

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXIV No. 343

POUSH 19, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

RAJAB 2, 1446 HIJRI

16 PAGES: TK 15.00

EC to verify voter list

It'll start door-to-door campaign Jan 20, publish updated list Jan 2, 2026; BNP terms the move 'absurd'

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission has said it will verify the information of the country's 12.36 crore voters ahead of the next national election -- a decision the BNP terms absurd.

The EC will visit people's homes from January 20 to June 30 in order to update the list, a draft of which will be published on January 2, 2026, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Abul Fazal Sanauallah told journalists while sharing the data on voter list at the EC office yesterday.

He added that the finalised list would be published on March 2, 2026.

Checking the entire list is the only way to know whether the information is correct, he said.

"Verification of the voter list is one of the main purposes of our door-

Brig Gen (retd) Abul Fazal Sanauallah, election commissioner, says some of the problems in the current list are names of dead people have not been erased; foreigners are on the list; and some people are named more than once.



to-door campaign," he said.

Ever since the Election Commission decided on December 2 to send representatives to people's doorsteps, the BNP has been criticising it.

"There is no need to go door to door to make an accurate voter list for 180 million people. It is time consuming, unnecessary, and the risk of making errors is high," Abdul Moyeen Khan, BNP standing committee member, told The Daily Star.

"Individual verification of such a large number of people is an absurd idea in this age, because the Election Commission already has the data on the entire population," he said.

Modern technology and AI can automatically update the list and make door to door visits unnecessary, he said.

Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain, also a former election commissioner, said verifying the information of all voters would take a long time because the EC would need to find out the voters.

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THE HARSHNESS OF WINTER ... With the fire to keep her warm put out, an elderly homeless woman makes do with a thin blanket near the capital's Rayer Bazar. As temperatures began plummeting since Wednesday, the poor and destitute have been bearing the brunt. The photo was taken around 1:30pm yesterday, when the temperature in the capital was around 21 degrees Celsius. At night, it dropped below 14.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Army chief meets Khaleda Zia

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General Wakeruz-Zaman visited BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night.

The army chief, accompanied by his wife, visited the BNP chief's Gulshan residence, Firoza, around 8:30pm, and stayed there for 40 minutes, said Sayrul Kabir Khan, a member of the BNP media cell.

During the courtesy meeting, the discussion primarily revolved around the health condition of the former prime minister, Sayrul said.

He said the army chief enquired about Khaleda's well-being and wished her a speedy recovery.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

It's unlikely to be recommended

Says member of polls reform body

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Electoral Reform Commission is likely to refrain from recommending a proportional representation system, ignoring the proposal of most political parties.

The commission is expected to submit the report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus soon.

"We are not going to recommend the introduction of a proportional representation system," said a member of the commission, requesting anonymity.

Proportional representation is an electoral system in which the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Mercury may continue to dip over next few days

STAR REPORT

A cold spell has been sweeping over the capital since the first day of the year, disrupting lives, as the gap between the day and night temperatures has narrowed.

According to Bangladesh Meteorological Department's forecast, the temperature is expected to fall further in the coming days of the month, as one or two moderate to severe cold waves are about to begin in the western, northwestern, northern and northeastern regions of the country.

Meanwhile, two to three mild to moderate cold waves are expected elsewhere, shows the Met's outlook for January, published yesterday.

Temperatures ranging from 8.1 to 10

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BUSINESS

Exports rose by 8.3% to \$50b in 2024

Bangladesh's exports hit \$50 billion in 2024, buoyed by a sharp spike in December, providing the much-anticipated breather for an economy facing multiple headwinds including external account pressures.

Of the amount, exporters earned \$4.62 billion in December alone, an 18 percent increase compared to the same month in the previous year.

STORY ON BI



People mourn over the bodies of Palestinian children, killed in an overnight Israeli strike on a makeshift displacement camp in Mawasi Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, in the yard of the Nasser hospital yesterday. The overnight Israeli air strike killed at least 11 people, including the chief of the territory's now dismantled Hamas police force, said Gaza officials.

PHOTO: AFP

CHAIRMAN
OF BANGLADESH
ASSOCIATION
OF BANKS



Congratulations
ABDUL HAI SARKER

An iconic figure in Bangladesh's financial landscape and the respected **Chairman of Dhaka Bank PLC**, Mr. Abdul Hai Sarker, has been re-elected as the **Chairman of Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB)**. Dhaka Bank family is elated by this remarkable success and extends its warmest wishes for his inspiring leadership in this new capacity. His visionary guidance is set to drive meaningful progress within Bangladesh's banking industry.



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EXCELLENCE IN BANKING

Govt officially declares Nazrul national poet

STAR REPORT

The government has issued a gazette notification, officially recognising Kazi Nazrul Islam as Bangladesh's national poet.

The cultural ministry made the announcement, formalising a recognition that was considered long overdue, reports UNB.

The decision came on December 24, following on from a December 5 advisory council approval to a proposal to retroactively put into effect the national poet status from May 4, 1972.

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Disclose AL govt's power, energy deals

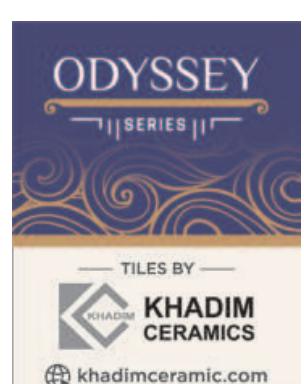
BNP urges interim govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday demanded public disclosure of all the power and energy sector agreements made by the ousted Awami League government.

"The interim government's first job should have been to make public the agreements so that the people can know how the Awami League gave contracts with public money without any tendering process or without following the public procurement rules," said Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, a standing committee member of BNP.

The AL government realised that money could be made quickly from the sector without any accountability as electricity is invisible, he said at a press



conference at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

"They played a magic show in this sector and mobilised money by pickpocketing the people and siphoning the money abroad," said Tuku, who served as the state minister for power during the BNP-led government in 2001-06.

It seems that the power and energy sector was the most corrupt during the 16 years of AL rule, said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir in his opening remarks.

If the BNP wins the election, the party will review all the issues in the power and energy sector. "We will do what is necessary after reviewing," he said.

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Jamaat's statement on patriotism 'ridiculous'

Says Rizvi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Syhet

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday made an oblique reference to a recent statement by Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami on patriotism and termed it "ridiculous."

On December 23, speaking at an event in Rangpur, Jamaat Ameer Dr Shafiqur Rahman said there were only two tested patriotic forces in the country -- one is the army, the other is Jamaat-e-Islami.

Rizvi said the army is undoubtedly patriotic because of its vital role in the 1971 Liberation War and in the 2024 July uprising.

He then raised questions about the

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Police on crowd control near the Chattogram court during the hearing of the bail petition of Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, spokesperson of Bangladesh Sammilito Sanatani Jagaran Jote, who was arrested in a sedition case last year. The photo was taken yesterday. Story on Page 12.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

27 migrants die off Tunisia in shipwrecks

AFP, Tunis

Twenty-seven migrants, including women and children, died after two boats capsized off central Tunisia, with 83 people rescued, a civil defence official told AFP yesterday.

The rescued and dead passengers, who were found off the Kerkennah Islands off central Tunisia, were aiming to reach Europe and were all from sub-Saharan African countries, said Zied Sdri, head of civil defence in the city of Sfax.

Searches were still underway for other possible missing passengers, according to the Tunisian National Guard, which oversees the coastguard.

Govt officially

FROM PAGE 1

Although the gazette was published on December 24, it was officially received on Thursday, Latiful Islam Shibli, executive director of Kabi Nazrul Institute, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Until the gazette was printed by BG [Bangladesh Government] Press, it remained only a cabinet decision. Now it has received formal recognition. Since taking charge of the Nazrul Institute, I have worked on this matter with utmost importance. So finally, it is completed today [yesterday]."

Kazi Nazrul Islam, widely revered as the "Rebel Poet", was brought to Dhaka from Kolkata with his family on May 24, 1972. The government allocated him a house at 330-B, Road 28 (Old), Dhanmondi, to honour his contributions, said the UNB report.

He was granted Bangladeshi citizenship on February 18, 1976, and was also awarded the prestigious Ekushey Padak that same year.

The Kazi Nazrul Islam Institute Act of 2018 officially addressed him as the national poet. However, no official gazette was issued until recently.

The UNB report adds: Nazrul has been recognised as a central cultural figure since December 10, 1929, when he was honoured as the national poet and national helmsman at the Albert Hall in Kolkata.

The event was attended by luminaries such as Subhas Chandra Bose, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, S Wazed Ali, and Dinesh Chandra Das, representing the collective admiration of the Bengali community towards him.

Since Bangladesh's independence, successive presidents, prime ministers, and chief advisers have referred to Nazrul as the national poet in official statements marking his birth and death anniversaries. Despite widespread acceptance of his status, a formal declaration had long been absent.

In June 2022, Supreme Court lawyer Asad Uddin and nine others filed a petition seeking the publication of a gazette that officially recognises Nazrul as the national poet.

In response, the High Court issued a rule asking why Nazrul should not be recognised as the national poet, and directed the cultural affairs secretary, director-general of Bangla Academy, and executive director of Nazrul Institute to respond within four weeks.

This gazette notification marks a historic moment, solidifying Kazi Nazrul Islam's role as a beacon of cultural identity and resistance for the nation.

Mercury may continue to dip over next few days

FROM PAGE 1

degrees Celsius are considered a mild cold wave, 6.1-8 degrees a moderate cold wave, and 4.1-6 degrees a severe one.

Met officials said the shrinking gap between day and night temperatures will intensify the cold weather.

Yesterday, the lowest temperature in Dhaka was recorded at 13.08 degrees Celsius, and the highest at 16 degrees.

Dr Md Abul Kalam Mallik, meteorologist at the Dhaka Met office, said, "The difference is only 2.2 degrees, which is resulting in the chilling cold sweeping over the city."

About why the difference between day and night temperatures has come down, he said the ridge of the sub-continental high currently extends up to Bangladesh.

"Another reason is the chilling winds coming from the northern direction and the Himalayas."

He also said the dense fog enveloping the city and the eastern and western regions is restricting sunlight, which is further worsening the cold.

"This situation will continue for a

few more days."

The Met forecast further said air navigation, and inland river and road communications may be temporarily disrupted due to the dense fog, with sunlight lasting for 5-7 hours a day this month.

Additionally, one or two low pressure systems are likely to form over the Bay this month, and one of these may intensify into a depression.

Yesterday, the lowest temperature -- 9.8 degrees Celsius -- was recorded in Chuadanga, with 95 percent air humidity, said Zahidul Islam, an observer of the Chuadanga Met office, adding that temperatures are likely to drop further as a mild cold wave continues to affect the region.

Kamal Hossain, a local, said, "People are avoiding venturing out. The low-income people, however, are suffering immensely as they have to work in this cold weather. Many of them are trying to keep warm by making fires."

The situation is similar in the northern districts.

In Dinajpur, the morning temperature yesterday was 10.2 degrees Celsius.

Tofazzal Hossain, in-charge at the Dinajpur Weather Office, said the cold is expected to persist some more days. He urged locals to take necessary precautions.

The day temperature in Lalmonirhat was recorded at 11.4 degrees Celsius, and in Kurigram it was 11.3, according to the Rangpur Met Office.

Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy director of Kurigram's agriculture extension department, said the farmers, particularly those living near the Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dharla, Dudhkumar and Gangadar river belts, are forced to work in this harsh cold to prevent crop loss.

Tentulia's Weather Observatory Centre recorded the district's day temperature at 11.3 degrees.

According to doctors at Rangpur Medical College Hospital, there has been an increase in patients with cold-related illnesses, including pneumonia, respiratory infections, and diarrhoea.

(Our correspondents from Benapole, Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat, and Thakurgaon contributed to this report.)

EC to verify voter list

FROM PAGE 1

"But they can assess the accuracy of the list by engaging an independent organisation or university," he said.

Sakhawat said when he was an election commissioner, an international firm audited the voter list and found it to be 99 percent accurate.

In 2008, when Sakhawat was an EC member, a voter list was prepared with photos.

EC Sanaullah yesterday said the commission would not feel confident without "an accurate" list.

Some of the problems in the current list are: names of dead people have not been erased, some foreigners are on the list, and some people are named more than once, he said.

Nineteen Rohingyas went to Nilphamari from Chattogram and became voters there, he said. "The evidence is right in front of us. These issues have made our voter list controversial."

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus had said he hoped the next election would be held late this year or in the first half of next year, Sanaullah said, adding that

updating the voter list was part of the preparation.

Asked whether the new voters included in the list through door-to-door campaigns would be able to cast their vote if the election took place in December 2025, Sanaullah said there was no legal barrier to that.

"We have in principle decided that if a significant number of people become eligible voters, they can be included on the list through an ordinance. The decision is not final. We will look into the possibilities," he said.

Asked about the chief adviser's proposal to lower the voting age to 17, Sanaullah said that it was a personal opinion. "A discussion is going on about it. We will decide when there is political consensus and subsequently change the constitution," he said.

Sanaullah said that the total number of voters in the country has risen to 12,36,83,512, with 6,33,30,103 male, 6,03,52,415 female, and 994 hijra voters according to the latest draft voter list.

Since March 2 of last year, 18,33,352 people became new voters.

Disclose AL govt's power

FROM PAGE 1

The AL government spent about Tk 3.33 lakh crore on the power sector in the 16 years and looted more than Tk 1 lakh crore from the amount in the name of capacity charges, which the government has to pay whether the plant produces electricity or not, according to the BNP.

"By whom, and how were the capacity charges fixed in the deals? We want to know how the capacity of a machine [power plants] was calculated and what is the efficiency of the machine. Most of the machines that are receiving capacity charges by sitting idle are defective. They looted public money by installing defective machines and left," Tuku said.

The previous BNP government had the plan to generate at least 60 percent of power by the public sector, he said.

The AL government moved away from the plan by depending on the private sector to generate nearly 80 percent of the power.

"They kept idle the government-owned power plants and installed private sector plants which took high capacity charges for years."

The quick rental power plants are usually installed to address emergency

power shortages.

These plants were supposed to operate for two years but have been running for 15 years or more, and they have cashed their 75 percent investment without producing any power, Tuku said.

He named the five highest recipients of capacity charges: Summit Group (Tk 10,630 crore), Aggreko International (Tk 7,932 crore), Ultra Power Holdings (Tk 7,523 crore), United Group (Tk 6,755 crore) and RPCL (Tk 5,117 crore).

Besides, Bangladesh paid Tk 1,115 crore to India as capacity charges in the name of power import.

"The Awami League government's developments in this sector are not sustainable. The economy can collapse in the future due to their misconduct."

Tuku also raised questions about the corruption in the purchase of pre-paid meters, alleged involvement of Hasina's family in the Rooppur nuclear power plant and allegations of corruption by former state minister Nasrul Hamid in the purchase of liquefied natural gas.

"Most of the companies that supplied LNG were owned by Nasrul Hamid and they looted millions."

It's unlikely to be recommended

FROM PAGE 1

distribution of seats corresponds with the proportion of the total votes cast for each party. For example, if a party gets 40 percent of the total votes, the PR system will allow it to get 40 percent of the seats in parliament.

Contacted, Electoral Reform Commission Chairman Badiul Alam Majumdar avoided a direct answer on the issue.

"Proportional representation is a matter related to the Constitution Reform Commission," he said.

Badiul also said the Electoral Reform Commission was trying its best to submit the report today.

Prof Ali Riaz, head of the Constitution Reform Commission, said that they have received proposals both in favour of and against the proportional representation system.

"We are carefully considering arguments of both sides," he told The Daily Star.

"In addition, we have studied the positive and negative aspects of the system. Since we have not yet finalised our recommendations, I cannot

disclose any specific proposals at this time, particularly those related to the proportional representation system," he added.

Currently, Bangladesh practises the first-past-the-post system, in which the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in a constituency wins a seat in parliament.

The interim government constituted the Electoral Reform Commission, and five others on October 3 and sought their reports within 90 days. Yesterday, the government gave the Electoral Reform Commission 15 more days to submit its report, said Abdul Alim, a member of the commission.

Since its formation, the commission has taken proposals from stakeholders, including political parties, former chief election commissioners, members of different citizen platforms, and the ordinary people.

Party sources said Jamaat-e-Islami, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and Islami Andolan Bangladesh suggested the proportional representation electoral

system in their proposals to the reform commission.

However, the BNP was against the system. A standing committee member of the party yesterday told The Daily Star they did not include the system in their proposals.

The BNP leader, who wished to be anonymous, warned that proportional representation system can give an advantage to the Awami League, which was ousted in the 2024 mass uprising.

He said the system can also increase the chance of potential candidates offering bribes to secure nomination, since their fate will depend on party tickets, not on votes.

"We don't favour the proportional representation system," Abdul Moyeen Khan, a standing committee member of the BNP, told this newspaper.

"We believe in the 'one voter, one vote' method, which has continued in the Westminster system for several centuries. People don't just vote for the party, but also for the candidates," he said.

Ctg court denies bail

FROM PAGE 12

"We also told the court that permission from the home ministry was not taken before filing the FIR [first information report] with police."

However, Public Prosecutor Mofizul said, "Sedition is a non-bailable offence and it carries a punishment of life imprisonment. We told the court that the case is being investigated and no report has been submitted yet."

"We opposed the bail petition, presenting our points, and the court denied bail to Chinmoy after hearing our arguments."

The hearing, which began around 11:00am, was held in a packed courtroom amid tight security.

A large number of police, BGB, APBN, DB, and army personnel stood guard in the court building and its adjacent area.

Colleagues of slain lawyer Saiful Islam Alif gathered outside the courtroom to know the update. Police personnel were seen

controlling the exit and entry points to the court building. Two additional commissioners of Chattogram Metropolitan Police supervised the security arrangements.

When the court rejected the bail plea, the lawyers who were outside the courtroom brought out a procession, welcoming the decision.

Around 11:40am, a team of 11 Supreme Court lawyers, led by Apurba, who represented Chinmoy during yesterday's hearing, left the court premises in two microbuses with a police escort.

As they were leaving, a section of lawyers chanted slogans such as "Dala" and demanded justice for Saiful.

On October 31 last year, Firoz Khan, former general secretary of Chattogram's Mohora ward BNP, filed the case with Kotwali Police Station, accusing Chinmoy and 18 others of disrespecting the national flag during a rally of the Hindu

community on October 25 in the port city's New Market area.

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

Following the rejection, supporters of Chinmoy burst into protests and blocked the prison van on its way to jail. They demanded his immediate release.

Later, police charged truncheons to disperse the agitated followers of Chinmoy, triggering a clash among law enforcers, lawyers, and the supporters in the court building area. Lawyer Saiful was beaten and hacked to death amid the clash.

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

Later, an anticipatory bail petition of the ex-ISKCON leader

DHAKA

PANTHAKUNJA PARK PROTEST

7 hurt as green groups clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least seven environmental activists were injured yesterday in a scuffle between two green groups during a protest at Panthakunja Park in Dhaka.

The clash erupted when members of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) and Green Voice, joined by around 150 activists, arrived at the park to hold a human chain demanding its preservation.

However, their presence angered activists of Bangladesh Gach Rokkha Andolon, who have been staging a continuous protest at the site for the past 21 days.

"Our seven activists were injured, and one required hospital treatment after Green Voice members attacked us multiple times," said Amirul Rajib, convener of BGRA, a coalition of green organisations and individuals.

Amirul said their round-the-clock protest had already secured assurances from officials that construction materials related to the Elevated Expressway project would be removed by March 25.

"Around 2,000 trees have been felled for the project, leaving no greenery nearby, which is why we've been protesting continuously," he added.

He criticised the other groups for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Environmental activists scuffle over participating in a protest to protect Panthakunja Park in Dhaka yesterday. At least seven persons were injured in the clash.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Vehicle registration declines again in 2024

Inflation, high dollar exchange rate key factors, say experts

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The issuance of new vehicle registrations in Bangladesh declined for the second straight year in 2024, dropping by 15 percent compared to 2023.

This happened as soaring inflation and rising dollar exchange rates took a toll on the transport sector, said officials and importers, adding that the changed political situation is another reason behind it.

Registrations of most vehicle types, including motorcycles and buses, declined, but registered SUVs increased by 11.45 percent, indicating a shift in consumer preferences among affluent buyers.

In contrast, the registration of buses and minibuses, crucial for public transport, dropped by 33.51 percent year-on-year, shows government data.

This decline highlights the strain on public transport system that relies heavily on these vehicles. This will cause further issues for the already struggling public transport system, experts said.

According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) data, 3.08 lakh vehicles were registered in 2024, 14.69 percent fewer than in 2023, when 3.61 lakh vehicles were registered.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



PHOTO: AI GENERATED IMAGE
According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) data, 3.08 lakh vehicles were registered in 2024, 14.69 percent fewer than in 2023, when 3.61 lakh vehicles were registered.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

'UPDF member' killed in Rangamati

Says ISPR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF-Main) was killed in a gunfire exchange with Bangladesh Army personnel in Rangamati's Naniarchar zone yesterday, said the Inter-Services Public Relations.

Acting on intelligence, the army discovered a UPDF-Main hideout in the Perachhara area during a special operation conducted around 5:50am, the ISPR added.

When the army personnel initiated a search, the UPDF (Main) members opened fire, prompting a gunfight, it said in a press release.

One UPDF (Main) member was killed, and several others were injured while the injured retreated into the dense forest, the press release said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Bangladesh, India to exchange detained fishermen Sunday

Says foreign adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain yesterday said Bangladesh and India would exchange nearly 200 fishermen detained in their respective countries on Sunday.

"If everything (formalities) goes as per schedule, the exchanges will take place on Sunday," he told reporters while visiting the recently renovated DCAB (Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh) Lounge at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

India currently holds 90 Bangladeshi fishermen who were detained on different occasions while 95 Indian fishermen were being held in Bangladeshi prisons.

According to a report by the Indian news outlet The Economic Times, on December 10, the Indian Coast Guard detained two Bangladeshi trawlers, along with 78 crew members, on charges of fishing "illegally" in Indian waters.

Earlier, in September last, 12 Bangladeshi fishermen were detained when their trawler sank in Indian water.

Six Indian trawlers entered Bangladesh water in September and October last, leading to the detention of 95 Indian sailors and the confiscation of their trawlers.

Foreign Secretary Md Jashim Uddin, Secretary (East) Dr Md Nazrul Islam, outgoing DCAB President Nurul Islam Hasib, newly elected President AKM Moinuddin, and DCAB members were present.



With practiced hands, boatmen hoist the sails under a clear, endless sky while the Shibsa River shimmers like a silver ribbon. Over time, sailboats have been disappearing from the country's rivers. However, in some areas, it is still possible to see boats sailing forward using the wind, even in this modern era. The photo was taken in Paikgacha, Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT

Producers to be held accountable

UNB, Dhaka

The environment ministry is preparing to introduce Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) guidelines to tackle plastic pollution, said Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday.

She said the initiative aims to hold producers accountable for the full lifecycle of their products, ensuring effective reuse, recycling and safe disposal of plastic waste.

"Producers must take responsibility for their products, even at the end of their lifecycle. Through these guidelines, opportunities for reusing, recycling and safely managing plastic waste will be significantly enhanced," said Rizwana Hasan.

She emphasised the importance of collective efforts in addressing the issue, urging all stakeholders to work together.

"Raising awareness about the harmful effects of polythene and microplastics is crucial. We must bring about a shift in people's mindset. Only a united approach can help us control the plastic crisis," she added.

Senior officials, including the secretary and additional secretaries to the Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Ministry, as well as representatives from various non-governmental organisations, attended the meeting.

The EPR initiative is expected to play a vital role in guiding Bangladesh toward environmentally sustainable development by curbing plastic pollution and fostering eco-conscious practices, according to the environment ministry.

Country shows positive shifts in gender norms

Prof Naila Kabeer tells BIDS event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has seen a significant decline in "son preference" and fertility rates in recent decades, indicating a shift in traditional gender norms, according to Prof Naila Kabeer of the London School of Economics.

Son preference refers to parents preferring to give birth to a male child over a female one, while fertility rate refers to the average number of children a woman gives birth to in her life.

Speaking at a public lecture titled "Renegotiating Patriarchy: Gender, Agency, and the Bangladesh Paradox," organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) at its office in Dhaka, Prof Kabeer discussed her fieldwork in a Faridpur village in 1979 and a follow-up visit in 2010.

Unlike India and Pakistan, where son preference and female-selective abortions have distorted gender ratios, Bangladesh has maintained near-normal ratios, reflecting a cultural shift toward valuing daughters.

She noted a significant decline in son preference and growing acceptance of daughters as valuable contributors to family well-being.

These changes, she said, show a shift in societal attitudes toward gender roles.

Despite challenges like poverty, weak governance, and deep-rooted patriarchy, Bangladesh has made notable progress in health, education, population control, and gender equality, she said.

Fertility rates in Bangladesh have dropped to 2.2, a better drop than in India and Pakistan. Girls' school enrolment has also surpassed both

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Marium Begum passes away

CITY DESK
Former lawmaker Marium Begum passed away at the age of 101 yesterday.

Born in 1923 to an illustrious Muslim family from Faridpur, she founded Rupayan, becoming one of Bangladesh's first female entrepreneurs.

After 1971, Marium Begum helped establish the Bangladesh Mohila Punrabashon Sangstha, providing support for Biranganas (war heroines) and their children.

She is survived by two daughters and a son.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held after Juma prayers today at Masjid Al Maghfirah, Uttara, Dhaka.

Tajul Islam Chonchol no more

CITY DESK



AKM Tajul Islam Chonchol, former general manager of Adamjee Jute Mills, and father of Ashraf Bin Taj, co-founder & managing director, IDC Bangladesh PLC, passed away on Tuesday.

Tajul was a stalwart of the jute industry, dedicating his life to advancing the sector and contributing significantly to its modernisation, said a press release.

He was suffering from ailments related to old age and was admitted to a city hospital where he received treatment until his passing.

He was buried at the Banani Graveyard.

He is survived by his family, colleagues, and a wide circle of well-wishers.

Khulna chokes on dust

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

"I have also faced significant business losses as customers avoid the area due to the unbearable conditions," he said.

Similarly, thousands of residents across multiple wards, including Khalishpur, Navy Check Post, Jora Gate, and others, report enduring severe dust pollution for over six years.

The problem extends beyond KCC areas, with locations like Joybangla Mor and Zero Point experiencing frequent clouds of dust stirred up by passing buses and trucks.

"To combat this crisis, coordinated efforts are needed, including stricter enforcement of environmental laws, cleaner technologies promotion, public transportation enhancement, and community awareness campaigns," he added.

Large-scale development projects, including the Khulna WASA sewage system and KCC drainage system, have left roads unattended for months, contributing to severe dust accumulation.

Projects such as KCC's Tk 823 crore drainage initiative and Tk 607 crore road development effort, along with Tk 500 crore of additional work by K-WASA and other agencies, have intensified the problem, particularly during the dry season.

These unfinished and poorly managed projects have led to hazardous conditions across the city.

Unregulated industrial activities, the burning of fossil fuels, and a growing number of motor vehicles without proper emission controls further aggravate the air quality.

The lack of green spaces and the careless dumping of construction materials on roads exacerbate the already dire situation, leaving residents to contend with persistent dust pollution.

Prolonged exposure to dust has led to widespread health issues, including respiratory illnesses.

Ajoy Sarker, a salon owner in Khalishpur, has developed asthma and chest diseases despite no family history of such conditions.

Roads such as Sonadanga Bypass Road, which serves over 400 buses daily, remain in deplorable condition, with heavy dust spreading across the area. The Rupsha Shipyard Road, incomplete for 13 years, is another major contributor to the crisis. Other critical roads, including those in Sonadanga, BIDC, and the bypass routes, are similarly neglected, further worsening the situation.

Experts highlight that Khulna's air quality frequently surpasses unhealthy levels, with PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations often exceeding 350 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and, at times, spiking to 450 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Sulfur dioxide levels also remain above safe limits, adding to the public health emergency. Residents struggle to mitigate the effects of suspended particulate matter, which poses

severe risks, particularly during the dry season.

Sadhan Chandra Swarnokar, a lecturer at Khulna University, said air pollution is not just an environmental issue; it is a public health emergency waiting for urgent action.

"To combat this crisis, coordinated efforts are needed, including stricter enforcement of environmental laws, cleaner technologies promotion, public transportation enhancement, and community awareness campaigns," he added.



Advocate Babul Hawladar, member secretary of Khulna Nagarik Samaj, criticised contractors and agencies for failing to complete projects on time. "They dump construction materials on roads, causing further pollution. K-WASA and KDA must finish their work on schedule," he said.

While KCC has repaired nearly 600 roads and 345 drains over the past two years, the city's air quality has deteriorated significantly.

Md Abdul Aziz, superintendent engineer of KCC, said KCC uses two modern road-sweeping trucks equipped with water tanks.

"We need more sweeping machine to clean dust regularly," he added. "Besides, house owners carelessly pile sand and other construction materials on road which worsens the situation," he added.

7 hurt as green

FROM PAGE 3
joining the movement after weeks of silence.

"We questioned their motives as they hadn't communicated with us during this time. When we raised these concerns, they assaulted us," he claimed.

The injured include Syed Mohammad Zakir, Amirul Rajib, Naimul Hasan, Faysal Mahmud, Ahadul Islam, and Dr Mansur, according to Amirul.

GREEN VOICE DENIES ALLEGATIONS

Humayun Kabir Rajib, co-coordinator of Green Voice, denied initiating the violence. "We began our protest at Anowar Park and continued to Panthakunjia. Some activists questioned why we joined after 21 days and accused us of hiring people. This provocation angered our members," he said.

Rajib said environmental movements cannot be confined to a timeline and claimed that the allegations of physical assault were exaggerated.

Iqbal Habib, vice-president of BAPA, also rejected allegations against his group.

"BAPA has consistently fought to protect parks and playgrounds, even when others didn't. We aim to unite activists, not divide them," he said.

Habib said BAPA often joins local protests to amplify their impact. "Some activists resisted our participation, but students involved with Green Voice defended their peers when tensions escalated," he added.

Adil Mohammad Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, condemned the incident, calling it a "black chapter" for the environmental movement. "The attack on activists is not only unfortunate but a criminal offence," he said.

Replying to question, he said vehicles registration remained suspended for over a month after miscreants set on fire BRTA headquarters amid student protest in July.

"But that may not be a reason because a car owner can register vehicle afterwards," he said.

Migration saw 22pc

FROM PAGE 3
implementing robust policies to tackle migration issues.

She also stressed the need for policy reforms, enhanced skills development programmes for workers, and the creation of safe job opportunities for women.

Additionally, she emphasised improving the overall migration system by ensuring transparency in recruitment processes and strengthening training centres.

Vehicle registration

FROM PAGE 3
RISE IN SUVS; FALL IN BUSES, MINIBUSES
Besides, bike dealers used to provide loans to consumers before the pandemic, but poor recovery rate reduced their investment, further affecting the situation, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The number of minibuses registered also fell by 22.34 percent, from 287 in 2023 to 220 in 2024.

Buses and minibuses are key elements of public transport, and their shortage has led to an increase in small vehicles like private cars and motorcycles.

According to BRTA data, 8,657 SUVs (BRTA registers such vehicles under "Jeep" category) were registered in 2024, up from 7,765 in 2023, an 11.45 percent increase.

Abdul Haque said SUV assemblers receive tax exemptions when importing parts, allowing them to sell the vehicles at a lower price, which may explain the rise in registrations.

PRAYER TIMING
JANUARY 3

Fazr Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-30	12-30	4-00	5-30
JAMAAT 6-05	1-15	4-15	5-35

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Country shows

FROM PAGE 3

countries, and female life expectancy is higher than in its neighbours, Prof Kabeer said.

Unlike India and Pakistan, where son preference and female-selective abortions have distorted gender ratios, Bangladesh has maintained near-normal ratios, reflecting a cultural shift toward valuing daughters, she added.

Prof Kabeer noted that Bangladesh, once characterised as "classic patriarchy" with practices like patrilineal inheritance and purdah, has made significant social progress.

She attributed this shift to the growing agency of women, stressing that women's ability to aspire has been key to the transformation. She also attributed the change to increased opportunities for women in education, employment, and social programmes.

BIDS Director General Binayak Sen said while patriarchy persists, Bangladeshi women have created their own space within it. However, challenges remain, which need to be addressed for further progress.

Naripokkho founding member Shireen Hug, Nijera Kori coordinator Khushi Kabir, and UNDP Gender team leader Sharmin Islam also attended the lecture, among others.

Cold, dense fog

FROM PAGE 5

Observatory Centre recording 11.3 degrees Celsius yesterday morning.

According to doctors at Rangpur Medical College Hospital, there has been an increase in patients with cold-related illnesses, including pneumonia, respiratory infections, and diarrhoea.

Hospitals across northern districts, including Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, are witnessing a similar surge in cases.

"Around 200 children suffering from cold related ailments are currently under treatment in the hospital's 45 bed children's ward," said Rakibul Alam, resident medical officer of Thakurgaon 250 bed Modern Hospital.

He said elderly patients with similar health issues are also being admitted.

Dinajpur and Rangpur district administrations have started distributing warm clothes to affected populations, but the demand far exceeds the supply.

Low-income families, unable to afford winter

clothing, continue to suffer in silence.

According to Md Mostafizur Rahman, assistant meteorologist at the Rangpur Meteorological Office, the weather in the northern areas is expected to remain unchanged for the next few days, with the sun obscured by dense fog.

Our correspondents from Benapole, Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat, and Thakurgaon contributed to this report.

UPDF member

FROM PAGE 3

During a search, the army recovered an M-16 assault rifle, two rounds of MG sniper ammunition, 90 rounds of rifle ammunition, a walkie-talkie, 12 mobile phones, and other equipment, it added.

UPDF (Main) spokesperson Angya Marma told The Daily Star that the person killed is not a member of their organisation and the name of their organisation is being falsely linked to incite internal conflict.

Plot Sale

Bashundhara R/A, Block-L, 3 katha Corner, Road Size: 40/25 Feet.

Contact: 01706617524

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD

Sylhet Road Circle, Sylhet.

Phone: 0299-6631506

E-mail: sesyl@rhd.gov.bd

Dated: 01/01/2025

Tender Corrigendum - 04

Tender Package No : 01/PSN/SRC/2024-2025(Re-Tender)
Tender Package Name : Upgradation, Operation and Maintenance of a Real-time Web based Toll collection system of "Fenchuganj Bridge" Toll Plaza at 36th Km of Moulvibazar-Rajnagar-Fenchuganj-Sylhet Road(N-208) Under Sylhet Road Division during the year 2024-2025 for 03 (Three) years."

This is to be notified for all concern that the following amendments have been made to the Invitation of Tender Ref. No. 35.01.9100.010.07.5/608(ka) 24-3636; Dated: 11.11.2024 for procurement of Non-Consulting Services.

IFT Notice SL No	Name of Criteria	Published in newspaper/Tender	Amendments
17	Tender Last Selling Date	05-01-2025 and 05.00 pm	26-01-2025 and 05.00 pm
18	Tender Submission Date and Time	06-01-2025 and 12.00 pm	27-01-2025 and 12.00 pm
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	06-01-2025 and 01.00 pm	27-01-2025 and 01.00 pm

All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged. This corrigendum notice will be treated as a part & parcel of the tender.

Ahsan Uddin Ahmed
ID No-601944Superintendent Engineer (C.C.), RHD
Sylhet Road Circle, Sylhet.

GD-29

Engineering Division

Patuakhali Science and Technology University
Dumki, Patuakhali-6602, Bangladesh.
Phone: 02477799759
E-mail: chiefengineer@pstu.ac.bd
Website: www.pstu.ac.bd

Date: 31/12/2024

Corrigendum for e-Tender (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works given below.

Sl No	Tender ID No.	Invitation Reference No.	Name of works	Tender document last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time
1	104890 0	PSTU/Engg/556/2024-2025/6761 Date: 10/12/2024	Repair and Maintenance Work of Student Hall Male & Female for Faculty of ANSV.	05/01/2025 4:00pm	06/01/2025 13:00
2	104890 6	PSTU/Engg/574/2024-2025/6762 Date: 10/12/2024	Repair and maintenance works of Academic Building Block A, B, C & D at PSTU.	05/01/2025 4:00pm	06/01/2025 13:05
3	104891 3	PSTU/Engg/561/2024-20			

Prevent lobbying in govt offices Info adviser urges secretaries

UNB, Dhaka



In a bid to curb unethical lobbying practices, Information and Broadcasting Adviser Mohammad Nahid Islam has issued a demi-official (DO) letter to all secretaries of government ministries.

In the letter, the adviser expressed concerns over unscrupulous people using his name or claiming familial ties with him to influence various government offices for personal gain.

"Recently, certain dishonest people and groups have been invoking my name or claiming to be my relatives to engage in lobbying for personal benefits, which is entirely unethical. Such actions are tarnishing my reputation," Nahid said.

The letter revealed that forged documents, including recommendations purportedly signed by the adviser, have come to light.

The adviser has requested all relevant authorities to disregard any such attempts made under his name or using fake endorsements.

Authorities have been instructed to immediately inform RHM Alaoi Kabir, the adviser's personal secretary (deputy secretary), in this regard.

In the letter, the adviser also emphasised the government's commitment to reflecting the aspirations of the public and implementing comprehensive state reforms with urgency.

He also urged government officials and employees to actively cooperate with these efforts.

Man killed in 'teen gang attack' in Sreepur, two held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A man was killed in an attack allegedly carried out by a teen gang in Sreepur upazila of Gazipur early yesterday.

The deceased, Hasibul Islam, 40, hailed from Barishal. He was the owner of Maa Moni Pharmacy in the Masjid Mor area of Sreepur.

Police detained two individuals in connection with the incident, said Zainal Abedin Mandal, officer in-charge of Sreepur Police Station.

Quoting eyewitnesses, the OC said Hasibul was visiting his father-in-law's house at Keowa Paschim Khanda village after returning from Dhaka around 3:00am, when 8 to 10 members of a local teen gang attacked him.

The assailants, allegedly intoxicated, struck him in the chest with bricks, leaving him critically injured, the OC said. He was declared dead at the upazila health complex.

Shimul Hossain, Hasibul's driver, said, "Once I parked the car in front of the house, the gang members started harassing the women in the car, and then assaulted me when I stepped out."

Hasibul's wife, Mahmuda Akter, said, "After we entered the house, the attackers forced their way in and killed my husband. They also harassed me and my sister."

RU scraps ward quota following student protest

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University administration abolished the ward quota last night, 12 hours after the students locked the university's administrative building yesterday.

The ward quota reserves seats for children and wards of the university's employees.

RU Vice-Chancellor Saleh Hasan Naqib announced this at an emergency press conference around 10:00pm yesterday. He said earlier the admissions sub-committee kept 1 percent quota for the children of third- and fourth-class employees. However, the students did not accept it and continued protests.

At the press conference, the VC said, "I do not even support the 1 percent ward quota. I am committed to completely abolishing it through proper process."

Earlier at 10:00am, students took position in front of the building, locking university officials inside.

Following months long protests, RU administration decreased the ward quota from three percent to one percent recently. It said the ward quota would be available only to applicants who are children or wards of the university's workers, as opposed to children and wards of all university employees (including teachers and officials).

Meanwhile, the university's Officers' Association has announced that they will go on strike on January 8 if the ward quota is not reinstated to 5 percent.

25 wild birds rescued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three people were detained with 16 Blossom-headed parakeets and 9 Bank mynas during a raid in a house in the port city's Alkanar area yesterday.

They are Hossen Mintu, 45, Rani Akter, 30, and Md Hridoy, 30, said Dipannita Bhattacharjee, wildlife and biodiversity conservation officer.

"A team of the Wildlife Division conducted the drive and found the house being used as a warehouse for wild birds. The suspects admitted to trapping and selling wild birds for years," she said.

Trapping, trading, buying, consuming, or caging wild birds is a punishable offense under the Bangladesh Wildlife (Protection and Safety) Act, 2012.

"We will release the birds once we get permission from the court," she said. The three detainees were produced before a court, which granted them bail.

Cold, dense fog disrupt life across country

Chuadanga records lowest temperature of 9.8 degrees Celsius; farmers fear crop damages

STAR REPORT

As a mild cold wave sweeps across the country, dense fog and chilly winds have disrupted lives, particularly in Chuadanga, which recorded the country's lowest temperature yesterday morning.

Chuadanga recorded the country's lowest temperature of 9.8 degrees Celsius yesterday, with air humidity at 95 percent, said Zahidul Islam, an observer at the Chuadanga Meteorological Office.

The district experienced 9.7 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, with air humidity at 93 percent, he noted, adding that temperatures are likely to drop further as a mild cold wave continues to affect the region.

"People are rarely stepping outdoors, and the low-income population is suffering immensely as they have to work in this cold," said Kamal Hossain, a local resident. He added that many are trying to ward off the cold by lighting fires.

The situation is similar in the fog-covered northern districts.

Dinajpur recorded 10.2 degrees Celsius yesterday morning. The cold is expected to persist for a few more days, with the possibility of another cold spell in late January, said Tofazzal Hossain, in charge



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

of the Dinajpur Weather Office, urging locals to take necessary precautions.

The cold has caused significant disruptions, with day labourers and transport workers losing work, as few people ventured outdoors. The unfavourable weather has also made commuting risky.

Meanwhile, Lalmonirhat recorded 11.4 degrees Celsius, and Kurigram reported 11.3 degrees Celsius in the morning, according to the Rangpur

Meteorological Office.

Farmers in these districts, particularly those in the Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dharla, Dudhkumar, and Gangadhar river belts, are forced to work in these harsh conditions to prevent crop loss, said Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in Kurigram.

Tentulia's temperature was similar to Lalmonirhat, with the district's Weather

SSE PAGE 4 COL 4

Meanwhile, Lalmonirhat recorded 11.4 degrees Celsius, and Kurigram reported 11.3 degrees Celsius in the morning, according to the Rangpur

CTG-DOHAZARI

Four years on, train service yet to resume

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Over four years after its suspension due to the pandemic, the train service between Chattogram and Dohazari has yet to resume. The prolonged closure continues to exacerbate the struggles of commuters and traders while depriving Bangladesh Railway (BR) of significant revenue.

Syed Nur Hossen, a resident near the Dohazari railway kitchen market, said, "The train service allowed us to travel affordably. Its closure has left us with costly and challenging travel options."

Before its suspension, the route was served by two pairs of local trains, including freight coaches, which carried over 4,000 passengers daily, according to BR's 2019 data.

The route was particularly vital for low-income individuals and small scale traders.

Vegetable traders from areas like Chandanish depended on the freight carriages to transport their goods to Chattogram at a low cost. Now, with the service unavailable, transportation costs have surged, reducing their profits. Monjurul Islam, a trader from Raji Uddin Bazar, said, "Transporting vegetables by train was much cheaper. Its closure has severely impacted our earnings."

BR officials had previously promised to resume the train service following the renovation of the Kalurghat Bridge. Despite the work being completed in October last year, the trains remain idle.

SSE PAGE 4 COL 1

SSE PAGE 4 COL 4

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
পানি সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়
বাংলাদেশ হাওর ও জলাভূমি উন্নয়ন অধিদপ্তর
প্রশাসন শাখা
৭২ শ্রী নেতৃ, ঢাকা-১২১৫
www.dhwd.gov.bd

মারক নং: ৪২.০৪.০০০০.০০১.১১.০০৩.২০২৪-০৩

তারিখ: ০১ আনুমানিক ২০২৫
১৭ শ্রী ১৪৩০

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ হাওর ও জলাভূমি উন্নয়ন অধিদপ্তরের জন্য রাজ্যিক রাজ্যে নিয়োগবিত্ত শূন্য পদে সরাসরি নিয়োগের জন্য বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে নিয়োগ শর্তাবলীকে নিয়রিত করার যাচাই প্রক্রিয়া করা যাচ্ছে।

বাংলাদেশ হাওর ও জলাভূমি উন্নয়ন অধিদপ্তরের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়া করার প্রয়োজন পূর্ণ করার পরে কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রক্রিয়া করা যাচ্ছে।

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বাংলাদেশ হাওর ও জলাভূমি উন্নয়ন



Justin Baldoni sues New York Times for \$250m over Blake Lively story

Justin Baldoni has filed a defamation lawsuit against The New York Times, denying sexual harassment allegations made by *It Ends with Us* co-star Blake Lively. Baldoni claims the article, published on December 21, was inaccurate and based on Lively's "one-sided account."

Lively's allegations were first reported in The New York Times, which published an article titled, 'We Can Bury Anyone': Inside a Hollywood Smear Machine, on December 21.

The 4,000-word article included details from Lively's complaint to the California Civil Rights Department, even though such filings are generally confidential.

He claims Lively fabricated accusations to gain creative control over their film and boost her public image, citing details from her confidential complaint to California's Civil Rights Department.

Parno Mittra, Mosharraf Karim's 'Beeldakini' to hit theatres this month

After wrapping up production in 2022, the much-anticipated film *Beeldakini* is finally set to hit theatres this month. Despite several announcements of release dates in the past, the film will officially be released nationwide on January 24.

Based on the novel of the same name by renowned author Nuruddin Jahangir, the film was directed by Fazlul Tuhin. It tells a powerful story of female strength and the liberation of motherhood.

The film stars Mosharraf Karim and West Bengal actress Parno Mittra in the lead roles. This is Parno Mittra's second Bangladeshi film following her appearance in Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's *Doob*.



Sariful Razz and Mim to reunite for new film



Sariful Razz and Bidya Sinha Mim are teaming up once again for a movie. The duo will be seen on-screen in the film *Danob*.

Directed by Anonno Mamun and produced by Action Cut Entertainment, *Danob* is set to begin shooting in the middle of this month in Bangladesh and Thailand.

Multiple sources associated with the

production confirmed to The Daily Star that they are aiming for an Eid-ul-Fitr release.

Razz and Mim, loved for their chemistry in *Poran* and *Damal*, faced tensions during *Damal* promotions due to Razz's former wife, leading Mim to profess not to work with Razz.

Fans, however, are thrilled about the latest project announcement.

Anurag Kashyap lashes out at Bollywood leaders over unreleased films

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap has expressed his frustration with Bollywood, revealing that five of his films, including *Kennedy*, remain unreleased due to profit-focused individuals in charge.

Despite *Kennedy*'s success at the Cannes Film Festival 2023, there's no certainty of its release in India.

In an interview, Kashyap lashed out at industry leaders, accusing them of not understanding filmmaking and being more concerned with financial returns.

He praised South Indian filmmakers for taking risks and empowering creators, contrasting it with Bollywood's reluctance.

Frustrated with the current state of the industry, Kashyap revealed that he no longer has the energy to continue battling its challenges and expressed his wish to move away from Mumbai.



Jason Momoa confirms role in 'Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow'



Jason Momoa, known for playing Aquaman in the previous DC cinematic universe, will take on a new role as Lobo in the upcoming film *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow*.

Momoa confirmed his involvement via Instagram by sharing part of an interview where he expressed admiration for the role. In his announcement, he wrote, "They called," signaling his enthusiasm for the project.

The film will feature Milly Alcock as Supergirl, centering on the journey of Kara Zor-El, Superman's cousin.

Lobo, a brutal and rebellious anti-hero from DC's world of Czarnia, wiped out his species and debuted in *The Omega Men #3* (1983), created by Roger Slifer and Keith Giffen.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

PAINT & VENT

Decode Your Dreams



Paint & Vent offers an opportunity for individuals to explore the meaning behind their dreams through the art of painting. Participants are invited to express their most vivid dreams – whether flying over mountains, mysterious symbols, or memorable experiences – and turn them into visual representations. No prior painting experience is needed, just the imagination and a willingness to reflect.

Date: Saturday, January 4, 2025

Time: 12pm - 3pm

Venue: Dhaka Trade Centre

COUNTRYWIDE



Unaware of the harmful effects, a farm worker sprays pesticide at a vegetable field in Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila. Such rampant use of pesticides could put people's health in danger.

PHOTO: STAR

WINTER VEGETABLES IN MOULIVIBAZAR Overuse of pesticides raises health risks

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Farmers in Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila are using pesticides in winter vegetable fields twice a week, floating health guidelines.

Experts say overuse of pesticides contaminates the produce and poses serious health risks to humans.

However, the use of pesticides has significantly increased in the cultivation of winter vegetables like tomatoes, beans, cauliflower and cabbage in the upazila, an agricultural hub.

However, many farmers, especially those who cultivate hybrid tomatoes, apply different pesticides in their fields twice a week, exceeding the prescribed amount.

Usually, vegetable growers target to harvest their crops before the regular winter crops hit the markets for better pay.

During a recent visit to Adampur, Madhabpur and Islampur unions, this correspondent saw farmers cultivating winter vegetables like beans, cauliflower, cabbage, brinjal, bitter gourd, and hybrid tomatoes on a large scale.

Nurul Muhaimin Milton, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, Moulvibazar unit, said pesticides should be applied every seven to ten days, but greedy farmers spray the insecticides even twice a week.

He said various companies are selling pesticides and farmers are using those

in their fields to combat fungus or insect attacks without considering the negative impact on public health.

According to Kamalganj Agriculture Office, winter vegetables have been cultivated on a total of 1,717 hectares of land in the upazila.

Of the vegetables, tomatoes alone have been cultivated on 280 hectares in areas including Alinagar, Adampur, Madhabpur, Tilakpur, Jamirkona, Homerjan, Patrakhola, Dhalai Par and Narendrapur.

Farmers Akhtar Mia and Mobasshir Ali said hybrid tomato cultivation needs a high volume of fertilisers and pesticides to combat insect attacks.

Moulvibazar Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Shamsuddin Ahmed said his department regularly advises farmers about the importance of applying fertilisers and fungicides within the prescribed limit.

Pesticides should be used every 15 days or as prescribed by the agriculture officials, he said, adding that they are encouraging farmers to apply organic methods like pheromone traps for pest control and organic manure in the vegetable fields.

Kamalganj Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Mahbubul Alam said excessive use of pesticides could lead to serious health issues, such as kidney, lung or eye diseases.

Rappers Hannan, Shezan

FROM PAGE 2

The intro of his song loosely translates to: 'Raise your voice, Bangladesh, raise your voice, So much blood on the streets, whose blood is that, raise your voice, Raise your voice, Bangladesh, raise your voice, Who fired the shots on the streets? Raise your voice, Bangladesh...'

The week before, Shezan, another young rap artist, released his song 'Kotha Ko' (Speak Up) on July 16. Its strong and thought-provoking lyrics emphasised a call for action and justice.

The intro of this song loosely translates to: 'Hey, what's the difference

Come forward

FROM PAGE 12

and that desire should be awakened.

There is more joy in working for the welfare of others than doing something for oneself, he said speaking at the conference at Manik Mia Avenue adjacent to the National Parliament.

He urged all to develop the habit of working for the greater public good in daily life.

Social Welfare Adviser Sharmin S Mursid and three student representatives of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement were also present at the event.

Jamaat's statement on patriotism 'ridiculous'

FROM PAGE 2

role of the "Islamist party" during the 1971 Liberation War.

"I want to ask the Islamist party about its role in 1971. In which sector did you fight, under which sector commander? Claiming to be the only patriotic party will make people laugh."

Rizvi made these remarks yesterday while speaking at an event at Humayun Rashid Chattar in Sylhet city.

He also criticised the government for not ensuring justice for BNP leaders and activists who were killed or disappeared.

He highlighted BNP's 15 and a half-year struggle for democracy, questioning the interim government's commitment to ensuring justice for victims of political repression.

Commenting on recent amendments to school textbooks, Rizvi praised the inclusion of chapters on

leaders like Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque, Maulana Bhashani, and Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy but expressed disappointment over the exclusion of a dedicated chapter on the Liberation War.

"It is essential to have a complete history of our struggle for freedom," Rizvi said, urging the government to ensure that the Liberation War's legacy is properly documented in school books.

Israeli airstrikes

FROM PAGE 12

municipality building in the Humanitarian Area".

Israel has killed at least 45,581 Palestinians since the offensive began on October, 2023, according to health officials in the enclave. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced and much of the tiny coastal strip is in ruins.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority (PA) temporarily halted operations of Qatar's Al Jazeera television in the territory including its broadcasts, citing the network's dissemination of "inciting material," the Palestinian news agency WAFA said.

The culture, interior and communications ministers made the decision jointly because the channel broadcast material that was "deceiving and stirring strife," WAFA said without providing details on the subject matter.

The order said the decision was temporary but did not specify an end date.

Later yesterday, separate Israeli airstrikes killed at least four people on Jala Street in downtown Gaza City and two in its Zeitoun district, medics said.

Hamas' smaller ally Islamic Jihad said it fired rockets into the southern Israeli kibbutz of Holot near Gaza yesterday. The Israeli

military said it intercepted one projectile in the area that had crossed from southern Gaza.

ICT analysing

FROM PAGE 12

and torture in these secret detention facilities.

The ICT on December 18 extended by two months the deadline for completing the investigations into two cases against Hasina.

Alongside her, former roads and bridges minister and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, and 44 others are currently facing charges in a case of crimes against humanity and genocide. Hasina is the lone accused in the other case on the same charges.

The PSC published final results on December 26, 2023, recommending 2,805 candidates for cadre and non-cadre posts, including 2,163 for cadre appointments.

This involved assessments by the National Security Intelligence (NSI) and the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), it added.

The additional verification identified adverse findings against 227 candidates, deeming them ineligible for appointment pending further investigation.

With the exclusion of these 227 candidates and the earlier 40 who missed the medical examination, a total of 267 candidates were removed from the list.

The final recruitment notification, issued on December 30, 2024, confirmed the appointment of 1,896 candidates.

The excluded candidates protested outside the Secretariat, demanding an explanation for their removal from the final list.

Earlier, on December 30, the government issued a fresh gazette announcing the revised appointments, revoking the October 15

notification.

The 43rd BCS, announced on November 30, 2020, under the Awami League government, received 435,190 applications, the second-highest on record.

The PSC published final results on December 26, 2023, recommending 2,805 candidates for cadre and non-cadre posts, including 2,163 for cadre appointments.

Meanwhile, a group of excluded candidates yesterday demanded a fresh gazette by January 5 to facilitate their joining by January 15.

They made the demands at a press conference held in front of the central library of Dhaka University at 12:30pm.

Speaking on behalf of the candidates, Masuma Akhtar said she worked hard for four years and successfully passed all stages of the 43rd BCS examination with honesty.

She said many resigned from their existing jobs or did not apply for government and private jobs, while some refrained from participating in the 44th BCS examinations after they saw their names in the first gazette.

The candidates urged the government to address the issue promptly to save their careers.

INTERNATIONAL

NEW ORLEANS RAMPAGE Killer acted alone, inspired by ISIS: FBI

AFP, New Orleans

A US army veteran motivated by loyalty to the jihadist group Islamic State likely acted alone when he killed and injured dozens in a truck attack against a New Orleans crowd of New Year revellers, the FBI said yesterday.

Despite initial concerns that Shamsud-Din Jabbar had accomplices still on the run, preliminary investigations show he likely was alone, FBI deputy assistant director Christopher Raia said.

"We do not assess at this point that anyone else was involved," Raia said.

However, new evidence emerged detailing the extent of the US citizen's loyalty to Islamic State and his plans to cause mayhem in the attack, which killed 14 and injured more than 30 in the French Quarter district, ending only after he was shot by police.



"He was 100 percent inspired by ISIS," Raia said, using an alternative name for the international jihadist group.

Just before the attack, in which 42-year-old Jabbar slammed a rented Ford F-150 pickup into the crowd, he "posted several videos to an online platform proclaiming his support for ISIS," Raia said.

He also carried a black ISIS flag on the back of the vehicle.

In one video, Jabbar "explains he originally planned to harm his family and friends, but was concerned the news headlines would not focus on the 'war between the believers and the disbelievers.'

Raia said that Jabbar had planted two homemade bombs in drink coolers in French Quarter streets. The bombs were viable but were made safe in time, he said.

Raia clarified that the total death toll of 15 from Wednesday's carnage included 14 victims and Jabbar himself, who died after wounding two police officers in an exchange of gunfire.



People holding placards, reading "Detain! Arrest! Insurrectionist Yoon Suk Yeol", take part in a rally against South Korea's impeached president Yoon Suk Yeol outside a subway station in Seoul, South Korea yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Syrian civil war killed more than 528,500

Says a Britain-based war monitor

AFP, Damascus

More than 528,500 people were killed in the Syrian civil war, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said on Wednesday.

The overall toll includes thousands killed since 2011 that were only confirmed dead recently, with access to detention centres and mass graves easier following the rebel overthrow of Bashar al-Assad.

The Britain-based monitor said 6,777 people, more than half of them civilians, were killed in 2024 in fighting in Syria.

Syria's civil war erupted in 2011 after the government brutally repressed pro-democracy protests triggering a devastating conflict that pushed millions to flee abroad and drew in foreign powers.

Last year, 3,598 civilians, including 240 women and 337 children were killed across Syria, according to the Observatory.

In addition, 3,179 combatants were killed, the monitor said, including soldiers from "the old regime", but also "Islamist armed groups" and jihadists.

In 2023, the Observatory reported 4,360 people killed, including nearly 1,900 civilians. In December, Islamist-led rebels overthrew Assad, seizing power in a rapid offensive that ended more than 50 years of the family's iron-fisted rule.

Since 2011, the monitor with a network of sources inside Syria has recorded more than 64,000 deaths in Assad's prisons "due to torture, medical negligence or poor conditions" in the jails.

BHOPAL DISASTER India clears toxic waste after 40 years

AFP, New Delhi

Indian authorities moved hundreds of tonnes of hazardous waste remaining more than 40 years after the world's deadliest industrial disaster struck the city of Bhopal, media reported yesterday.

Communities have for decades blamed a high level of sicknesses on contamination of the groundwater in the wake of the highly toxic gas leak from the Union Carbide factory in December 2, 1984.

Some 3,500 people were killed in the immediate aftermath of the leak.

DHAKA FRIDAY JANUARY 3, 2025

POUSH 19, 1431 BS

The Daily Star

7

BSF aiding Bangladeshi infiltrators Says Mamata Banerjee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday accused the Indian Border Security Force of letting infiltrators from Bangladesh enter India to destabilise the state.

Banerjee also claimed that the ploy "is a blueprint of the Union Government to disturb West Bengal."

Bangladesh has the longest border with India, with West Bengal sharing a 2,272 km-long boundary with it and Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and Meghalaya sharing the remaining boundary.

The paramilitary force is responsible for guarding the Indo-Bangladesh border. "We have got information that the BSF is letting infiltrators enter India through Islampur, Sitai, Chopra and several other border areas."

"The BSF is also torturing people and trying to destabilise the state," she alleged at an administrative review meeting at "Nabanna" in Howrah.

A senior BSF officer, requesting anonymity, rejected Mamata's allegation and said "we are diligently performing our responsibilities to ensure the safety and security of the borders."

Montenegro mourns after gunman kills 12

AFP, Cetinje

Montenegro began three days of national mourning yesterday after a gunman went on a rampage after opening fire at a village restaurant, killing 12 people including two children.

"Twelve people were killed, of whom two were children," prosecutor Andrijana Nastic told reporters in the southern town of Cetinje, raising the previous toll of at least 10 from Wednesday's attack.

The 45-year-old gunman died after shooting himself in the head when he was surrounded after an hours-long manhunt, police said early yesterday.

The killing spree started around 5:30 pm (1630 GMT) in Bajice, a village near Cetinje, according to police.

The victims were killed at five different locations, with the first four in the restaurant, the prosecutor said. Police said the two killed children were aged 10 and 13.

Anwar Kamal Pasha, a renowned Education Enthusiast, Philanthropist and Business person of the country has been elected as Chairman, Board of Trustees, Prime University Trust



FATAL PLANE CRASH S Korea cops raid Jeju Air, airport

AFP, Muan

South Korean police raided the offices of Jeju Air and the operator of Muan International Airport yesterday as they step up a probe into the fatal crash of a Boeing 737-800 that killed 179 people.

The flight was carrying 181 passengers and crew from Thailand to South Korea on Sunday when it issued a mayday call and belly-landed before slamming into a barrier, killing all aboard except two flight attendants.

Authorities yesterday carried out search and seizure operations at Muan airport where flight 2216 crashed, a regional aviation office in the southwestern city, and Jeju Air's office in the capital Seoul, police said.

Jeju Air's chief executive Kim E-bae has also been banned from leaving the country as the investigation continues, police said separately.

চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

চট্টগ্রাম

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

তারিখ: ০১-১২-২০২৪

নিচে বর্ণিত বেতন ক্ষেত্রে এবং রীতি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় অন্যান্য ভাত্তায় চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিয়োগের জন্য বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে নির্ধারিত ফরমে দরবার্তা আবাবন করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রমিক	পদের নাম	অফিস	পদের সংখ্যা	জাতীয় বেতন ক্ষেত্র-২০১৫
১	নিরীক্ষা ও পরিবার কর্মসূল	উপচার্য দণ্ডন	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি
২	নিরীক্ষা তত্ত্ববিদ্যার্ক	উপচার্য দণ্ডন	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	১০ম শ্রেণি
৩	বিস্টো কেলো (ঝংকুত, পালি)	চ.বি. জাপুর	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি
৪	রিসার্চ ফেলো (আবর্বা)	চ.বি. জাপুর	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি
৫	সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (সিভিল)	প্রকৌশল দণ্ডন	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি
৬	কোর্মান	বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি
৭	সহকারী পরিচালক	পরিবহন দণ্ডন	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি
৮	সেকশন অফিসার	ফালিত কোর্মান ও কোম্পানি বিভাগ	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি
৯	কম্পিউটার প্রযোজার (সেকশন অফিসার সমমান)	কম্পিউটার সাময়েস এবং ইজিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি
১০	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর (সেকশন অফিসার সমমান)	পরিষিত বিভাগ	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি
১১	সেকশন অফিসার	বসমাতা শেখ মাজিলাতুরেছা মুজিব হল	০১ (এক) টি ছারী	৯ম শ্রেণি

উক্ত পদসমূহের জন্য প্রযোজনীয় মূল্যনতম যোগ্যতাসহ বিজ্ঞাপিত তথ্যাদি এবং আবেদনপত্রের নির্ধারিত যোগ্য চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট <http://www.cu.ac.bd> এ প্রযোজন করা যাবে।

অধ্যোয়ী/জনতা ব্যাক লিপ্ত-এ যেকোন শাখা হতে নেজিট্রের, চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এর অন্যকলে অধ্যোয়ী ব্যাক লিপ্ত/জনতা ব্যাক লিপ্ত, চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় শাখা, চট্টগ্রাম ব্যাকর প্রদেয় দরবার্তা ক্ষেত্রে বাবদ ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকার ব্যাক লিপ্ত ক্ষেত্রে উক্ত দুটি পদসমূহের জন্য ১০ (দশ) সেট দরবার্তা আবাবন অন্যান্য ৩০-০১-২০২৫ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস

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Make workers' safety a national priority

BILS study portrays a grim picture across various industries

Not long ago, we wrote about why workers deserve a better deal in today's Bangladesh thanks not only to their contribution in the July uprising but also because they have received the smallest share of whatever economic progress has been achieved over the decades, despite being its main drivers. Workers, particularly those in labour intensive industries, are often deprived of benefits and rights—such as the right to workplace safety—that many take for granted. This has been once again confirmed by a study by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) that says that at least 707 workers were killed in workplace accidents in 2024. Among them, transport workers accounted for the highest number of fatalities (273), followed by those in agriculture (102), construction (91), rickshaw pullers (43), migrant workers (38), and day labourers (32).

In comparison, 2023 recorded slightly higher fatalities, with 742 deaths. The BILS study has identified road accidents, roof collapses, electrocution, fires, cylinder explosions, and trolley or boat capsizing as the leading causes of workplace deaths. Many, including fishermen, also died or went missing during natural disasters. Unfortunately, this state of precarity has been persistent throughout the past decade that claimed over 8,000 lives in total—with 2019 and 2021 going down as the deadliest years. The relative decline in numbers in more recent years is not due to any positive shift in industrial policies and practices, however.

The question is, how much longer will workers have to wait for meaningful changes that ensure their safety? When, if ever, will the authorities address the systemic neglect that allow such tragedies to persist? One sector where this neglect has been most glaring is shipbreaking, which recorded nine deaths last year. This doesn't adequately portray the danger lurking in shipbreaking yards, as workers there routinely face hazardous conditions, inadequate safety measures, and exposure to toxic materials. A recent views exchange event organised by the BILS in Chattogram's Sitakunda—where such yards have allegedly witnessed 129 fatalities since 2015—brought out their appalling conditions.

Speakers, for example, highlighted the prevalence of unskilled, noncompliant contractors, who often obtain licenses through dubious means, as well as the lack of protections and proper wages for workers. They also expressed concerns about the occurrence of accidents in so-called "green shipyards", questioning how they receive certification without ensuring workers' rights and safety. They also raised alarm about the non-implementation of the minimum monthly wage of Tk 16,000 set in 2018. The persistence of such issues, which are by no means restricted to the shipbreaking industry, shows how workers are still being treated as expendable despite their critical role in driving our economy.

This needs to change. Our industries, both formal and informal, must undergo a radical transformation in how they approach workers' rights, including workplace safety and decent wages. It is imperative that the government not only ensures the implementation of existing safety regulations and wage structures but also introduces stronger mechanisms for worker representation, fair investigations, and transparency in industrial practices. Otherwise, this cycle of preventable workplace tragedies will continue to claim lives.

Can we ever curb air pollution?

Lack of progress has been frustrating

It is alarming to learn that this December marked the most polluted month in Dhaka in the past nine years. According to the Center for Atmospheric Pollution Studies (CAPS), over these nine years, the months of December have seen 17 days of "hazardous" air, with 11 of those days being in last December. Research by CAPS found that the average Air Quality Index (AQI) last month was 288—the worst since 2016. On December 14, the pollution level reached an unprecedented 880 AQI at 11 PM.

Thus, Dhaka has suffered from consistently poor air quality over the years. While the air quality slightly improves during the monsoon season, it deteriorates to "unhealthy" and "very unhealthy" levels during winter. But 11 days of "hazardous" air in a single month indicates a tipping point that demands decisive action.

The failure of the previous government has undoubtedly contributed to the current situation. Many projects were undertaken over the past decade to improve air quality, but these failed to deliver results, with allegations of funds being misappropriated by the relevant authorities. But has anything changed since the political transition in August? Reportedly, no significant initiatives have been undertaken to address major pollution sources such as brick kilns, factory emissions, unfit vehicles, indiscriminate waste burning, and unchecked construction activities. We do not need additional projects to curb these illegal activities—what we need is active, consistent monitoring which is sorely lacking at present. The environment ministry must be held accountable for this failure.

It is known that political influence hindered efforts when Awami League was in power, but how to explain the lack of progress since the interim government took charge? After assuming the role of environment adviser, Syeda Rizwana Hasan announced a National Air Quality Management Action Plan to address pollution sources, improve air monitoring, and strengthen enforcement mechanisms. Months have passed, yet there has been no tangible progress. As a result, Dhaka's hospitals are now overwhelmed with patients suffering from pollution-related diseases.

We do not expect a dramatic change under the interim government, but Dhaka's residents at least deserve to see some measurable progress in curbing its air pollution. The authorities must not fail them again.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Spirit lands on Mars

On this day in 2004, NASA's exploration rover Spirit landed on Mars to study the chemical and physical composition of the planet's surface.

EDITORIAL

The anatomy of free speech



Dr Lamia Karim
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LAMIA KARIM

During President Barack Obama's second term, when extremist groups were active on social media and college campuses, I faced a situation that was a lesson on the intricacies of free speech. Campus Student Services informed me that one of my students had been "outed" on social media as a member of a White supremacist group. They said the student now felt unsafe to attend class. He had not said or done anything in the classroom to provoke his peers; his affiliation with the White supremacist group had sparked understandable outrage. Student Services asked me to ensure that the student could complete the term without persecution from his peers.

This directive put me in an ethical dilemma. I am a staunch advocate of free speech, and I uphold its importance as a cornerstone of democracy. I also teach that free speech carries with it a grave responsibility: it must not intentionally harm others. In this case, the student's affiliation with a White supremacist group—not his words—posed a perceived harm to the rights and safety of others in the classroom. I asked the student to meet during my office hours. When he arrived, I wanted to know if he felt safe in the classroom, and he said no. With only a few weeks left in the term, I proposed that he could attend class remotely and meet with me if he had questions about the course material. I did not question his ideology. Instead, I asked him to consider the dual nature of free speech—his right to express an ideology versus the potential harm it might cause others. He accepted the arrangement, completed the course remotely, and he did not contact me again.

The case posed several questions. How does one balance the right to free speech against the need to protect others from its harms? Are affiliations as harmful as spoken words? If so, how do we adjudicate them? The experience underscores the fragile and imperfect nature of free speech. It is not merely an idea to be exercised, but a responsibility to be exercised judiciously. In the US, many believe in an unfettered right to free speech without considering its impact on society. In 1919, US Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr wrote the most enduring analogy in US Constitutional Law, "The most stringent protection of free speech

would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic." But shouting fire in an open field is protected. That is, the context of speech matters.

Recent events in Bangladesh highlight some of these tensions. We can see the understandable anger around certain political affiliations. But what about the rights of those who belonged to a party but never participated in any unlawful acts? Are they also guilty by association? In my travels in rural Bangladesh, I found that the majority did not debate politics but were concerned about their livelihoods. And no matter whom they

an incident of fire has led to charges of suffocating press freedom. An adviser explained the urgency to verify the legitimacy of these entry cards in the wake of the fire, and journalists were issued new passes. But the question remains: why wasn't a selected group of the press allowed to enter the premises with the authorities?

Free speech is messy, complex and has a compromising side. We may not agree, but denying speech, in my opinion, will push those ideas underground where they will find adherents.

At the heart of a thriving democracy is an educated citizenry: individuals capable of discerning truth from falsehood. Bangladesh must invest wisely and heavily in rebuilding its educational infrastructure—from kindergarten to the university, training and compensating the teachers properly, with experts from within and outside the country. Such an education system must also focus on citizenship and civic responsibilities. Not so long ago, students at a residential hall of Dhaka University beat a young man

both physical and digital spaces for inclusive, civil discourse among its citizens. In Bangladesh, this effort must extend beyond Dhaka to provincial towns and villages. The traditional rural practice of *shalish* (informal adjudication boards) could serve as a model for fostering dialogue and integrating diverse perspectives from communities across the country about their ideas of the state. Can we not ensure a series of townhall-like *shalish* across provincial towns and villages, which are broadcast live into the homes of Bangladeshis in and outside the country?

It is well-known that Bangladesh is a highly stratified society. If you watch Bangladeshi TV talk shows, you will see a handful of people, mostly men, holding forth on various subjects. I am not contesting their discourse, which is of high quality; I am contesting the absence of women (save one or two known faces) and minorities. Wouldn't their inclusion enrich these discussions? Similarly, the question of how to bridge the socioeconomic class differences are usually reduced to food prices, ignoring



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

voted for, their existential realities did not improve. Let's move to another example. Was it an exercise of free speech when a cow was slaughtered in front of the *Prothom Alo* newspaper office? Or when bureaucrats issued an ultimatum to remove an interim government adviser? These were politically motivated to create chaos in society, but no actions were taken by the interim government for accountability, which sends the wrong signal. The more recent invalidation of journalists' entry cards at the secretariat following

to death, accusing him of petty theft. University students have physically and verbally assaulted their professors and doctors for their "failures." Such behaviour exposes mob mentality, lack of civic responsibility, and disregard for others. While criminality should be dealt with through legal procedures, it behoves us to ask: why do the youth behave in this way? And why do some stand aside and let these criminal incidents occur? What are their sources of discontent?

Beyond laws, society must cultivate

systemic issues that result in unequal access to resources. Say for example, the interim government brought down the price of eggs for a month, would that make it a level playing ground for rickshaw pullers and garment workers?

In a democracy, sovereignty lies with the people, and it is the people who decide the nature of the state. If that is true, then the *krishok* and *majdoor* would benefit from these social "revolutions." But do they? I fear that we run the risk of forgetting those who need to be heard the most.

Pharmacies can become urban primary healthcare hubs



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MOHAMMAD IHTESHAM HASSAN

Urban Bangladesh lacks a well-functioning primary healthcare system. Currently, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, through its Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), operates 35 urban dispensaries nationwide. Additionally, the Local Government Division runs a public-private partnership (PPP) model under the Urban Primary Health Care Services Delivery Project (UPHCP) in selected areas across the country.

The need for a well-functioning and structured primary healthcare system with nationwide coverage is paramount. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), primary care can meet around 80-90 percent of a person's lifetime health needs. If unaddressed, the problems due to inadequate primary healthcare in urban areas are only likely to worsen, exacerbated by the ever increasing urban population and the consequent increased demand for healthcare.

Consider the situation in Dhaka city. People come from all over the country to the hospitals here, which are often overburdened with patients and operate at overcapacity, struggling to provide quality care. Patients frequently face difficulties, such as limited accommodation, extended waiting times, and transportation hurdles due to late night commutes.

One of the major problems in the

current healthcare system is the lack of an effective referral system and inadequate gatekeeping at tertiary care facilities. Barring emergency care and referrals from lower-tier health facilities, patients should not visit hospitals as they are meant to provide tertiary-level care. However, due to the lack of primary healthcare centres—and perhaps also due to the lack of awareness—patients are often left with no choice but to visit tertiary-level hospitals, further burdening these facilities. Patients should have primary care centres close to their homes. The community clinic model in rural areas aims for one clinic for every 6,000 people, trying to mitigate pressure across these facilities.

Urban health-seeking patterns present a more complex scenario. While hospitals remain crowded with patients, data from the Household Income and Expenditure Surveys (HIES) shows that pharmacies are the most frequented healthcare providers. Findings of the 2010, 2016, and 2022 HIES all show that pharmacies consistently emerge as the preferred choice, with 53 percent of healthcare seekers choosing them in 2022, whereas, 11 percent preferred visiting qualified doctors' chambers, the second-most used option.

So why are pharmacies so frequently preferred? Firstly, pharmacies are easily accessible and

closer to people's residences, as there are 200,000 registered and over 100,000 unregistered pharmacies across the country. Secondly, the average waiting time to access care at pharmacies is 8.22 minutes in urban areas, significantly shorter than the average of 17.51 minutes at formal healthcare facilities, and 48 minutes at government hospitals, according to

One of the major problems in the current healthcare system is the lack of an effective referral system and inadequate gatekeeping at tertiary care facilities. Barring emergency care and referrals from lower-tier health facilities, patients should not visit hospitals as they are meant to provide tertiary-level care.

the 2022 HIES data.

However, pharmacies do not have medically trained professionals who are licensed to diagnose patients. Nor are they pharmacists, as they do not hold a degree in pharmacy.

To standardise the retail pharmacy sector, the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) launched a novel concept in 2016 called model pharmacies, consisting of accredited pharmacies that comply with DGDA-recommended and health ministry-approved standards. Requirements include 300 sq ft of floor space, an air-conditioning system, a pharmacy-grade refrigerator, a graduate pharmacist, etc.

While the initiative sounded very promising, media reports revealed that many of the model pharmacies were involved in various irregularities, such as non-compliance with the DGDA guidelines for drug sales and absence of registered pharmacists. It has also been found that pharmacies without the DGDA approval use the logo of model pharmacy at their shops and mislead consumers. The DGDA lacks adequate manpower to properly monitor these irregularities.

In the absence of a well-functioning primary healthcare system, the proposition is to leverage the existing pharmacies and transform them into comprehensive points of care for a primary healthcare system. Despite the current shortcomings of the model pharmacies, lessons can be learnt from a thorough evaluation. If the DGDA collaborates with other wings of the health ministry and the local government bodies in formulating a comprehensive policy and guidelines, along with strict monitoring and regulation, there is a potential to create a robust primary care system.

Converting even 10 percent of the 200,000 registered pharmacies into comprehensive primary care centres could result in 20,000 such facilities in urban areas, which would result in a better ratio than one clinic per 6,000 people ratio in rural areas. As pharmacies are already the most popular choice for seeking treatment, transforming them would require minimal resources compared to launching new dedicated primary care centres.

Solving the primary care gap can go a long way in ensuring health equity for all citizens of the country and the country's ambition of attaining Universal Health Coverage status by 2032.

Should Bangladesh opt for a national government?



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AHMED SHAFIQUL HUQUE

Post-revolution scenarios play out in diverse ways. Turmoil and instability follow revolutions, and political systems struggle to come to terms with new realities. Changes in 1947, 1971 and 1990 resulted in tension and turmoil, but a resilient Bangladesh eventually overcame the challenges.

In his poem "The Road Not Taken," Robert Frost highlighted the challenges and consequences of choice. He preferred the road "less travelled by" that made "all the difference." The July uprising in Bangladesh brought the country to a critical juncture of history, and it became the call of the interim government to decide which road to take. Guided by public demands, the student leaders' passion and the advisers' wisdom, holding the general elections and handing over the rein of government to the elected majority political party emerged as the preferred strategy for returning Bangladesh to normalcy.

The dominant pattern of thinking at present is that elections will restore a democratic government and establish an authority that would address the numerous challenges facing the country. After speculations and unclear statements from some advisers and demands from various groups to declare a schedule, the chief adviser informed the nation last month that elections would likely be held in late 2025 or the first half of 2026.

At this moment, society is divided into several ideological, political, social, and

to be done in promoting cohesiveness and harmony within the government machinery. There were reports of insubordination and breach of discipline in the police academy in Sarda, and members of the Ansar battalion put the secretariat under siege to press their demands. With serious dissatisfaction and resentment among key agencies that have a critical role to play, it will be difficult to hold free and fair elections.

societies. Most citizens of Bangladesh are concerned about that. The country lost the services of many personnel in the disciplinary services since the fall of the previous regime. These agencies are essential for assisting with holding elections and must be repopulated with new recruits.

The economy is under pressure as incalculable amounts of bank loans remain outstanding, foreign exchange reserves

the government. Considering the possible drain on financial and human resources, this may not be the ideal time for the country to invest in electoral activities that may not produce sustainable results. Citizens may not be ready to participate in a democratic electoral process at this stage when many national questions remain unresolved.

Under the circumstances, the road not taken could be the option of establishing an inclusive national government that would give priority to stability, social justice, and democratic values. The July uprising forged an unprecedented unity in a divided society. It produced an opportunity to bring back depoliticised, alienated, and apathetic groups into the governing process. Focusing on elections at this time could lead to dividing a population that was unified in demanding termination of an autocratic regime.

Recent showings of hostility towards Bangladesh by certain quarters in India further underlines the importance of national unity. The chief adviser's consultations with political parties to build national unity and respond to the challenges opened an opportunity for all stakeholders to work together. A national government will add to the strength to plan and chart a course for the future political settlement in Bangladesh. It would serve the purpose of deliberating and finding answers to questions that fractured the society. Without a national consensus, a divided nation will continue to return to the same cycle of problems.

The process of healing and reconciliation in society requires regular dialogues and deliberations on important national questions. It requires an inclusive approach to listen to the voices of all stakeholders and build consensus on national issues. The projected time frame of 12-18 months for the election, suggested by the chief adviser, will still require an effective government, particularly for reassuring citizens that electoral arrangements are fair and impartial. At the same time, the interim government needs to gain the confidence of the public in their ability to ensure law and order and control the spiralling inflation. These are two issues with which most citizens are concerned. The March for National Unity on the first day of the new year resonated with chants for reform and justice, and these must be accomplished before the elections.

This task can be performed most effectively by a national government that represents all interests in society. Elections can be held after the national government tackles the critical problems that confront the country and that could make "all the difference" for ensuring a return for post-revolution Bangladesh to a parliamentary democratic republic, the ideal that guided the Liberation War.



The July uprising in Bangladesh brought the country to a critical juncture of history.

FILE PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

A national government will add to the strength to plan and chart a course for the future political settlement in Bangladesh. It would serve the purpose of deliberating and finding answers to questions that fractured the society. Without a national consensus, a divided nation will continue to return to the same cycle of problems.

economic groups, and their views and expectations vary from one another. Policies of the past regime contributed to sharp divisions in society. It will take a long time to overcome the bitterness and animosity accumulated over decades and return to normal democratic practices. Elections will not be productive until those goals are achieved.

Degeneration and misuse of state institutions have diminished their capacity to organise and manage the task of holding national elections, not to mention the discharge of their constitutional responsibilities. Recent events of protests by groups aggrieved by the interim government's decisions suggest that there is much work

Public trust and confidence in the electoral system and the role of the Election Commission have declined to dangerously low levels, and it will take time to restore them. The practice of seeking nominations from political parties for appointment in the Election Commission must be replaced with a transparent and inclusive arrangement in which public consultation can be incorporated. Since elections involve competition between candidates and political parties, they bear the risk of creating further divisions in society. This could affect the prospect of forging national unity that is needed for long-term productive results.

Decline in the law and order situation is a widespread problem in post-revolutionary

dwindle, and trade and business suffer. A massive capital flight took place through cronyism and corruption perpetrated over decades. The spiralling inflation has impacted crores of people who find it hard to survive. Steps by the interim government and the Trade Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) to offer relief through the sale of essential commodities at "fair" prices is barely adequate compared to the citizens' need.

The government's financial strength is limited, and the costs of governance are on the rise. Elections are expensive undertakings and involve deployment of large numbers of government employees. This could divert attention from more urgent tasks confronting

Can Bangladesh and India transcend South Asia's colonial legacies?



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KAZI ASM NURUL HUDA

The relationship between Bangladesh and India has long been a study in asymmetry. For decades, it has resembled a delicate dance where one partner dictates the rhythm while the other struggles to keep pace. But recent developments suggest that this fragile dynamic is beginning to crumble as Bangladesh asserts its sovereignty in ways that challenge India's self-perception as the "big brother" in South Asia. This transformation raises profound questions about the moral responsibilities of regional powers and the meaning of true independence in a postcolonial world.

Historically, Bangladesh's ties with India have been marked by a complex interplay of dependency and domination. From the 1971 Liberation War to the treaties and memoranda of understanding signed over the decades, the balance of power has overwhelmingly tilted towards New Delhi. The persistent border killings, trade disparities, and political interference have only deepened the perception that Bangladesh exists as a subordinate rather than an equal. This dynamic reached its zenith during Sheikh Hasina's tenure, a period characterised by India's outsized influence on Dhaka's policies.

This era can be described as one of "soft colonialism," where Bangladesh's sovereignty was compromised in exchange for political stability. Treaties disproportionately favouring India became the norm, and protests against these arrangements were met with repression. The fear of speaking out against Indian interests grew so pervasive that it symbolised the erosion of Bangladesh's democratic fabric.

The recent ousting of Sheikh Hasina represents more than just a political shift. It signifies a collective yearning for dignity and self-determination, a reclamation of what Sir Isaiah Berlin would describe as both negative and positive freedom. Negative freedom, or the absence of external constraints, reflects Bangladesh's desire to shed India's overbearing influence. Positive freedom, the ability to act autonomously and shape its destiny, embodies the nation's quest for equitable partnerships based on mutual respect.

Certain quarters in India, however, still appear ill-prepared for this change. Their reactions—ranging from inflammatory rhetoric in political circles to disinformation campaigns in some sections of the media—betray a deep unease. The arrest of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmacari and the killing of a Muslim lawyer in Chattogram have been weaponised to stoke communal tensions and paint Bangladesh as unstable. These narratives, far from fostering regional harmony, reveal India's discomfort with losing its grip on a neighbour it once controlled with ease.

This behaviour speaks to a broader psychological and geopolitical dilemma. Big powers often struggle to transition from dominance to partnership. For India, the loss of a pliant ally like Sheikh Hasina represents not just a strategic setback, but also a symbolic blow to its self-image as the regional leader. The shift in Bangladesh's stance challenges India to rethink its approach to leadership.

Sir Berlin's framework helps illuminate why this transition is so

fraught. Negative freedom without positive freedom risks perpetuating cycles of dependency; positive freedom without mutual respect risks devolving into isolationism. True freedom, both for individuals and states, lies in the interplay of the two. For Bangladesh, this means asserting its sovereignty while cultivating relationships grounded in dignity. For

The path forward is a geopolitical challenge as well as an ethical imperative. The question is not who holds power, but how that power is wielded, whether it is used to dominate or to uplift, to impose or to inspire. In this, both Bangladesh and India have a choice: to perpetuate the cycles of history or to break free from them and forge a future defined by dignity, justice, and shared prosperity.

India, it means relinquishing the allure of hegemony in favour of ethical leadership.

This moment also demands introspection from India's political establishment. The rise of Hindu nationalism and populist rhetoric has created a domestic environment where dominance over smaller neighbours is seen as a measure of strength. The BJP-led government, elected three consecutive times, has often conflated regional leadership with coercion.

Allowing Sheikh Hasina safe haven while undermining the recent student-led mass uprising in Bangladesh and the country's new government is symptomatic of this mindset. Yet, such

tactics are counterproductive, eroding trust and destabilising a region already fraught with tensions.

Bangladesh, too, faces critical challenges. As it seeks to redefine its relationship with India, it must address the internal vulnerabilities that have historically made it susceptible to external manipulation. Strengthening democratic institutions, promoting national unity, and ensuring justice for all citizens—regardless of religion or ethnicity—are essential steps. Sovereignty without internal cohesion is fragile; autonomy without accountability is hollow.

The broader question is whether South Asia can transcend the legacies of colonialism and embrace a model of cooperation that prioritises collective well-being over individual dominance. India, as the region's largest and most influential nation, bears a unique responsibility in shaping this future. By embracing humility and reciprocity, it can transform its role from a "big brother" to a genuine partner. For Bangladesh, this moment represents an opportunity to lead by example, demonstrating that sovereignty and solidarity are not mutually exclusive.

The moral vision required to achieve this transformation is not merely a matter of policy but of principle. It demands a recognition that true leadership lies in empowering others, not in subjugating them. For India, this means treating its neighbours not as instruments of its ambitions but as collaborators in a shared journey. For Bangladesh, it means carefully balancing independence and interdependence with courage and wisdom.

The path forward is a geopolitical challenge as well as an ethical imperative. The question is not who holds power, but how that power is wielded, whether it is used to dominate or to uplift, to impose or to inspire. In this, both Bangladesh and India have a choice: to perpetuate the cycles of history or to break free from them and forge a future defined by dignity, justice, and shared prosperity.

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Move borders, perhaps
- 2 Pitching stat
- 3 Made way, in a way
- 4 Choir word
- 5 Fort feature
- 6 Daughter of Leda
- 7 Skating jump
- 8 Make a sharp turn
- 9 Yale rooter
- 10 Rent out
- 11 Martini garnish
- 12 Solitary sort
- 13 Bona fide
- 14 Fragrance
- 15 Tooth layer
- 16 Outdated
- 17 Banish
- 18 Show uncertainty
- 19 Brooch
- 20 Get-up-and-go
- 21 Untie, perhaps
- 22 Titled woman
- 23 Asked to one's home
- 24 Julia Louis-Dreyfus show
- 25 Mess up
- 26 Traffic snarl
- 27 Do fabric work
- 28 Quilt cloth
- 29 Fable fellow
- 30 Fit for the fleet
- 31 Astaire's partner
- 32 George W.'s wife
- 33 Lobe spot
- 34 The Matterhorn, for one
- 35 Chatbots
- 36 Uncool
- 37 Curly
- 38 Hog the mirror
- 39 Scatter

DOWN

- 1 Bitterly cold
- 2 Pitching stat
- 3 Made way, in a way
- 4 Choir word
- 5 Fort feature
- 6 Daughter of Leda
- 7 Skating jump
- 8 Make a sharp turn
- 9 Yale rooter
- 10 Rent out
- 11 Martini garnish
- 12 Solitary sort
- 13 Bona fide
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- 34 The Matterhorn, for one
- 35 Chatbots
- 36 Uncool
- 37 Curly
- 38 Hog the mirror
- 39 "You — Here"
- 40 Scatter

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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Date: 31.12.2024

JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd. (DPDC) invites applications from eligible candidates from the bona fide citizens of Bangladesh for immediate appointment for the position of **Junior Assistant Manager (HR)** on contractual basis for an initial period of maximum three (03) years at a time (inclusive of 01 year probationary period). The contractual appointment may be renewed every three (03) years up to the age of 60 years subject to satisfactory performance. A brief job description and job specification of the post including other relevant information are as under.

1. Junior Assistant Manager (HR): Number of posts 09*

1.1 The Junior Assistant Manager (HR) position is in the functional area of Human Resource Management, reporting to the head of the office/ unit concerned. He/ She will work under the direct supervision of the head of the concerned office/ unit of DPDC.

1.2 Required Qualifications:

At least Graduate degree in HR/ Management/ Management Information System (MIS)/ International Business/ Organization Strategy and Leadership/ Public Administration/ International Relations/ Economics/ Law/ Mass Communication & Journalism or BBA major in HR/ Management/ Management Information System (MIS)/ International Business/ Organization Strategy and Leadership from any recognized university. No third division/Class at any stage of the academic career shall be acceptable. Candidates passed in the grading system must possess at least a GPA/ CGPA 4.0 on a scale of 5.0 and a GPA/ CGPA 3.0 on a scale of 4.0. Letter grades of O Level and A Level subjects are to be converted into grade points on the basis of A= 4, B= 3, C= 2 and D= 1. Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated by averaging the grade points. Must demonstrate strong participatory leadership ability. Must have strong communication skill in Bangla & English (written & oral) including working experience using computer.

1.3 Remuneration/Compensation Package:

Basic salary per month Taka 39,000.00 (thirty nine thousand) only plus house rent @ 60% of basic per month for Dhaka City and 50% of basic per month for Narayanganj & Gazipur City area, two festival bonuses in a year, Bangla New Year allowance once in every year at the rate of 20% of basic salary, contributory provident fund, group insurance, encashment of leave, gratuity as per applicable rules of the company. Expenses at actual for medical treatment purposes as mentioned in the policy of the company will be reimbursed up to a maximum limit of equal to 02 (two) months basic salary per annum, and transport allowances will be provided as per company policy. Income tax shall have to be paid by the employee.

Conditions:

- Interested candidates must apply through the 'Online Application System' wherein a scanned photograph, signature, SSC and Graduation/ BBA certificate/ Transcript (upload the document that shows subject & result) of the candidate have to be inserted in due place. The online application form's web link is available on the website of Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd. (www.dpdc.gov.bd).
- Maximum age is 32 (thirty-two) years on 31.12.2024. The maximum age limit may be relaxed by 5(five) years for DPDC's employees.
- Those who have recently appeared in the examination and yet to get their degree need not apply for the position.
- The applicant must pay Tk.1500/- (one thousand five hundred) following necessary directives mentioned in DPDC's website www.dpdc.gov.bd.
- Persons employed in govt., semi govt., autonomous organization or power sector utilities should submit application through proper channel as per instructions provided on DPDC's website www.dpdc.gov.bd.
- Persuasion of any kind will disqualify the candidate. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any application and increase or decrease the number of positions/ posts* as it may seem proper and no explanation for such action will be provided to the applicant. Only the short-listed candidates will be called for Test/ Interview.
- Last date of submission of application through online is **26.01.2025**.

Deputy General Manager
Employee Management (Administration), HR, DPDC
Biddut Bhaban (3rd floor), 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
প্রধান উপদেষ্টার কার্যালয়
বেপজা কমপ্লেক্স, বাড়ী নং-১৯/ডি, রোড নং-৬,
ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা-১২০৫।

বেগজায় তালিকাভুক্তি বিষয়ক বিজ্ঞপ্তি

২১ পৌষ ১৪৪৩

০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫

বাংলাদেশ রপ্তানী প্রক্রিয়াকরণ এলাকা কর্তৃপক্ষ (বেপজা) এর অধীন জোনের শিল্প প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহে নির্মাণিত কাজে (গুপ্ত অনুযায়ী) ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থ বছর মেয়াদে তালিকাভুক্তি/লাইসেন্স প্রদানের জন্য অগ্রহী যাত্রি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নির্ধারিত ফরমে দরখাত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

কাজের ধরণগুলি

গুপ্ত-কাজ: Wastage/Garbage ক্রয়।

গুপ্ত-ঋং খাদ্য মুদ্রা এবং কেন্দ্রীয় সরবরাহ।

গুপ্ত-গঃ স্টেশনারী, অফিস ইন্টার্নেট, এক্সেসরিজ (Accessories) এবং অন্যান্য মালামাল সরবরাহ।

গুপ্ত-ঋং ডায়াগ্রাম যন্ত্রবহন সরবরাহ।

গুপ্ত-চঃ যে কোনো ধরনের নির্মাণ কিংবা রাসায়নিক কাজ (পুরু, বৈদ্যুতিক ও যান্ত্রিক)।

গুপ্ত-চঃ পরিকার পরিচ্ছমা কর্মী সরবরাহ।

গুপ্ত-চঃ বিখ্যাত উপর্যুক্ত ০৭ (সাত) টি গুপ্তের নির্ধারিত কাজ ব্যাতীত অন্য যে কোনো ধরনের কাজ।

ক্ষেত্র ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থ বছর মেয়াদে তালিকাভুক্তি:

- তালিকাভুক্তির নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম (নীতিমালাসহ) আগামী ০৩ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৫ (সোমবাৰ) পর্যন্ত (বকের দিন বাটীত) অফিস চলাকীলৈ ১,০০০,০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা নদৰ মূলো (অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত) বেপজা নির্ধারী সংস্থার এবং সকল জোনের ইস্তেম ব্যাতীত হতে ক্রয় করা যাবে। পুরুষকৃত আবেদনপত্র ১৩ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৫ (বৃহস্পতিবার) তারিখের মধ্যে সহশ্রীষ্ট সংস্থারে (যেখানে থেকে ক্রয় করা হয়েছে জো দিতে হবে)।
- আবেদনকারী যাত্রি/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে নিরাপত্তা জামানত হিসেবে আবেদনপত্রে সাথে যে কোনো তফসিলি বাংকের পে-অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে বেপজাৰ অনুকূলে ২,০০,০০০.০০ (দুই লক্ষ) টাকা (ফেরতযোগ্য) জো দিতে হবে। যোগ্য আবেদন এবং নিরাপত্তা জামানতের টাকা লাইসেন্স কার্যকরী (নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী) থাকা পর্যন্ত বেপজায় জো থাকবে। তবে বাছাই প্রক্রিয়া ব্যাতিলকৃত আবেদনসমূহের নিরাপত্তা জামানত হিসেবে গৃহীত পে-অর্ডারের টাকা ফেরত যোগায়।
- প্রতিটি গুপ্তের জন্য পৃথক লাইসেন্স প্রদান করতে হবে। নির্বাচিত যাত্রি/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে নির্ধারিত তারিখের মধ্যে (যথাসময়ে জোনানো হবে) লাইসেন্সে ফি বাবদ (অফেরত যোগ্য) ১০,০০,০০. (দশ হাজার) টাকা নদৰ/পে-অর্ডার আকারে সংশ্লিষ্ট সংস্থারে হিসাবে শাখায় জো দিতে হবে।
- প্রদত্ত লাইসেন্সের মেয়াদ হবে ০১ জুলাই ২০২৫ হতে ৩০ জুন ২০২৬ পর্যন্ত। তবে সন্তোষজনক কার্য সম্পাদনের ভিত্তিতে নির্ধারিত নবায়ন ফি প্রদান সাথেকে পরবর্তী অর্থ বছরের জন্য উক্ত লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করা যাবে। প্রদত্ত এ লাইসেন্স কোনোভাবেই হস্তান্তরযোগ্য নয়।
- অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদনপত্র ব্যাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কাগজ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোনো যাত্রি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের আবেদন ব্যাতিল/গ্রহণের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

(১) বিদ্যুমান লাইসেন্স নবায়ন:

- ইতোপৰ্যে জোরুকৃত যে সমস্ত তালিকাভুক্তি/লাইসেন্সের মেয়াদ আগামী ০৩-০৬-২০২৫ তারিখ পর্যন্ত বহাল রয়েছে উক্ত লাইসেন্সসমূহের মেয়াদ থাকাকালীন নির্ধারিত নবায়ন ফি বাবদ ৫,০০০.০০ (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা সংশ্লিষ্ট হিসাবে শাখায় জো দিয়ে পরবর্তী অর্থ বছরের জন্য নবায়নের আবেদন করবেন। এছাড়াও মেয়াদসম্মত একটি নির্দিষ্ট সময় পর্যন্ত (নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী) নির্ধারিত বিলম্ব ফিসহ নবায়ন ফি দাখিলপূর্বক লাইসেন্স নবায়নের আবেদন করা যাবে।
- সময়ে সময়ে সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত হারে ভাট্টা প্রযোজ্য হবে।
- এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি বেপজা ওয়েব সাইট (www.bepza.gov.bd) প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

(মেজে খুরাশুন আলম)
নির্বাচিত পরিচালক (এন্ট্রোপ্রাইজ সার্ভিসেস)
টেলিফোন: ৮৮-০২-২২৩৬৫৫১৭
ই-মেইল: ed.es@bepza.gov.bd

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চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

দরপত্র আহ্বান

তারিখ: ৩ ঢু. ১২. ২০২৪

এতদ্বারা চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ২০২৪-২০২৫ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ১ম বর্ষ ম্লাতক (সম্মান) শ্রেণিতে ভর্তি পরীক্ষার সকল ইউনিট (A, B, C, D) এবং B1, B2 ও D1 উপ-ইউনিট এর আনুমানিক দুই লক্ষ পদবীগুলি হাজার ভর্তিক্রম পর্যায়ে ক্ষমতা থাকিয়া হলো। ভর্তি পরীক্ষার উভয়পত্র মূল্য ও সরবরাহ এবং কল্পনাটোরের মাধ্যমে মূল্যায়ন ও ফল প্রকাশের লক্ষ্যে খ্যাতনামা, অভিজ্ঞ ও নির্ভরযোগ্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে তারের নিজস্ব প্রয়োজন সীলনের ব্যরূপ দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। দরপত্র আগামী ১৩ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ প্রিয়াল সকাল ১০:০০ টার মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রেশন, চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের এক অফিসকক্ষে রাখিত টেক্নোলজি বারে জো দেয়া হবে এবং একই দিন সকাল ১০:১৫ টায় দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিতি থাকেন) দরপত্র খোলা হবে।

দরপত্রের সঙ্গে দরপত্রের ১০০% টাকা জামানত হিসেবে রেজিস্ট্রেশন, চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অনুকূলে অগ্রহী ব্যাংক, চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শাখায় উত্তোলনযোগ্য ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার মূলে জো দিতে হবে।

দরপত্রের সঙ্গে উক্ত মূল্যের ১০% টাকা জামানত হিসেবে রেজিস্ট্রেশন, চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অনুকূলে অগ্রহী ব্যাংক, চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শাখায় উত্তোলনযোগ্য ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার মূলে জো দিতে হবে।

OMR Form এর নমুনা নির্ধারিত সময়সীমার মধ্যে সকল কার্যবিদ্যালয়ে সকাল ১০:০০টা থেকে বেলা ২:০০ টা এর মধ্যে নির্মাণকারীর অফিসে দেয়া যাবে। কোন কারণ দর্শনে ছাড়াই যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করে নাই বা বাতিল অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।

১ ও ২ নং ক্ষমতিকে উপস্থিতিক কাজের প্রতি Sheet এর দর পথক পৃথক ভাবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে। প্রতি ইউনিট / উপ-ইউনিটের OMR Form দুইটি রং-এ মুদ্রিত হবে।

OMR Form এর নমুনা নির্ধারিত সময়সীমার মধ

Fuss over BPL tickets continues

SPORTS REPORTER

Before the start of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) day game between Dhaka Capitals and Durbar Rajshahi yesterday, some fans vandalised and set fire to the ticket booths adjacent to gate five of Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium (SBNCS).

According to officials affiliated with security, fans set fire to the booths due to the unavailability of BPL tickets. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had earlier announced that fans can secure tickets online and from Modhumoti Bank PLC branches anytime or from the stadium ticket booths on matchdays.

There was an added demand for tickets on Thursday, as two heavyweights—defending champions Fortune Barishal and Rangpur Riders—faced off in the evening.

Members of police informed that crowd got increasingly irritated upon seeing unavailability of tickets. The furor reached its peak when the agitators found that scalpers were selling tickets at a much higher price. Some fans even claimed that "200 taka tickets were being sold at 1000 tk" by scalpers.



Ankon develops helicopter shot to counter yorkers

SPORTS REPORTER

On his way to hitting an 18-ball half-century against Chittagong Kings in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) on Tuesday—the fastest ever 50 by a Bangladeshi in recognised T20s—Khulna Tigers' Mahidul Islam Ankon hit Shoriful Islam for a six with a helicopter shot, a stroke made famous by former India captain MS Dhoni.

Ankon said that the shot was the outcome of the hours he spent in training, trying to find different ways to dispatch fuller length deliveries, focusing more on timing than brute strength.

"I just wanted to time the delivery. I anticipated that the ball would be in my zone which is why I was able to play that shot," Ankon said.

"I practiced specifically on how to score against yorkers. That's where it all came from, trying to score off yorkers or low full-tosses."

"I tried to improve day by day. I knew what would be expected from me batting at six or seven and those are the things I worked on in training," Ankon said.

BFF welcomes back Choton in new role

European coaches shortlisted for national teams

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has shortlisted three European coaches each for the men's and women's teams, with Javier Cabrera and Peter Butler among the candidates after the duo's respective contract expired earlier this week.

"The final decision on the coaches' appointments will be made by January 10," BFF president Tabith Awal confirmed to The Daily Star over the phone on Wednesday.

The BFF boss further informed that they have been focusing on other priorities of late, keeping in mind the contracts for both Englishman Butler and Spaniard Cabrera were going to end on December 31, and that the former is likely to be offered a contract renewal after having guided the women's team in defending the SAFF Championship crown last year.

In a parallel development, former national women's team head coach Golam Rabbani Choton has returned to the BFF in a new capacity. Effective from January 1, Choton has been appointed head of youth development and the BFF Elite Football Academy for a one-year tenure.



This marks a significant return for the 56-year-old, who previously coached the women's team to their maiden SAFF Championship title in 2022. Choton had stepped down from his earlier role in May 2023, citing family reasons, and subsequently joined the Army women's football team as head coach. At the time, he had ruled out any possibility of rejoining the BFF. However, the emergence of Tabith Awal as the new BFF boss following BFF elections in late October and a subsequent reshuffling within the federation prompted a change in direction.

"I have come here afresh with new responsibility as the head of youth development. I believe there are a lot of areas to work and improve in youth development," Choton told reporters after receiving his appointment letter at the BFF headquarters yesterday.

Choton brings a wealth of experience to his new role. As an AFC Pro License holder, he worked extensively at the grassroots level before transitioning to women's football in 2008.

With Choton at the helm of youth development and the upcoming decisions on senior team coaching appointments, the BFF are setting the stage for a transformative year.



Young pace sensation Nahid
Rana made his presence felt, casting the stumps of Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah Riyad, to help Rangpur Riders bundle out defending champions Fortune Barishal for just 124 in 18.2 overs in the Bangladesh Premier League in Mirpur yesterday. Following Nahid's figures of two for 32, Alex Hales and Saif Hassan smashed unbeaten 49 and 62 respectively as Rangpur chased down the modest total in just 15 overs to beat Barishal by eight wickets.

PHOTO: STAR

'This is my time to give back'

SPORTS REPORTER

Hard work and self-belief are the two hallmarks of Taskin Ahmed's international career.

After bursting onto the scenes in 2014, Taskin had seemingly lost his way in the international arena after ICC suspended him for having an illegal action in 2016 which was followed by bouts with injuries and a prolonged lean period which led to him not getting picked for the ICC World Cup 2019.

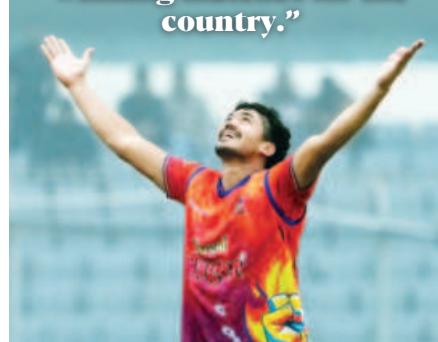
But the right-arm pacer persevered through the many challenges, worked hard on his fitness and his craft and never lost belief in his ability in making a comeback.

The blood, sweat and tears shed by the pacer did not go to waste as he has turned a new leaf in his career and has become the leader of Bangladesh's attack across three formats.

Taskin, who was named player-of-the-series in the Tiger's recent Test series against West Indies, added another feather in his cap yesterday while playing for Durbar Rajshahi against Dhaka Capitals in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), when he claimed 7 for 19 in his four overs—the best ever bowling figure in BPL history.

He was on point from his very first delivery in the match, making the ball whisk past Liton Das, zipping off the surface while moving away. Wry smiles appeared across Liton and Taskin's faces, both acknowledging the unplayable delivery.

"My dream is to end my career as a legendary fast bowler. I want to get lots of wickets and heavily contribute in winning matches for the country."



But Taskin was just getting warmed up, as the next delivery was of the same ilk and this time Liton could not get his bat out of the way and departed caught behind.

Tanzid Tamim would perish too soon after, nicking an out-swinger. After Dhaka revived their innings, Taskin came in with his variations and picked up two more wickets in the 17th. In the final over, the variations and yorkers saw him pick up three more inside four balls.

Taskin overtook Pakistan's Mohammad Amir, who had taken six for 17 for Khulna Tigers against Rajshahi Royals in 2020 and

is also one of only three bowlers to pick seven wickets in a recognised T20 after Malaysia's Syazrul Idrus and Netherlands' Colin Ackermann.

Claiming seven wickets in a T20 game is an improbable thought for most bowlers, but not Taskin, as the supremely confident 29-year-old pacer claimed that he manifested his seven-wicket haul into reality.

"Yes, I thought of it, otherwise it wouldn't happen. And yes, you need a bit of luck but Alhamdulillah, I am happy with how I have been able to execute what I want to do," Taskin expressed his feelings.

"Alhamdulillah, this is a big achievement for me. Since I am a Bangladeshi, it's a proud moment for me that even after leaving the game, my name will remain in BPL history," he added.

He also said that is just the beginning for him in terms of giving something back to the country.

"Truth be told, this is my time to give back. The reason is that for so many years the board has supported me and I have gained experience. I am reading situations better and game awareness has improved. I feel like it's my duty to support the team whether I am playing for Bangladesh or a franchise," he said about being able to perform with regularity.

"My dream is to end my career as a legendary fast bowler. I want to get lots of wickets and heavily contribute in winning matches for the country," he concluded.

SA look to turn the tables in Cape Town

REUTERS, Cape Town

South Africa have already sealed their place in this year's World Test Championship (WTC) final ahead of the second and final Test against Pakistan at Newlands on Friday but will want to keep their momentum going in the longest format.

South Africa beat Pakistan by two wickets in a tense first Test in Pretoria and have won their last six red ball matches in a row, their joint best run since a team record nine victories in succession in 2002 and 2003.

South Africa will give a debut to firebrand 18-year-old fast bowler Kwena Maphaka as one of three changes to their side for the second Test.

Maphaka has only bowled 60.5 overs in first class cricket and was writing his school exams a few months ago. He takes the place of Dane Paterson, who took 5-61 in the first innings at Centurion Park.

South Africa's form has propelled them into the WTC final at Lord's in June but questions around their brittle batting line-up will be a major focus on what has recently been a perilous Newlands pitch.

The previous Test played there against India 12 months ago lasted only 107 overs as the visitors won by seven wickets inside two days, the shortest Test that has had a winner in history.

The wicket should be better this time round, but at a ground that used to be a fortress for the home team, they have lost two of their last three Tests in Cape Town.

'Just want to keep scoring'

Gabriel Jesus is determined to keep scoring as Arsenal look to end their more than 20-year wait for a Premier League title. Jesus cancelled out Bryan Mbeumo's 13th-minute opener for Brentford before Mikel Merino and Gabriel Martinelli scored for the Gunners early in the second half during a 3-1 win on Wednesday.

It was the Brazil striker's scoring his sixth goal in four games—a far cry from a previously woeful run of just one goal in 33 appearances for the 27-year-old Brazilian. "I just want to keep winning and scoring and helping the team, the club, to be there always fighting for the title," Jesus told TNT Sports.



T SPORTS
BPL
Chittagong vs Rajshahi
Live from 2:00 pm
Dhaka vs Khulna
Live from 7:00 pm
STAR SPORTS 1
Australia vs India
Fifth Test, Day 2
Live from 5:30 am (Saturday)
SPORTS 18
South Africa vs Pakistan
Second Test, Day 1
Live from 2:30 pm

Striking back from troubled past

ANISUR RAHMAN

Al Amin, a 21-year-old forward for Bangladesh Police Football Club, sent a chill down the spine of defending champions Bashundhara Kings twice during their Federation Cup encounter on Tuesday.

Both of Al Amin's goals at the Kings Arena drew significant attention from the country's football fraternity, but his brilliance went in vain as Police lost 3-2.

First, the young forward displayed incredible pace, tapping the ball home between two Kings defenders after teammate Isa Faisal delivered a low cross from the right flank. The lanky forward then kept his composure to strike a stunning goal from a tight angle, clearly announcing his arrival in top-flight football.

Both strikes in the Federation Cup match were not a fluke for Al Amin, who has been in the limelight during the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). With five goals, he currently sits as BPL's joint-top scorer alongside Mohammedan SC's Malian forward Souleymane Diabate, Rahmatganj MFS's Nabib Newaj Jibon, and Brothers Union's Senegalese forward Cheikh Sene.

Interestingly, such remarkable performances might not have been possible for Al Amin, who was once banned for a year—from September 2021 to September 2022—after being involved in online betting and spot-fixing as an Arambagh KS footballer during the 2020-21 season.

Al Amin, hailing from Nilphamari, returned to Shams-Ul-Huda Football Academy in Jashore—his grooming academy—to rectify his mistakes and hone his skills under the guidance of coaches Kazi Maruf and Emadul Hossain. Sheikh Jamal DC then recruited him on loan for the 2023-24 season.

However, his top-flight career faced another hurdle this season when Sheikh Jamal decided not to form a team for the 2024-25 season, leaving Al Amin frustrated and without a team. Fortunately, national team defender Issa Faisal and Joyonto Kumar Roy brought him to Bangladesh Police, where Al Amin has been repaying their faith with his performances.

"I learned a lot from coach Kazi Maruf, who taught me how to score and how to keep cool to net goals. I could assist in scoring goals twice last season for Sheikh Jamal, and I was also struggling to get goals for Bangladesh Police in practice matches. Then, head coach Mahbubul Haque Jewel sir worked separately with me and made me hungry to get goals," Al Amin told The Daily Star over the phone on Wednesday.

"It has always been a pleasure for me to get a place in the playing eleven ahead of foreign players," he added.

Quick running has always been Al Amin's strength, a skill he developed in childhood and plans to continue refining. His initial target is to remain at the top of the scorer's list with seven to eight goals by the end of the first phase, and he also hopes to achieve a hat-trick soon, having already struck a double in three matches.

"Based on my performances in the seven matches of the BPL and Federation Cup, I can hope for a call-up to the national team," Al Amin said confidently.

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Come forward to help country achieve its goals

Yunus urges all

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhamed Yunus yesterday urged all to come forward at the individual level rather than relying on the government to move the country towards its desired goals.

"The power of people is stronger than that of the government," he said while inaugurating the Walkathon and Social Service Conference organised by the Department of Social Services marking National Social Service Day 2025.

The chief adviser said social service is the responsibility of every citizen and the job of the ministry is to remind all so that no one forgets this responsibility and does not move away from it. "I hope this call will reach everyone."

Prof Yunus said that every person tends to work for the benefit of others



SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Ctg court denies bail to Chinmoy

The accused in seditious case may seek HC bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday denied bail to Chinmoy Krishan Das Brahmachari, a former ISKCON leader, in a seditious case filed over disrespecting the national flag.

Chattogram Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Saiful Islam rejected the bail plea after hearing arguments from the defence and prosecution for around 30 minutes, Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Mofizul Haque Bhuiyan told The Daily Star.

After the hearing, Chinmoy's lawyer Apurba Kumar Bhattacharjee told this correspondent that they plan to appeal to the High Court for their client's bail.

Chinmoy, also spokesperson for Samilita Sanatan Jagaran Jote, was not brought before the court.

Lawyer Apurba said, "During the hearing, we told the court that the allegations against Chinmoy are not true. There are no such elements in the case that can prove Chinmoy is guilty."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Israeli airstrikes kill 43 across Gaza

Medics say women, children in a tent encampment among dead

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli airstrikes killed at least 43 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip yesterday, including 11 people in a tent encampment sheltering displaced families, medics said.

They said the 11 included women and children in the Al-Mawasi district, which was designated as a humanitarian zone for civilians.

The director general of Gaza's police department, Mahmoud Salah, and his aide, Hussam Shahwan, were killed in the strike, according to the Hamas-run Gaza interior ministry.

"By committing the crime of assassinating the director general of police in the Gaza Strip, the occupation is insisting on spreading chaos in the (enclave) and deepening the human suffering of citizens," it added in a statement.

The Israeli military said it had conducted an intelligence-based strike in Al-Mawasi, just west of the city of Khan Younis, and eliminated Shahwan, calling him the head of Hamas security forces in southern Gaza. It made no mention of Salah's death.

Other Israeli airstrikes killed at least 26 Palestinians, including six in the interior ministry headquarters in Khan Younis and others in north Gaza's Jabalia refugee camp, the Shati (Beach) camp and central Gaza's Maghazi camp.

Israel's military said it had targeted Hamas members who intelligence indicated were operating in a command and control centre "embedded inside the Khan Younis



SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Taskin Ahmed holds aloft the ball as he walks back to the pavilion following a sensational bowling display for Durbar Rajshahi in a Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) game against Dhaka Capitals in Mirpur yesterday. Inspired by Taskin's seven for 19 in four overs -- the best-ever bowling figures in the tournament's history -- Rajshahi bounced with a seven-wicket win after a defeat in their first match.

PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY ICT analysing Hasina's phone calls, documents

Say 2 prosecutors of the special tribunal

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Sheikh Hasina's phone calls and documents of meetings in July-August are being analysed as part of a probe into allegations of crimes against humanity during the 2024 mass uprising.

The International Crimes Tribunal's investigation agency is analysing the records "carefully" to ensure fairness, according to the prosecution.

To ensure an accurate, speedy and thorough investigation, the agency is utilising state documents and modern technology, such as geolocation tools, video analysis, and forensic reports.

The prosecution said it is focusing on a series of meetings led by the former prime minister before and after the nationwide curfew aimed at suppressing the student-led uprising.

Two ICT prosecutors, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star that the investigation agency has collected original videos, photos, and phone records related to the killings of students and civilians during the July-August protests.

One of the prosecutors said the investigators are consulting ballistic experts for analysing the sound of gunshots to help identify the individuals involved in the crimes.

The investigation is not limited to Hasina alone. The agency is also investigating other individuals involved, based on the documents it has gathered.

The ICT is prioritising cases involving the former minister, MPs, Hasina's advisers, a former army official, and high-ranking police officials as these individuals held significant power and responsibility.

The investigation team has requested phone records from the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC) and the national identity card server for further evidence.

The NTMC is a national intelligence agency responsible for monitoring, collecting, and intercepting electronic communications, such as phone calls, emails, and social media accounts.

Major General Ziaul Ahsan, who headed the NTMC during Hasina's rule, is also accused of crimes against humanity and is currently in jail.

ICT Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam previously said that Hasina was central to a nationwide network of secret detention cells during the 15 years of the Awami League rule.

He said the investigation team gathered evidence pointing to Hasina's direct involvement in enforced disappearances

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

MINISTRY'S NOTIFICATION 227 excluded candidates of 43rd BCS can seek review

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has announced a review opportunity for 227 candidates from the 43rd Bangladesh Civil Service recruitment who have been excluded from the public administration ministry's gazette published four days ago.

The ministry issued a notification yesterday saying that it is now accepting review applications from the excluded candidates.

The decision came following a sharp criticism over the exclusion of candidates who were nominated by the Public Service Commission (PSC) but were not selected for appointment.

According to the notification, the PSC initially recommended 2,163 candidates for appointment on January 25, 2024, under Rule 4 of the BCS Recruitment Rules, 1981.

The recommendations followed preliminary character verification by the Special Branch of Bangladesh Police and district commissioners, it said.

Out of the recommended candidates, 40 failed to attend the mandatory medical examination, and 59 were deemed ineligible based on intelligence reports.

As a result, 99 candidates were

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VAT hike won't fuel inflation Says finance adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The hike in value-added tax on 43 goods and services would not fuel inflation further, said Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed.

The items are an insignificant part of the basket for consumer price index, he told journalists yesterday following a meeting of the cabinet committee on public purchase.

The VAT hike will not impact the prices of essential commodities as the government has waived all duties on essentials at the import stage.

On Wednesday, the council of advisers to the interim government approved the imposition of VAT on 43 goods and services, which includes a 15 percent VAT on restaurants, sweets, clothing and tissue paper.

At present, a 5 percent VAT is collected on restaurant bills, while a 7.5 percent VAT is imposed on sweets, clothing and tissue paper.

"We have increased VAT on over

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Scandinavians came to Britain long before Vikings

KOSOVO PRESS ONLINE

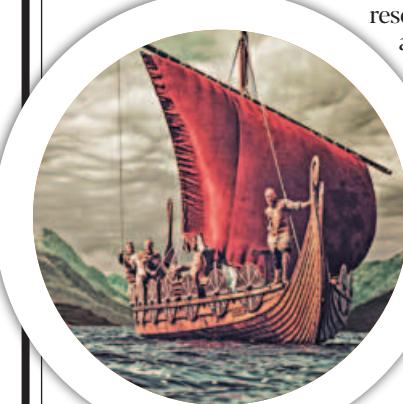
People of Scandinavian descent were in Britain long before the Anglo-Saxons or Vikings appeared, researchers have found after studying the genetics of an ancient Roman buried in York.

The arrival of the Anglo-Saxons brought an influx of Scandinavians to ancient Britain in the fifth century. However, researchers studying a man thought to have been a Roman soldier who lived between the second and fourth centuries have found that 25 percent of his ancestry is from Scandinavia.

"The pre-advent that we thought would come with the Anglo-Saxons was probably already there in some parts," said Leo Speidel, the study's first author and a group leader at Riken, a national scientific research institute in Japan.

The discovery is part of a large-scale study that has taken a new approach to analysing ancient DNA, shedding new light on migrations across Europe in the first millennium.

Pontus Skoglund, co-author of the study from the Francis Crick Institute in London, said that much of the history explored in the study was determined by the Romans for other people groups.



MAJESTIES OF THE ORIENT

An oriental pied hornbill couple resting on a tree branch in the Kaptai National Park. Considered to be among the smallest and most common hornbills in Asia, this bird can be found in subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests in the Indian subcontinent and throughout Southeast Asia. Though the two sexes of this bird are similar, the males have much larger "helmets" on their heads, with a slit in which they gather their food and feed the females and the chicks with. Compared to other hornbills, the oriental pied hornbill is also known to be more tolerant of human spaces and can also be found in large city parks as well as open forests and edges.

PHOTO: KAMOL DAS