, will be used to compile voter lists for the elections planned for this year that opposition groups have widely condemned as a sham.

"I am striving to successfully organise a free and fair election, which is the ultimate goal of the State Administration Council," junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said in his New Year speech that was published in state media.

The 2024 population of 51.3 million



Police investigators surround a white truck that crashed into a work lift in the French Quarter of New Orleans, Louisiana, US yesterday. At least 10 people were killed and 30 others injured when the vehicle plowed into a New Year's crowd in the heart of the thriving New Orleans tourist district.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia launches drone attack on Kyiv

Two killed; apartment blocks in Pechersky district hit; Ukraine downs 109 of 111 drones

AFP, Kyiv

Russia launched an aerial attack on the centre of Kyiv in the first hours of 2025, killing two people, Ukrainian authorities said yesterday.

The attack -- a rare strike on the heart of the Ukrainian capital -- came just hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky vowed in a New Year's message that he would do everything possible to bring the war to an end over the next 12 months.

"One person has been killed as a result of an enemy attack on Kyiv. The number of wounded has increased to 7, including two pregnant women," the Prosecutor General's office said in a post on Telegram.

Local officials said the damage was caused by falling debris, suggesting the drones had been intercepted.

AFP journalists in the city heard multiple powerful explosions early yesterday morning.

Ukrainian officials said Russian drones targeted the capital's Pechersky district, home

to the presidential palace and government quarter.

Apartment blocks were hit and Ukraine's central bank said one of its buildings was damaged in the attack.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly threatened to strike at the heart of Kyiv in recent weeks -- an attack he said would be a response to Ukraine firing US-supplied weapons on Russian territory.

Zelensky blasted the Russian drone attack.

"Even on New Year's night, Russia only cares about hurting Ukraine," he said in a post on Telegram.

A total of 111 Russian drones were fired at Ukraine overnight, with 109 either shot down or disabled by Ukraine's air defence systems, the Ukrainian air force said.

Both sides have ramped up their aerial attacks over the last two months, seeking to gain an upper hand in the conflict ahead of US President-elect Donald Trump coming to power later in January.

AP, Kyiv



Island-wide blackout hits Puerto Rico

AFP, San Juan

A major power outage plunged much of Puerto Rico into darkness on New Year's Eve, with the US island territory's electric utility saying restoration could take up to two days.

The "island-wide blackout" began at 5:30 am Tuesday, Luma Energy said, adding that the preliminary findings pointed to a fault in an underground cable as the cause, although outage remained under investigation.

India, Pakistan exchange list of nuke installations

AGENCIES

India and Pakistan yesterday exchanged lists of their nuclear assets as part of a bilateral pact that bars them from attacking each other's nuclear facilities.

The two sides exchange such lists on the first day of January every year.

In a statement yesterday, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the lists were simultaneously handed over through their respective diplomats in Islamabad and New Delhi.

The exchange is part of the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities pact, which was signed by the two countries in December 1988. It was implemented in January 1991, reports AP.

"This is the 34th consecutive exchange of such lists between the two countries, the first one having taken place on January 1, 1992," India's Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

Pakistan and India have had strained relations since their independence from colonial British rule in 1947 over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir. They have fought three wars, built up their armies and developed nuclear weapons.

India conducted its first nuclear test in 1974, with Pakistan carrying out its first test in 1988.

S KOREA POLITICAL CRISIS Investigators vow to execute Yoon arrest warrant

AFP, Seoul

South Korean investigators said yesterday they would execute an arrest warrant for Yoon Suk Yeol over his declaration of martial law by the deadline of January 6, as the impeached leader's supporters rallied outside his residence.

Supporters and opponents of Yoon, who was suspended from office by lawmakers over his attempt to subvert civilian rule last month, have been camped outside the compound where he has been holed up for weeks, fending off investigators' efforts to question him. The Corruption Investigation Office requested the warrant after Yoon failed to report for questioning a third time, but it has been unclear whether they could execute it as the Presidential Security Service have previously refused to comply with search warrants.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ এর কার্যালয়

সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা

টেলিফোন নং-০২-৪৪১১০৮৬৮

মোবাইল নং-০১৩৩০-৭৮২৭৫৬

ই-মেইলঃ eekhu@rhd.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.৪৫১.৪৩৬.১৯০০১.২৪.২২২

তারিখঃ ৩০-১-২০২৪

ফেরীঘাট ইজারা কোটেশন আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি

(২য় আহবান)

সড়ক ও জলপথ অধিদপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদার/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান এবং ইজারাদার/ইজারাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিটে হতে স্ব-স্ব লাইসেন্স-এর ক্ষমতা/অভিভাবক অনুযায়ী সীমান্বাহনকৃত খামে বাংলাদেশ ফরম নং-২৯১১-তে কোটেশন আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

০১। ইজারা কোটেশন নং

০২। ইজারার বিবরণ

০৪। ইজারার/কেটেশন নং-২০২৪-২০২৫ (২য় আহবান)।

০৫। ২০২৫-২০২৬, ২০২৬-২০২৭ ও ২০২৭-২০২৮ অর্ধ বসেরের জন্য সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা-এর অধীন দিলগিয়া- (নেলগেট)-আজুয়া-গাজীরহাট-তেরখাদা (জেড-৭০৪০) জেলা মহাসড়কের ১ম কিলোমিটারে অবস্থিত নগরঘাটা ফেরীঘাট হতে পারাপারকারী যানবাহনের টোল আদায়ের নিমিত্তে ইজারাদার নিয়োগ।

০৬। (তিনি) বর্ষাস (১০৫ দিন)।

০৭। টাই ৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার টাকা) মাত্র।

০৮। ভাটি ও আইটিসি মেট উত্কৃষ্ণ দরের ১০০% টাকা মাত্র (ব্যাক ড্রাফট/গে-অর্ডার/মানি রিপিট আকারে)।

০৯। ২৮-০১-২০২৫ তারিখ বিকাল ৮:০০ গ্রহণ।

১০। টাই লাইসেন্স, ভাটি ও আয়কর সদাদ্বারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/নগরায়ক/বাসন্ত মার্কেট-তেরখাদা (জেড-৭০৪০) জেলা মহাসড়কের ১ম কিলোমিটারে অবস্থিত নগরঘাটা ফেরীঘাট হতে পারাপারকারী যানবাহনের টোল আদায়ের নিমিত্তে ইজারাদার নিয়োগ।

১১। ভাটি ও আয়কর সদাদ্বারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/নগরায়ক/বাসন্ত মার্কেট-তেরখাদা (জেড-৭০৪০) জেলা মহাসড়কের ১ম কিলোমিটারে অবস্থিত নগরঘাটা ফেরীঘাট হতে পারাপারকারী যানবাহনের টোল আদায়ের নিমিত্তে ইজারাদার নিয়োগ।

১২। ভাটি ও আয়কর সদাদ্বারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/নগরায়ক/বাসন্ত মার্কেট-তেরখাদা (জেড-৭০৪০) জেলা মহাসড়কের ১ম কিলোমিটারে অবস্থিত নগরঘাটা ফেরীঘাট হতে পারাপারকারী যানবাহনের টোল আদায়ের নিমিত্তে ইজারাদার নিয়োগ।

১৩। পুরুষ সুপার সুপার, খুলনা।

১৪। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

১৫। (ব্যাক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা।

১৬। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

১৭। (ব্যাক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা।

১৮। (ব্যাক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ-১/২/৩ সারি কারখানা উপ-বিভাগ, খুলনা।

১৯। (ক) তারিখানক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক সার্কেল, বরুরা, খুলনা।

(খ) জেলা প্রশাসক, খুলনা।

(গ) পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

(ঘ) নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা।

২০। জেলা প্রশাসক, খুলনা।

২১। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

২২। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

২৩। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

২৪। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

২৫। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

২৬। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

২৭। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

২৮। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

২৯। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩০। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩১। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩২। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩৩। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩৪। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩৫। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩৬। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩৭। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩৮। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৩৯। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৪০। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৪১। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৪২। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৪৩। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৪৪। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

৪৫। পুরুষ সুপার, খুলনা।

Develop AI cooperation with China

Putin orders Russian govt, top bank

REUTERS, Moscow

President Vladimir Putin has ordered Russia's government and the country's biggest bank, Sberbank, to build cooperation with China in artificial intelligence.

Putin's instructions were published on the Kremlin's website yesterday, three weeks after he announced that Russia would team up with BRICS partners and other countries to develop AI.

He told the government and Sberbank, which is spearheading Russia's AI efforts, to "ensure further co-operation with the People's Republic of China in technological research and development in the field of artificial intelligence".

Western sanctions intended to restrict Moscow's access to the technologies it needs to sustain its war against Ukraine have resulted in the



world's major producers of microchips halting exports to Russia, severely limiting its AI ambitions.

Sberbank CEO German Gref acknowledged in 2023 that graphics processing units (GPUs), the microchips that underpin AI development, were the trickiest hardware for Russia to replace.

By partnering with non-Western countries, Russia is seeking to challenge the dominance of the US in one of the most promising and crucial technologies of the 21st century.

Putin said on December 11 that a new AI Alliance Network would bring together specialists from BRICS countries and other interested states.

Russia currently ranks 31st of 83 countries by AI implementation, innovation and investment on a UK-based Tortoise Media's Global AI Index, well behind not only the United States and China but also fellow BRICS members India and Brazil.

On Tuesday, Putin told Russians in a New Year address that the country would move forward with confidence in 2025, though he offered no specific promises on the economy or the war in Ukraine.



Displaced Palestinian children walk through a puddle of rain water at a makeshift camp housing displaced Palestinians in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Gaza babies die from winter cold

Say medics, families as Israeli attacks push healthcare 'to brink of collapse'

AFP, Deir el Balah

Yahya al-Batran clutched the tiny clothes of his dead newborn son Jumaa, just days after the baby died from the cold in their tent in war-torn Gaza.

"We are watching our children die before our eyes," said the 44-year-old. Their baby was one of the seven children who died from the cold within the span of a week, the Hamas-run territory's health ministry said on Monday.

"We fled the bombing from Beit Lahia, only for them to die from the cold here," said the child's mother Noura al-Batran, referring to their hometown in northern Gaza.

The 38-year-old is still recovering from giving birth prematurely and she said the doctor decided to take the babies out of the incubator despite the family not having access to heating.

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On a rain-soaked mat, the father hugged his older children tight with blankets and worn-out cloth in a corner of their tent.

He then placed a small pot of water on the stove to make tea, which he then mixed with dry

weather expected in the coming days, saying it posed a "real threat to two million displaced people," the majority of whom live in tents.

In southern Gaza's Khan Yunis, Mahmoud al-Fasih said he found his infant daughter, Seela, "frozen from the cold" in their small tent near al-Mawasi beach, where they were displaced from Gaza City.

He rushed her to the hospital in



bread to make a meagre lunch for his family with a little cheese and the thyme-based spice blend called zaatar. Like thousands of other families enduring dire conditions, they face shortages of food, fuel, and medicine, with the United Nations warning of an "imminent collapse" of the healthcare system.

The Hamas government press office in Gaza warned on Monday of the impact of more harsh

weather expected in the coming days, saying it posed a "real threat to two million displaced people," the majority of whom live in tents.

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He rushed her to the hospital in

the area that Israel has designated a "humanitarian zone", but she was already dead. Ahmad Al-Farra, a doctor and director of the emergency and children's department at Nasser Hospital, told AFP that the three-week-old baby arrived at the hospital with "severe hypothermia, without vital signs, in cardiac arrest that led to her death".

The twins were born

the area that Israel has designated a "humanitarian zone", but she was already dead. Ahmad Al-Farra, a doctor and director of the emergency and children's department at Nasser Hospital, told AFP that the three-week-old baby arrived at the hospital with "severe hypothermia, without vital signs, in cardiac arrest that led to her death".

Under the deals, it is possible that the three men could plead guilty to the attacks and in exchange not face the death penalty.

Mohammed is the most widely known inmate at the US detention facility known as Guantanamo Bay on the coast of Cuba.

Plea deals related to 9/11 attacks may proceed

Says US military appeals court

REUTERS, Washington

A US military appeals court has ruled that plea deals related to the man accused of masterminding the September 11, 2001, attacks and two accomplices can proceed after Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had earlier moved to invalidate the agreements.

In August, Austin rescinded plea deals that the Pentagon had entered into with the trio, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

In November, a US military judge ruled that Austin acted too late on revoking the plea deals and that they were still valid. The order late on Monday by the US military appeals court upheld that ruling.

The Pentagon declined to comment. It has previously said Austin was surprised by the plea deals and that the secretary was not consulted because that process is independent.

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POLLS INTERFERENCE

US imposes sanctions on Iran, Russia groups

AFP, Washington

The United States unveiled sanctions Tuesday against Iranian and Russian organizations, alleging they had sought to interfere in the US election.

The groups targeted were the Cognitive Design Production Center, a subordinate organization of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and the Moscow-based Center for Geopolitical Expertise.

"The Governments of Iran and Russia have targeted our election processes and institutions and sought to divide the American people through targeted disinformation campaigns," said Bradley Smith, Acting Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller added in a separate statement that the United States closely monitors "efforts by malicious actors to influence or interfere in the integrity of our elections."

"We remain committed to promoting accountability for state sponsored actors who attempt to undermine public trust in our democratic institutions," Miller said.

The groups, which are affiliates of the IRGC and the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) respectively, "aimed to stoke socio political tensions and influence the US electorate," said the US Treasury Department.

South Korea to send Jeju Air crash black box to US

AFP, Seoul

South Korean investigators probing a Jeju Air crash which killed 179 people in the worst aviation disaster on its soil said yesterday they will send one of the retrieved black boxes to the United States for analysis.

The Boeing 737-800 was carrying 181 people from Thailand to South Korea Sunday when it issued a mayday call and belly-landed before hitting a barrier and bursting into flames, killing everyone aboard except two flight attendants pulled from the burning wreckage.

South Korean and US investigators, including from Boeing, have been combing the crash site in southwestern Muin since the disaster to establish a cause. "The damaged flight data recorder has been deemed unrecoverable for data extraction domestically," said South Korea's deputy minister for civil aviation, Joo Jong wan.

"It was agreed today to transport it to the United States for analysis in collaboration with the US National Transportation Safety Board."

Joo earlier said both of the plane's black boxes were retrieved, and for the cockpit voice recorder "the initial extraction has already been completed".

"Based on this preliminary data, we plan to start converting it into audio format," he said, meaning investigators would be able to hear the pilots' final communications.

The second black box, the flight data recorder, "was found with a missing connector", Joo said.

Officials initially pointed to a bird strike as a possible cause of the disaster, but they have since said the probe was also examining a concrete barrier at the end of the runway, which dramatic video showed the plane colliding with before bursting into flames.



KSA executes six Iranians for drug trafficking

AFP, Dubai

Saudi Arabia has executed six Iranians sentenced for drug trafficking, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) announced yesterday.

The Iranians were put to death in Dammam, on the kingdom's Gulf coast, for having "clandestinely introduced hashish" into Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement published by the SPA, without specifying the date of the executions.

Riyadh has executed 117 people in 2024 for drug trafficking, according to an AFP tally of official figures.

In 2023, the authorities in the Gulf monarchy launched a highly publicised anti-drugs campaign involving a series of raids and arrests.

The execution of traffickers has increased since the end of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty for drug charges two years ago.

Channel migrant crossings soar by 25pc in 2024

UK govt data shows

AFP, London

The number of irregular migrants crossing the Channel to Britain in small boats in 2024 soared by a quarter compared with the previous year, the UK government data showed yesterday.

The steep rise highlights the challenge facing Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who swept to power in July and has pledged to crack down on the dangerous journeys.

Some 36,816 people were detected in the Channel last year, a 25 per cent jump from the 29,437 who arrived in 2023, provisional figures from the interior ministry showed.

The total, however, was still well below the record 45,774 undocumented migrants who arrived on the UK's shores in 2022.

Migration to Britain, irregular and regular, was a major issue at last summer's general election, when Labour returned to government after 14 years in opposition.

Upon entering office, Starmer scrapped the previous Conservative government's controversial scheme to send the irregular migrants to Rwanda.

He branded it a "gimmick" and called it "dead and buried" during his first press conference as prime minister.

Starmer has pledged to "smash the gangs" of people traffickers running the crossings and has signed a number of agreements with foreign countries to co-operate on law enforcement.

In December, Britain and Germany signed a joint action plan aimed at tackling the smuggling gangs, while the interior ministers of Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Britain held talks to boost cooperation.



Demonstrators raise placards during a rally by university students and faculty denouncing strikes on Yemen and in solidarity with Palestinians, in the Houthi-controlled capital Sanaa yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক
(সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ)
প্রধান কার্যালয়
মতিবিল, ঢাকা-১০০০

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং: ৬০/২০২৪

বাংলাদেশ

ইউনিয়ন রিসোর্সেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১
(রিক্তমেন্ট এন্ড আউটসোর্সিং টাইট)তারিখ: ১৬ পৌষ, ১৪৩১
৩১ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৪**পুনঃনিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

দি সিকিউরিটি প্রিটিং করপোরেশন (বাংলাদেশ) লি, গাজীপুর এ 'মহাব্যবস্থাপক (নিরাপত্তা)' গদে চুক্তিভিত্তিক নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে ২০/০৫/২০২৪ তারিখে প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি (নং: ০১/২০২৪)-এর অনুমতিজ্ঞমে বর্তিত পদে বাংলাদেশের প্রস্তুত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে নিয়োগবিত্ত শর্তাবলীমে পুনরাবৃত্ত দরবারাত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে:

০১। বেতন ও সুবিধাদি : মাসিক সর্বসাকুলো বেতন টাঃ ২,০০,০০০ (ঢাকা দুই লক মাত্র)। উক্ত অর্থের উপর প্রচলিত হারে আয়কর কর্তৃতযোগ্য। চুক্তিভিত্তিক নিয়োগকারীন কোনোরূপ বর্তিত বেতন ভারা, আগাম, ইনক্রিমেন্ট, বোনাস বা পদের প্রতি প্রদান করা হবে না।

০২। বয়সসীমা (২০/০৫/২০২৪ তারিখে) : সর্বনিম্ন ৫০ বছর ও সর্বোচ্চ ৬০ বছর।

০৩। চুক্তির মেয়াদ : ০৩ বছর।

০৪। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা : মাত্রক্ষেত্রে বা ৪ বছর মেয়াদী মাত্রক তিনি অর্জনকারী হতে হবে। শিক্ষাজীবনে সকল পরীক্ষায় স্নাতক ২য় বিভাগ/গ্রেডে যে কোন ২টি তে ১ম শ্রেণি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে।

০৫। অভিজ্ঞতা :
 (ক) সশস্ত্র বাহিনী হতে অবসরপ্রাপ্ত লেং কর্টেজ/কর্টেজ সময়স্থানের কর্মকর্তা। পিএসসি থাকতে হবে।
 (খ) স্বাস্থ্যব্যবস্থা কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে স্নাতক ০২ বছর নিরাপত্তা সংক্রান্ত কাজ করার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।

০৬। অব্যোগ্যতা : সশস্ত্র বাহিনী হতে বাধাতামূলক অবসরে গমনকারী প্রার্থীগণ যোগ দিবে বিবেচিত হবেন না।

০৭। অন্যান্য শর্ত : স্নাতক ২ মাসের নেটিশে দুই পক্ষের সময়েতোর ভিত্তিতে চাকরি হতে অব্যাহত প্রদান করা যেতে পারে।

০৮। O' Level এবং A' Level সম্পর্কীয় প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে এ দেশীয় সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষা বোর্ড হতে ইস্যুযুক্ত সময়ন সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalent Certificate) এবং বিদেশী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে প্রাপ্ত তিনি ক্ষেত্রে মৌলিক সংশ্লিষ্ট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মন্ত্রীর ক্ষেপণ/উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃপক্ষ ইস্যুযুক্ত সময়ন সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalent Certificate) অনুযায়ী ডিগ্রি ও ফ্লাফলের (শ্রেণি/বিভাগ/জিপিএ/সিজিপিএ উয়েবসহ) তথ্য প্রদান করতে হবে।

০৯। অগ্রহী প্রার্থীদেরকে চাকরির আবেদনপত্র এবং আবেদনপত্রের সাথে পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ২ কপি রাখিন হবি, অবসর গ্রহণ সংক্রান্ত আদেশ, ১৮ নং ক্রমিকে বর্ণিত জীবন বৃত্তান্ত (সিভি) ও সংক্রান্ত দলিলাদি (একাডেমিক সনদপত্র, ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট, স্বাস্থ্যব্যবস্থা কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে নিরাপত্তা সংক্রান্ত কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদ, পিএসসি সনদ, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র ও অন্যান্য যাচিত দলিলাদির সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি) পরিচালক (এইচআরডি-১), ইউনিয়ন রিপোর্টের প্রিমার্টেমেন্ট-১, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, প্রধান কার্যালয়, মতিবিল, ঢাকা-১০০০ বরাবর সরাসরি অথবা ডাকখালে আগামী ৩০/০৫/২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে পৌছাতে হবে।

১০। আবেদনে প্রদত্ত স্থায়ী ঠিকানার সংক্ষে সংশ্লিষ্ট সেয়ার/প্রোসেসর মেয়ার/কাউন্সিলর/ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ চেয়ারম্যান কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষরিত আবেদনপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে। বিবাহিত মালিনা প্রার্থীগণ স্থায়ী ঠিকানা দিবে যদি আশীর ঠিকানা ব্যবহার করেন সেক্ষেত্রে উত্তোল স্থায়ী ঠিকানার সংক্ষে নাগরিকত্ব সনদ জমা দিতে হবে।

১১। বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক ব্যক্তিগত অথবা বাণিজ্যিক ব্যক্তিগত অন্য ক্ষেত্রে কোন প্রার্থীর যোগাযোগ থাটিত পাওয়া গেলে বা দুর্বিতা, অসভ্য তথ্য প্রদান, কোন জাল সনদ দাখিল, অসন্মুগ্য অবলম্বন, প্রতারণার আশ্রয় নিলে বা আবেদনপত্রে পুনৰ্বৃত্ত (Substantive) হৃতি বা ঘাটিত দেখা গেলে বা প্রদত্ত তথ্য মিহা প্রমাণিত হলে নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়ার দেখেক পর্যায়ে উক্ত প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে।

১২। অভিজ্ঞতা পদে আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে কোন আবেদন ফি প্রদান করতে হবে না।

১৩। বর্তিত পদে স্থায়ী মৌখিক পরীক্ষা প্রার্থীর প্রার্থী ব্যক্তিগত অন্যান্য পরীক্ষাকে প্রার্থী ব্যক্তিগত করা হবে।

১৪। চাকরির প্রার্থীগণ তাদের স্থ-স্থ নিয়োগকারীকে কর্তৃপক্ষের পূর্বনূম্যে আবেদন করতে পারবেন। নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের অনাপত্তিগতের মূলক মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় জমা দিতে হবে। অন্যান্য প্রার্থীকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ দেওয়া হবে না।

১৫। যাচিত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা অভিজ্ঞতে বাধাইযুক্ত প্রার্থীদেরকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার প্রার্থী ব্যক্তিগত পুনৰ্বৃত্ত (Substantive) হৃতি বা ঘাটিত দেখা গেলে বা প্রদত্ত তথ্য মিহা প্রমাণিত হলে নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়ার দেখেক পর্যায়ে উক্ত প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে।

১৬। অসম্পূর্ণ/ভুল ও স্থ সম্বলিত আবেদনপত্র কোন প্রকার যোগাযোগ ব্যক্তিগতে বাতিল করা হবে।

১৭। 'মহাব্যবস্থাপক (নিরাপত্তা)' পদে আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে নিয়োগ হৃতি অনুযায়ী জীবন বৃত্তান্ত প্রস্তুত করে চাকরির আবেদনপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।

হক

জীবন বৃত্তান্ত

পদের নাম: 'মহাব্যবস্থাপক (নিরাপত্তা)'

১। (ক) প্রার্থীর নাম (বাংলায়) :
 (খ) প্রার্থীর নাম (ইংরেজিতে) :
 ২। (ক) পিতার নাম (বাংলায়) :
 (খ) পিতার নাম (ইংরেজিতে) :
 ৩। (ক) মাতার নাম (বাংলায়) :
 (খ) মাতার নাম (ইংরেজিতে) :
 ৪। বর্তমান ঠিকানা :
 ৫। স্থায়ী ঠিকানা :
 ৬। জন্ম তারিখ :
 ৭। বয়স (২০/০৫/২০২৪) তারিখে :
 ৮। জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের নথর :
 ৯। জাতীয়তা :
 ১০। মোবাইল নথর :
 ১১। ই-মেইল :
 ১২। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা :
 ১৩। ক্রমিক নং :
 ১৪। অভিজ্ঞতা বিবরণ :
 ১৫। স্বাস্থ্যব্যবস্থা কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে নথি ও কার্যকলাস্থ :
 আমি এ মর্মে যোগাযোগ করছি যে, উপরে বর্তিত সকল তথ্যাদি সঠিক এবং নির্তৃত। বর্তিত তথ্যে কোন ভুল/অসভ্য প্রয়ালিত হলে তার জন্য আমি দায়ী থাকব।

১৬। পূর্বে বিজ্ঞপ্তি (নং: ০১/২০২৪, তারিখ: ২০/০৫/২০২৪) অনুযায়ী আবেদনকৃত প্রার্থীদের মধ্যে যে সকল প্রার্থীর এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি যোতাবেক

আবেদনের যোগ্যতা রয়েছে সেসকল প্রার্থীর নতুনভাবে আবেদন করার যোজন নেই।

১৭। বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রয়োজনে এই বিজ্ঞপ্তির কার্যক্রম যেকোন পর্যায়ে সংশোধন/স্থগিত/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

১৮। প্রতিষ্ঠানের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নথি ও কার্যকলাস্থ কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬তম নথরে ফোন করুন।

১৯। পূর্বে বিজ্ঞপ্তি (নং: ০১/২০২৪, তারিখ: ২০/০৫/২০২৪) অনুযায়ী আবেদনকৃত প্রার্থীদের মধ্যে যে সকল প্রার্থীর এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি যোতাবেক

আবেদনের যোগ্যতা রয়েছে সেসকল প্রার্থীর নতুনভাবে আবেদন করার যোজন নেই।

২০। বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষে এই বিজ্ঞপ্তির কার্যক্রম যেকোন পর্যায়ে সংশোধন/স্থগিত/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

তিসিপঃ ৪৮/২০২৫-১

তারিখঃ ০১/০১/২০২৪

(মোঃ জব্বালু ইসলাম)

পরিচালক (এইচআরডি-১)

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিন্তু

কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬তম নথরে ফোন করুন।



ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন

প্রকৌশল শাখা, প্রশাসন বিভাগ

ধর্ম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়

আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭

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দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ধর্ম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়।
২	এজেন্সি	ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন।
৩	কর্মকারীর নাম	সচিব, ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন, আগারগাঁও, শ

জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস

২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫

সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর

বিশেষ ক্রেডিপত্র ক্ষেত্র ১৪৩১, ০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫, রোজ বৃহস্পতিবার



রাষ্ট্রপতি
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ
বর্ষভবন, ঢাকা
১৪ পৌষ ১৪৩১
০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫

বাণী

সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের উদ্যোগে 'জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস, ২০২৫' উদ্যাপিত
হচ্ছে জেনে আমি আনন্দিত।

জনগুরের মৌলিক অধিকার নিশ্চিতের মাধ্যমে একটি বৈসম্যমুক্ত কল্যাণ রাষ্ট্র প্রতিষ্ঠা
সকলের কাম্য। দেশের কল্যাণমূলক কার্যক্রমে ও উন্নয়নের সূচক সকলের কাছে
পৌছে দিতে সমাজের দুর্ভ ও অসহায় মানুষের সমাজিক নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত ও মনবাধিকার
সুরক্ষায় বৃক্ষ, বিধবা ও স্বামী নিঃশীলী মহিলা, প্রতিক ও মনবাধিকার সুরক্ষার লক্ষণ
প্রাতিক ও অন্তর্সর জনগোষ্ঠীকে সমাজিক সুরক্ষা প্রদানের লক্ষ্য সরকার ব্যাপক
উদ্দেশ্য প্রদত্ত করছে। এ প্রকল্পটি জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবসের এ বছরের
প্রতিপাদ্য 'নেই পাশে কেউ যার, সমাজসেবা আছে তার' যথর্থে ও সময়োপযোগী
হচ্ছে বলে আমি মনে করি।

জাতীয় সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কৌশলের অধীনে গভর্নেন্ট টু পার্সন (জিটপি) পদ্ধতিতে
ভাতা প্রদান ও বিভিন্ন কৌশলগত সংস্করণ কর্মসূচি সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা বলয় দৃঢ়করণ
ও দারিদ্র্য বিমোচনে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করছে। দেশের সুবিধাবৃত্তি ও
পক্ষাংশের জনগোষ্ঠীর সার্বিক উন্নয়নে প্রকৃত দুর্ভ ও অসহায় মানুষের কাছে সরকার
সুবিধা পৌছে দেয়া অভ্যন্তরীণ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। আমি আশা করি, বৈমানিকভাবে স্বচ্ছ
যাচাই-বাচাই প্রক্রিয়ায় যোগ্য ব্যক্তিকে সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচির আওতাভুক্ত করা
হবে। সকলের সম্মিলিত প্রচেষ্টায় আমরা বাংলাদেশকে একটি আধুনিক কল্যাণ রাষ্ট্র
হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠান সক্ষম হয়ে- ইন্শাআলাহ।

আমি 'জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস, ২০২৫' উপলক্ষ্যে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সাফল্য
কামনা করি।

বাংলাদেশ চিরজীবী হোক।

মোঃ সাহারুদ্দিন



উপদেষ্টা
সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাণী

'নেই পাশে কেউ যার, সমাজসেবা আছে তার'- এই প্রতিপাদ্যকে সামনে রেখে
০২ জানুয়ারি 'জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস, ২০২৫' উদ্যাপিত হতে যাচ্ছে জেনে
আমি আনন্দিত।

সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরের মাধ্যমে দেশের দুর্ভ ও অসহায়,
অন্তর্সর, প্রাতিক, বিধবা ও স্বামী নিঃশীলী, প্রবাসী, সুবিধাবৃত্তি
ও শিশুদের অধিকার সুরক্ষা ও উন্নয়ন এবং সমাজের অন্তর্সর অংশকে
মূলধারায় সম্পৃক্ত করার ক্ষেত্রে পথিকৃতের ভূমিকা পালন করছে। সমাজসেবা
অধিদপ্তরের সদর কার্যালয়সহ জেলা ও উপজেলা মিলিয়ে মোট ১,০৩৬টি
কার্যালয় রয়েছে, যার মাধ্যমে ৫৪টি কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়ন করছে। এ অধিদপ্তর
সামাজিক ন্যায়বিচার ও সাম্য প্রতিষ্ঠা এবং সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা বিধানের নিমিত্ত
সমাজের প্রিয়ের পঢ়া জনগোষ্ঠীর কল্যাণস্থান ও ক্ষমতায়নের কাজ করে

সরকার জুলাই বিপ্লবের চেতনা ও নতুন প্রজন্মের প্রত্যাশাকে ধীরণ করে
দেশের সকল নাগরিকের জন্য সমান সুযোগ সৃষ্টির মাধ্যমে বৈমানিক
বাংলাদেশ গড়ার প্রত্যায়ে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। সে সক্ষে সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
জনস্বার্থকে সুরোচ গুরুত্ব দিয়ে সৃজনশীল উপায়ে সেবা সংক্ষেপের মাধ্যমে
সরকারি কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করছে।

আমি বিশ্বাস করি, জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস, ২০২৫ উদ্যাপনের ফলে
সরকারের পাশ্চাপাশি বিভিন্ন বেসরকারি সংস্থা ও সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরে
সম্মুখীন হৃষি কাজে আসব।

জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস, ২০২৫ উপলক্ষ্যে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সাথে
সফলতা কামনা করছি এবং দিবসটি উদ্যাপনের সাথে সহিতে স্বত্ত্বান্বিত সকলকে

আন্তর্বিক ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি।

(শারমীন এস মুরশিদ)

নেই পাশে কেউ যার,
সমাজসেবা আছে তার

জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস

২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫

সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর

১৪ পৌষ ১৪৩১, ০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫

১৪ পৌষ ১৪৩১, ০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫</p

Cyber ordinance a threat to freedom

Scope for return of repressive practices must be prevented

We support the Transparency International Bangladesh's call to revise the recently approved draft of the Cyber Protection Ordinance by properly incorporating feedback from all key stakeholders. Rushing through the approval of such an important legal instrument without inclusive consultations is as problematic as some of its provisions. The TIB is the latest to join the growing chorus of experts taking aim at the ordinance that they say still retains some of the controversial provisions and terminologies of its predecessors—the Cyber Security Act (CSA) and the Digital Security Act (DSA). This calls for a renewed examination of the ordinance so that there is no scope for past transgressions to be repeated.

The TIB, which earlier criticised the short three-day window for public review before the draft's approval, has detailed its objections at a recent event. It pointed out that the ordinance largely preserves the regulatory and surveillance mechanisms of the CSA and DSA, posing potential threats to freedom of expression, media independence, and citizens' rights to dissent and organise. Among the contentious provisions is one that criminalises content that are "insulting", "harassing", and "defamatory", which it says could be weaponised to stifle legitimate criticism. Another provision criminalises "hurting" religious values and sentiments without defining these terms or incorporating safeguards for equality, non-communalism, and non-discrimination. Additionally, the ordinance grants "broad and unchecked powers" to a government figurehead to block online content.

These are all serious objections that need to be thoroughly checked. Over the last few days, several experts, including two columnists of this daily, have highlighted similar issues. While the removal of eight controversial sections of the CSA and the withdrawal of ongoing cases under it are positive developments, one columnist provided a detailed analysis showing how the shadow of the previous oppressive laws still hangs over the draft, risking a continuation of repressive practices. For example, Section 43 of DSA (Section 42 of CSA), which empowered police to search, seize and arrest without a warrant, has reappeared as Section 35 of the ordinance. Another columnist explained how criminalising "hurting" religious sentiments—using vague and broad terms—shrinks the scope for constructive discussions and risks deepening religious divisions.

In post-uprising Bangladesh, we need cyber legislation that effectively checks authoritarian tendencies, not perpetuate them under a new guise. While protections against the abuse of free speech are expected, unnecessarily criminalising speech undermines democracy. To address these concerns as well as the many overlapping, inherently contradictory issues lumped together under this ordinance, the TIB has proposed splitting it into three separate laws addressing computer-related crimes, cybersecurity, and online safety. This could be a viable approach, but the government must first prioritise proper consultation with key stakeholders, including rights defenders and journalists, before proceeding any further.

Union health centres need adequate staff

Rural healthcare facilities must not be neglected

We are concerned about the state of union-level health and family welfare centres across the Habiganj district. According to a report, many of these centres are operating with just one or two staff members, far below the government mandated minimum of 10 personnel per centre. For instance, the Health and Family Welfare Centre in Chaumuhani union of Madhabpur upazila is struggling with a significant manpower shortage, serving approximately 40,000 residents with just one family welfare inspector. Sadly, not just in Habiganj, but the shortage of medical staff is a persistent issue in rural healthcare facilities across Bangladesh.

Over the years, this daily has repeatedly highlighted the challenges facing rural health centres, including upazila health complexes and union-level facilities. These centres, which offer free medical services, are frequently undermined by shortages of doctors, nurses, technicians, and medicines. In Habiganj, the health centres play a vital role in promoting normal childbirth, an essential alternative to the rising number of C-sections at private clinics. In 2022, these centres performed 8,737 normal deliveries, increasing slightly to 8,816 in 2023. However, only 2,161 deliveries have been recorded last year, which highlights the deteriorating staffing situation. Roksana Akhter, the lone family welfare inspector at the Chaumuhani centre, points out that even having one additional staff member could significantly improve patient care, especially for women seeking childbirth services.

To address this crisis, the government's approach to the primary healthcare sector must change. It must urgently recruit adequate medical personnel for rural healthcare facilities. Equally important is ensuring that doctors posted in remote areas remain at their stations, which requires addressing the lack of basic facilities and incentives in these regions. Poor governance, which has allowed such dysfunction to persist, must also be tackled to improve service delivery for rural populations.

The challenges in rural healthcare are part of the broader malaise afflicting the health sector, which has long been plagued by corruption and irregularities. A complete overhaul of the whole sector is thus overdue. It is encouraging that the government has established a health reform commission to address various systemic issues. We hope the commission delivers a sustainable reform roadmap to bring accountability and efficiency to the health sector, ensuring that rural healthcare facilities receive the attention and resources they deserve.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Granada reclaimed by Spain

On this day in 1492, Granada, home of the Alhambra palace and the seat and final stronghold of the Moorish kingdom in Spain, was surrendered to the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand II and Isabella I, ending the Reconquest.

EDITORIAL

What should be our strategic priorities in 2025?



Dr Selim Raihan is professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Dhaka and executive director of South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM). He can be reached at selim.raihan@econdu.ac.bd.

SELIM RAIHAN

As Bangladesh steps into a new year and looks forward to confronting ongoing economic and political challenges, the need for objectively assessing the country's current economic realities cannot be overstated. The economy is experiencing several complex challenges that require a cohesive and strategic approach. Key priorities for the upcoming national budget, to be placed in June, must also be outlined while underscoring the importance of a broader reform agenda.

The source of the economic hurdles lies in the unrelenting inflationary pressure that does not seem to recede. The Bangladesh Bank has resorted to hiking interest rates on many occasions over the past two years, with little effect on containing inflation. As a result, the country has been a major failure, whereas many neighbouring countries have successfully controlled inflationary pressure. While the past regime faced allegations of either inaction or improper action in combating inflation, the present interim government has also not been able to show any success so far. The failure emanates from the lack of coordination among monetary policy, fiscal policy, and domestic market management. By now, policymakers must understand that without a synchronised approach, these measures remain fragmented and ineffective. For the interim government, containing inflation and providing solace to low-income people must be the top priority.

Exports and remittance inflows have provided some respite, with recent performances showing promise. This has led to a marginal improvement in the foreign exchange reserve position. However, the key to sustaining this momentum is addressing the macroeconomic instability, labour unrest, and tensions that have bedevilled many factories. Furthermore, private investments remained stagnant in the context of high and rising interest rates and an unfriendly business environment, with an unstable law and order situation. That has had a strangulating effect on job creation and industrial growth.

The forex market is another area of concern. While the Bangladesh Bank is signalling a shift towards a more market-driven exchange rate policy, careful timing and implementation are necessary to avoid exacerbating import costs and inflationary pressures. The transition should be well complemented with a properly communicated strategy in which businesses and consumers are duly prepared for it.

However, the absence of strong and resolute economic management from the interim government has not

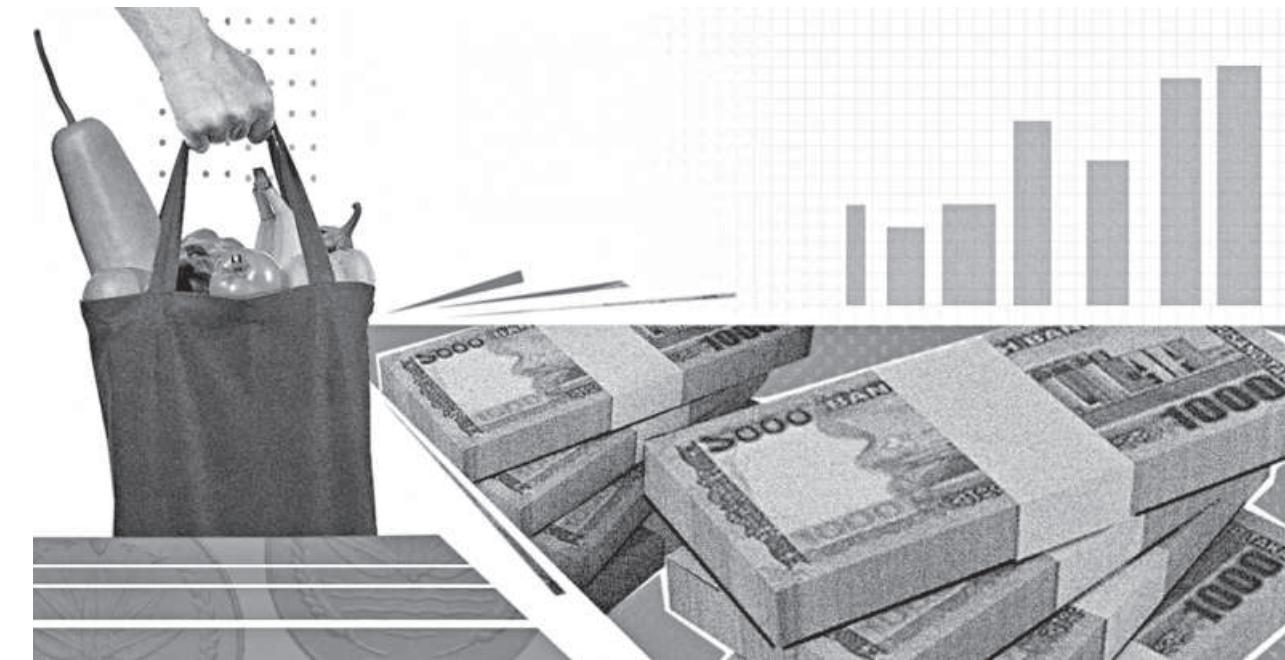
that have plagued development projects, including megaprojects, during the previous regime. This report is a major call for the interim government to take decisive actions against these entrenched practices. By implementing key recommendations from the report, the government can begin to address the root causes of inefficiency and corruption. This includes reforms in critical economic, political, administrative, and judicial domains—reforms that must be reflected in the government's allocations and priorities.

While the mass uprising in July-August created optimism about a unified national effort towards reforms and nation-building, the reality increasingly looks beset on all sides. Political tensions and disagreements over the scope of reforms, duration of the interim government, and the timing of the next national election threaten to derail the focus on economic

supply-side drivers of inflation through investment in agriculture, energy, and transportation infrastructure.

At the same time, policymakers should lay a solid foundation for far-reaching reforms in key economic, political, administrative, and judicial domains. Apparently, there is some consensus on the direction of economic reforms, such as fixing the systemic inefficiency in public finance management, overhauling the taxation sector, restructuring the banking sector, and modernising trade and investment policies. However, the directions of political, administrative, and judicial reforms remain far more contentious and marked by disagreement.

The challenge is to make sure that debates and disputes on reforms in the political, administrative, and judicial domains do not weaken the momentum to move ahead with economic reforms. These



FILE VISUAL: REHNUMA PROSHOON

helped much in addressing the major economic challenges. The apparent lack of coordination in major economic issues raises concerns about the mechanism for making and implementing policies. It is high time for the interim government to show seriousness in addressing the challenges through comprehensive and effective interventions.

The White Paper Committee's recent report, submitted on December 1, sheds light on systemic corruption, illicit money transfers, cronyism, and rent-seeking activities

priorities. A confrontational political climate risks diverting attention from critical issues, including the persistent inflation that continues eroding ordinary citizens' purchasing power.

With these challenges in mind, policymakers must take actions that offer immediate economic relief and facilitate broader reform measures. They include coordinated efforts to contain inflation, to cushion the effects of inflation on the most vulnerable groups through expanded social safety nets, and to address

disagreements, if not carefully managed, risk overshadowing or derailing efforts to address structural economic challenges that are essential for ensuring stability and growth.

It is, therefore, incumbent upon the interim government to stay focused on economic reforms with the same intensity as opening up dialogue and consensus-building on general institutional reforms. All these competing priorities require clear leadership, effective communication, and a commitment to incremental progress.

The hidden cost of New Year's celebrations



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MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

As the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve, the sky lights up with a dazzling display of colours, each firework going off to mark the passing of another year. The spectacle is undeniably mesmerising—a universal symbol of hope and celebration. But amid the cacophony of cheers, have we paused to consider who might not be so thrilled about our celebratory detonations?

Beneath the glow of fireworks, we rarely pause to consider the impact on the most vulnerable among us. For young children, the loud sounds of firecrackers cause not excitement but distress. The sharp, jarring explosions disrupt sleep, trigger fear, and leave many inconsolable. Paediatric studies have long highlighted the detrimental effects of sleep disturbances and heightened anxiety on children. Yet, during New Year's Eve celebration, this knowledge often takes a backseat, overshadowed by the pursuit of spectacle.

For the elderly, the experience is equally harrowing. Sudden, high-decibel sounds can potentially trigger pre-existing health conditions. Those with cardiovascular issues face heightened risks of heart attacks or elevated blood pressure, while those with hearing aids may find the noise unbearably amplified. The

psychological toll cannot be ignored either. The barrage of firecrackers is more than an inconvenience; it comes off as an assault on their peace and well-being.

Animals are silent victims of our inconsiderate celebrations. Domesticated pets, accustomed to quieter environments, react with panic. Dogs hide under furniture, trembling with fear, while cats flee to secluded corners, driven by instincts to escape perceived danger. Birds, disoriented by the noise and flashing lights, abandon their roosts, sometimes unable to return. Stray animals, already burdened with a life of neglect, are left completely exposed. Their frantic attempts to flee often result in accidents or permanent displacement, a cruel side-effect of our celebrations.

Noise pollution, though less visible, is no less damaging. The World Health Organization (WHO) has long classified noise as a significant health hazard, linking prolonged exposure to stress, sleep disorders, and cardiovascular disease. Firecrackers push decibel levels far beyond safe thresholds, affecting not only humans but also the natural environment. Individuals with PTSD are especially vulnerable, as the explosions can trigger severe flashbacks—a grim irony

when the noise meant to symbolise joy becomes a source of torment.

Then there's the environmental cost. Firecrackers release toxic chemicals into the air. Cities often wake up to a blanket of smog on New Year's Day, a grim reminder of the previous night's excesses. This pollution exacerbates respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis. For those already

struggling with health issues, the added pollution is a direct threat. But hey, what is a little more smog when you are having fun, right? After all, nothing says "new beginnings" like ushering in the year with a fresh layer of particulate matter.

Defenders of this annual ritual argue that fireworks are a harmless tradition. But harmless for whom? Perhaps for those who can afford to have insulated homes to muffle the chaos outside. For everyone else—children, the elderly, animals, and the environmentally conscious—it is less harmless tradition and more universal nuisance. The notion of harmlessness is often a privilege enjoyed by those unaffected by the consequences.

This year, a writ petition sought measures to curb disruptive activities on New Year's Eve. In response, the High Court issued directives to mitigate the chaos, instructing the police to prevent gatherings on rooftops, open spaces and parks, and banning the use of firecrackers.

However, as the night unfolded, it became evident that these directives struggled to translate into practice.

The persistence of such practices despite legal and moral opposition raises troubling questions about our priorities. Perhaps the issue is not the lack of laws but our unwillingness to embrace their necessity? Rules can be imposed, but without a cultural buy-in, they remain mere suggestions, easily ignored. True celebration lies not in how loudly we proclaim our joy but in how inclusively we share it. The stray dog did not ask to spend New Year's Eve trembling in fear, nor did your neighbour's cat volunteer for a panic attack every time a firecracker went off.

As a business student, I offer a satirical proposition. Why not replace fireworks with pre-recorded cheering? Or better yet, distribute noise-cancelling headphones as party favours? Silent fireworks, which offer the same visual spectacle without the auditory assault, are another innovative alternative. Imagine celebrating without terrorising every living being within a 10-kilometre radius. Fun, right?

It's high time we realised that joy need not come at the expense of others' peace. A society that prides itself on empathy and progress must find ways to celebrate without causing a living nightmare for those unable to voice their distress.

The Stockholm syndrome in South Asian politics



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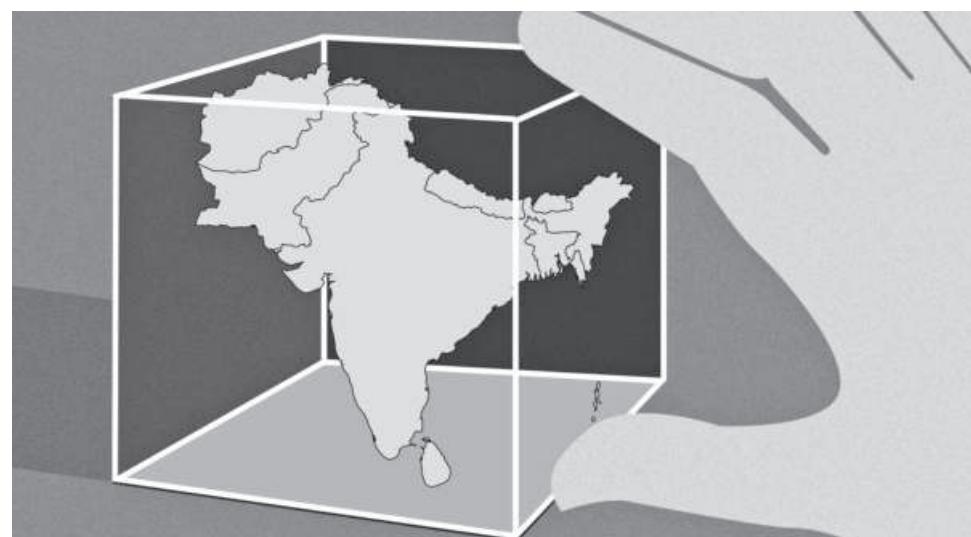
SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

The political landscape of South Asia has become increasingly disoriented, marked by the rise of populist political extremism influenced by various ideologies and religious sentiments. This troubling trend poses significant challenges to the region's aspirations for growth and development. Major power centres and strategic pivots, such as Dhaka, Delhi and Islamabad, seem to have lost their way in striking a balance between the short-sighted political objectives of the ruling elites and the collective goal of fostering equitable relations among neighbouring countries.

As Henry Kissinger once noted, "If you don't know where you are going, every road will get you nowhere." That's exactly where the region stands at the moment.

This cluelessness has become more apparent with the fascinating and transformative events we witnessed in 2024, which brought about remarkable changes, with Bangladesh in the global spotlight due to the student-led mass uprising in July-August that shook the country's political, economic and social foundations. Dhaka is poised to change its traditional foreign policy, which has much to do with the public aspirations and the uprising that will reconfigure the South Asian geopolitical ecosystem.

Dhaka is set to recalibrate its neighbourhood policy based on the July uprising, leading to more equal-handed relations with Delhi, improved ties with Islamabad, fostering energy and trade ties with Kathmandu and Thimphu, and strengthening maritime interests with Male and Colombo. In global terms, balancing between two superpowers—the US and China—would be a rational option, but the



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

Trump administration will likely forge the government to tilt towards alliance politics in 2025 and beyond.

Hence, the challenge of sustaining a new foreign policy approach is astronomically high, coupled with the precarious political fluidity in Dhaka that may become more ebbing and flowing in 2025.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political and spiritual invincibility was challenged during the 2024 Indian general elections. His most trusted aide, former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, ingloriously left the country, which fundamentally changed Delhi's relations with Dhaka. The Bangladesh which Modi's BJP has known for the past 15 years is gone for now.

At the same time, the rapport between US President-elect Donald Trump and Modi is seen as a mellow transactional love. However, the Trump administration 2.0 is likely to be more conservative and transactional than to show mellow love in global politics. That will make the Chinese dragons breathe more fire.

Understandably, Delhi could go to Washington with its cheerleaders to claim its relevance as a regional power, showcasing

Pakistan-China triad are likely to further heighten Delhi's perceptions of insecurity in the near future. Still, the good part is that Delhi and Beijing reached a border rapprochement deal in October 2024 to resume patrols in Ladakh and disengage troops. My good friend Michael Kugelman thinks "these developments provide a chance to inch ties forward."

On the southern front, the Maldives expelled Indian troops from the country due to Delhi's overextended, undiplomatic comments on the Maldivian parliamentarians, enabling Beijing to gain more muscular, if not firmer, footholds in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka elected a left-leaning president—Anura Kumara Dissanayake—marking a historical shift from seven decades of traditional old guards of politics to a new generation of political ideologues.

The northern front comes with Thimphu-Beijing border relations that have remained complicated despite the border negotiations, highlighted by Beijing's strategic decision to permit settlements near the crucial Doklam plateau since 2020. Thimphu is gradually expanding its international presence beyond its traditional China-India orbit. A significant milestone will occur in January 2025 when Ed Sheeran becomes the first Western artiste to perform in Bhutan. In Nepal, KP Sharma Oli has reclaimed the prime ministerial throne for the fourth time. Yet, the tradition of political musical chairs may continue in Nepal's politics in 2025. Oli's pro-Beijing tilt will likely continue until he hands over power to Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba. Oli's cabinet approved a new 100 Nepali rupee note showing Nepal's unilaterally drawn new map—the map India has already termed "untenable" and "artificial enlargement."

And, of course, the eastern front, the key zone for the looming uncertainties, comes with a potent mosaic of insurrections and conflicts owing to Delhi's weakening position in the Indian northeast and Myanmar. Delhi and Beijing's ally, the genocidal military of Myanmar, may lose control over most of the Burmese sovereign territory to the ethnic armed groups. It won't be surprising

for Dhaka to see Bangladesh getting new neighbours, if not in 2025 but later. Indeed, Bangladesh, for the first time in its 53 years of history, has a non-state actor—the Arakan Army—as its border counterpart.

That means that in 2025, there will be more diplomatic and strategic paranoia in Dhaka, Delhi, and Beijing. I can't help but bring back Kissinger again: "Even a paranoid can have enemies." But the caveat is in the new variant of political Stockholm syndrome that Dhaka and Delhi suffer from. The variant lies in mental ensnarement through new technologies to promote misinformation and disinformation, which spread through tabloid media, online, and propaganda news for which South Asian media have earned quite a reputation.

While Delhi's economy significantly relies on Beijing's prejudice, the BJP spares no stone unturned in projecting Beijing as an existential threat, shifting its habitual focus from Islamabad's nukes or the Taliban in Afghanistan. Dhaka sees Delhi as a gross violator of diplomatic sensibility by attempting to destabilise its internal affairs. Still, Bangladeshi political elites can't unplug themselves from their perception of India as a power. The political tycoons—be they Hindutva or Islamist nationalists, revolutionary romantics, or perhaps traditional ones—would continue to expose their variants of Stockholm syndrome in 2025.

Dhaka's foreign policy community should remember that Bangladesh's current political landscape, if marked by a looming divide over national interests and ideologies, could invite more involvement from external actors in 2025. We are in for an eventful year ahead, filled with expected and unexpected political twists and sabotages, geopolitical shifts, economic shocks, and regional tensions. The sooner the country gets its national consensus on its international affairs, the better it will be at protecting its national interests and reducing the Stockholm syndrome.

Let's stay positive, though, and prepare for what could be a politically riveting and geopolitically perplexing journey through 2025 for Bangladesh and its neighbours!

A message from one neighbour to another



A.K. Flora
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A.K. FLORA

The disinformation campaign and lies hurled by certain quarters in India after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's brutal fascist regime are deplorable, and seem to be nothing short of an attempt to destabilise the communal harmony in Bangladesh. Bangladesh believes in and respects the sovereignty of every nation, and we do not meddle in the internal affairs or try to destabilise the peace and harmony of our neighbours.

India has been on an interesting journey. The promises made by the BJP government regarding unemployment and price rises during the 2014 campaign have all but evaporated. India's unemployment rate is higher than the unemployment rate of both Bangladesh and Pakistan. Indian consumers, being crushed under steep price rises, have yet to see "Ache Din."

Amid this bleak economic scenario, Manipur is burning, millions of lives could be destroyed on the pretext of NRC in Assam, Dalits face violence and discrimination all over the country, and farmers die by suicide and their protests for a fair deal continues to go unheard. In addition, the extensive violence against women in India (the incident at R G Kar Medical College in Kolkata being a recent example) is an affront to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" campaign.

Muslims in India have been lynched for allegedly eating beef, rapists were garlanded after raping a pregnant Muslim woman, and plans to demolish at least 11 mosques were awaiting court verdicts in December, surprisingly close to the 2025 Rajya Sabha elections.

Meanwhile, as the killing of Bangladeshi citizens by India's Border Security Force (BSF) continues, blatant interference in our democratic process has taken place, clearly one-sided trade deals have been routine, and we still do not have our fair share of water in 53 years. It is, therefore, time to recalibrate how matters are handled between the two countries.

It's time for India to delve into introspection and self-examination. It cannot hide behind the false narrative of Hindu persecution in Bangladesh when crimes are being committed against its own minorities on Indian soil. No

amount of deflection will work anymore.

This overbearing theme is conspicuous in India's relationships with its other neighbours, where anti-India sentiments have been growing. And now attempts to demonise Bangladesh are in full view for the world to see.

A Hindutva mob attacked our Assistant High Commission in Agartala in an abhorrent violation of the Geneva Convention. Yet, lies about Bangladeshi minorities continue to be circulated in an effort to dehumanise Bangladeshi Muslims. Calling one's neighbours "termites" and "infiltrators" only reflects one's own true disposition.

We guard mandirs while mosques are demolished in our neighbouring country for

medical tourists. Over 25 lakh Bangladeshi tourists visit India annually, accounting for more than 22 percent of foreign tourist arrivals. And Bangladesh is India's fourth-largest remittance provider.

The Indian government has given shelter to an autocratic mass murderer who ordered her own citizens to be butchered to try and remain in power. There is credible evidence to show that India interfered in how our elections played out. But that reality has changed as of August 5, 2024, and India must reconcile with its neighbour on equal terms and with equal respect.

Hasina is no Dalai Lama. India is under no obligation to provide for her. Providing shelter to a mass murderer like her sends a negative message to Bangladesh.

We urge certain segments of the Indian media—commonly being referred to nowadays as the Godi media—to stop spewing the toxic venom of disinformation and lies. We are a sovereign nation, and it is well within our rights to treat our citizens how we deem fit, within our rules of law. The trial of Chinmoy Krishna Das is no exception. Our internal affairs are not the business of our neighbouring countries, and they must be

We urge certain segments of the Indian media—commonly being referred to nowadays as the Godi media—to stop spewing the toxic venom of disinformation and lies. We are a sovereign nation, and it is well within our rights to treat our citizens how we deem fit, within our rules of law.

mandirs to be built on top of them. Lawyer Saiful Islam's father appealed for peace and calm even after enduring the brutal death of his son. That is the magnanimity we embody in our hearts as Bangladeshis. We have lived in communal harmony for hundreds of years, and we will continue to do so. Our Hindu brothers and sisters must speak up against the twisted lies being spewed from across the border. It is incumbent on every Bangladeshi citizen to push back against this attack on our national character and identity.

I urge all sensible Indians to please pay attention to the statistics. Bangladesh is India's largest trading partner in South Asia, with bilateral trade totalling \$15.9 billion in FY2022-23. India exported goods worth \$13.8 billion to Bangladesh during the same period. Our trade deficit with India is at \$9.2 billion. Bangladeshi medical tourists contribute heavily to India's healthcare sector, comprising 54.3 percent (in 2020) of foreign

mindful of that fact.

Our citizens must remain calm, strategic, and vigilant against any attempt to project us as extremists and communal people. We must demonstrate restraint against every provocation and stay on the course of peaceful solutions to any problems within our borders. No hate based on religion should ever permeate our society.

If such propaganda against Bangladesh continues, UN special rapporteurs should be invited to visit both countries to assess the plight of their minorities.

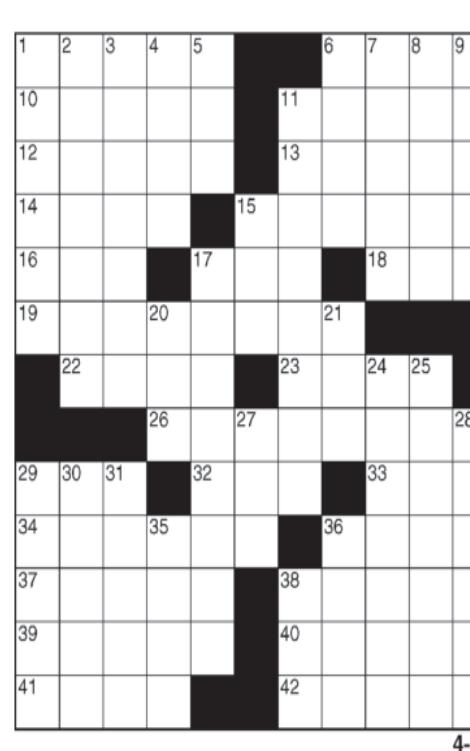
India is on the wrong course. The people of India must wake up and take note of that fact. They should not fall victim to any group that tries to use the old "divide and rule" tactic based on religion and harmful narratives. Indians must hold their media accountable, and they must treat their neighbours as they want to be treated themselves.

Respect must always be mutual.

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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26 Some online helpers	5 Fast plane	36 Fling
29 Frilly wrap	6 Polite fellow	38 Scandal sheet
DOWN		
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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

F	A	S	T	S	C	A	R	O	L
A	D	H	O	C	E	L	E	N	A
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WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
dsopinion@gmail.com.

THE SHELF

For the Curious Writer: Writing tips for the New Year



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

STAR BOOKS REPORT

As 2025 rolls around, spelling yet another year of reading about writing and writing about reading, we asked the Star Books and Literature family to share their top writing tips for our readers. From learning to pick up your pen anew to knowing when to part ways with an idea, here are some of our favourite pieces of advice for the Curious Writer in the upcoming year.

READ TO INHALE, WRITE TO EXHALE:

Read. A lot. It doesn't matter what it is, or if it's "good" or "bad". Read

constantly, endlessly, and greedily. Read good books and excellent books and bad books and terrible books. Read anything and everything, and do not stop. Reading is inhaling, and writing is exhaling. Read because you must, and then write because you now know how.

By Sarazeen Saif Ahana

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF:

If you have not been writing for a while and there is that inkling of self-doubt creeping inside your head, do not be afraid of picking your pen up again. Of writing, of putting your words on paper—do not fight against your

previous self, fight against the fear of incompetence. Let your words flow. Give your words an outlet, a blank slate. Write about anything and everything that holds weight to you. It does not have to make sense, you only have to regain faith in yourself as a writer, author, or poet. As it has been said: "You have to let the dirty water run before the clean water flows", and yours will too!

By Nur-E-Jannat Alif

TREAT IT LIKE A JIGSAW PUZZLE: Unless you're sitting for a timed, paper-based exam, there is absolutely no reason to take a top-down approach

to writing. Give yourself permission to let go of the chronological order. Write the middle. Write the ending. Write the funny anecdote you just thought of for your character. You don't have to rack your brain for an introduction to let the rest of the words flow. Treat each paragraph like a modular chunk, so that you can rearrange and reorder to make the whole writing sound cohesive. Play around until you have perfectly fitted all the pieces together!

By Mashiyat Nayem

CONSISTENCY MATTERS:

This might come off as slightly

unconventionally worded advice, but if writing is something you really enjoy and/or are passionate about, then you need to keep showing up for yourself everyday no matter what other people, or even your own mind for that matter, tells you about your work. Be consistent. Try writing a word/sentence a day if nothing else helps. Keep pushing yourself. Keep showing up. Imposter syndrome is a writer's lifelong companion, and you'll have to keep at it regardless.

By Raisa Ashraf

KNOW WHEN TO LET GO:

Oftentimes, it becomes easy to lose yourself in crafting draft after draft of a piece, all to no avail. Your natural instinct of self-deprecation might make you think it's your writing that's causing the problem. While a healthy dose of self-deprecation is necessary to succeed as a writer, give yourself the benefit of the doubt. Maybe it's not you, maybe it's the idea or the method of execution that's causing the issue. Take a step back. Come back to it after a while. If it still doesn't work out, consider parting ways with the idea. There is, after all, no shortage of things to write about!

By Adrita Zaima

YOU'RE THE VOICE:

The "voice" in writing is that hard-to-define element that essentially captures the unique perspectives of a writer. A strong voice engages the reader and keeps them turning the pages. It's what distinguishes a writer from another. So how do you craft an authentic voice? Let go of the fear of perfection. Study the work of your favourite authors and draw inspiration from them, but don't try to emulate their style.

When writing fiction, it is important to note that the author's voice should not override the character's voice. How can we tell the difference? Think lengthy exposition (a.k.a "telling") and preachy monologues. Avoid that. When writing multiple points of view, ensure each character has an authentic voice and characteristics that distinguish one from the other. They can have similarities of course, but too many and they are essentially the same person. That can create monotony or confusion and turn off readers.

By Nabilah Khan

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Through folklore and fantasy: An ode to Bangla mythological characters

Review of 'Otiprakrito' (Otibeguni, 2024) by Anindita Chowdhury and Afra Nawmi

Not all myths, though, are equally telling. Some creatures remain shrouded in mystery, their chapters brief and fleeting. However, the black and white and sepia illustrations offer these chapters a chance to shine and their forms are instantly recognisable.

TAHSEEN NOWER PRACHI

Let me tell you a tale of a big Banyan tree, by a river that flows through the heart of a village near the borders of Bangladesh, and merges into the Ganges. The tale features a little girl sitting under that tree, immersed in the books she brought from Dhaka to Chaudanga. Little did she know that Banyan tree held a reputation to be home to a creature known as the "Brommo Doitti". When she grew up, her grandmother and father narrated the tale of how the doitto had cursed the schoolmaster who cut the tree that was there before, and for generations, his successors died in the river, leaving no one to carry the family line. Finally, as an apology, the family planted another tree and prayed for peace to appease their ill fate.

Such was my introduction to the mythologies rooted in the soil of Bengal. As someone who is deeply in love with the relatively pale pages of Western mythologies—the saga of how Greek and Roman Gods ruled the earth and the Norse myths of Gods, giants, and cosmic balance, centered on Yggdrasil, the World Tree, connecting nine realms—the mythological treasures of Bengal attracted me just as much, probably more. So if you, too, are someone in love with mythology or is a lover of Bangla literature, there is much nostalgia awaiting you in the pages of *Otiprakrito*. The book features the mythological creatures that already exist in Bangla mythology and have been believed, loved, and feared throughout literature.



Otiprakrito is akin to a graphic novel that is written by Anindita Chowdhury and Afra Nawmi, with a team of illustrators and artists who reimagined and brought to life—through their artwork—traditional characters from Bangla mythology. A group of researchers also aided in creating the foundation for these stories and together, they crafted a book that can work as an encyclopedia of Bengal's mythological creatures.

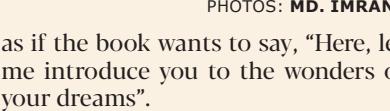
Reading through *Otiprakrito* is like opening the pages of a book where myths and legends don't just whisper from the pages—they leap out of them. Each character is vividly painted. The moment you meet

Ghum Parani Mashi-Pishi, snoozing delicately in a fairy-tale saree, or stumble into the tragic hilarity of the Hattimatim, tucked away in their eccentric mansion, you know you're not in the realm of the ordinary. This is a universe where the fairy-tale demons and witches frighten and delight. Every image, a brainchild of different artists, carries their signature flair while staying bound to the book's overarching theme.

But at its heart, this book isn't a deep dive into just the supernatural—it is more of a visual feast, an attempt to acquaint readers with creatures of the myth, forgotten gods and goddesses, and fantastical beings. It's



PHOTOS: MD. IMRAN



as if the book wants to say, "Here, let me introduce you to the wonders of your dreams".

Not all myths, though, are equally telling. Some creatures remain shrouded in mystery, their chapters brief and fleeting. However, the black and white and sepia illustrations offer these chapters a chance to shine and their forms are instantly recognisable.

"Don't judge a book by its cover," they say—but here, the cover is visually appealing and shines on its own. A fairytale frame guards the 'au' (the first letter of the Bangla alphabet), while 10 mythical animals from folklore stand sentinel. It represents what lies within: the book's essence.

captured in a burst of noble colors. Additionally, the font in the book offers a nod to the nostalgic charm of old typewriters—the black lettering floats on yellowed pages.

For a curious reader, the real joy lies in character analysis. Find your favorite ghost or mythical creature you've never met, it's all here waiting to be discovered. The book invites you to revel in the world of legends, to dream as you once did as a child.

In its essence, *Otiprakrito* asks you to revisit your childhood and reminds you that our myths and legends are timeless and a part of our collective identity. It reminds us that like the myths from different cultures across the globe, the rivers of Bengal also whisper its ancient secrets to the world. In those whimsical depths, shadows dance—figures too delicate yet fierce to belong to the mortal realm. The air of *Otiprakrito* hums with stories older than time, of serpents with gems guarding treasures, of Ponkhiraj Ghora soaring above the clouds, and Rakshasas whose laughter can shatter the strongest of hearts.

If I am asked who this book is for: It is for the dreamers, believers, the ones who once feared the darkness under their beds, yet longed to uncover mysteries.

Tahseen Nower Prachi is a writer whose head is a koi pond of micro tales too scattered to come down to her keyboard. For more of her little pieces follow *The Minute Chronicles* on Facebook.

U19 WC in focus as girls depart

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 Women's cricket team are set to depart for Sri Lanka tomorrow to play four T20s against the hosts to ramp up preparations for the upcoming U-19 World Cup, starting on January 18 in Malaysia.

The four-match series against Sri Lanka will begin on January 3 and run till January 9 after which the Bangladesh team will travel to Malaysia on January 11.

Pitted in Group D, Bangladesh will take on Australia, Nepal and Scotland in the group stage.

"Our first target is to play our game whether the opponent is Australia or someone else. We believe that it will be difficult against Australia. But they will be scared, at least, of being in the same group as Bangladesh. It's not just past memories which give me that feeling. We played the Asia Cup in Malaysia, the World Cup hosts. Since we have played there, we will get some advantage," Bangladesh skipper Sumaiya Akter said.

Barishal face Rangpur in high-voltage fixture

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Premier League T20 returns today after a day's break with two matches, the highlight of which is a high-voltage night game between table-toppers Rangpur Riders and reigning champions Fortune Barishal at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium. The match will get underway at 6:30pm.

On paper, Barishal are the strongest team in the tournament with most of the top national cricketers alongside a healthy foreign collection and they already have shown their pedigree with a 198 run chase against Durbar Rajshahi in the tournament opener on Monday.

Meanwhile, Rangpur, coming off their Global Super League triumph in Guyana, notched back-to-back wins in the opening two days and are currently sitting on top of the points table with four.

In both Rangpur matches, their middle-order did the rescue act and helped post decent totals on the board before their bowlers came up with exceptional performances to seal victories.

Barishal had a training session in Mirpur yesterday while Rangpur opted for rest.

Meanwhile, in the day's first game scheduled to kick off at 1:30pm, Durbar Rajshahi and Dhaka Capitals – both newcomers – will face off in an attempt to open their account after having lost their respective opening games.



PHOTO: REAL MADRID

Kylian Mbappe goes up against full-back Fran Garcia in Real Madrid's first training session of the year at Real Madrid City yesterday. Real will begin LaLiga's action in 2025 on Friday with a visit to Valencia for a game that was postponed last October due to deadly floods in the region.



What to WATCH

T SPORTS

BPL
Dhaka vs Rajshahi
Live from 1:30 pm
Barishal vs Rangpur
Live from 6:30 pm
(Friday)

STAR SPORTS 1
Australia vs India
Fifth Test, Day 1
Live from 5:30 am

Australia's final push for ending decade-long wait

AGENCIES

On Friday, the Pat Cummins-led Australia will begin their final push for reclaiming the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after a decade in the fifth and last Test against India in Sydney.

Fresh from their 184 run win in the fourth Test at the MCG on Monday to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series, Australia will only aim for a victory as it would also help them secure a spot in the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final.

With South Africa having ensured a maiden spot in the WTC final with a thrilling victory over Pakistan in Centurion, and Australia having overcome India in Melbourne, the equations for Australia have become clear – they need just one win from their upcoming three matches, including a two-match series away to Sri Lanka at Galle later this month, to guarantee a WTC final spot.

"[It would be a] reward for 24 months of really solid cricket. [It is] a group that is extremely experienced, [with] skilful Australian legends amongst it, who are continuing to surprise us with how good they are. But we can't look too far ahead," said Australia's wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey ahead of the fifth Test.

In 13 Tests against India at the Sydney Cricket Ground, Australia have a strong record with five wins, seven draws and just one loss.

Since losing to England in 2011, Australia are unbeaten in this format at the venue, with seven wins and six draws.



A draw in Sydney would be enough for Australia to reclaim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, a prize that has eluded them since they last won at home in 2014/15. However, it would only keep them ahead of India in the race to the WTC final, but leave the door open for Sri Lanka to sneak through.

Carey, however, stated that Australia's focus was simple: to secure a win.

"We know it's a really quality outfit in India, who have shown they are well and truly capable of bouncing back. So for this group, it's head down, another opportunity to win a Test match, and if we are able to secure the trophy, it would be fantastic."

Carey also mentioned that pacer Mitchell Starc, who showed signs of discomfort during the Melbourne Test, will be "fine and push through" to play the final Test against India.

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) returned under seemingly auspicious circumstances, with a youth festival lending a vibrant touch to the event. Yet beneath the surface glamour lies a troubling reality as the tournament began without fulfilling basic requirements, most notably players' payments.

This glaring oversight raises questions about the tournament's organisational structure, or lack thereof.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed – appointed expressly through the National Sports Council (NSC) quota to steady the ship after previous board members had fled the scene following the political shift since August 5 – has had to spend most of his effort and time in holding this edition's BPL since taking the BCB hot seat.

While the effort is laudable, there has been no indication that a proper structure for the BPL committee has been implemented, or at least initiated. In this case, despite the new-look board getting less than six months to prepare for the much-awaited tournament, it has little excuse for not forming a well-functioning committee to manage the BPL's complexities by now.

On Monday, the BPL's 11th edition rolled onto the turf amidst hustle and bustle and high-scoring games, but the structural integrity of the tournament remained vague. In fact, a lot of hotchpotch scenarios arose, with no bank guarantee money falling into BCB coffers from the franchises – a fundamental requirement

to safeguard player payments in case the franchises fail to do so.

As the matches began, criticism intensified when it emerged that no players had received payments from the franchises. According to tournament bylaws, franchises are required to clear 50 per cent of player payments before the competition starts, another 25 per cent at the halfway point, and the final instalment at its conclusion.

After quite a bit of dawdling, the BCB president remarked yesterday that they

Barca seek new licence for Olmo, Victor

REUTERS

Barcelona applied for new players' licences for Dani Olmo and Pau Victor with the Spanish FA (RFEF) on Tuesday, while the club denied claims of requesting any delay from governing bodies for their registrations.

Barcelona lost a second appeal to register the players for the remainder of the season on Monday, with the club unable to meet LaLiga's wage cap.

Barcelona informs that it has applied for a new license for the players Daniel Olmo and Pau Victor to the RFEF, the Catalan club said.

Barcelona signed Olmo in August for around 55 million euros but the attacking midfielder was registered for only the first half of the season.

The club managed to register Olmo and forward Victor after long-term injuries kept first-team players out of the squad for months, allowing them to allocate a portion of their wages.

While Olmo and Victor will be free agents after the deadline, Barcelona could meet the economic requirements to sign them before the transfer market closes in February.

However, according to the RFEF rules, a player cannot be signed by the same club twice in the same season.

ANISUR RAHMAN

are communicating with the franchises so that players receive their payments. It revealed the helplessness of an ineffective process, specifically in trying to bring the tournament up and running in a hurry.

"If you ask me to answer in black and white why this didn't happen (franchises didn't pay guarantee money), I won't be able to provide a clear answer. You have to see the overall situation from everyone's perspective over the last four months," Faruque told reporters yesterday.

Considering the perspective of current Bangladesh, what could be the market strategy, how the franchises would go about their financial strategy, and a need for stability and continuation of franchises were key details that needed to be sorted out.

It appears that old goods are being sold in new packaging. The professionalism needed in a well-functioning tournament is missing, as evidenced by the mishap with player payments. It mimics the ventures of the past board, where one man was taking on multifaceted endeavours and finding himself with too much on his plate.

For instance, Faruque has personally engaged with franchise owners to foster a sense of partnership.

"I have spoken directly with the franchise as board president so that they feel that we are partners. They are also spending money for Bangladesh cricket," he said.

The BCB president appears to be happy simply to get the show running, but a one-man show, as the past board has shown, usually fails to meet even the most basic requirements.

Handover of BNS delayed by another six months

ANISUR RAHMAN

The handover of the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has been extended by another six months following a decision by the planning commission on Tuesday.

The country's premier multi-purpose sports venue, which started undergoing renovation worth Tk 98.35 crore in September 2021, was initially supposed to be completed by December 2023. The deadline, however, was extended in two phases to December 2024 due to delay in approval of revised budget, which raised the cost by Tk 60 crore.

Former sports minister Nazmul Hassan Papon in early 2023 and later last year Youth and Sports Adviser Asif vowed to complete project within the timeline of December 2024.

"The planning commission yesterday [Tuesday] approved the extension of the project by six months. Hopefully, we can complete everything by this time unless any unavoidable circumstances arise," National

Sports Council's (NSC) acting planning and development director Mahbub Morshed Sohel told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked why they could not meet the deadline for a second time, Sohel said that there were various reasons behind it which they



explained to the sports ministry and planning commission.

The NSC official also informed that they had a few meetings with the BFF officials, who want to host the Asian Cup Qualifiers match against Hong Kong [scheduled for October 9] at the BNS.

BFF general secretary Emran Hossain Tushar, however, said

that they have requested NSC to hand over the ground, the dressing rooms and the media box by next month.

"We have sent a letter to the NSC today [Wednesday], requesting them to hand over the venue, dressing room and media centre by January as we are planning to stage matches of Bangladesh Championship League there since a new artificial turf is being installed at the Kamalapur venue," Emran said. "We also want international football to return to BNS through two international friendly matches of the women's team in the latter part of February."

Emran also informed that they need a match commissioner's room at BNS for hosting international matches. The NSC officials told them that by February they would be able to install floodlights, the bulbs for which are expected to reach the venue within a few days.

"We have two major tasks left. One is installing shed on the western gallery and the other is floodlights. The media centre is almost ready while all chairs for the galleries and the VIP boxes have been procured already," Sohel said.

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

BSRM
building a safer nation

**HIGHEST
SELLING
CEMENT** **20**
for more than
YEARS



Invest more in service sector to boost export

Yunus to business people

UNB, Dhaka



Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged the country's business community and entrepreneurs to come forward to strengthen its export base with more investment in the services sector to boost overall exports to the competitive global market.

"We need to enhance our exports. I urge all businesspeople to come forward to invest more in the services sector in addition to products to boost our exports," he said while inaugurating the 29th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2025 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre at Purbachal.

Highlighting the importance of entrepreneurs' role, Dr Yunus said developing an exportable product is important but it is more important to know who developed the product.

The chief adviser said every year, an initiative is launched to announce

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

DUAL CITIZENSHIP ACC seeks info on govt employees Sues ex-law minister over corruption

DIPAN NANDY

After former ministers and lawmakers, the Anti-Corruption Commission is now enquiring about government employees' dual citizenship.

The anti graft body yesterday wrote to the Security Service Division under the home ministry, the Department of Immigration and Passports and the Special Branch of Bangladesh Police, seeking relevant information, said Akhtar Hossain, director general (prevention) of the ACC.

Recently, the ACC urged the Election Commission and the home ministry to take action against 24 former ministers and lawmakers who held foreign citizenship while in office.

Concealing information, several corrupt government officials are obtaining and using passports of other countries, the letter said.

"Through this, these suspects are trying to protect themselves from legal action and cover up their misdeeds."

Taking up second citizenship is a violation of section 40 of the Government Service Act-2018, section 21 of the Penal Code, section 2 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947 and section 110 of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

3 lives lost in road crashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Narayanganj

Three people were killed and six others were injured yesterday in separate road accidents in Narayanganj's Rupganj upazila.

Hridoy Khan, 26, son of Kalam Khan of Barisal, died after his motorcycle collided head-on with a brick-laden three-wheeler (also known as Nosimon) on the Kanchan-Rupganj road in the upazila's Hatabo area around 8:00am.

Hridoy died on the spot while his pillion riders, Munma and Shanto, were critically injured, said Mehedi Islam, senior assistant superintendent of Narayanganj police.

The officer said they came to the area from Dhaka's Notun Bazar area to drink date juice. The injured are currently being treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, he added.

Meanwhile, Ram Das, 70, and Md Ebadullah, 71, both residents of Hatabo, died after a private car

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



Palestinian children inspect the damage at the site of an Israeli strike the previous night, in Jabalia, in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. As most of the world welcomed the new year with fireworks and music, Palestinians in Gaza entered 2025 with the sound of air strikes that flattened more buildings and killed 17 more.

PHOTO: AFP

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Braving the biting cold, labourers are working in a potato field in Yakubpur village of Thakurgaon Sadar upazila yesterday morning. The northern district has been experiencing severe cold weather for the last couple of days.

PHOTO: QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

Israeli air strikes kill 17 in Gaza

Over 1,500 tents flooded, unusable in the Palestinian enclave after days of rain

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israeli air strikes on al-Bureij refugee camp and Jabalia town in central and northern Gaza killed at least 17 Palestinians yesterday, the official Palestinian news agency WAFA reported.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment although in a post on X, its Arabic spokesperson warned residents of al-Bureij earlier to evacuate ahead of an imminent strike against Hamas men firing rockets from the area.

It also said overnight that it killed Abd al-Hadi Sabah, a senior Hamas member who helped lead the infiltration into Kibbutz Nir Oz during the October 7, 2023 attack by the group on southern Israel.

The instruction to clear the al-Bureij camp has caused a new wave of displacement, although it was not immediately clear how many people were affected.

Israel's Gaza campaign has killed at least 45,553 Palestinians, according to health officials in the Hamas-run enclave. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced and much of the tiny coastal strip is in ruins.

Palestinian and United Nations officials say

- Residents of al-Bureij camp told to evacuate
- Senior Hamas member killed in drone strike
- Death toll in Gaza rises to 45,553

fighting in Gaza ends.

WAFA said the military blew up residential blocks in Beit Lahiya and in and around Jabalia, while tanks shelled parts of Gaza City and the al-Bureij camp.

Meanwhile, Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz warned yesterday that Israel will step up its strikes in Gaza if Hamas keeps up its rocket fire at Israel.

The Hamas-run territory's health ministry said seven children have died from the cold over the past week.

SC lawyers' team to seek Chinmoy's bail today

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

A team of 11 Supreme Court lawyers will take part in today's bail hearing for former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari.

Court sources said the team, led by lawyer Apurba Kumar Bhattacharjee, will represent Chinmoy, also spokesperson for Sammilita Sanatan Jagaran Jote, in the sedition case filed over disrespecting the national flag.

Contacted, lawyer Apurba said, "We have come to Chattogram under the banner of Ainjibi Oikya Parishad, and we will move for Chinmoy in the court for his bail."

"I already got the Vakalatnama from Chinmoy. I'm a member of both the Supreme Court and Chattogram Bar associations, so I don't need authorisation from any local lawyer to move the case," he told The

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Wrong name of July martyr printed in textbook

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has made an error in publishing the name of a July uprising martyr in one of the textbooks for fifth graders.

The Bangla textbook reads that along with others, a protester named Nahyan was killed. However, NCTB officials said it was meant to be Nafisa Hossain, a protester killed by law enforcers in Savar.

The book tells the story of Abu Sayed, a student leader in Rangpur, who was shot dead by police at a close range while he stood with his arms outstretched in defiance against police brutality. His death and the photo of defiance spread like wildfire, drawing people from all corners of the country onto the streets.

A massive uprising followed. In Dhaka's Uttara, Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mugdho, a student, was killed while giving out water bottles to protesters.

"Countless lives were lost, including [Golam] Nafiz, Nahyan and Anas. Even children in their mothers' arms, children playing with their fathers, rickshaw pullers, labourers, farmers, hawkers, office

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Mystery of famine-causing volcanic eruption solved

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A team of researchers have helped solve the mystery over a volcanic eruption that caused famines and crop failures around the world, almost 200 years ago.

Scientists from the University of St Andrews say they have discovered the exact volcano that erupted in 1831, leading to a global cooling of approximately 1C.

The team discovered it was the Zavaritskii volcano on the remote, uninhabited island of Simushir, which is part of the Kuril Islands -- a disputed territory between Russia and Japan.

Currently controlled by Russia, the island operates as a strategic military outpost. During the Cold War, the Soviets used Simushir as a secret nuclear submarine base, docking vessels in a flooded volcanic crater.

Scientists also discovered the eruption occurred sometime during spring or summer. Scientists were previously unsure as to which volcano had erupted, and it was debated in the science community for many years.

However, the new research, led by Dr Will Hutchison from the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, reveals how the team analysed ice core records from the event, identifying a perfect match of the ash reports.

10 killed as driver rams truck into New Orleans crowd

Suspect killed; over 35 hurt; FBI launches terror probe

AFP, Washington

A US citizen with an Islamic State flag slammed a pickup truck into a crowd of New Year revellers in New Orleans yesterday, killing at least 10 people and wounding more than 35, officials said.

The FBI identified the attacker as Shamsud-Din Jabbar, a 42-year-old "US citizen from Texas."

"An ISIS flag was located in the vehicle, and the FBI is working to determine the subject's potential associations and affiliations with terrorist organisations," the FBI said in a statement.

The suspect was fatally shot in an exchange of gunfire with police. Potential homemade bombs were found in his truck and around the Louisiana city's famed French Quarter, the FBI said.

Local police said the incident took place at around 3:15am (0915 GMT) in the heart of the French Quarter, which was packed with people celebrating the start of 2025.

"This man was trying to run over as many people as he possibly could," Police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick told reporters.

Driving at "very high speed" and in a "very intentional" manner, "he was hellbent on creating the carnage and the damage that he did," Kirkpatrick said. He wounded two

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