



**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**

## 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 uptick, 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



Children look at their brand new textbooks at Azimpur Girls School and College in the capital on the first day of the year. However, most school students across the country are not so lucky as the authorities have not been able to deliver all the books on time.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



**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

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**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".

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## 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 RAHAMAN

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.

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**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



**Touhid Hossain**

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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.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## 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 Barlekha.

Suspect Zakir Hossain Tipu, 31, was arrested shortly after the incident, said Barlekha Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Abdul Qayyum.

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

The OC said Barlekha 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.



Workers unloading goods from a truck blocking the Sadarghat Gabtali 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

## 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.

## 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 Huq.

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.

## 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.

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

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.

## 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

parties emerge in Bangladesh, Tarique said those who fear the people's verdict 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

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."

## 10 killed as driver rams truck

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officers in the subsequent shootout but they were listed in stable condition.

The vehicle used was a white Ford F-150 electric pick-up, an AFP correspondent on the scene said.

The New Orleans attack came 10 days after a similar car-ramming assault at a Christmas market in the eastern German city of Magdeburg that killed five and wounded more than 200. In that case, police arrested a Saudi man and said he appeared to be mentally disturbed.

President Joe Biden called New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell "to offer full federal support following the horrific news," the White House said.

"There is no justification for violence of any kind, and we will not tolerate any attack on any of our nation's communities," Biden said in a statement.

President-elect Donald Trump immediately linked the attack to illegal immigration, giving no

evidence and before authorities made clear the suspect was American.

"When I said that the criminals coming in are far worse than the criminals we have in the country... it turned out to be true," Trump posted on social media.

Trump also claimed that the nation's crime rate "is at a level that nobody has ever seen." In fact, violent crime is sharply down across the country, according to the FBI.

In the wee hours of the year's first day, the area would have been packed with revellers celebrating in the French Quarter, a district renowned for its bars, restaurants and jazz history.

A white truck crashed through a barricade "at a very high rate of speed," witness Jim Mowrer told CBS News.

"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

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.

The iconic French Quarter listed special deals for New Year's, including LGBTQ+ parties and a drag cabaret near where the incident took place.

## 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 meddle in politics. 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 embarrassing for us," he said, adding that the army personnel would happily return to their barracks as soon as the police were ready to resume their duties in earnest.

The army is currently vested with magistracy powers to aid the civil administration, and it is taking steps accordingly, he said.

Asked about the army's support for

the interim government, Gen Waker reiterated the army's full-fledged cooperation with the incumbent government headed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Prof Muhammad Yunus, saying, "We will assist the chief adviser in whichever manner he seeks our cooperation."

He said he would not mind aiding the government even if it inconvenienced the military. "We will do it in the interest of the country and nation."

Regarding a question about the government facing numerous demands from diverse groups, the army chief said he thought people should restrain themselves and not become a burden on the Yunus government. Patience, he said, would make it easier for the incumbents to hold quick elections and pave the way for an elected government.

Regarding the relationship with India, Gen Waker said that the military was very keen to maintain its cordial relations with the big neighbour. He said Bangladesh was dependent on India for a wide range of things, as was India on Bangladesh.

He said it was a relationship of 'give and take', and one had to negotiate or bargain for a better share of the pie. "But we should not do anything that makes it seem that India is dominating us in any way that harms our interests."

The army chief said if Bangladesh takes care of India's interests, India would duly reciprocate. "Instability will not be created in our Chattogram Hill Tracts. The stability along the Myanmar border will not be disrupted either. They will not kill our people along the borders. We will get our fair share of water."

He said there was no problem with this relationship of 'give and take' but stressed it had to be fair.



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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.



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

## 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, Bangalee 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 Lama 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,

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## ‘Don’t try to hijack ownership of the movement’ Says BNP leader Khasru

STAR 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 Chattagram’s Sholoshahar marking the 46th founding anniversary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

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## Workplace accidents claimed 707 lives in 2024 Says BILS report; transport sector sees highest deaths, agriculture second

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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

SECTOR-WISE BREAKDOWN	
Transport	273
Agriculture	102
Construction	91
Rickshaw pullers	43
Migrants	38
Day Labourers	32

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 Belalur Rahman, additional IGP at the Police Telecom; Selim Md Jahangir, additional IGP at the Police Headquarters and Mallick Faqurul 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.



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.

It is noteworthy that the first gazette of the 43rd BCS was published on October 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

In Loving Memory of Mrs. Hasmat Ara Islam



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 lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un)

Mrs. Islam departed this world on 30<sup>th</sup> 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 Kulkhani will be held at her residence, House-19, Road-47, Gulshan-2, Dhaka, following Maghrib prayers at 6:00 pm on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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**



## 2,229 families received

FROM PAGE 3  
victims and the injured has been provided since October 1, 2024.

According to him, the foundation has received around Tk 109.20 crore, of which over Tk 47.32 crore has already been disbursed as financial assistance to 2,229 families, comprising 628 families of those killed and 1,601 families of those injured. The remaining Tk 61 crore is currently deposited in the foundation's account.

According to the latest data from the Health and Family Welfare Ministry's Management Information System (MIS), the number of deceased stands at 826 and the injured at 11,306. Of them, 198 families [of those killed] are waiting, said Sarjis Alam, general secretary of the foundation.

He highlighted several challenges while trying to explain the delays in this regard. "Efforts are underway

to coordinate the MIS list with the foundation's list. Applications received by the foundation are being verified," said Sarjis.

He said financial assistance is being provided to those listed in the MIS and those whose applications to the foundation have been verified. In cases where necessary documents are missing, the process is taking longer. Hospital discharge certificates must be submitted as proof, adding that the delays in providing financial assistance often occur because many lack proper hospital discharge papers or certification.

He said the foundation currently has 35 staff members dedicated to this task. While the focus has primarily been on assisting the families of martyrs, moving forward the foundation's priority will be to assist the injured.

## Smuggled goods worth Tk 1.43 crore seized in Sylhet

BSS, Sylhet

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) 48 battalion seized smuggled goods worth over Tk 1.43 crore in separate drives conducted along the Sylhet and Sunamganj frontier areas yesterday.

The drives were conducted in Pratappur, Utma, Sreepur, Kalasadek, and Bisnakandi areas of the two districts.

The seized goods included Indian sarees, skincare products, clothing items, sugar, cane, poppy seeds, cow dung, perfume body spray, candy, soap, and a scooter.

Additionally, smuggled goods originating from Bangladesh and a Mahindra tractor used for transporting the items were also seized, according to BGB sources.



After moulding small clay cups, Bithi Rani dries them in the sun to prepare them for sale. These cups, used to serve curd, see higher demand in winter due to various events like weddings and fairs held throughout the season. The photo was taken in Patuakhali's Baufal upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

## North shivers in cold

FROM PAGE 5  
upazila of Kurigram, echoed similar difficulties.

"The cold has increased our misery. I can't go out in the morning because of the biting chill. We burn straw at home to stay warm as we lack adequate clothing," he said.

Hospitals across the region are witnessing a surge in patients suffering from cold-related illnesses such as fever, pneumonia, diarrhoea, and respiratory issues. Low-income families, particularly in rural areas, are struggling to procure warm clothing and heating materials, compounding their hardship.

Local authorities and non-governmental organisations are being urged to distribute blankets and warm clothes to those in need.

Meanwhile, residents of Dhaka and surrounding areas are expected to experience colder weather in the coming days as temperatures may drop further due to persistent fog during the daytime, an official from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) stated.

Dhaka's minimum temperature was recorded at 15 degrees Celsius yesterday.

According to BMD's morning weather bulletin, thick fog is likely to disrupt air navigation, inland river transport, and road communication at least until 9:00am today.

BMD Meteorologist Md Omar Faruq said that the foggy conditions in Dhaka are expected to improve by Sunday, with a slight rise in temperature.

## Workplace

FROM PAGE 3  
and two were women.

The report also noted that 55 workers, mostly fishermen, went missing during natural disasters.

In 2023, workplace accidents claimed the lives of at least 742 workers across various sectors, with 489 others injured.

The report identified road accidents, roof collapses, electrocution, fires, cylinder explosions, trawler or boat capsizing, and lightning strikes as the leading causes of workplace deaths.

Over the past decade, workplace accidents have claimed the lives of more than 8,000 workers, the report highlighted.

The highest number of workplace fatalities occurred in 2019, with 1,200 deaths, followed by 2021 with 1,053 deaths.

## 2024 saw over 200

FROM PAGE 3  
including its fundamental aspects, remain unimplemented which intensified the steamroller of discrimination and deprivation against the indigenous Jumma people," the report highlighted.

A total of 12 incidents of violence against Jumma women and children were committed last year by settlers, affecting 16 Jumma women and children, the report said, adding that these incidents are repeating due to the prevailing culture of impunity.

Over 119 incidents of human rights violations were committed by security forces and law enforcement agencies, affecting at least 5,655 individuals, including 5,000 Bawm people, as well as 1,321 families, including at least 1,000 Bawm families, and residents of 94 villages, including 47 Bawm villages, the report detailed.

Among the victims, 20 individuals, including 16 Bawm people, were killed.

Additionally, 143 people were arrested and implicated in false cases, 28 individuals were detained, and 42 families faced obstacles and losses in Jhum farming and garden cultivation, read the report.

Moreover, 242 families were impacted by damage caused by border connectivity roads, and 20 villages were ordered to provide family information and photographs.

The report also noted that 25 incidents were committed last year by settlers and land grabbers, resulting in 210 Jumma people becoming victims of human rights violations.

Furthermore, 119 houses, shops, and Buddhist temples were set on fire and looted, and 2,314 acres of land were illegally occupied.

### জমি বিক্রয়

গাজীপুর-মৌচাক রাস্তা-বিন্দুসহ  
২০ কাঠা বাগান বাড়ী  
উপযোগী উচ্চ রেডি জমি বিক্রয়  
হবে, একদাম ৬৪ লক্ষ।  
**01711 350917**

### জমি বিক্রয়

ঢাকার সন্নিকটে উত্তরা উত্তর  
মেট্রোরেল দেশানের পশ্চিম পাশে  
সাতারের আকরায় মৌজায় আটমি  
মোহাম্মদ আবুলিয়া মডেল টাউনে  
তিনদিনকে ৩৫ফুট/৩০ফুট/২৫ ফুট  
রাস্তাসহ এখনই বাড়ি করার উপযোগী  
৮ বিঘা জমি বিক্রয় হবে।  
যোগাযোগঃ  
০১৭৭২১১৮০৮১, ০১৬৭৫১২৭৯২১

## Don't try

FROM PAGE 3  
"Think before you make a statement. We don't want to question this movement as it is the movement of 18 crore people of Bangladesh," the BNP leader said.

"Together with all the people, we have driven out the fascists. No one should try to take ownership of the movement. If we (BNP) have to calculate the ownership, you will be ashamed," he said referring to BNP's contribution to the protests. Khasru said the uprising gave back people the right to vote.

"If anyone plays with it, they will follow the path of Sheikh Hasina. Trying to stay in power by creating new narratives without elections will not work here. You have to go to the polls. Elections should be held as soon as possible, He said.

He said the responsibility of the interim government is to peacefully hand over power to the elected government, he said. "And the reforms that are being talked about will be carried out in the next parliament. That is, the elected parliament members will make the necessary reforms."

Meanwhile, speaking at another programme, BNP standing committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan yesterday said the party believes the interim government can implement necessary reforms while preparing for the national elections.

"Reform is an ongoing process. Reform never stops. The idea of reform first and then election holds no meaning," he told reporters after paying tribute at the grave of former president Ziaur Rahman in Dhaka, marking JCD's anniversary.

PRAYER  
TIMING  
JANUARY 2

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

## SC gets 55

FROM PAGE 3  
604 calls were received for receiving legal advice services and 344 for seeking information on various cases.

All the information of these calls has been provided to the service recipients immediately, according to the press release.

The SC administration on September 25 last introduced a helpline number (+88 01316154216) to assist the litigants or service recipients.

## 267 excluded from 43rd

FROM PAGE 3  
excluding 99 recommended candidates. In the subsequent gazette on December 30, an additional 168 candidates were excluded, making a total of 267 excluded candidates.

One of the excluded female candidates expressed her frustration to journalists, saying, "We had heard that our joining date was set for January 1. We were waiting with great hope for the new year. But today, we are left devastated and forced to stand on the streets to demand our rightful place. My name was on the October 15 gazette, but it is absent in the December 30 gazette. I came here today to question why my name is missing. We were recommended based on merit, not through any quotas."

In the past decade and a half under the Awami League government, 259 candidates from various BCS batches were similarly excluded. However, after the

formation of the current interim government, they were appointed. Those who gathered in front of the Secretariat yesterday questioned, "We talk about building an equitable Bangladesh after the fall of authoritarian governments. So why is this discrimination happening to us now?"

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday demanded that the government cancel the gazette issued for the 43rd Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) recruitment and issue a new one.

The organisation, in a statement, said the government on December 30 issued the gazette excluding 168 candidates from various cadres, of which 71 were from religious minority communities.

It said the gazette is a clear reflection of a mindset of religious hatred, which goes against expectations of the recent anti-discrimination movement.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD  
Narayanganj Road Division.  
Phone & Fax No-02-7693468  
Email: [eenarayanjanj@gmail.com](mailto:eenarayanjanj@gmail.com)

Memo No: 35.01.6700.451.07.000.25-03Dated: 01.01.2025


**e-Tender Notice**  
e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the Executive Engineer, RHD, Narayanganj Road Division, Narayanganj for the procurement of below mentioned works:

Sl. No.	Tender ID, Package No. & Date of publishing	Name of work	Last Selling & Closing Date & Time
01.	Tender ID: 1057435, Package No: 23/e-GP/EE/PMP-Roads/NRD/2024-2025. Publishing: 01-Jan-2025.	Repairing of Madanganj (Minarbari) - Langalbandh Road (Z-1061) from ch:0+000km to ch:3+900km by Overlay and necessary repair work under Narayanganj Road Division.	22-Jan-2025, 16:00 23-Jan-2025, 12:00
02.	Tender ID: 1057437, Package No: 24/e-GP/EE/PMP-Roads/NRD/2024-2025. Publishing: 01-Jan-2025.	Repairing of Mograpara (Sonargaon College) - Kaikertek - Nabiganj Road (Z-1066) from ch:0+000km to ch:7+600km by Overlay and necessary repair work under Narayanganj Road Division.	29-Jan-2025, 16:00 30-Jan-2025, 12:00

These are online Tenders, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Signed.  
(Shahana Ferdous)  
ID No: 602161  
Executive Engineer, RHD

GD-22



**Bangladesh Krishi Bank**  
Head Office  
83-85, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000  
**ICT Systems Department**  
E-mail: [dgmiectsystem@krishibank.org.bd](mailto:dgmiectsystem@krishibank.org.bd)  
Website: [www.krishibank.gov.bd](http://www.krishibank.gov.bd)  
Tel: 02-223356653

No. BKB/HO/ICT (Systems)/10(46)/2024-25/454Dated: 31-12-2024


**Tender Notice (OTM)**  
This is to notify all concern that the following tender has been published through National e-Government Procurement Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

SI	e-Tender ID, Tender Package and Reference No.	Name of tender	Tender documents last selling date and time	Tender closing & opening date and time	Tender method
01	1048002, 03/2024-2025, Reference No.: BKB/HO/ICT(Systems)/10(46)/2024-25/454; Dated: 31-12-2024	Supply of Network Router for Bangladesh Krishi Bank.	Date: 13-01-2025 Time: 16:00	Date: 14-01-2025 Time: 15:00	OTM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-Government Procurement Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-Government Procurement Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-Government Procurement Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) and you can also ask help from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Sd/-  
**K. M. Nuruddin Sarawar**  
Deputy General Manager (ICT)

GD-20



**ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন**  
**সম্পত্তি বিভাগ**  
আপনার পরিবেশ সুন্দর ও পরিচ্ছন্ন রাখুন  
আপনার শিতকে টিকা দিন

স্মারক নং-৪৬.২০৭.০০০.১৩.০২.৫১০৫.২০২৪তারিখঃ ৩০/১২/২০২৪ খ্রি.

**ঃ ইজারা বিজ্ঞপ্তি ঃ**

১।	মন্ত্রণালয় ও বিভাগ	ঃ স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়, স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ।
২।	সংস্থার নাম	ঃ ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন।
৩।	দরপত্র আহবানকারী বিভাগ	ঃ সম্পত্তি বিভাগ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন।
৪।	ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	ঃ উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM), সিলগালা মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান।
৫।	ইজারার মেয়াদ	ঃ কার্যাদেশের তারিখ থেকে পরবর্তী ০১ (এক) বছর।
৬।	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	ঃ ব্যক্তির ক্ষেত্রে (ক) পাসপোর্টের সাইজের ছবি-০২ কপি। (খ) ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর/ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান/১ম শেনির পোজিটেড অফিসার কর্তৃক জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি। (গ) হালনাগাদ টি.আই. এন সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি। (ঘ) কোম্পানীর ক্ষেত্রে হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি। (ঙ) ইজারা দরের ৩০% (শতকরা ৩০ ভাগ) অর্থ পে- অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে, ২৫% অর্থ ইজারা মূল্যের সাথে সমন্বয় করা হবে এবং বাকী ৫% অর্থ জামানত হিসেবে সংরক্ষিত থাকবে। (চ) সিডিউল ক্রয়ের চালানের ফটোকপি।
৭।	সিডিউলের টাকা জমা দেয়ার খাত	ঃ সিডিউল মূল্য বাবদ নির্ধারিত অর্থ মেয়র, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন, চলতি হিসাব নং- ২০০০১৭৮৩৯ (বিবিধ), সোনালী ব্যাংক লিঃ, নগর ভবন শাখা।
৮।	দরপত্র বিক্রির স্থান	ঃ বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়; ঢাকা বিভাগ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের সম্পত্তি বিভাগ, হিসাব বিভাগ ও সকল আঞ্চলিক নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়।
৯।	দরপত্র জমা দেয়ার স্থান	ঃ বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়; ঢাকা বিভাগ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের সম্পত্তি বিভাগ ও সকল আঞ্চলিক নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়।
১০।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	ঃ প্রধান সম্পত্তি কর্মকর্তার দপ্তর, সম্পত্তি বিভাগ, ৪র্থ তলা, রুম নং-৩২৫, নগর ভবন, ঢাকা।


১১। সিডিউল ক্রয়ের তারিখ, দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার তারিখ ও খোলার সময় নিম্নরূপ ঃ

দরপত্র আহবানের পর্যায়	সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র বাজ ও খাম খোলার তারিখ ও সময় (দরদাতার উপস্থিতিতে)
১ম পর্যায়	১৩/০১/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ	১৪/০১/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ তাং- সকাল ৯ টা হতে দুপুর ১২.৩০ টা পর্যন্ত	১৪/০১/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ তাং- দুপুর ২.৩০ টা
২য় পর্যায়	২২/০১/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ	২৩/০১/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ তাং- সকাল ৯ টা হতে দুপুর ১২.৩০ টা পর্যন্ত	২৩/০১/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ তাং- দুপুর ২.৩০ টা
৩য় পর্যায়	০৪/০২/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ	০৫/০২/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ তাং- সকাল ৯ টা হতে দুপুর ১২.৩০ টা পর্যন্ত	০৫/০২/২০২৫ খ্রিঃ তাং- দুপুর ২.৩০ টা

১২। কাজের বিবরণ :

ক্র. নং	পার্কিংয়ের বিবরণ	সরকারী মূল্য	সিডিউল মূল্য
০১.	পোস্তগোলা শশানঘাট সংলগ্ন বুড়িগঙ্গা নদীর পাড় ঘেঁষে রাস্তার পূর্ব পার্শ্বে ও দক্ষিণ পার্শ্বে এক সারিতে ৩৫টি পার্কিং।	৫,৫৩,৫৮৫/-	১,৮০০/-

১৩। বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলীঃ সরকারী ছুটি/অনিবার্য কারণবশত নির্ধারিত দিনে দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলা সম্ভব না হলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে ও একই সময়ে দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলা হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই যেকোন দরপত্র/সমুদয় দরপত্র বাতিল বা গ্রহণ করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। টেন্ডার সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য টেন্ডার শিডিউলে বর্ণিত থাকবে।



কাইজার মোহাম্মদ ফারাবী  
(উপসচিব)

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E-mail: [cesto@dscc.gov.bd](mailto:cesto@dscc.gov.bd)

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## 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 Farooqi, 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. Deepto 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 new *Nakshi Kanthar 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 starrer *Nakshi Kanthar Jamin* based on the renowned author Hasan Azizul Haque's story *Bidhobader Kotha* was released on December 27.

"The narrative in *Nakshi Kanthar 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 Kanthar 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."

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## 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

## 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.



# 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 avail 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 serves 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, Nahiyan 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 Nahiyan'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 Nahiyan," the source said.

It could not be independently verified whether anyone named Nahiyan 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 Mugdho.

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

## SC lawyers' team to seek Chinmoy's bail

FROM PAGE 16

Daily Star over the phone yesterday evening.

Chinmoy is in a Chattogram jail.

Earlier, an anticipatory bail petition of Chinmoy was rejected by a Chattogram court as his lawyer Rabindra Ghosh, a senior High Court lawyer, had no Vakalatnama to represent Chinmoy in court and authorisation of any local lawyer to move the case.

However, several lawyers yesterday confirmed that he would not represent Chinmoy in court today.

A Vakalatnama is a document that authorises a lawyer to act on behalf of his/her client.

On December 3, Chattogram Metropolitan Session Judge Saiful Islam fixed today for the bail hearing.

Court sources said the SC lawyers from Dhaka also talked to the president and the secretary of Chittagong District Bar Association (CDBA) about the bail procedure of the

70 lawyers, who are among the 115 accused in a case filed by slain lawyer Saiful Islam Ali's brother Khan-e-Alam on charges related to explosives, attacks on justice seekers and vandalism on November 26.

Subrata Chowdhury, an SC lawyer who deals with the bail procedure of the accused lawyers, told this newspaper, "I talked to the CDBA leaders about their bail procedure. We, all the lawyers' community, have a strong unity and bond regardless of political affiliations. If any lawyer has been charged wrongfully, we all will work together to free them."

Meanwhile, the Chattogram Bar yesterday formed a human chain in the court building area, demanding the arrest of the rest of the accused in Saiful murder case and the transfer of the case to a speedy trial tribunal.

Addressing the human chain, CDBA President lawyer Nazim Uddin Chowdhury said, "ISCKON

leader Chinmoy instigated his supporters to murder Saiful. Using the megaphone of police, he provoked them while he was in prison van."

On November 26, a Chattogram court sent Chinmoy to jail rejecting his bail prayer after he was arrested in the capital the previous day.

Firoz Khan, former general secretary of Chattogram's Mohora ward BNP, on October 31 filed a case with Kotwali Police Station accusing Chinmoy and 18 others of disrespecting the national flag during a rally of the Hindu community in Chattogram's New Market area on October 25.

Following the bail rejection, supporters of Chinmoy blocked the prison van on its way to jail and demonstrated demanding his immediate release.

Later, police charged truncheons to disperse agitating Chinmoy's supporters, triggering a clash among law enforcers, lawyers, and the supporters

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 upsurge and Sergeant Zahurul 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, Mugdho, Titu Mir, Pritilata, Asad, Matiur, Noor Hossain, Dr Milon and Zehad.

## 3 lives lost

FROM PAGE 16

rammed into them and others around 9:00am, said ASP Mehedi.

Both the deceased were fish sellers who were sitting by the Kanchan-Rupsi road. Four others were injured in the incident, he added.

Both the drivers of the three-wheeler and the car have been arrested. The vehicles have also been sized, said Mehedi, adding that no case has been filed over the incidents yet.

Invest more

FROM PAGE 16

a "Product of the Year," and this year, furniture is the product of the year.

In addition to this process, Dr Yunus said, he wants to introduce "Entrepreneur of the Year" to let everyone know who is behind the product.

The CA highlighted the government's initiative to promote Bangladesh's products in the global market with its diversified presence.

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. "It's playing an important role in strengthening Bangladesh's economy."

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 Chatter" and "Chhatrish Chatter" 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 manner.



# CREATING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES for Women Entrepreneurs



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 Khushi,**  
Entrepreneur,  
Kallyani Nari Kallyan  
Shomabay Samiti,  
Kurigram  
I’m a WING entrepreneur

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 thana 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,  
Karoponno,  
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.



**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 collaterals 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

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

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.

While the pandemic, by creating the “Anandamela” 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.



**Musfiqua 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.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Simplify legal processes to facilitate the establishment and expansion of businesses for women.
- » Enhance training and mentorship programmes to address skill gaps and encourage entrepreneurship.
- » Optimise logistics and supply chains to improve efficiency and reduce operational challenges.
- » Include entrepreneurship in the curriculum from the school level.
- » Create a comprehensive database of women-owned SMEs to aid visibility and access.
- » Provide training and facilitate access to both domestic and international markets for women entrepreneurs.
- » Develop inclusive policies that cater to marginalised groups, with targeted support for women entrepreneurs.
- » Expand women’s access to financial resources through simplified and inclusive banking processes.
- » Shift focus from traditional to non-traditional products for women entrepreneurs.







## 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



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 to Jumaa and his surviving twin brother, Ali, who is being treated in an intensive care unit at a hospital in southern Gaza.

Completely destitute and repeatedly displaced by the Israel's offensive in Gaza, the Batran family live in a makeshift tent in Deir el-Balah made of worn-out blankets and fabric.

Like hundreds of others now living in a date palm orchard, they have struggled to keep warm and dry amid heavy rains and temperatures that have dropped as low as eight degrees Celsius.

"We don't have enough blankets or suitable clothing. I saw my baby start to freeze, his skin turned blue and then he died," she cried.

The twins were born

prematurely and she said the doctor decided to take the babies out of the incubator despite the family not having access to heating.

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

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".

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.

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.

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 Muan 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.



## 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 percent 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

## 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.





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

হিউম্যান রিসোর্সেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১  
(রিক্রুটমেন্ট এন্ড আউটসোর্সিং উইং)

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং: ৬০/২০২৪

তারিখ: ১৬ পৌষ, ১৪৩১  
৩১ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৪

পুনঃনিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

দি সিকিউরিটি প্রিন্টিং করপোরেশন (বাংলাদেশ) লি., গাজীপুর এ 'মহাব্যবস্থাপক (নিরাপত্তা)' পদে চুক্তিভিত্তিক নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে ২০/০৫/২০২৪ তারিখে প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি (নং: ৩১/২০২৪)-এর অনুবৃত্তিক্রমে বর্ণিত পদে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাধীনে পুনরায় দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

- ০১। বেতন ও সুবিধাদি : মাসিক সর্বসাকুল্যে বেতন টাঃ ২,০০,০০০ (টাকা দুই লক্ষ মাত্র)। উক্ত অর্থের উপর প্রচলিত হারে আয়কর কর্তনযোগ্য। চুক্তিভিত্তিক নিয়োগকালীন কোনরূপ বর্ধিত বেতন ভাতা, আগাম, ইনক্রিমেন্ট, বোনাস বা পদোন্নতি প্রদান করা হবে না।
- ০২। বয়সসীমা (২০/০৫/২০২৪ তারিখে) : সর্বনিম্ন ৫০ বছর ও সর্বোচ্চ ৬০ বছর।
- ০৩। চুক্তির মেয়াদ : ০৩ বছর।
- ০৪। শিক্ষাপত্র যোগ্যতা : স্নাতকোত্তর বা ৪ বছর মেয়াদী স্নাতক ডিগ্রী অর্জনকারী হতে হবে। শিক্ষাজীবনে সকল পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণিসহ যে কোন ২টি তে ১ম শ্রেণি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে।
- ০৫। অভিজ্ঞতা : ক) সশস্ত্র বাহিনী হতে অবসরপ্রাপ্ত লেঃ কর্ণেল/কর্ণেল সমমর্যাদার কর্মকর্তা। পিএসসি থাকতে হবে।  
খ) স্বনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে ন্যূনতম ০২ বছর নিরাপত্তা সংক্রান্ত কাজ করার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
- ০৬। অযোগ্যতা : সশস্ত্র বাহিনী হতে বাধ্যতামূলক অবসরে গমনকারী প্রার্থীগণ যোগ্য হিসেবে বিবেচিত হবেন না।
- ০৭। অন্যান্য শর্ত : ন্যূনতম ২ মাসের নোটিশে দুই পক্ষের সম্মেলনের ডিগ্রিতে চাকরি হতে অব্যাহতি প্রদান করা যেতে পারে।
- ০৮। O' Level এবং A' Level সম্পন্নকারী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে এ দেশীয় সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষা বোর্ড হতে ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalent Certificate) এবং বিদেশী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে প্রাপ্ত ডিগ্রীর ক্ষেত্রে দেশী সংশ্লিষ্ট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন/উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalent Certificate) অনুযায়ী ডিগ্রী ও ফলাফলের (শ্রেণি/বিভাগ/জিপিএ/সিজিপিএ উল্লেখসহ) তথ্য প্রদান করতে হবে।
- ০৯। আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদেরকে চাকরির আবেদনপত্র এবং আবেদনপত্রের সাথে পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ২ কপি রঙিন ছবি, অবসর গ্রহণ সংক্রান্ত আদেশ, ১৮ নং ক্রমিকে বর্ণিত জীবন বৃত্তান্ত (সিভি) ও এ সংক্রান্ত দলিলাদি (একাডেমিক সনদপত্র, ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট, স্বনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে নিরাপত্তা সংক্রান্ত কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ, পিএসসি সনদ, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র ও অন্যান্য যাচিত দলিলাদির সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি) পরিচালক (এইচআরডি-১), হিউম্যান রিসোর্সেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, প্রধান কার্যালয়, মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০ বরাবর সরাসরি অথবা ডাকযোগে আগামী ৩০/০১/২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে পৌঁছাতে হবে।
- ১০। আবেদনে প্রদত্ত স্থায়ী ঠিকানার সপক্ষে সংশ্লিষ্ট সিটি কর্পোরেশনের মেয়র/পৌরসভার মেয়র/কাউন্সিলর/ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ চেয়ারম্যান কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষরিত সনদপত্র আবেদনপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে। বিবাহিত মহিলা প্রার্থীগণ স্থায়ী ঠিকানা হিসেবে যদি স্বামীর ঠিকানা ব্যবহার করেন সেক্ষেত্রে উক্ত স্থায়ী ঠিকানার সপক্ষে নাগরিকত্ব সনদ জমা দিতে হবে।
- ১১। বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক ব্যতীত অন্য কেউ নিয়োগের জন্য উপযুক্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবেন না। বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক নয় প্রার্থীর এরূপ স্ত্রী বা স্বামী থাকলে অথবা বিবাহ বন্ধনের জন্য চুক্তিবদ্ধ হলে নিয়োগের জন্য অনুপযুক্ত বিবেচিত হবেন।
- ১২। বর্ণিত পদের ক্ষেত্রে কোন কাগজপত্রাদির ঘাটতি থাকলে বা পরবর্তীতে কোন প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতার ঘাটতি পাওয়া গেলে বা দুর্নীতি, অসত্য তথ্য প্রদান, কোন জাল সনদ দাখিল, অসদুপায় অবলম্বন, প্রতারণার আশ্রয় নিলে বা আবেদনপত্রে গুরুত্ব (Substantive) ত্রুটি বা ঘাটতি দেখা গেলে বা প্রদত্ত তথ্য মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়ার যেকোন পর্যায়ে উক্ত প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে।
- ১৩। আলোচ্য পদে আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে কোন আবেদন ফি প্রদান করতে হবে না।
- ১৪। বর্ণিত পদে শুধু মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের মাধ্যমে প্রার্থী বাছাই করা হবে।
- ১৫। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীগণ তাদের স্ব-স্ব নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের পূর্বনুমোদনক্রমে আবেদন করতে পারবেন। নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের অনাপত্তিপত্রের মূলকপি মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় জমা দিতে হবে। অন্যথায় প্রার্থীকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ দেওয়া হবে না।
- ১৬। যাচিত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতার ডিগ্রিতে বাছাইকৃত প্রার্থীদেরকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার জন্য আমন্ত্রণ জানানো হবে।
- ১৭। অসম্পূর্ণ/ভুল তথ্য সম্বলিত আবেদনপত্র কোন প্রকার যোগাযোগ ব্যতিরেকে বাতিল করা হবে।
- ১৮। 'মহাব্যবস্থাপক (নিরাপত্তা)' পদে আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নোক্ত ছক অনুযায়ী জীবন বৃত্তান্ত প্রস্তুত করে চাকরির আবেদনপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।

ছক

জীবন বৃত্তান্ত					
পদের নাম: 'মহাব্যবস্থাপক (নিরাপত্তা)'					
১। (ক) প্রার্থীর নাম (বাংলায়)	:				
(খ) প্রার্থীর নাম (ইংরেজিতে)	:				
২। (ক) পিতার নাম (বাংলায়)	:				
(খ) পিতার নাম (ইংরেজিতে)	:				
(গ) স্বামীর নাম (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে)	:				
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 নম্বর	:				
৯। জাতীয়তা	:				
১০। মোবাইল নম্বর	:				
১১। ই-মেইল	:				
১২। শিক্ষাপত্র যোগ্যতা	:				
ক্রমিক নং		ডিগ্রী	শ্রেণি/বিভাগ/জিপিএ/সিজিপিএ	পাসের সন	বোর্ড/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
১৩। অবসর গ্রহণের তারিখ ও আদেশ নম্বর	:				
১৪। অভিজ্ঞতার বিস্তারিত বিবরণ	:				
১৫। স্বনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে নিরাপত্তা সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের : অভিজ্ঞতা (প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও কার্যকালসহ)	:				
আমি এ মর্মে ঘোষণা প্রদান করছি যে, উপরে বর্ণিত সকল তথ্যাদি সঠিক এবং নির্ভুল। বর্ণিত তথ্যে কোন ভুল/অসত্য প্রমাণিত হলে তার জন্য আমি দায়ী থাকব।					
স্বাক্ষর	:				

- ১৯। পূর্বের বিজ্ঞপ্তি (নং: ৩১/২০২৪, তারিখ- ২০/০৫/২০২৪) অনুযায়ী আবেদনকৃত প্রার্থীদের মধ্যে যে সকল প্রার্থীর এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি মোতাবেক আবেদনের যোগ্যতা রয়েছে সেসকল প্রার্থীর নতুনভাবে আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই।
- ২০। বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রয়োজনে এই বিজ্ঞপ্তির কার্যক্রম যেকোন পর্যায়ে সংশোধন/স্বগিত/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২৫-১৩  
তারিখঃ ০১/০১/২০২৪

ব্যাবসিক ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হারানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

(মোঃ জবদুল ইসলাম)  
পরিচালক (এইচআরডি-১)

GD- 24



ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন

প্রকৌশল শাখা, প্রশাসন বিভাগ  
ধর্ম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়  
আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭  
www.islamicfoundation.gov.bd

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ধর্ম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়।
২	এজেন্সি	ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন।
৩	ক্রয়কারীর নাম	সচিব, ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন, আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭।
৪	ক্রয়কারীর কোড	প্রযোজ্য নয়
৫	ক্রয়কারীর জেলা	ঢাকা
৬	বিজ্ঞপ্তির সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	১৬.০১.০০০০.০০১.০৭.০০৪.২৪.১৮৪৬; তারিখঃ ৩১ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৪
৭	ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি।
৮	বাজেট ও অর্থায়ন উৎস	রাজস্ব খাত।
৯	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	১৫/০১/২০২৫খ্রিঃ, অফিস চলাকালিন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১০	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	১৬/০১/২০২৫খ্রিঃ, সময় দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১১	দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১৬/০১/২০২৫খ্রিঃ, সময় দুপুর ০২.০০ ঘটিকা স্থানঃ প্রধান কার্যালয়ে ২য় তলার সভাকক্ষ।
১২	ক) দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের স্থান খ) দরপত্র সঞ্চাহের স্থান গ) দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণের স্থান	(ক) পরিচালক, অর্থ ও হিসাব বিভাগ (৩য় তলা, কক্ষ নং: ৩০৩), ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন, আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা। (খ) মসজিদ ও মার্কেট বিভাগ (২য় তলা), বায়তুল মোকাররম, ঢাকা-১০০০। ১। প্রশাসন বিভাগ (২য় তলা), ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন, আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা। ২। মসজিদ ও মার্কেট বিভাগ (২য় তলা), বায়তুল মোকাররম, ঢাকা-১০০০। সভাকক্ষ (২য় তলা), ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন, আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা।
১৩	দরপত্রদাতার সংক্ষিপ্ত যোগ্যতা ও উপযুক্ততা	দরদাতা প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালসনের ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, টিআইএন, ভ্যাট ও ব্যাংক সলভেন্সী সার্টিফিকেটসহ দরপত্র দলিলে বর্ণিত অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা থাকতে হবে।
১৪	কাজের বিবরণ ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন আগারগাঁওস্থ প্রধান কার্যালয়ের পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্ন কাজের ঠিকাদার নিয়োগ।	দরপত্র জামানত (টাকা) ৬০,০০০.০০ (ষাট হাজার টাকা (ফেরতযোগ্য)) দরপত্র ক্রয়মূল্য ২,০০০.০০ [দুই হাজার] টাকা কাজের সময়সীমা ১ (এক) বছর
১৫	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম, পদবি ও ঠিকানা	মোহাম্মদ ইসমাইল হোসেন, সচিব, ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন, আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭, ফোনঃ ০২-২২২১৮২৬০।
১৬	বিশেষ শর্তাবলী	(ক) অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ নির্ধারিত দিনে সরকারী ছুটি বা নিয়ন্ত্রণ বহির্ভূত কারণে দরপত্র গ্রহণ/খোলা সম্ভব না হলে, পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে একই স্থান ও সময়ে দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকে) দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলা হবে। (খ) কর্তৃপক্ষ সর্বনিম্ন দরপ্রস্তাব গ্রহণে বাধ্য নয় এবং কোন কারণ দর্শনো ছাড়াই যেকোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল কিংবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

৩১/১২/২৪

মোহাম্মদ ইসমাইল হোসেন

সচিব

ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন

ফোন নংঃ ০২-২২২১৮২৬০

GD-14



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Defence

Project Director's Office, Chattogram, Cumilla and Mymensingh (Trishal)

Military Farm Modernization Project, RV&F Directorate, QMG'S Br

Army Headquarters, Dhaka Cantonment

Invitation for Re-Tenders for Goods

Invitation for Tender No: CCT-P/Tender/2024-2025/05

Dated: 01 January 2025

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh				
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence (MOD)		
2	Agency	Army Headquarters, QMG's Branch, RV&F Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment, Bangladesh		
3	Procuring entity name	Project Director, Chattogram, Cumilla and Mymensingh (Trishal), Military Farm Modernization Project		
4	Procuring entity code	Not used at present		
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka		
6	Invitation for	Goods		
7	Invitation Ref No. and date	23.01.901.062.05.053.01.31.12.24 Dated 31 December 2024		
KEY INFORMATION				
8	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) - National		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
9	Budget and source of funds	Government of Bangladesh (GOB)		
10	Development partners (if applicable)	Not applicable		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
11	Project/programme code (if applicable)	224356100		
12	Project/programme name (if applicable)	Chattogram, Cumilla and Mymensingh (Trishal) Military Farm Modernization Project		
13	Tender Package No.	GD-13		
14	Tender package name	Procurement of Weighing Bridge including Installation, Commissioning & trial operation		
15	Tender publication date	04 January 2025		
16	Tender selling date	05 January 2025 to 14 January 2025 up to 1400 hours		
17	Tender closing date and time	15 January 2025 1200 hours		
18	Tender opening date and time	15 January 2025 1230 hours		
19	Name & address of the office(s)	Chattogram, Cumilla and Mymensingh (Trishal) Military Farm Modernization Project, RV&F Directorate, QMG's Branch, Army Headquarters, Dhaka Cantonment		
	Selling tender document (principal)			
	Selling tender document (others)	Not applicable		
	No conditions apply for sale, purchase or distribution of tender documents			
	Receiving tender document	Chattogram, Cumilla and Mymensingh (Trishal) Military Farm Modernization Project, RV&F Directorate, QMG's Branch, Army Headquarters, Dhaka Cantonment		
	Opening tender document			
20	Place/date/time of Pre-tender meeting (optional)	Not applicable		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
21	Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	(a) Tenderer/Supplier must have minimum 05 years experience in the supply of Weighing Bridge or similar type of goods. (b) Satisfactory completion at least 01 contracts within last 05 years. (c) Eligible as per PPA 2006 & PPR 2008.		
22	Brief description of goods	Procurement of Weighing Bridge including Installation, Commissioning & trial operation		
23	Brief description of related services	Not applicable		
24	Price of tender document (Tk)	2000.00 (non-refundable)		
25	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)
26	GD-13	Procurement of Weighing Bridge including Installation, Commissioning & trial operation	Military Farm Chattogram, Military Farm Cumilla and Military Farm Trishal	3,50,000.00
27	Name of official inviting tender	Colonel Md Balayet Hossain		
28	Designation of official inviting tender	Project Director		
29	Address of official inviting tender	Chattogram, Cumilla and Mymensingh (Trishal) Military Farm Modernization Project, RV&F Directorate, QMG's Branch, Army Headquarters, Dhaka Cantonment		
30	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 880-2-8711111 extension 2692, Mobile: 8801769012692/ 8801769012696/8801769012636 Email: cctprojbd@gmail.com, Website: www.army.mil.bd		
31	<b>Miscellaneous Instruction for Tenderer:</b> a. Tenderer shall submit a copy of letter of valid enlistment with application on company letterhead to Project Director when purchasing tender schedule. b. Mentioning the rate of goods in the pad Tenderer must submit the tender in the Tender box kept at Project Office, Army Headquarters, RV&F Directorate, QMG's Branch, Dhaka Cantonment. c. Detail requirements are mentioned in Tender Data Sheet of tender documents. d. The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings. e. Due to unavoidable/special circumstances if tender cannot open as per scheduled date and time then tender will be open on next working day at same time.			


আই.এস.পি.আর./সেনা/০২  
০১/১/২৫

Project Director  
Chattogram, Cumilla and Mymensingh (Trishal)  
Military Farm Modernization Project  
RV&F Directorate, QMG's Branch  
Army Headquarters, Dhaka Cantonment


GD-21







রাষ্ট্রপতি  
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ  
বঙ্গবন্ধব, ঢাকা  
১৮ পৌষ ১৪৩১  
০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫



বাণী

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

জনগণের মৌলিক অধিকার নিশ্চিতের মাধ্যমে একটি বৈষম্যমুক্ত কল্যাণ রাষ্ট্র প্রতিষ্ঠা সকলের কাম্য। দেশের কল্যাণমূলক কার্যক্রমে ও উন্নয়নের সফল সকলের কাছে পৌঁছে দিতে সমাজের দুঃ ও অসহায় মানুষের সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিতের বিকল্প নেই। জনগণের জীবনমান উন্নয়ন, সামাজিক ন্যায়বিচার নিশ্চিত ও মানবাধিকার সুরক্ষায় বয়স্ক, বিধবা ও স্বামী নিগৃহীতা মহিলা, প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তি, সুবিধা বঞ্চিত শিশু, প্রান্তিক ও অনগ্রসর জনগোষ্ঠীকে সামাজিক সুরক্ষা প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে সরকার ব্যাপক উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করেছে। এ প্রেক্ষাপটে জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবসের এ বছরের প্রতিপাদ্য 'নেই পাশে কেউ যার, সমাজসেবা আছে তার' যথার্থ ও সমন্বয়যোগ্যী হয়েছে বলে আমি মনে করি।

জাতীয় সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কৌশলের অধীনে গভর্নমেন্ট টু পার্সন (জিটুপি) পদ্ধতিতে ভাতা প্রদান ও বিভিন্ন কৌশলগত সংস্কার কর্মসূচি সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা বলয় দৃঢ়করণ ও দারিদ্র্য বিমোচনে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করছে। দেশের সুবিধাবঞ্চিত ও পচাৎপদ জনগোষ্ঠীর সার্বিক উন্নয়নে প্রকৃত দুঃ ও অসহায় মানুষের কাছে সরকারি সুবিধা পৌঁছে দেয়া অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। আমি আশা করি, বৈষম্যহীনভাবে স্বচ্ছ যাচাই-বাছাই প্রক্রিয়ায় যোগ্য ব্যক্তিকে সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচির আওতাভুক্ত করা হবে। সকলের সম্মিলিত প্রচেষ্টায় আমরা বাংলাদেশকে একটি আধুনিক কল্যাণ রাষ্ট্র হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠায় সক্ষম হবে। ইনশাআল্লাহ।

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

বাংলাদেশ চিঠিজীবী হোক।



মোঃ সাহাবুদ্দিন



প্রজন্মের প্রত্যাশাপূরণ ও কল্যাণরঞ্জন গঠনে  
সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরের ভূমিকা

মোঃ সাইদুর রহমান খান  
মহাপরিচালক  
সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর



বাণী

১৯৭১ সালে ৯ মাসের রক্তক্ষয়ী জনমুখে লক্ষ লক্ষ শহিদ ও অসংখ্য মা-বোনের আহুত্যাগের বিনিময়ে ১৯৭১ সালে বিশ্বের মানচিত্রে স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশের আত্মপ্রকাশ ঘটে। মুক্তিযুদ্ধের অন্যতম মুখস্বাক্ষর ছিল বৈষম্যমুক্ত বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তোলা, বাক-স্বাধীনতা, মানবাধিকার ও মানববর্ষালায় সমৃদ্ধ রাখা এবং নাগরিকদের জীবনমান উন্নত (Good Enough Life) করা। তবে জনমানুষের এই ঈঙ্গিত লক্ষ্য নানা কারণে পূরণ হয়নি। বহুমাত্রিক নিপীড়ন ও বৈষম্যের যাতাকলে শিশু হয়েছে সাধারণ মানুষের মানুষের যাপিত জীবন। এনএই এক বন্ধনার প্রেক্ষাপটে আমাদের তরুণ প্রজন্মের নেতৃত্বে সংঘটিত হয় জুলাই বিপ্লব। জুলাই বিপ্লবের মাধ্যমে আমাদের তরুণ প্রজন্ম তাদের রক্ত চিঁড়া, বৈষম্যহীন সমাজগঠন ও কল্যাণরঞ্জন প্রতিষ্ঠার আকাঙ্ক্ষা সুস্পষ্টভাবে প্রকাশ করেছে। নতুন প্রজন্মের প্রত্যাশার সাথে দেশের সাধারণ মানুষের প্রত্যাশার মেলবন্ধন বিশেষভাবে লক্ষ্যীয়। সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর জনআকাঙ্ক্ষাকে ধারণ করে। সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর জুলাই বিপ্লবে আহতদের চিকিৎসা সহায়তা প্রদান করতে গিয়ে পর্বিত। উল্লেখ্য, সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর হাসপাতাল সমাজসেবা কার্যক্রমে আওতাধীন দেশের জেলা ও উপজেলা পর্যায়ের ৫০৮ টি হাসপাতালে কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করছে। নভেম্বর ২০২৪ পর্যন্ত বৈষম্যবিরোধী ছাত্র আন্দোলনে আহত ২২৩৩ জন ছাত্র-জনতাকে ২ কোটি ৯ লক্ষ ৫০ হাজার টাকার চিকিৎসা সহায়তা প্রদান করা হয়েছে, যা এখনো চলমান রয়েছে। সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর বিশ্বের তেরনার পরিস্থিতিতে ও গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশের সংবিধানের ১৫ (খ) অনুচ্ছেদে বাক-স্বাধীনতার আলোকে সামাজিক ন্যায়বিচার ও সাম্য প্রতিষ্ঠা এবং সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিতকল্পে দুঃ, প্রবীণ ও প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তি, সুবিধাবঞ্চিত শিশু, অনগ্রসর ও প্রান্তিক মানুষের কল্যাণ, উন্নয়ন ও সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা বিধান জীবনকর্ত্তিকরিক বিভিন্ন ধরনের কর্মসূচি ও কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়ন করে আসছে। শিশু বিকাশ সেন্ট্রি প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক কার্যক্রম শিশু বিকাশ ও সুরক্ষা কল্যাণ রাষ্ট্র প্রতিষ্ঠার অন্যতম অনুস্র। সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর পরিভক্ত, টিকনানীন, দাবিনারহীন ও প্যারালকরীদের নিকট থেকে উদ্ধারকৃত নুন থেকে ৭ বছর বয়সী শিশুদের বিকাশ ও উন্নয়ন, চিকিৎসাসহ লালন-পালনের জন্য ৬টি হোমোমি নিবাস পরিচালনা করছে। ৮-১৮ বছর বয়সের শিশুহীন অথবা শিশু-মাতৃহীন শিশুদের শিক্ষা, প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসনের জন্য ৮৫টি সরকারি শিশু পরিবার রয়েছে। এর মধ্যে বালকদের জন্য ৪০টি, বালিকাদের জন্য ৪১টি এবং বালক ও বালিকা উভয়ের জন্য ১টি প্রতিষ্ঠান পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। প্রতিটি শিশু পরিবারে প্রবীণদের জন্য ১০টি আসন নির্ধারিত রয়েছে, যেখানে ৮৫০ জন প্রবীণ নাগরিক শিশুদের সাথে পরিবারিক পরিবেশে সবাস্য করতে পারেন। কর্মজীবী নারীর সন্তানদের সেবা প্রদানের জন্য একটি নিবাসকালীন শিশুত্ব কেন্দ্র রয়েছে। দারিদ্র, অসহায়, হিম্মত ও দুঃ শিশুদের শিক্ষা, প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে সুযোগিক হিসেবে গড়ে তোলা এবং আর্থ-সামাজিকভাবে পুনর্বাসনের জন্য ৩টি দুঃ শিশু প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসন কেন্দ্র পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। এটিম ও প্রতিবন্ধী ছেলেমেয়েদের যুগোপযোগী কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদানের মাধ্যমে সমাজে পুনর্বাসন করার লক্ষ্যে দেশে ৬টি কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র পরিচালনা করে যাচ্ছে। শিশু পরিবারের শিশুদের কারিগরি দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধির জন্য রয়েছে ৫টি প্রাক-বৃত্তিমূলক প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র। প্রাক-বৃত্তিমূলক প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্রসমূহে শিশুদের লাইট ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ডিজেল মেকানিক্স, সাধারণ চিকিৎসা, গবেষণা, উত্ত ওয়ারে ইত্যাদি বিষয়ে দক্ষ কারিগরি দ্বারা প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করা হয়। দেশের এটিম ও অনাথ শিশুদের কল্যাণে নিশ্চিত বেসরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলির শিশুদের মাসিক ২০০০ টাকা করে সরকারি অনুদান প্রদান করা হচ্ছে। শিশু সুরক্ষা বিষয়ক প্রতিষ্ঠান

আমাদের সহিত সংযুক্ত জগিত শিশুদের কারাগার না রেখে, তাদের সুরক্ষা ও উন্নয়নের জন্য সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরে অধীন গাজীপুর ও বাগেরা ৩টি শিশু উন্নয়ন কেন্দ্র পরিচালিত হচ্ছে, যার একটি মেয়েদের জন্য নির্ধারিত। মেয়েদের জন্য স্থাপিত কেন্দ্রটি গাজীপুরে কোনাবাড়িতে অবস্থিত। আইনের সংশ্লিষ্ট আইন মালিক ও শিশু-কিশোরী স্বেচ্ছাজ্ঞাতদের কারাগারের বাইরে নিবাস স্থানে রেখে উদ্ধারকৃত, কাস্টোডি ও প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদানের জন্য সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর ৬টি মালিক ও শিশু-কিশোরী স্বেচ্ছাজ্ঞাতদের নিরাপদ আবাস কেন্দ্র (Safe Custody Home) পরিচালনা করছে। বৌদ্বিহিত নিয়োজিত ১৮ বছরের নিচে মেয়েদের প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসনের জন্য ৬টি কেন্দ্র রয়েছে, যার ২টি কেন্দ্রে বর্তমানে এনজিও প্রতিষ্ঠান পরিচালিত। শিশুদের জন্য কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। বহুতর ও নিরাপত্তা ব্যক্তি (পুনর্বাসন), আইন, ২০১১ এর আওতাধীন চিকিৎসা ও বহুতর জীবন-মানবকরী ব্যক্তির প্রশ্রয় ও প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে উৎসাহনালীন নাগরিক হিসেবে গড়ে তোলার জন্য পরিচালিত হচ্ছে সরকারি আশ্রয় কেন্দ্র। শিশু ও মধ্যবিত্ত পরিবারের মহিলাদের প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে জীবন-মানবকরী মান উন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত করছে ৩টি আর্থ-সামাজিক প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র। শিশু সুরক্ষা নিশ্চিত করতে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর নানা ধরনের কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করছে। শিশু আইন, ২০১৩ এর বিধান অনুসারে ইউনিফর্ম এর আর্থিক ও কারিগরি সহায়তা চাইল ছেলেগাইন ১০৯৮ এর কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হচ্ছে, যা ২৭ অক্টোবর ২০১৬ তারিখে আনুষ্ঠানিক যাত্রা শুরু করে। এ সেবা বিবর্তিতহীনভাবে ২৪ ঘণ্টা প্রদান করা হয়ে থাকে। প্রতিবন্ধীদের জন্য প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক কার্যক্রম সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর প্রতিবন্ধীদের জন্য নানা ধরনের প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করছে। দুটি ও প্রবণ প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষার্থীদের পুনর্বাসনের লক্ষ্যে পি.এইচ.টি. সেন্টার (Physically Handicapped Training Centre) পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। বাক-প্রবণ প্রতিবন্ধীদের শিক্ষা প্রদানের জন্য রয়েছে ৪ টি সরকারি বাক-প্রবণ প্রতিবন্ধী বিদ্যালয়। দুটি প্রতিবন্ধী শিশুদের জন্য রয়েছে ১টি বিদ্যালয়। এছাড়া দুটি প্রতিবন্ধী শিশুদের সমন্বিতভাবে শিক্ষা প্রদানের উদ্দেশ্যে ৬৪ জেলা শহরে ৬৪টি সমন্বিত দুটি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের বৃত্তিমূলক প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসনের জন্য রয়েছে একটি প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসন কেন্দ্র, যা টংগিতে অবস্থিত। দুটি প্রতিবন্ধী, বাক-প্রবণ ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী বৃদ্ধকদের প্রশিক্ষণের জন্য বাগেরহাট জেলার ফকিরহাটে রয়েছে শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের গ্রামীণ পুনর্বাসন উপকেন্দ্র। বয়স্ক দুটি প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের বৃত্তিমূলক প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে আর্থনির্ভরশীল করে গড়ে তোলার উদ্দেশ্যে পরিচালিত হচ্ছে জাতীয় দুটি প্রতিবন্ধীদের প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসন কেন্দ্র (TRCB)। মানসিক প্রতিবন্ধী শিশুদের পরিবার ও চিকিৎসা প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে চট্রগ্রাম জেলার রউমাবাসে মানসিক প্রতিবন্ধী শিশুদের প্রতিষ্ঠান কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। এ প্রতিষ্ঠান কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদানসহ ফিজিওথেরাপি, পিচিওথেরাপি ও সাইকোথেরাপির ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে। প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের শিক্ষা প্রদানের জন্য প্রশিক্ষিত শিক্ষক তৈরির লক্ষ্যে ঢাকার মিরপুরে পরিচালিত হয়ে আসছে জাতীয় বিশেষ শিক্ষা কেন্দ্র। জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধিভুক্ত এ প্রতিষ্ঠান ব্যাচেলর অব স্পেশাল এডুকেশন (BSED) ডিগ্রিসহ মাস্টার অব কম্পানাল এডুকেশন (MSED) ডিগ্রি বিষয়ে পঠদান ও প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করে থাকে। সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচি সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর পরিচালিত কার্যক্রমসমূহের মধ্যে ব্যাপকতার বিচারে সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচিসমূহ প্রথম দিকে রয়েছে। সরকারি পরিচালিত ১২৩ সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচির মধ্যে সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় ২৭টি কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়ন করেছে, যার মধ্যে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর বাস্তবায়ন করেছে ২২টি কর্মসূচি। প্রাথমিকভাবে দেশের সকল ইউনিয়নের প্রতিটি ওয়ার্ডে ১০ জন দরিদ্র বয়স্ক ব্যক্তিকে মাসে ১০০ টাকা করে ভাতা প্রদানের মাধ্যমে বয়স্ক ভাতা কার্যক্রম শুরু হয়। তরুতে এ খাতে ব্যয়টি ছিল মাত্র ১২.৫০ কোটি টাকা। চলতি ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে বয়স্ক ভাতাকর্মসূচির সংখ্যা ৬০.০১ লক্ষ জন এবং এ খাতে ব্যয় ১৮৪.৪২ কোটি টাকা। চলতি ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে ২৫.৭৫ লক্ষ নারী বিধবা ও স্বামী নিগৃহীতা ভাতা পাচ্ছেন। এ খাতে ব্যয় ১৮৪.৪২ কোটি টাকা। বিধবা ও স্বামী নিগৃহীতা ভাতা অসহায় নারীদের সামাজিক মর্যাদা ও ক্ষমতায়নে ভূমিকা রাখছে। প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তির সাংবিধানিক অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা এবং জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিকভাবে গৃহীত অধীকার বাস্তবায়নে সরকার প্রতিবন্ধী ভাতা কর্মসূচি চালু করে। ১.০৪ লক্ষ প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিকে চলতি মাসিক ২০০ টাকা করে ভাতা প্রদানের মাধ্যমে এ কর্মসূচির যাত্রা শুরু হয়। চলতি ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে মাসিক ৮৫০ টাকা করে প্রতিবন্ধী ভাতা পাবেন ৩২.৩৪ লক্ষ জন। এ খাতে বরাদ্দের পরিমাণ ৩০২১.৭৭ কোটি টাকা। এছাড়া প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষার্থীদের প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক শিক্ষা লাভ নিশ্চিত করতে সরকার 'প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য শিক্ষা উপবৃত্তি কর্মসূচি' প্রবর্তন করে। ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে ১.০০ লক্ষ জন প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষার্থীর বিপরীতে ১১৩.৭১ কোটি টাকা ব্যয় হয়েছে। সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর সার্বিক পরিস্থিতিতে পড়া জনগোষ্ঠীর স্বল্প উন্নয়ন নিশ্চিতকরণের লক্ষ্যে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। এ মধ্যে হিজড়া, বেসে ও অনগ্রসর জনগোষ্ঠীকে ভাতা, উপবৃত্তি ও প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে দক্ষ জনশ্রিত রূপান্তরের লক্ষ্যে ২০১২-২০১৩ অর্থবছরে থেকে কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়ন করা হচ্ছে। চলতি অর্থবছরে দারিদ্র্যো ক্যাম্পার, কিডনি, লিভার সিরোসিস, স্ট্রোক প্যারালাইজড, জন্মাত হৃদরোগ ও থ্যালাসেমিয়া আক্রান্ত রোগীকে ও তার পরিবারকে চিকিৎসা সহায়তা হিসেবে এককালীন ৫০ হাজার টাকা করে আর্থিক অনুদান প্রদান করা হচ্ছে। চলতি অর্থবছরে ৬০ হাজার জন রোগীর চিকিৎসা সহায়তা প্রদানের জন্য ৩৬.২৫ কোটি টাকা ব্যয় হয়েছে। চা-শ্রমিকদের জীবনমান উন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করেছে। ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে ৬০ হাজার চা-শ্রমিককে এককালীন ৬ হাজার টাকা অনুদান হিসেবে প্রদান করা হবে। এ খাতে বরাদ্দের পরিমাণ ৩৬.২৫ কোটি টাকা। সরকারি চিকিৎসার দক্ষ অর্থবাসীর পেশা থেকে নিবৃত্তি করার লক্ষ্যে ২০১০ সালে 'চিকিৎসক নিয়োজিত জনগোষ্ঠীর পুনর্বাসন ও বিকল্প কর্মসূচি' নামে কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করে। এ কর্মসূচির মাধ্যমে এ খাতে ১৪,৭০৭ জন চিকিৎসকে পুনর্বাসন করা হয়েছে। চলতি অর্থবছরে ১২ কোটি টাকা ব্যয়ে ৭ হাজার ৫০ জন চিকিৎসকে পুনর্বাসনের লক্ষ্যে কার্যক্রম অব্যাহত রয়েছে। সামাজিক ন্যায়বিচার প্রতিষ্ঠানিক কার্যক্রম সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরের অন্যতম কাজে করে সামাজিক ন্যায়বিচার ও সাম্য প্রতিষ্ঠা। দারিদ্রবিমোচন ও শোষণমুক্ত দেশগড়ার প্রত্যয়ে পল্লী সমাজসেবা (RSS) কার্যক্রমে আওতাধীন 'পল্লী সমাজসেবা' ও 'পল্লী মাতৃকেন্দ্র' (RMC), 'সহ সমাজসেবা কার্যক্রম' এবং 'দুঃ ও প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের পুনর্বাসন কার্যক্রম' নিয়ে ৪টি দাপ্তরিকবিমোচন কার্যক্রম চলমান রয়েছে। এসকল কার্যক্রমে আওতাধীন শতকরা ৫ ভাগ সার্বিক-চারিত্রিক নিমিত্তে ৫,০০০ টাকা থেকে ৫,০০,০০০ টাকা পর্যন্ত বিনামূল্যে ও জামানতে সুদমুক্ত ক্ষুদ্রঋণ প্রদান ও বৃত্তিমূলক প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদানের মাধ্যমে হস্তশিল্প ও দরিদ্র জনগোষ্ঠীকে আর্থবর্ক কাজে লাগিয়ে সমাজের মূলপ্রান্তায়নার যুক্তকরণের কাজ অব্যাহত রয়েছে। এছাড়া হস্ত শিল্পপ্রবণ চারিত্রিক মোকাবেলার নিমিত্ত ৮০টি শহর সমাজসেবা কার্যালয়ের প্রশিক্ষণ কার্যক্রমে কার্যক্রম মানে উন্নীত করার লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশে কারিগরি শিক্ষাবোর্ডের অনুমোদনক্রমে 'দক্ষতা উন্নয়ন প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র' হিসেবে রূপান্তর করা হয়েছে। হাসপাতালে ভাগ্যত নারী, অসহায় ও দুঃ রোগীদের রোগী করণ সমিতির মাধ্যমে ঊষধসহ অন্যান্য চিকিৎসা সহায়তা সাহায্য প্রদান করা হয়ে থাকে। ভাতা মহানগরীসহ জেলা পর্যায়ের ১১৩টি ও শরক উপজেলা শাখা কমপক্ষে ৪২০টি, সর্বমোট ৫৩০টি ইউনিটে এ কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। The Probation of Offenders Ordinance, ১৯৬০ প্রকৃত ক্ষমতাবলে প্রবেশন কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। বর্তমানে ৬৪টি জেলা এবং ৬টি মুখ্য মহানগর হাকিম আলদলসহ ৭০টি ইউনিটে প্রবেশন এও আক্টর কোয়ার কার্যক্রম চলমান রয়েছে। সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর বৈষম্যবিরোধী সমাজকল্যাণ সচিবালয় (নিবন্ধন ও নিয়ন্ত্রণ) অধ্যাদেশ, ১৯৬৩ ও সংশ্লিষ্ট বিধি, ১৯৬২ এর আওতাধীন 'বৈষম্যবিরোধী সচিবালয়' নামে প্রদান করে থাকে। বর্তমানে সার্বিক ৭০২৫৬টি নিবন্ধিত বৈষম্যবিরোধী সচিবালয় রয়েছে। বার্ষিক জ্ঞান কর্মসূচিক্রম প্রকল্প সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর সমাজের দুঃ, অসহায় ও অনগ্রসর জনগোষ্ঠীকে জীবনমান উন্নয়নের মাধ্যমে সমাজের মূলপ্রান্তায়নার অর্থকরকরণের লক্ষ্যে বিভিন্ন উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প গ্রহণ ও বাস্তবায়ন করে আসছে। চলতি অর্থবছরে এটিমিক্রম ২৬টি বাস্তবায়নানীন উন্নয়ন প্রকল্পের অনুদলে ৬৯০ কোটি ৮২ লক্ষ টাকা ব্যয় হয়েছে। প্রকল্পসমূহের মধ্যে সরকারি শিশু পরিবার এবং হোমোমি নিবাস নির্মাণ/পুনর্নির্মাণ, দুঃ শিশু প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসন কেন্দ্র গুননির্মাণ, কোনাবাড়ি, গাজীপুর, বিদ্যামান শিশু উন্নয়ন কেন্দ্র (৩টি) এর সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধি, বাংলাদেশের প্রান্তিক পেশাজীবী জনগোষ্ঠীর জীবনমান উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প (২৭ হেক্টর), ট্রানজিট সেন্টার হোম, কিডনি হাসপাতাল স্থাপন, সিঙ্গেল, ডায়া সেনিটর শহীদ সালাম মেমোরিয়াল প্রতিবন্ধী সেবা কেন্দ্র এবং কনিটিনিটি হাসপাতাল নির্মাণ, দাপনডুগা, কোলি, দুঃ, বিধবা, স্বামী পরিত্যক্তা ও হস্তশিল্প জনগোষ্ঠীকে কর্মনিজ্ঞানমূলক কাজে প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে আর্থ-সামাজিক অবস্থার উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প ইত্যাদি উল্লেখযোগ্য। সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক ৬৪ জেলায় জেলা সমাজসেবা কমপ্লেক্স নির্মাণ প্রকল্পের মাধ্যমে ১ম পর্যায়ের ২২টি জেলা সমাজসেবা কমপ্লেক্স নির্মাণ সম্পন্ন হয়েছে। ২য় পর্যায়ের ৪২টি জেলা সমাজসেবা কমপ্লেক্স নির্মাণের কাজ চলমান রয়েছে। এছাড়া সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা সেবা প্রদানের আনুষ্ঠানিককরণের জন্য ক্যাম্প ট্রান্সফার মর্ডনাইজেশন (সিটিএম) প্রকল্প গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। এছাড়া কলম্বু বান্ধুত রোগীরা শিশুদের সুরক্ষা নিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরে রোগীরা শিশু সুরক্ষা কার্যক্রম চলমান রয়েছে। এছাড়া বাল্যাদেশের প্রান্তিক জনগোষ্ঠীর জীবনমান উন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে প্রান্তিক জনগোষ্ঠীর জীবনমান উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প গ্রহণ করা হয়। বর্তমানে প্রকল্পটির ২য় পর্যায়ের কার্যক্রম চলমান রয়েছে। প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক সক্ষমতাবৃদ্ধি সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরের কাজের পরিধি বহুতর বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীদের পেশাগত দক্ষতা ও মানোন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে জাতীয় সমাজসেবা একাডেমিতে কর্মকর্তাদের বৃত্তিগত প্রশিক্ষণসহ বিভিন্ন ধরনের প্রশিক্ষণ ও রিসোর্স কোর্স আয়োজন করা হচ্ছে। আনুষ্ঠানিক সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরের ৩৪ ও ৪৪ শ্রেণি কর্মচারীদের জন্য ৬টি আঞ্চলিক প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র রয়েছে। এছাড়া কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীদের দক্ষতা উন্নয়নের জন্য বিশ্বজুড়ে ইনট্রাউজ প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করা হয়ে থাকে। কার্যের স্বীকৃতিস্বরূপ সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর তৃতীয় জাতীয় ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ দিবস ২০১৯-এ শ্রেষ্ঠ সরকারি দপ্তর হিসেবে পুরস্কার লাভ করে। উপসংহার সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর জাতিসংঘ ঘোষিত টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রার মুখস্বাক্ষর 'Leave No One Behind' ধারণ করে, যা জুলাই বিপ্লবের চেতনা ও জনপ্রত্যাশার আলোকে বৈষম্যহীন ও অস্তিত্বমূলক সমাজ গঠনে নিয়ামক শক্তি হিসেবে কাজ করে। সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরে বিস্তৃত কর্মসূচি সমাজ বাস্তবায়নের মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশকে সামাজিক ন্যায়বিচার ও সামাজিক ন্যায়বিচার একটি পিপ্লু কল্যাণরঞ্জন হিসেবে গড়ে তোলা সম্ভব। সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় বর্তমানে সরকারের ২৭টি সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়ন করছে, যার ২২টি কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়ন করেছে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর। সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় ও সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরকে এ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সুস্থভাবে সুশাসনে অনেক চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হতে হয়। এ চ্যালেঞ্জ মোকাবেলার সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরের জনবল কাঠামো সংশোধন ও যুগোপযোগীকরণের পাশাপাশি প্রয়োজনীয় লজিস্টিক সাপোর্টেরও প্রয়োজনীয়তা রয়েছে। সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরের কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়নে আশীর্বাদে সরকারি সহযোগিতা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। সকলের স্বত্বস্বর্ক্ট অংশগ্রহণ ও সম্মিলিত প্রচেষ্টায় বাংলাদেশ একটি কল্যাণরঞ্জন মর্যাদা উন্নীত হবে। এ লক্ষ্যার্জনে অর্পিত দায়িত্ব সত্যতা ও দক্ষতার সাথে বাস্তবায়নে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর অঙ্গীকারবদ্ধ।



প্রধান উপদেষ্টা  
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

১৮ পৌষ ১৪৩১  
০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫



বাণী

সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের উদ্যোগে ০২ জানুয়ারি 'জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস, ২০২৫' উদ্‌যাপন করা হচ্ছে জেনে আমি আনন্দিত। দিবসটির এবারের প্রতিপাদ্য 'নেই পাশে কেউ যার, সমাজসেবা আছে তার', যা অত্যন্ত সমন্বয়যোগ্যী হয়েছে বলে আমি মনে করি।

সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর দেশের দরিদ্র, প্রবীণ ব্যক্তি, সুবিধাবঞ্চিত শিশু, প্রতিবন্ধী, কিশোর-কিশোরী, বিধবা ও স্বামী নিগৃহীতা নারী, গুরুতর অসুস্থ রোগী ও প্রান্তিক জনগোষ্ঠীসহ অসহায় মানুষের কল্যাণ ও উন্নয়নে নিরলসভাবে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। বাংলাদেশের সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা খাতে ব্যাপক বিনিয়োগের মাধ্যমে দরিদ্র জনগোষ্ঠীর মুখে হাসি ফোটাতে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচিসমূহ সফলতার সাথে বাস্তবায়ন করছে।

তথ্যপ্রযুক্তির কল্যাণে সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচির ভাতা জিটুপি পদ্ধতিতে মোবাইল ফিন্যান্সিয়াল সার্ভিস ও ব্যাংকের মাধ্যমে মানুষের দোরগোড়ায় সেবা পৌঁছে যাচ্ছে। বর্তমানে সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচির আওতাধীন ১ কোটি ২৬ লক্ষ ৩৯ হাজার ৮৬৬ জন মানুষকে সেবা দেয়া হচ্ছে। ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে এ কর্মসূচি খাতে মোট বরাদ্দের পরিমাণ ১০ হাজার ৫৫৯ কোটি ৯৪ লক্ষ টাকা। সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় ও সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর সীমিত জনবল ও সম্পদ নিয়ে মোট ৫৪টি জনহিতকর কর্মসূচি দক্ষতার সাথে বাস্তবায়ন করছে, যা সত্যিই প্রশংসার দাবি রাখে। হাসপাতাল সমাজসেবা কার্যক্রমের মাধ্যমে জুলাই বিপ্লবে আহত ছাত্র-জনতাসহ প্রতি বছর লক্ষ লক্ষ মানুষ চিকিৎসাসেবা ও সহায়তা পাচ্ছে।

আমি 'জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস, ২০২৫' উপলক্ষ্যে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সর্বাঙ্গীণ সফলতা কামনা করছি।



প্রফেসর মুহাম্মদ ইউনুস



উপদেষ্টা  
সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়  
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

১৮ পৌষ ১৪৩১  
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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 দুঃ, অসহায়, অনগ্রসর, প্রান্তিক, বিধবা ও স্বামী নিগৃহীতা, প্রবীণ, প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তি, সুবিধাবঞ্চিত শিশুদের অধিকার সুরক্ষা ও উন্নয়ন এবং সমাজের অনগ্রসর সমাজসেবা 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 পিছিয়ে পড়া জনগোষ্ঠীর কল্যাণসাধন ও ক্ষমতায়নের কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। সুসংহত এসকল সেবা প্রদানের ফলে দেশের জনগণের জীবনমান উন্নত হচ্ছে।

সরকার জুলাই বিপ্লবের চেতনা ও নতুন প্রজন্মের প্রত্যাশাকে ধারণ করে দেশের সকল নাগরিকের জন্য সমান সুযোগ সৃষ্টির মাধ্যমে বৈষম্যহীন বাংলাদেশ গড়ার প্রত্যয়ে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। সে লক্ষ্যে সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় জনস্বার্থকে সর্বোচ্চ গুরুত্ব দিয়ে সূজনশীল উপায়ে সেবা সংস্কারের মাধ্যমে সরকারি কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করছে।

আমি বিশ্বাস করি, জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস, ২০২৫ উদ্‌যাপনের ফলে সরকারের পাশাপাশি বিভিন্ন বেসরকারি সংস্থা ও উচ্চাঙ্গী ব্যক্তিগণ জনকল্যাণ-মুখী কাজে উজ্জীবিত হবে।

জাতীয় সমাজসেবা দিবস, ২০২৫ উপলক্ষ্যে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সার্বিক সফলতা কামনা করছি এবং দিবসটি উদ্‌যাপনের সাথে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি।



মোঃ সাহাবুদ্দিন



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০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫



বাণী

সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর পরিচালিত কার্যক্রমসমূহের মধ্যে ব্যাপকতার বিচারে সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচিসমূহ প্রথম দিকে রয়েছে। সরকারি পরিচালিত ১২৩ সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচির মধ্যে সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় ২৭টি কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়ন করেছে, যার মধ্যে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর বাস্তবায়ন করেছে ২২টি কর্মসূচি। প্রাথমিকভাবে দেশের সকল ইউনিয়নের প্রতিটি ওয়ার্ডে ১০ জন দরিদ্র বয়স্ক ব্যক্তিকে মাসে ১০০ টাকা করে ভাতা প্রদানের মাধ্যমে বয়স্ক ভাতা কার্যক্রম শুরু হয়। তরুতে এ খাতে ব্যয়টি ছিল মাত্র ১২.৫০ কোটি টাকা। চলতি ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে বয়স্ক ভাতাকর্মসূচির সংখ্যা ৬০.০১ লক্ষ জন এবং এ খাতে ব্যয় ১৮৪.৪২ কোটি টাকা। বিধবা ও স্বামী নিগৃহীতা ভাতা পাচ্ছেন। এ খাতে ব্যয় ১৮৪.৪২ কোটি টাকা। চলতি ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে ২৫.৭৫ লক্ষ নারী বিধবা ও স্বামী নিগৃহীতা ভাতা পাচ্ছেন। এ খাতে ব্যয় ১৮৪.৪২ কোটি টাকা। বিধবা ও স্বামী নিগৃহীতা ভাতা অসহায় নারীদের সামাজিক মর্যাদা ও ক্ষমতায়নে ভূমিকা রাখছে। প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তির সাংবিধানিক অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা এবং জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিকভাবে গৃহীত অধীকার বাস্তবায়নে সরকার প্রতিবন্ধী ভাতা কর্মসূচি চালু করে। ১.০৪ লক্ষ প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিকে চলতি মাসিক ২০০ টাকা করে ভাতা প্রদানের মাধ্যমে এ কর্মসূচির যাত্রা শুরু হয়। চলতি ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে মাসিক ৮৫০ টাকা করে প্রতিবন্ধী ভাতা পাবেন ৩২.৩৪ লক্ষ জন। এ খাতে বরাদ্দের পরিমাণ ৩০২১.৭৭ কোটি টাকা। এছাড়া প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষার্থীদের প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক শিক্ষা লাভ নিশ্চিত করতে সরকার 'প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য শিক্ষা উপবৃত্তি কর্মসূচি' প্রবর্তন করে। ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে ১.০০ লক্ষ জন প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষার্থীর বিপরীতে ১১৩.৭১ কোটি টাকা ব্যয় হয়েছে। সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর সার্বিক পরিস্থিতিতে পড়া জনগোষ্ঠীর স্বল্প উন্নয়ন নিশ্চিতকরণের লক্ষ্যে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। এ মধ্যে হিজড়া, বেসে ও অনগ্রসর জনগোষ্ঠীকে ভাতা, উপবৃত্তি ও প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে দক্ষ জনশ্রিত রূপান্তরের লক্ষ্যে ২০১২-২০১৩ অর্থবছরে থেকে কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়ন করা হচ্ছে। চলতি অর্থবছরে দারিদ্র্যো ক্যাম্পার, কিডনি, লিভার সিরোসিস, স্ট্রোক প্যারালাইজড, জন্মাত হৃদরোগ ও থ্যালাসেমিয়া আক্রান্ত রোগীকে ও তার পরিবারকে চিকিৎসা সহায়তা হিসেবে এককালীন ৫০ হাজার টাকা করে আর্থিক অনুদান প্রদান করা হচ্ছে। চলতি অর্থবছরে ৬০ হাজার জন রোগীর চিকিৎসা সহায়তা প্রদানের জন্য ৩৬.২৫ কোটি টাকা ব্যয় হয়েছে। চা-শ্রমিকদের জীবনমান উন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করেছে। ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে ৬০ হাজার চা-শ্রমিককে এককালীন ৬ হাজার টাকা অনুদান হিসেবে প্রদান করা হবে। এ খাতে বরাদ্দের পরিমাণ ৩৬.২৫ কোটি টাকা। সরকারি চিকিৎসার দক্ষ অর্থবাসীর পেশা থেকে নিবৃত্তি করার লক্ষ্যে ২০১০ সালে 'চিকিৎসক নিয়োজিত জনগোষ্ঠীর পুনর্বাসন ও বিকল্প কর্মসূচি' নামে কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করে। এ কর্মসূচির মাধ্যমে এ খাতে ১৪,৭০৭ জন চিকিৎসকে পুনর্বাসন করা হয়েছে। চলতি অর্থবছরে ১২ কোটি টাকা ব্যয়ে ৭ হাজার ৫০ জন চিকিৎসকে পুনর্বাসনের লক্ষ্যে কার্যক্রম অব্যাহত রয়েছে। সামাজিক ন্যায়বিচার প্রতিষ্ঠানিক কার্যক্রম সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তরের অন্যতম কাজে করে সামাজিক ন্যায়বিচার ও সাম্য প্রতিষ্ঠা। দারিদ্রবিমোচন ও শোষণমুক্ত দেশগড়ার প্রত্যয়ে পল্লী সমাজসেবা (RSS) কার্যক্রমে আওতাধীন 'পল্লী সমাজসেবা' ও 'পল্লী মাতৃকেন্দ্র' (RMC), 'সহ সমাজসেবা কার্যক্রম' এবং 'দুঃ ও প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের পুনর্বাসন কার্যক্রম' নিয়ে ৪টি দাপ্তরিকবিমোচন কার্যক্রম চলমান রয়েছে। এসকল কার্যক্রমে আওতাধীন শতকরা ৫ ভাগ সার্বিক-চারিত্রিক নিমিত্তে ৫,০০০ টাকা থেকে ৫,০০,০০০ টাকা পর্যন্ত বিনামূল্যে ও জামানতে সুদমুক্ত ক্ষুদ্রঋণ প্রদান ও বৃত্তিমূলক প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদানের মাধ্যমে হস্তশিল্প ও দরিদ্র জনগোষ্ঠীকে আর্থবর্ক কাজে লাগিয়ে সমাজের মূলপ্রান্তায়নার যুক্তকরণের কাজ অব্যাহত রয়েছে। এছাড়া হস্ত শিল্পপ্রবণ চারিত্রিক মোকাবেলার নিমিত্ত ৮০টি শহর সমাজসেবা কার্যালয়ের প্রশিক্ষণ কার্যক্রমে কার্যক্রম মানে উন্নীত করার লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশে কারিগরি শিক্ষাবোর্ডের অনুমোদনক্রমে 'দক্ষতা উন্নয়ন প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র' হিসেবে রূপান্তর করা হয়েছে। হাসপাতালে ভাগ্যত নারী, অসহায় ও দুঃ রোগীদের রোগী করণ সমিতির মাধ্যমে ঊষধসহ অন্যান্য চিকিৎসা সহায়তা সাহায্য প্রদান করা হয়ে থাকে। ভাতা মহানগরীসহ জেলা পর্যায়ের ১১৩টি ও শরক উপজেলা শাখা কমপক্ষে ৪২০টি, সর্বমোট ৫৩০টি ইউনিটে এ কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। The Probation of Offenders Ordinance, ১৯৬০ প্রকৃত ক্ষমতাবলে প্রবেশন কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। বর্তমানে ৬৪টি জেলা এবং ৬টি মুখ্য মহানগর হাকিম আলদলসহ ৭০টি ইউনিটে প্রবেশন এও আক্টর কোয়ার কার্যক্রম চলমান রয়েছে। সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর বৈষম্যবিরোধী সমাজকল্যাণ সচিবালয় (নিবন্ধন ও নিয়ন্ত্রণ) অধ্যাদেশ, ১৯৬৩ ও সংশ্লিষ্ট বিধি, ১৯৬২ এর আওতাধীন 'বৈষম্যবিরোধী সচিবালয়' নামে প্রদান করে থাকে। বর্তমানে সার্বিক ৭০২৫৬টি নিবন্ধিত বৈষম্যবিরোধী সচিবালয় রয়েছে। বার্ষিক জ্ঞান কর্মসূচিক্রম প্রকল্প সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর সমাজের দুঃ, অসহায় ও অনগ্রসর জনগ



## 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.

# What should be our strategic priorities in 2025?



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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



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 act 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

**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.**

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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Affairs (BCIPA) in Jahangirnagar University.

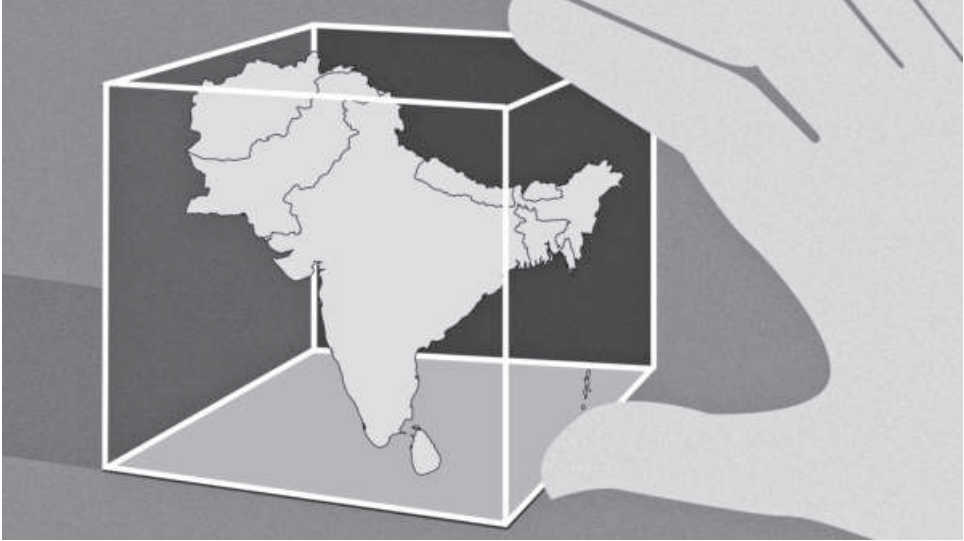
SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

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 Bangladesh 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 overstretched, 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 insurgencies and conflict 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  
is a non-resident Bangladeshi author and  
non-profit founder.

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

#### ACROSS

- 1 Lowly workers
- 6 Fortitude
- 10 Dance parties
- 11 Ecu
- 12 Put up
- 13 Trig topic
- 14 Brown songbird
- 15 Big snake
- 16 Do something
- 17 Treasury Dept. div.
- 18 Gift from Santa
- 19 Knickknack shelves
- 22 Way out
- 23 Mystique
- 26 Some online helpers
- 29 Frilly wrap

- 32 Ram's mate
- 33 Porch sight
- 34 Square
- 36 Ring of light
- 37 Clean with effort
- 38 Talk at length
- 39 Indian dish
- 40 Get up
- 41 Farm females
- 42 Pane material

#### DOWN

- 1 Would-be lawyer's major
- 2 Otologist's case
- 3 Strain
- 4 Bottle part
- 5 Fast plane
- 6 Polite fellow
- 7 Proper

- 8 Dome-shaped home
- 9 Minute
- 11 Massachusetts
- 15 Old hand
- 17 On paper
- 20 Quirk
- 21 Deli order
- 24 Hungary neighbor
- 25 Bewildered
- 27 Cobbling tool
- 28 Go pieces
- 29 Name on the Cardinals' stadium
- 30 Promptly
- 31 Squirrel's find
- 35 For us
- 36 Fling
- 38 Scandal sheet



#### 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 Mashiyyat Nayeem

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 distinguishes 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

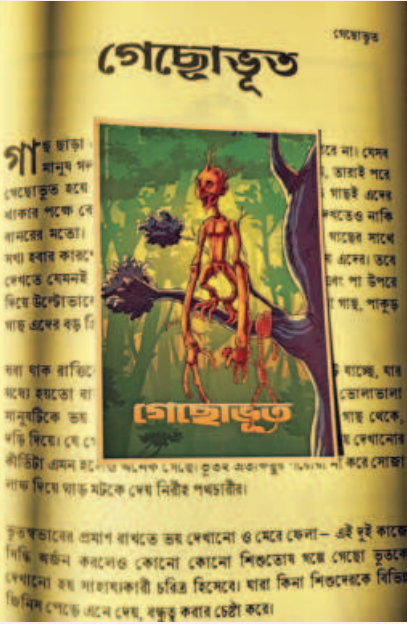
Let me tell you a tale of a big Banyan tree, by a river that flows through the heart of a village near the borders of Bangladesh, and merges into the Ganges. The tale features a little girl sitting under that tree, immersed in the books she brought from Dhaka to Chuadanga. Little did she know that Banyan 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 Hattimatimtim, 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 a 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: STAR

Bangladesh Under-19 Women's Cricket team captain Sumaiya Akter takes a selfie with her side at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday after a photo session ahead of their departure for the ICC U-19 Women's World Cup, starting on January 18 in Malaysia. The girls in red and green will travel to Sri Lanka first for four T20s to ramp up preparations for the mega event.

## No black and white in BPL, only grey areas

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

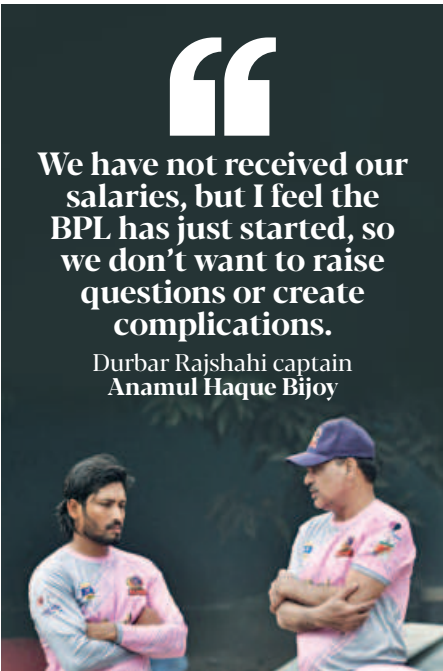
The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) returned under seemingly auspicious circumstances, with a youth festival lending a vibrant touch to the event. Yet beneath the surface glamour lies a troubling reality as the tournament began without fulfilling basic requirements, most notably players' payments.

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

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.



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.

## 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.

## 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

## 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.



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## 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



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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

## Wrong name of July martyr printed in textbook

MOHUDDIN 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 Nahiyen 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, Nahiyen and Anas. Even children in their mothers' arms, children playing with their fathers, rickshaw pullers, labourers, farmers, hawkers, office

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## 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

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## 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

no place is safe in Gaza and that evacuations worsen the humanitarian conditions of the population.

According to the Palestinian civil defence, more than 1,500 tents sheltering displaced people across Gaza were flooded by heavy rains over the past two days, leaving people exposed to the cold, their belongings damaged.

Hundreds more tents experienced less severe flooding that still left displaced people unable to use them.

Much of the area around the northern towns of Beit Hanoun, Jabalia and Beit Lahiya has been cleared of people and razed, fuelling speculation Israel intends to keep the area as a closed buffer zone after the 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.

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

## SC lawyers' team to seek Chinmoy's bail today

FMMIZANUR 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 Sanatani 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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## 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 1°C.

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.



## 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 Rugganj 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-Rups road in the upazila's Hatabo area around 8:00am.

Hridoy died on the spot while his pillion riders, Munna 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

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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

## 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

PHOTO ON PAGE 8

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