



Internal democracy still a mirage

Dynastic politics, personality cults plague the political parties

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

With their mass rallies and processions, slogans and posters echoing the will of their electorate, Bangladesh's political parties project an air of vibrant democracy on the surface. Yet behind the scenes, democracy ends where leadership begins. Power is concentrated in the hands of a few, and internal democracy is a distant mirage.

For decades, the country's political landscape has been dominated by leaders who rarely face opposition within their ranks. Party constitutions promising regular elections and elaborate MP nomination process are routinely set aside, turning leaders into de facto monarchs. They hold on to power for years, if not decades, only to relinquish control until ill health, legal troubles or death forces their hand, an analysis of 25 political parties by this newspaper shows.

This centralisation of power has fostered a cult of personality around party leaders, turning internal dissent into a taboo. The result is a hollowing out of democracy within the very institutions that are supposed to safeguard it, with far-reaching consequences for Bangladesh's political culture.

Almost all party constitutions stipulate a council, every three or four years, to elect office bearers, including the top leadership. But that remains on paper only. Political scientist Professor Rounaq Jahan says in her book "Political Parties in Bangladesh" that those who highlight the role of political parties in consolidating democracy also underscore the importance of their internal democracy. This, she says, can be measured by the process of leadership selection, candidate nomination and policy-setting.

An analysis of historical facts shows that most parties lack a democratic culture in their leadership election or candidate nomination.

"A lack of this internal democratic practice is a major obstacle to making Bangladesh truly democratic," Prof Jahan told The Daily Star recently.

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Those at party helms hold on to power for years, if not decades, only to relinquish control until ill health, legal troubles or death forces their hand.



PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

Even in the biting cold, these farmhands wake up early every day and get to work at the potato field so that they can earn the day's wages to provide for their families. The photo was taken at Balapara village in Rangpur around 7:30am yesterday.

CYBER PROTECTION Freedom of speech, press will be in peril Speakers tell event on draft law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recently approved draft of the Cyber Protection Ordinance 2024 threatens the freedoms of expression and press, just like the Digital Security Act and Cyber Security Act – both of which were broadly criticised for years for the same

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Cops want their own commission

IGP submits draft proposal to reform commission

SHARIFUL ISLAM

After facing accusations of systemic corruption and harsh criticism for furthering Awami League's political agenda, the police force has proposed an independent commission with sweeping powers to ensure accountability and neutrality of the law enforcers.

This oversight body, which will have the power to make top appointments within the police force, will also be responsible for policies on recruitment,

transfers and promotions that is expected to end a long-held practice of handpicking individuals.

Bangladesh's top police official recently submitted a draft of the proposed "Police Commission" to Safar Raj Hossain, head of the Police Reform Commission, which is expected to recommend a raft of reform measures for the police.

"We have submitted a report to the commission proposing reforms,

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Hoping to get outpatient services first thing in the morning, patients from different districts arrived at National Cancer Research Institute and Hospital last night and went to sleep near the entrance to the building. The photo was taken early today.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

HUSH MONEY CASE Trump to be sentenced on January 10

AFP, New York

The New York judge presiding over President-elect Donald Trump's hush money case on Friday set sentencing for 10 days before his January 20 inauguration and said he was not inclined to impose jail time.

Judge Juan Merchan said Trump, the first former president ever convicted of a crime, can appear either in person or virtually at his January 10 sentencing.

In an 18-page decision, Merchan upheld Trump's conviction by a New York jury, rejecting various motions from Trump's lawyers seeking to have it thrown out.

The judge said that instead of incarceration he was leaning towards an unconditional discharge — meaning the real estate tycoon would not be subject to any conditions.

The sentence would nevertheless see

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CRISIS IN RAKHINE Rohingya repatriation hope dims further

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Prospects for the repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar are dimming as the Rakhine state descends deeper into conflict and humanitarian crisis.

Since July 2023, more than 80,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh amid acute food shortage, prolonged farming disruptions, and recruitment drives by the Arakan Army (AA).

The ongoing turmoil underscores the escalating challenges facing both Myanmar and Bangladesh in addressing the plight of the stateless minority.

The Bangladesh government, which officially opposes accepting new Rohingya arrivals, has struggled to stem the flow of refugees entering through unofficial routes. Corruption at the border has exacerbated the situation.

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain acknowledged the government's challenges on the border. Despite Dhaka's repeated calls for a sustainable resolution, conditions in Myanmar are moving in the opposite direction. With the Arakan Army nearing full control of Rakhine, the possibility of creating a safe and stable environment for Rohingyas to return is rapidly vanishing.

The Arakan Army, an ethnic Rakhine armed group, has solidified its grip over much of the state, further destabilising the region. Reports suggest the AA is preparing to declare either independence or autonomy, intensifying clashes with other factions, including the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation.

These developments, coupled with Myanmar's broader political upheaval, have rendered efforts to facilitate a dignified return for the Rohingya increasingly futile.

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Family Members

Malaysia expels two boats ferrying about 300 Myanmar migrants

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia yesterday said it expelled two boats ferrying about 300 undocumented migrants from Myanmar from the country's waters.

The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) said the boats were located two nautical miles (3.7 kilometres) southwest of the northern resort of Langkawi late Friday evening.

"MMEA provided assistance, including food and clean drinking water, before expelling the boats out to the national maritime border to continue their journey," Director-General Mohd Rosli Abdullah said in a statement.

"We are also working closely with Thai authorities to obtain additional information on the movements of these boats."

On Friday Malaysian police detained almost 200 suspected Rohingya migrants from Myanmar after their boat ran aground in Langkawi.



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus poses for photo alongside UK MP Rupa Huq and a delegation led by her after a meeting at state guest house Jamuna in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PTD

Sacked major Zia applies for withdrawal of cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syed Ziaul Haq, a sacked army major who had been convicted in a case filed over the 2015 murder of writer Avijit Roy, has recently applied to the law ministry to withdraw all the cases filed against him.

Zia, who was sentenced to death in the case, also applied to the home ministry to call off a Tk 20 lakh bounty declared on him by police headquarters when the Awami League was in power.

After the murder of Avijit, law enforcers said for years that Zia was the top leader of the al-Qaeda-inspired domestic militant outfit Ansar al Islam.

Zia's lawyer M Sarwar Hossain told The Daily Star that the applications were sent to the ministries on December 29.

"We have applied to the law adviser and the deputy commissioner of Dhaka to withdraw the false cases filed against my client," he said.

"We also applied to the inspector general of police, and the home ministry to withdraw the bounty on Zia."

Sarwar said, "It was by luck that he managed to flee from his residence during a raid or else he would have been killed by the police because the previous government was bent on continuing the drama of militancy as per the prescription of a neighbouring country."

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Internal democracy still a mirage

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"If we want to really institutionalise democracy, political parties will need to practise it within their ranks," she said. "They have turned politics into personality cults."

She explained that unable to retain general members, the parties increasingly rely on dynastic politics. "Policies are no longer important in the political parties," she said.

Jahan writes that following restoration of electoral democracy in 1991, the political parties failed to institute processes and practices that strengthen internal democracy.

SELECTION, NOT ELECTION

Awami League leaders said council meetings had increasingly become a rubber stamp in the hands of the party president only to endorse her preference.

During the last AL council in 2022, Sheikh Hasina stressed the need for new leadership and handed over responsibilities to councillors at a closed-door session, to which the entire auditorium had burst out into a loud "No!"

As the designated election official of the council took the microphone and asked for names of party president, councillors shouted in unison, "Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Hasina!"

Veteran leader Amir Hossain Amu then took the floor, saying there was no other alternative. "We all want her at the post for as long as she lives."

Consequently, Hasina was re-elected as AL president unopposed. The councillors also empowered Hasina with absolute authority to select other office-bearers—which she did.

The story is not too different for BNP. Khaleda Zia was elected as party chair unopposed in 2016. A week ahead of the council, Jamir Uddin Sircar, BNP standing committee member and chief election commissioner for the council, declared the two top leaders, chairperson and senior vice chairman, had been elected unopposed. "Nobody came forward to contest the elections," he said.

A week later, during the session, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain told councillors as they have full trust in Khaleda Zia in all matters, they could entrust her with the responsibility to pick people for the standing committee (BNP highest policy making body) and the executive committee.

The councillors readily agreed. Khaleda did not decline either but said she needed to do more homework before picking her team.

MP NOMINEES HANDPICKED

The relevant law – Representation of the People Order, 1972 – stipulates a bottom-up nomination process for MP aspirants of political parties. They are required to be nominated from the grassroots by local leaders. This list is supposed to be finalised by a nomination board.

However, both the major parties blatantly violate these provisions. The AL announced its MP nominees for the 2024 election after Hasina interviewed over 3,350 aspirants.

International corruption watchdog Transparency International

said in a report that candidates were not nominated based on local recommendations. "All nominations had been decided through interviews at the central level." Prior to the 2018 polls, Hasina had claimed that there had been surveys to gauge public perception at the local level before handing out nominations.

In the NP's case, over a dozen grassroots leaders had told this newspaper that they had not prepared any list of aspiring candidates for MP nominees. They were all picked centrally in the 2018 polls.

As for the Jatiya Party, it was always the leader who chose nominees without paying heed to the legal provisions.

Even a cursory look into the history of each party's leadership explains the situation with further clarity.

AWAMI LEAGUE

Hasina, elder daughter of Awami League's iconic leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was made party chief in February 1981 while she was in exile in India at a time when the party was crumbling. Since then, Hasina has led unopposed for 43 years, much longer than luminaries like Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani or her father, who remained at the helm for eight years—second longest stint as AL president.

In his book "Muldharar Rajniti Bangladesh Awami League: Council 1949-2016", Harun-or Rashid writes that Mujib resigned as party president in 1974, amid protest by councillors, in line with a provision barring presidents, prime ministers or ministers from holding party positions.

This provision, introduced in 1955, was annulled in 1992, Harun added.

Hasina took over AL presidency for the ninth term in 2022 at 75, although in June 2007, she had proposed that leaders above 60 would not remain on the party's key policy making bodies. "All leaders above 60 will be accommodated in the advisory council," Hasan Mahmud, Hasina's aide at the time, had told the press.

The party has held 22 councils in 75 years. The last was one in December 2022.

BNP

Khaleda Zia, widow of the party's founder Ziaur Rahman, entered politics at the request of party workers in 1982. In March 1983, she was appointed senior vice chair. Khaleda went on to become elected, unopposed, as the party's chair in May 1984. She has remained in that position for 40 years.

Party leaders on February 8, 2018 announced that senior vice-chairman Tarique Rahman, Khaleda's elder son, will run the party as its acting leader in her absence as she was sent to jail.

The BNP has held six council sessions in 46 years—the last one in 2016.

JATIYA PARTY

Founded in 1986 by military dictator Hussein Mohammad Ershad, Jatiya Party's charter vests its leader with absolute power to appoint office bearers at will. Ershad remained at the helm of his party until his death in 2019.

According to a Centre for Policy

Dialogue working paper, Ershad told the party's council in 2009 that there was no need for an acting chairman since he was ready to resume leadership and serve this position "until death".

BANGLADESH JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI

The Islamist party has had four full-fledged leaders in 45 years since its revival in 1979, while its charter stipulates election of a party chief every three years.

Ghulam Azam was elected party chief in 1979 but was replaced by Abbas Ali Khan as acting head in light of the trouble over Azam's citizenship. Abbas remained in the position till his death in 1992, while Azam was officially the party chief till 2000, when he quit due to ill health.

Matiur Rahman Nizami worked as the party leader from 2000 to 2016. But Maqbul Ahmed filled in as acting chief from June 2010 to May 2016, when Nizami was in jail for war crimes and subsequently hanged.

Maqbul was elected ameer in May 2016 and held the office until 2019.

Shafiqur Rahman was elected in November 2019 and remains as party chief.

OTHERS

National Awami Party NAP (Muzzaffar) faction president Muzaffar Ahmad was the longest serving party leader in Bangladesh, remaining in charge for 52 years until his death in August 2019. He had become president of the erstwhile East Pakistan NAP in 1967.

Gono Forum leader Dr Kamal Hossain was elected as emeritus president for life in October 2023 after he resigned as party president, a position he had held for 30 years since founding the party in 1993. The party has so far held seven councils.

"Out of respect for Dr Kamal Hossain, no one challenged him for the post of president," said its General Secretary Mizanur Rahman.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon has led the leftist party for 20 years since 2004. He was general secretary between 1992 and 2004. The party has held nine councils in 38 years.

Hasanul Haque Inu has been the president of his faction of the Jatiya Samjantrik Dal since 2002. Inu was general secretary between 1986 and 2002.

The party decided in 2010 that none of its leaders would be elected president or general secretary more than twice in a row. That provision was suspended in 2016.

Mujahidul Islam Selim was either general secretary or president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh for 30 years between 1993 and 2022. It became the only party in Bangladesh to have term limits on its leadership when the party congress decided in 2012 that no one would be elected president or general secretary more than two consecutive terms.

Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal was founded in 1980 by some renegades of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal. Khalequzzaman was the top leader either acting as convenor or general secretary for 42 years until March 2022. He is now the party's chief adviser. Although the party constitution stipulates a council every four years, it held its first congress in

March 2022. Its Assistant General Secretary Razequzzaman explained that they held internal conventions several times and a conference in 2009 to elect party leadership.

ASM Rab left the JSD in 2001 and formed his faction of the Jatiya Samjantrik Dal (Rab). He has been the president since then.

Andaleev Rahman Partha became president of the Bangladesh Jatiya Party in 2008 after the death of his father Nazim Rahman Manzur. Partha remains in charge of that faction while Anwar Hossain Manju has remained chairman of another faction since 2002.

Zonayed Saki has been the top leader of Ganosamhati Andolon since its foundation in 2002 while Badruddin Umar remains president of the Jatiya Mukti Council since its foundation in 2003.

Former president and BNP stalwart, AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury founded the Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh in 2004 and served as president for 20 years until his death in October 2024.

Oli Ahmed founded the Liberal Democratic Party in October 2006, and has remained its leader since then.

Islami Andolan Bangladesh (erstwhile Islami Shashontantra Andolan) was formed in 1987 by Syed Fazlul Karim, also known as Charmonai pir. Fazlul's son Rezaul Karim was made the party chief following Fazlul's death in 2006.

Khelafat Majlish was founded in 1989. Its founding chief Azizul Haque, better known as Shaikhul Hadith Azizul Haque, remained at the helm until his death in 2012.

Bangladesh Tarikat Federation was formed by Syed Najibul Bashar Maizbhandari in 2005 and is still the party chairman.

Dilip Barua has been the leader of Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal since 1987. Krishak Sramik Janata League's President Abdul Kader Siddique has been in that same position since its foundation in December 1999.

Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh was founded by faction of leaders and activists of the Workers Party in 2004. Since then, Saiful Haque has been the general secretary.

Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan was founded by Muhammadullah Hafeezee Huzur in 1981. He remained the leader until his death in 1987, after which his elder son, Shah Ahmedullah Ahsraf became chief and remained in that position till November 2014. Ataullah Ibne Hafeezee was made chief of the party that year, and remains in that position.

Zaker Party was founded by Maulana Mohammad Hashmatullah, renowned as the Pir of Atrashi in Faridpur, in 1989. Since then, Hashmatullah's son Mostafa Amir Faisal has been the party chair. The party needs to hold a council every four years and has held four councils to date. Zaker Party Secretary General Shameem Haider said, "No one else was interested in running for chairman in the last couple of councils."

UKBCCI Chairman Iqbal Ahmed OBE and UKBCCI President MG Mousa Mia are leading the delegation.

Siddiqi invited British businesspeople, including those of Bangladesh origin, to invest in the country, saying the interim government has undertaken sweeping reforms to attract foreign direct investment.

Rohingya repatriation

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh has hosted nearly 1.2 million Rohingyas since the mass exodus triggered by a Myanmar military crackdown in 2017. Despite international pressure and periodic talks, progress on repatriation has been negligible. Observers argue that without engaging the AA, now a crucial stakeholder in Rakhine, any meaningful resolution to the crisis remains unlikely. Ignoring the AA's role in the region's power dynamics is a recipe for failure.

According to Imtiaz Ahmed, professor of international relations at Dhaka University, it is crucial to establish communication with all ethnic groups in Myanmar. "The fragmented sovereignty within Myanmar has created a complex situation, and our security forces already have some connections with the ethnic minorities there. If we had engaged with the Arakan Army, the situation might have unfolded differently."

"Our communication should not be limited to the AA; we must build connections with other ethnic groups as well. These relationships do not necessarily have to be open; they can be developed through various discrete channels. The AA's control over a significant area is a reality we must acknowledge. While key strategic points remain under Tatmadaw's control, communication does not need to be confined to traditional diplomatic channels."

He added that incentives should be offered to encourage the AA to facilitate the repatriation of Rohingyas. Currently, Bangladesh finds itself in an awkward position regarding the Rohingya crisis. Resolving this issue is impossible without the involvement of China and India, as both nations have aligned interests in this matter.

A NEW WAVE OF REFUGEES

Unlike earlier arrivals, many among the latest influx of Rohingyas are financially solvent, having initially tried to remain in Myanmar despite worsening conditions. However, deteriorating security and a severe shortage of commodities have left them with no choice but to flee. Most have bypassed designated refugee

camps in Bangladesh, opting instead for informal settlements.

The situation has also displaced over 200 individuals from other ethnic minorities in Rakhine, highlighting the broader humanitarian fallout.

Inside Myanmar, over 400,000 Rohingyas remain in Rakhine, many confined to 33 squalid internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. With farming disruptions now stretching into a second year, entire communities are being forced to abandon their homes. Recruitment efforts by the Arakan Army are targeting young people in rural villages, further compounding fears of a large-scale migration.

Bangladesh's response to the crisis has drawn criticism for its lack of strategic direction. Although Dhaka recently appointed a Director General for Rohingya Affairs and Special Envoy, Khalilur Rahman, to spearhead repatriation efforts, gaps in policy and implementation remain glaring.

"There is no question about the government's sincerity, but the problem is they are still struggling to strategise," said an official involved in the process.

At a recent informal consultation in Bangkok, Touhid Hossain reiterated the need for a comprehensive roadmap to address the crisis. He called on Myanmar and regional powers to create conditions conducive to the Rohingyas' safe and dignified return, warning that failure to do so would perpetuate instability across the region.

A HUMANITARIAN IMPERATIVE

The ongoing impasse has placed immense strain on Bangladesh, already grappling with the burden of hosting the world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazar. With no viable solution in sight, experts are urging coordinated international action to address the crisis.

The Rohingya issue is not just a bilateral problem; it's a regional and global humanitarian challenge that demands urgent attention, experts say.

As Rakhine's conflict intensifies and the AA consolidates its power, hopes for Rohingya repatriation become increasingly dim.

Trump to be sentenced

FROM PAGE 1

Trump entering the White House as a convicted felon.

The 78-year-old Trump potentially faced up to four years in prison but legal experts – even before he won the November presidential election – did not expect Merchan to send the former president to jail.

"It seems proper at this juncture to make known the Court's inclination to not impose any sentence of incarceration," the judge said, noting that prosecutors also did not believe a jail term was a "practicable recommendation."

Trump, who is expected to lodge an appeal that could potentially delay his sentencing, denounced the decision late Friday.

"This illegitimate political attack is nothing but a Rigged Charade," he wrote on his platform Truth Social.

Calling Merchan a "radical partisan," Trump added that the order was "knowingly unlawful, goes against our Constitution and, if allowed to stand, would be the end of the Presidency as we know it."

Trump was convicted in New York in May of 34 counts of falsifying business records to cover up a hush money payment to porn star Stormy Daniels on the eve of the 2016 election to stop her from revealing an alleged 2006 sexual encounter.

Trump's attorneys had sought to have the case dismissed on multiple grounds, including the Supreme Court's landmark ruling last year that former US presidents have sweeping immunity from prosecution for a range of official acts committed while

in office.

Merchan rejected that argument but he noted that Trump will be immune from prosecution once he is sworn in as president.

"Finding no legal impediment to sentencing and recognizing that Presidential immunity will likely attach once Defendant takes his Oath of Office, it is incumbent upon this Court to set this matter down for imposition of sentence prior to January 20, 2025," the judge said.

Trump spokesman Steven Cheung denounced Merchan's decision to set sentencing for the former president, calling it a "direct violation of the Supreme Court's Immunity decision and other longstanding jurisprudence."

"This lawless case should have never been brought and the Constitution demands that it be immediately dismissed," Cheung said in a statement.

"President Trump must be allowed to continue the Presidential Transition process and to execute the vital duties of the presidency, unobstructed by the remains of this or any remnants of the Witch Hunts," he said.

"There should be no sentencing, and President Trump will continue fighting against these hoaxes until they are all dead," Cheung added.

Trump also faced two federal cases brought by special counsel Jack Smith, but both were dropped under a long-standing Justice Department policy of not prosecuting a sitting president.

CA reiterates 2 possible polls timelines

FROM PAGE 1

vote in the last three elections. There was a fake parliament; fake MPs and a fake Speaker. The whole country got their voice back, which was taken away forcibly," said Yunus.

During the meeting, Rupa also enquired about the reform initiatives undertaken by the interim government and the political parties'

participation in those initiatives.

Yunus told Rupa about the repression of the people during the regime of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and explained how it led to the July uprising.

James Goldman, deputy high commissioner and development director of the British High Commission in Dhaka, was also

present at the meeting.

Earlier, Rupa met Special Envoy to Chief Adviser Lutfy Siddiqi, BIDA Chairman Ashik Mahmud Chowdhury, and Senior Secretary for SDG Affairs Lamiya Morshed over trade and investment in Bangladesh.

A delegation from UKBCCI is currently on a three-day visit to Bangladesh.

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As the sun begins its descent on the horizon, casting a warm golden hue across the sky, the tranquil waters of Kuakata beach shimmer with its reflected light. Amid this, a line of engine-powered boats, manned by fishermen from nearby coastal villages, prepares to set out for an evening of fishing. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

8,543 killed on roads in 2024

Says Jatri Kalyan Samity; motorbikes account for one-third of accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of road crashes and fatalities in Bangladesh increased last year, with motorcycle-related incidents accounting for nearly one-third of all crashes and casualties, according to the Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity.

At least 8,543 people were killed and 12,608 injured in 6,359 road crashes across the country in 2024, the organisation reported.

The organisation said 2,570 people were killed in 2,329 bike-related crashes last year, which accounted for 36.62 percent of total crashes and 30.08 percent of deaths.

The sharp rise in motorcycles and battery-run auto-rickshaws, along with the illegal operation of both speedy and slow-moving vehicles on highways, were blamed for the rise, said the organisation's secretary general Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury while revealing the annual report at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

The report comes amid a series of recent accidents on the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway. On December 27, at least six people lost their lives when a bus rammed into three other vehicles at the expressway's toll plaza in South Keraniganj.

It was later found that the bus had no legal documents, including fitness clearance and route permit, while the driver had no valid licence.

The Samity identified 22 causes of road crashes, including unfit vehicles, reckless driving, and unskilled

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AL accepted Indian subservience to secure power: Sarjis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The younger generation should understand that India's participation in Bangladesh's Liberation War was primarily to protect its own interests, particularly the Seven Sisters region, said Sarjis Alam, chief organiser of Jatiya Nagorik Committee, yesterday.

He also said the Awami League accepted Indian subservience to secure power.

Speaking at a roundtable organised by Islami Andolan Bangladesh at Railway Pologround Field in Chattogram, he said,



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Students should unite, focus on their studies

Say Mirza Fakhrul

AGENCIES

BNP leaders have called on students to unite and focus on their studies to build a prosperous and discrimination-free Bangladesh, while reflecting on the lessons from the downfall of autocratic regimes.

They emphasised the need for knowledge and dedication to lead the nation towards a brighter future.

Speaking virtually at a rally organised by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (Thakurgaon district unit) marking its 46th founding anniversary, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir urged students to remain united and prioritise education.

"At this moment, everybody should remain united. Students should also focus on their studies to come out successfully and become self-reliant," he said.

Fakhrul called on students to work for the wellbeing of the country, adding, "An opportunity has come before the nation after the fall of the fascist Awami League regime. BNP aims to free the country from corruption and protect democracy, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press."

He accused the Awami League government of destroying the country's education system, economy, and electoral process while violently suppressing anti-discrimination movements.

Meanwhile, BNP Standing Committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan, speaking at a civic reception in Morrelganj, highlighted the



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Do not want to hear words like majority, minority

Says Jamaat ameer

UNB, Kushtia

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Dr Shafiqur Rahman has vowed to build Bangladesh based on equality.

"We no longer want to hear about the minority or majority in this country. All those born in Bangladesh are proud and dignified citizens of this nation, irrespective of their religion or caste," he said.

The jamaat leader made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest at a member conference at the Kushtia Government College grounds yesterday.

He said people in this country will not face any obstacles in practicing their respective religions, and Islam cannot be forced on anyone.

Shafiqur said after independence, until 5 August of last year, those who treated the Liberation War and the independence of this



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Reforms and elections must complement each other

Says Zonayed Saki

UNB, Dhaka

Ganosamhati Andolan's Chief Coordinator

Zonayed Saki yesterday said reforms and elections are intrinsically linked, stating that both are necessary for a meaningful political change.

"Just as there will be no elections without reforms, many reforms without elections will not be possible," Saki said during a public dialogue titled "Establishing a New Political Settlement for the Democratic Transformation of the State" at Jatiya Press Club.

Saki stressed that the next election date should be determined through



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Cold bites, warmth eludes Char people in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat suffer without adequate winter clothes

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The char people in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat are enduring severe suffering due to a biting cold wave that has persisted for two consecutive weeks.

These areas, situated in the basin of 26 rivers, including the Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dharla, Dudhkumar, and Gangadhar, are home to around 500 chars, with 400 in Kurigram and 100 in Lalmonirhat.

More than six lakh people live in these remote and vulnerable regions, struggling to cope with the extreme cold using old, worn-out clothes.

The inability to afford winter clothing exacerbates their hardship, and while government, NGO, and private initiatives distribute winter clothes, these resources often fail to reach the remote char areas.

In the impassable Char Ghughumari on the Brahmaputra riverbed in Saheber Alga Union of Ulipur upazila, Kurigram, the situation is particularly dire. Located about 20 kilometers from the mainland, residents are shivering due to a lack of blankets.

Suruj Mia, a 62-year-old farm labourer from

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TABLIGH JAMAAT Protest on Jan 10, confce on Jan 25

Says Zubair faction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Tablighi Jamaat faction aligned with Maulana Zubair Ahmad will hold a nationwide demonstration on January 10 to seek a ban on the activities of Maulana Saad Kandhalvi's followers.

An ulema (Islamic scholars) conference will also be held on January 25, said Hefazat-e-Islam Vice President Mufti Nazmul Hasan Qasemi at a press conference at the Kakrail Mosque in Dhaka yesterday.

He made the announcement on behalf of Ulema-Mashayekh Bangladesh and Tablighi Jamaat Companions.

He said all activities of Saad supporters should be banned, and they should be held accountable for the killings in 2018 and 2024.

In a written statement, Qasemi said, "If the government fails to take

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'Bangladesh open for business'

Special envoy to chief adviser tells British entrepreneurs

UNB, Dhaka

Lutley Siddiqi, special envoy to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, yesterday urged British entrepreneurs, including Bangladeshi-origin investors, to capitalise on Bangladesh's widespread reforms designed to attract foreign direct investment.

"We are open for business. We are keen to answer your questions. Please keep on asking them. Please keep on visiting to take a look for yourselves. And if you like what you see and hear, please help spread the word," Siddiqi said during a meeting with a delegation from UKBCCI at the State Guest House Jamuna.

UKBCCI Chairman Iqbal Ahmed and UKBCCI President MG Moula Mia are leading the delegation that is currently on a three-day visit to Bangladesh.

The special envoy appraised the delegates on positive developments on the macroeconomic front – exchange rate, reserves, exports, port handling rates, etc – and steps already taken across the government to create a more conducive experience for investors.

Siddiqi answered questions about labour reforms, the RMG sector, the law-and-order situation and the overall reform journey.

He expressed gratitude for the engagement and support of the Bangladeshi diaspora.

BIDA chairman Ashik Mahmud Chowdhury, senior secretary for SDG affairs Lamiya Morshed, and UK parliamentarian Rupa Huq were among others present on the occasion.



At least four steps on the stairway of the Paribagh footbridge have been missing for six months, creating a significant safety hazard for commuters. The other ramp is also in a deteriorated state (not in picture). A mother and her son stare at the gaping hole from above as commuters face the danger of falling from this height, particularly at night. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Samson H Chowdhury's death anniv

STAR REPORT

Today is the 13th death anniversary of visionary entrepreneur Samson H Chowdhury.



Samson, founder of Square Group, died on January 5 in 2012 at Raffles Hospital in Singapore. Born on February 25, 1926 in Pabna, Samson started a small pharmacy at Ataikula in Pabna in 1952, which ultimately led to one of the country's leading pharmaceutical businesses. Samson was nominated for the "Best Entrepreneur of the Country" in the Year 2000-2001 organised by The Daily Star and DHL. The American Chamber in Bangladesh honoured him as "Business Executive of the Year" in 1998.

Ardhendu Shekhor Roy's death anniv

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 25th death anniversary of Ardhendu Shekhor Roy, former deputy registrar (judicial) of the Cooperative Department in Rajshahi region. He passed away after suffering a brain stroke. Ardhendu was the father of Amresh Roy, senior reporter of the Daily Samakal; Ashokesh Roy, copy editor of Views Bangladesh; and Abhijit Roy, Faridpur correspondent of the Daily Janakantha.

Journo's parents attacked at home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Three people -- including the parents of a journalist -- were injured when a miscreant attacked them after breaking into their house in Faridpur on Friday night. The incident occurred at Purbapara in Domain village of Madhukhali upazila, said police and locals. The injured are Shyamendu Basu, 65, and Kakoli Basu, 60, parents of Ajker Patrika staff reporter Sougato Basu, and their 15-year-old neighbour. All three are undergoing treatment at Faridpur Medical College Hospital. Sougato Basu was not at home at the time of the incident. Jibon Kumar Mondal, a member of Domain Union Parishad, said the family was watching TV when the incident happened. Shyamendu said he noticed someone was inside the house and chased him. The intruder suddenly struck him on the head with a sharp weapon, he further said. As others came to help, the criminal attacked them as well before fleeing the scene. Shoilien Chakma, additional superintendent of police in Faridpur, said law enforcers are investigating the matter.

Students should

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lessons from the student-led revolution that ended autocratic rule. "Sheikh Hasina and many Awami League leaders were forced to flee in the face of the mass revolution," he said, urging politicians to learn from such events. Moyeen praised students' sacrifices during the revolution but urged them to return to their studies. "They will undoubtedly lead the country in the future and take up key leadership roles," he added. Both leaders reiterated the importance of education in building a liberal democratic society and urged students to prepare themselves for future leadership.

AL accepted Indian

FROM PAGE 3

"Power was more valuable to the Awami League than the country, the people, and the sovereignty of Bangladesh," He further alleged that the AL had introduced India as Bangladesh's patron. Sarjis criticised India for its cultural aggression, accusing it of controlling Bangladesh's media landscape. "India does not allow a single Bangladeshi channel to broadcast, yet 90 percent of foreign channels in Bangladesh are Indian," he said. Aamir Mufti Sayed Muhammad Rezaul Karim of Islami Andolan Bangladesh echoed the sentiments, stressing the need for national unity in resisting Indian influence. "We must fight against Indian aggression to bring peace to the country," he said.

Do not want to hear

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country as the legacy of their fathers and grandfathers spoke of "consciousness." "And through such rhetoric, they have plundered this nation, committed genocide, and their children have inflicted a century of rape through their atrocities. They have looted the country's wealth and smuggled it abroad. Wherever there has been any mega development, mega robbery has taken place." "With the amount spent on building one Padma Bridge, at least four could have been constructed. So where did the money for the other three bridges go? The answer is clear. Those who have established 'Begum Para' abroad with the nation's money have stolen it." Referring to the contributions of students and the public in the July-August uprising, he said, "We must protect the sacrifice of the blood, and we must show respect."

Bridge work stalled

FROM PAGE 5

all the materials from the construction site," said Abu Hossain Mollik, a local of Goperhat area. Rokhsana, a resident of Chal Pukhuria village, said, "Every day, we have to cross the canal on boats amid much risk to commute to Pirojpur town and other neighbouring areas. The boats are not available all the time, adding to our hassles." Md Towhidul Islam, another local, said if someone needs to cross the canal at 8:00pm for any emergency reason, it would not be possible as boats would not be available before next morning. Contacted, Harashit Sarkar, upazila engineer in Pirojpur Sadar, said they have contacted with the construction firm for completing the work. "If they refuse to complete the work, we will take steps as per decision of the higher authority," he added.

Reforms and elections

FROM PAGE 3

discussions involving all stakeholders and highlighted the need for a power structure rooted in accountability to the people. "The power of the future must be the power of accountability of the people," he said. While Bangladesh has made significant progress over the last 53 years, justice for the country's people remains elusive, Saki said. He pointed out that the prolonged authoritarian style of governance has hindered progress, calling for structural changes to the 1972 Constitution. Saki also underscored the importance of uniting people in the fight for democratic transformation and warned against divisive tactics. "Only if there is accountability of power, it is possible to establish the rule of law in society." Urging vigilance, he called on citizens to remain united in ensuring a democratic and just society.

Cold bites, warmth

FROM PAGE 3

Char Ghughumari, said the cold has made life unbearable. Despite his need for a blanket, his sons cannot afford to buy one, and no external aid has reached the char due to its remoteness, he said. At Rahamater Char on the Teesta riverbed in Ulipur upazila, Noor Islam, a 55-year-old farm labourer, shared how he and others are forced to warm their bodies by burning straws in the morning and evening due to the lack of blankets. "We have no choice but to resort to such measures," he said. Similarly, in the Char Chinatuli on the Teesta river at Rajpur Union in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, Sahidar Rahman, a 65-year-old farmer, said he attempts to work in the fields despite the cold but cannot endure it for long. In Char Bhagabatipur on the Brahmaputra riverbed in Kurigram Sadar upazila, 60-year-old day labourer Amjad Hossain echoed similar struggles. Contacted, Bablu Rahman, the chairman of Begumganj Union Parishad in Ulipur upazila, Kurigram, highlighted the inadequate allocation of blankets for his union, which is home to 40 chars in the Brahmaputra river basin. While there is a demand for more than 8,000 blankets, only 300 have been provided by the government. He said donors are often unwilling to bring aid to the impassable chars. Abdul Hai Sarkar, the district relief and rehabilitation officer of Kurigram, said the ministry does not make special allocations for char dwellers. He said government aid for cold-affected poor people is distributed through district and upazila administrations and public representatives, but this does not adequately address the needs of char residents.

Russian woman

FROM PAGE 5

of Building 9. According to preliminary findings, Kesoni had a quarrel with her husband shortly before the incident, the OC said. Security personnel at Green City rushed her to the project's medical facility, where she was pronounced dead by doctors. Police retrieved her body from the facility early yesterday and sent it to Pabna General Hospital for an autopsy. Police are looking into the incident, the OC added.

JOB VACANCY

We are 100% foreign invested dyestuff company in Bangladesh is looking for an engineer at home and abroad who is capable to coordinate with the Architect / Engineer for smooth execution of the Dyestuff manufacturing plant. **Position: Senior Technical Support Engineer (Position-01)** Attractive salary will be offered to suitable candidate. Interested candidates are requested to send the resume in email at acctg.fl@gmail.com within 10 days from publication date of this advertisement.

Career Opportunity

UTAH Knitting & Dyeing Ltd. located at Gazipur is looking for the position of **General Manager-Technical**, No of Vacancy-01, Experience-Minimum 15 years, Education-GCE-Advanced Level/Diploma in Apparel Technology will get preference, Age at least 45 years, Basic Salary-Tk. 7,15,000/- House Rent-Tk. 50,000/- Conveyance- Tk. 20,000/- Please apply for the above position with detailed CV and recent photographs within 15 (Fifteen) days to, sabera@utahgroup.net

8,543 killed on roads in 2024

FROM PAGE 3

drivers. It also made 13 recommendations, including enacting a new road safety act and prioritising road safety measures. Mozammel said despite the change in government, no significant improvement has been seen in the transportation sector. "The control of extortion has merely shifted hands, while unfit vehicles continue to operate. The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) focuses on revenue collection, and the traffic department competes to impose fines," he said. Factors contributing to road crashes remain unaddressed. Meetings, speeches, and ads alone cannot resolve the crisis," he said. **RISE IN CRASHES, FATALITIES** The organisation reported a 1.56 percent rise in road crashes, an 8.11 percent increase in deaths, and a 21.56 percent surge in injuries compared to 2023. In 2024, there were 6,359 crashes, 8,543 deaths, and 12,608 injuries, compared to 6,261 crashes, 7,902 deaths, and 10,372 injuries in 2023. Additionally, 512 were killed and 315 were injured in 497 rail-related incidents, said the organisation. Besides, riverway incidents resulted in 162 deaths and 267 injuries from 118 cases. Among the road crash victims, 755 were students, 168 were members of law enforcement, 1,952 were drivers, 1,879 were pedestrians, 622 were transport workers, and 126 were teachers. Women and children accounted for 1,206 and 658 victims, respectively. The organisation said 50.84 percent of deaths occurred when vehicles rammed pedestrians, 24.39 percent were killed in head-on collisions, and 18.92 percent died when vehicles fell into ditches. Of the crashes, 35.67 percent occurred on national highways, 21.66 percent on regional highways, and 35.81 percent on feeder roads, it also reported.

Protest on Jan 10

FROM PAGE 3

effective measures, we will announce our next course of action at the conference." He also said, "We believe that if justice had been served for those killings in 2018, the incidents of December 2024 would not have occurred. If they are spared again, it may lead to even greater disasters in the future." Hefazat Ameer Shah Mohibullah Babunagari blamed Saad followers for the December 18 clash and criticised their actions. Mamunul Haque, general secretary of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, demanded an immediate ban on all activities of the Saad faction of Tabligh Jamaat. Asked about the presence of Hefazat and Khelafat Majlish leaders in the pro-Zubair faction, Mamunul replied, "They are not here as leaders of Hefazat but as Islamic scholars (ulema). The ulema have attempted to mediate the disputes between the two Tabligh factions..." He further said, "Three people were killed at the Tongi Ijtima field. The perpetrators must be punished. If everyone works together, the issues can be resolved." He also said the first phase of the Ijtima will take place on January 31, and preparations are ongoing as scheduled. He, however, added, "Saad followers' involvement in the [December 18] attack" disqualifies them from arranging the second phase of Ijtima, which is scheduled for February 7-9. Meanwhile, police claimed to have arrested an accused in a case filed over the killings of three devotees at the Biswa Ijtima ground in Tongi on December 18. Shafiullah was arrested in Shariatpur last night, said Mohammad Helal Uddin, officer in-charge of Palong Police Station. OC Iskander Habibur Rahman of Tongi West Police Station said he was being brought to the police station. Shafiullah is known as a supporter of the Tabligh Jamaat faction aligned with Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, said the OC.

THE SECURITY PRINTING CORPORATION (BANGLADESH) LTD. (SPCBL) GAZIPUR-1703.

Local/International e-Tender.

International e-Tender is invited in "The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd. (SPCBL)'s e-Tender site <https://spcbletender.bb.org.bd> for procurement of the following item for SPCBL as per e-Tender schedule. Necessary information is given below:

e-Tender No.	Nature of e-Tender	Name of Item	Date of Publish	Last Date & time for submission of e-Tender	Date & time for Opening of e-tender
21/2024-2025	Local	Supply of 200 pcs Nylo print plates.	05.01.2025	10.02.2025 11:00 A.M	10.02.2025 11:15 A.M
22/2024-2025	International	Supply of 200 pcs Nylo print plates.	05.01.2025	10.02.2025 11:00 A.M	10.02.2025 11:15 A.M

For more details, please visit/contact the followings:

Website : www.spcbl.org.bd
Cell No : +8801552476764, +8801742453378
Telephone : +88-02-996695110-15
Fax : +88-02-996695772-3
E-Mail : info@spcbl.org.bd
E-tender site : <https://spcbletender.bb.org.bd>

(Shafayet Arefin)
General Manager (Foreign Purchase)
Phone: +88-02223375571

GD- 41

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা

নং সাহেব/ন-৫৮/রে- ৪৩৩৯ তারিখ : ০৪ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫

আবশ্যিক

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিম্নবর্ণিত শূন্য পদসমূহে পূরণের নিমিত্তে যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে :

শিক্ষক পদ

- ১। পুরকৌশল বিভাগ
সহকারী অধ্যাপক-এর ৪টি পদ (৩টি স্থায়ী ও সহযোগী অধ্যাপকের বিপরীতে ১টি অস্থায়ী পদ)। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
- ২। তত্ত্ব ও ইলেক্ট্রনিক কৌশল বিভাগ
সহকারী অধ্যাপক-এর ৬টি স্থায়ী পদ। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
- ৩। কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এবং ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ
সহকারী অধ্যাপক-এর ২টি স্থায়ী পদ। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
- ৪। যন্ত্রকৌশল বিভাগ
সহকারী অধ্যাপক-এর ১টি স্থায়ী পদ। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
- ৫। কেমিক্যাল বিভাগ
সহকারী অধ্যাপক-এর ৪টি স্থায়ী পদ। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
- ৬। ইভিনিউয়াল এবং প্রোটোকল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ
সহকারী অধ্যাপক-এর ১টি স্থায়ী পদ। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
- ৭। ম্যানেজমেন্টেরিয়াল এবং প্রিন্সিপাল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ
সহকারী অধ্যাপক-এর ১টি স্থায়ী পদ। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
- ৮। পদার্থবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ
ক) সহকারী অধ্যাপক-এর ১টি স্থায়ী পদ। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
খ) লেকচারার-এর ২টি অস্থায়ী পদ। বেতন স্কেল হ: ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-।
- ৯। ইনস্টিটিউট অব এগ্রোফ্রিস্ট্রিট টেকনোলজি
গবেষণা সহকারী অধ্যাপক (ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং)-এর ১টি অস্থায়ী পদ (গবেষণা অধ্যাপক পদের বিপরীতে)। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
- ১০। ইনস্টিটিউট অব নিউক্লিয়ার পাওয়ার ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং
সহকারী অধ্যাপক-এর ১টি অস্থায়ী পদ (অধ্যাপক পদের বিপরীতে)। বেতন স্কেল হ: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/-।
- ১১। মানবিক বিভাগ
লেকচারার (ইংরেজি)-এর ১টি অস্থায়ী পদ। বেতন স্কেল হ: ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-।

উল্লিখিত পদসমূহের আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ: ২৬/০১/২০২৫

সকল পদের বিজ্ঞপিত তথ্যের জন্য বুকেট ওয়েব সাইট (regoffice.buet.ac.bd)-Vacancy-এর Job circular page-এ Search করা অথবা রেজিস্ট্রার অফিসের সংশ্লিষ্ট শাখায় সরাসরি যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।

GD- 44 রেজিস্ট্রার

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

District Primary Education Office
Bhola
<http://dpe.bhola.gov.bd>

Memo No. 38.01.0900.001.00.000.2025/06 Date: 01.01.2025

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2024-25

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

Sl No.	Name of scheme	Tender ID No.	Tender/ proposal publication date & time & Package No.	Tender/ proposal document last selling/ downloading date & time	Tender/ proposal closing date & time	Remarks
1	Goods: Furniture Supply for 20 Nos. Class Room of Selected 4 Nos. of Newly Nationalized Govt. Primary School (Lalmohon-Kumar Khali NNGPS, Moddho Baluchor NNGPS, Purbo Balur Chor, Ramgong Model NNGps) at different location of Bhola District.	1049338	05 Jan 2025 09:00 Package No: NBI/DNNGP SP1/BHO/20 24-25 GI-13	20 Jan 2025 17:00	21 Jan 2025 12:30	OTM

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender/Proposal Document from the National e-GP Portal to be deposited online through any registered bank's branch. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Aminul Islam
District Primary Education Officer
Bhola
Email: dpeobhola@gmail.com

GD-46

Chittagong Dry Dock Limited

Bangladesh Navy
East Patenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh
Phone: +88(031)2501113, Mobile: +8801769744475
Fax: +880-31-2501123, E-mail: drydock.bd@gmail.com, Website: www.cdcl.gov.bd

Tender Notice

Date: 05.01.2025

01.	Procuring Entity Name	Chittagong Dry Dock Limited, Bangladesh Navy
02.	Invitation for	Tender
03.	Invitation Ref No.	23.02.1565.341.53.003.25.01 Date 05 January 2025
04.	Project Name	Construction of pavement work from gate No 3 to weigh bridge at Chittagong Dry Dock Limited (CDDL), East Patenga, Chattogram.
05.	Budget and Source of Funds	Own Fund
06.	Tendering Method	Open Tender Method
07.	Eligibility of Tenderers	Required eligibility criteria have been mentioned in the Tender Document.
08.	Price of Tender	Tk 2,000/- (Tk Two Thousand and only) (Non Refundable)
09.	Amount of Tender Security	Tk 4,50,000/- (Tk Four Lac Fifty Thousand and only) in the from of pay order/Bank Draft/Irrevocable Bank Guaranty in favor of "The Managing Director, Chittagong Dry Dock Limited" issued by a schedule Bank of Bangladesh. (Refundable)
10.	Name & Address of the Office (s)	
a.	Selling Tender Documents	Cash Section, Finance and Accounts Department Chittagong Dry Dock Limited Bangladesh Navy East Patenga, Chattogram.
b.	Receiving Tenders	Office of the Section Head (Civil) Chittagong Dry Dock Limited Bangladesh Navy East Patenga, Chattogram.
c.	Opening Tenders	Office of the Section Head (Civil) Chittagong Dry Dock Limited Bangladesh Navy East Patenga, Chattogram.
11.	Tender Selling last Date and Time	22 January 2025 03:00 pm
12.	Tender Closing Date Date and Time	23 January 2025 11:00 am
13.	Tender Opening Date and Time	23 January 2025 11:15 am
14.	Brief Description of Works	Construction of pavement work from gate no 3 to weigh bridge at Chittagong Dry Dock Limited (CDDL), East Patenga, Chattogram. (As Per Schedule)
15.	Contract Details of Official Inviting tender	Phone: +8801769-744470/75, Fax: 880-31-2501123 Email: drydock.bd@gmail.com
16.	Special Instructions	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all or any tender prior to acceptance without showing any reason. If it is not possible to open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and same venue.

Managing Director
Chittagong Dry Dock Limited
Bangladesh Navy

GD- 42

ROOPPUR PLANT
Russian woman
found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pabna

A Russian national was found dead in Green City, the residential area of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project in Pabna's Ishwardi, on Friday night. The deceased, identified as 39-year-old Kesoni Postahuk, was employed by SMU-1, a company working on the project, said Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station. Police suspect Kesoni fell to her death after jumping from a high-rise building between 11:30pm and 11:45pm. She lived with her husband, also a project employee, on the third floor

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Residents rely on boats on a daily basis to cross this canal and commute to Pirojpur town and nearby areas due to the absence of a bridge, whose construction has been stalled for four years. The unavailability of boats at times further exacerbates their struggles. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

PIROJPUR SADAR UPAZILA
Bridge work stalled
for four years

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Construction of a 42 metre girder bridge has remained suspended for four years, causing immense sufferings to residents of three unions under Pirojpur Sadar upazila. According to sources at the upazila engineer's office, the Local Government Engineering Department initiated construction of the bridge over Tona canal between Chalpukhuria and Gopherhat areas in September 2020 at a cost of Tk 4.27 crore to enhance connectivity between Kalakhali, Tona and Durgapur unions in the upazila. A contractor firm named Mohammed

Eunus and Brothers (Pvt) Ltd got the work order, with a stipulated deadline of one year to complete the construction. The firm, however, failed to begin the work in time, leading to extension of the deadline by one more year. Eventually the contractor firm abandoned the work after completing around 30 percent of the bridge's construction, leading to suspension of the project. "Earlier, there was an iron bridge on the canal, which became dilapidated within a short time. The construction of a new bridge began around four years ago, but the work got suspended after the contractor abandoned it and even removed



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Freedom of speech, press will be in peril

FROM PAGE 1
reasons, speakers said at an event yesterday. They said the new draft is nothing new compared to the previous two, and the move to issue an ordinance without proper consultation with stakeholders is a betrayal to the aspirations of the July uprising. The discussion, titled "Cyber Protection Ordinance 2024: State Oppression Exists and Negligence to the Spirit of Mass Uprising", was organised by Voice for Reforms, a citizens' platform, at the Bishwo Shahitto Kendro in the capital. Irene Khan, UN special rapporteur of freedom of opinion and expression, said the ambiguities in the ordinance will encourage the misuse of state power. She pointed out sections 25 and 26 as barriers to the freedom of expression, adding that some of the provisions contradict the human rights-related conventions with international bodies, including the UN, which were signed by Bangladesh. The international arena has already agreed on some of the best practices on cyber protection, which Bangladesh should follow

to enact a law, Irene said, adding that defamation should not be counted as a criminal offence, though the draft does so. "How will the media practise political satire and cartoons and who will determine which is defamatory or not?" She also said the ordinance failed to address the issues of disinformation and misinformation. Barrister Sara Hossain raised concerns on the process of drafting the new ordinance, saying they are raising the same issues for the draft ordinance as they had been with the DSA and CSA since 2006. For example, she said, the sections of blasphemy remain the same – allowing a person to file a case if their "religious sentiments are hurt", adding that such issues vary from person to person. She also mentioned that the new provisions added for the protection of women and children were formulated without consulting the very groups they are meant to protect. Photographer Shahidul Alam, co-convener of Voice for Reform, said the government that came

to power through the sacrifices of thousands of lives should not issue such an ordinance that would violate human rights. He emphasised the need for transparent discussions to finalise the act. "If a law is made in the interest of the public, it must reflect public interests and not be imposed without the consideration of the people's voices." Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua said the new draft ordinance brought no structural and qualitative changes except some linguistic ones. "The traps for the citizen's and journalists remain the same in the draft. The law was initiated aiming to control the peoples' voices... Though it is named 'cyber protection', it will only serve the purposes of the state..." He added that the ordinance lacks a clear explanation of cyberbullying and some other crimes, adding that the definitions in it are "disorganised". Jyotirmoy also questioned the process of establishing the Cyber Security Council, which allows people with no knowledge on cyber spaces to join it.

He further criticised sections 25, 26 and 35 of the draft ordinance, saying, "There are similar provisions [in the previous laws] that can be misused against the minorities instead of protecting them." Didarul Islam Bhuiyan, activist of Rastrachinta, said there should not be any clause which allows the police to detain someone without a warrant. "The draft allows this and also allows them [police] to check personal gadgets." He added that although many cases against political leaders, who were victims of the Awami League regime, were withdrawn, many of them are still being harassed with the DSA and CSA. Bobby Hajjaj, chairman of Nationalist Democratic Movement; Saimum Reza Talukder, assistant attorney General of the International Crimes Tribunal; Mohammad Tauhidul Islam, director of Transparency International Bangladesh's Outreach and Communication Division; Asaduzzaman Fuaad, joint member secretary of AB (Amar Bangladesh) Party, and Shabhanaz Rashid Diya, executive director of Tech Global Institute, also spoke among others.

Cops want their own commission

FROM PAGE 1
including a police commission," Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam told The Daily Star on December 29. The commission's goals are to ensure that police remain neutral, independent, and committed to protecting human rights in alignment with public expectations. Additionally, it aims to safeguard the rule of law and protect individual liberties. The proposed police commission's framework was drawn up in line with an online survey by the Police Reform Commission. Among the 14,389 respondents, 58.9 percent supported the creation of a separate oversight body to ensure police accountability and protect them from external interference, according to police officials involved in the process. "We have received a proposal from the IGP that suggests a constitutional commission," Safar Raj told The Daily Star recently. A member of the reform commission said the commission is set to include the police proposal as an annex to the its final report. It would also recommend a police commission without specifying a format, he said wishing anonymity. COMMISSION'S STRUCTURE The proposed police commission will comprise 11 members with a retired Appellate Division judge

or a retired IGP as the chairperson. The members will include four MPs – two from the ruling party and two from opposition parties. The names would be recommended by the parliament speaker in consultation with the prime minister and leader of the opposition. The commission will also include four non-political personalities – a legal expert, a human rights activist, a retired IGP and one academician on social science or policing. These four people, one of whom will be female, will be appointed by the president from a list of six that will be forwarded by a selection committee. Besides, the home secretary and incumbent IGP will be ex-officio members with the IGP serving as member secretary. The Chief Justice or an Appellate Division judge nominated by the top judge will head the selection committee which will include the heads of Anti-Corruption Commission, Bangladesh Comptroller and Auditor General, National Human Rights Commission and either a retired secretary or a retired IGP. COMMISSION'S FUNCTION The commission will recommend a panel of three officers not below the rank of additional inspectors general to the president for IGP appointment. The top cop's tenure will range between two and three years, irrespective of

the retirement age. The proposed commission is envisioned also to have the authority to remove an IGP, if majority of the commission agree with the decision. It will also recommend names for appointments to important positions, including heads of police training institutions, specialised units, deputy inspectors general (DIGs), metropolitan commissioners and district superintendents. Each appointment, according to the proposal, will be for two years. Additionally, the commission will formulate policies on recruitment, transfers, promotions and other service matters. "This will put an end to the practice of picking officers for promotions and lucrative positions based on their political loyalties," said another reform commission member. The proposed commission will also draft a national public safety policy, and police related laws, rules and regulations if and when necessary. It will also be responsible to determine the scope of lawful use of force and plan police training, capacity building and formation of specialised units as and when required. COMMISSION'S TENURE The tenure of the police commission's members will be four years. The MPs will cease to be on the commission if the parliament is dissolved, while appointment to the

commission will be limited to just one term. Loan defaulters, aliens, tax dodgers, embezzlers, criminals or office bearers of the republic, among others, will not be eligible to be a member of the commission. The government will provide necessary resources, including permanent and temporary staffers and allocate sufficient funds based on the commission's proposal, reads the draft proposal. COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT The commission will oversee a complaint management committee consisting of three members of the commission which will act as an appellate authority for the existing complaint management system against policemen. Anyone not satisfied with the police headquarters' investigation may appeal to this three-member committee. This complaint committee will submit its report to the commission chairman for action. The commission will also form a three-member Grievance Redress Committee to resolve problems that police officers may be facing.

PRAYER
TIMING
JANUARY 5

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Host and FDMN Enhancement of lives through Infrastructure Improvement Project (HELP)
Workshop Bhaban (Level-3), Agargaon,
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No: 46.02.0000.560.07.001.24.14 Date: 02/01/2025

Invitation for Tenders
IFT No: 01/2024-2025

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh				
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Co-operatives/ Local Government Division.		
2	Agency	Local Government Engineering Department		
3	Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, Host and FDMN Enhancement of lives through Infrastructure Improvement Project (HELP), LGED.		
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not used at present		
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka		
6	Invitation for	Vehicle hiring for transport services: a) One-4x4 Cross country Service Vehicle, Seat capacity 7 persons b) Two-4x4 Cross country Service Vehicle, Seat capacity 5 persons c) One-Sedan Car, Seat capacity 5 persons d) One-4x4 Cross country Service Vehicle (Double Cabin Pick up), Seat capacity 5 persons (Package No: HELP/S-16).		Single Lot
7	Invitation Ref No.	46.02.0000.560.07.001.24		
8	Date	02/01/2025		
KEY INFORMATION				
9	Procurement Method	NCT (Non-Consulting Service)		Open
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10	Budget and Source of Funds	Development Budget (IDA)		Credit
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	IDA		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12	Project/ Programme Code (if applicable)	224402800		
13	Project/ Programme Name (if applicable)	Project Director, Host and FDMN Enhancement of lives through Infrastructure Improvement Project (HELP)		
14	Tender Package No.	Package No: HELP/S-16		
15	Tender Package Name	Vehicle hiring for transport services: a) One-4x4 Cross country Service Vehicle, Seat capacity 7 persons b) Two-4x4 Cross country Service Vehicle, Seat capacity 5 persons c) One-Sedan Car, Seat capacity 5 persons d) One-4x4 Cross country Service Vehicle (Double Cabin Pick up), Seat capacity 5 persons.		
16	Tender Publication Date	Date: 06-01-2025		
17	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	Date: 30-01-2025	Time: 4:00 PM	
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	Date: 02-02-2025	Time: 1:00 PM	
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	Date: 02-02-2025	Time: 1:30 PM	
20	Place of Selling, Receiving Pre-Tender Meeting & Opening Tender Document	Office of the Project Director, HELP, LGED HQ, Workshop Bhaban, Level-3, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.		
21	Pre-Tender Meeting Date & Time	Date: 16-01-2025	Time: 11:00 AM	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	As per Tender Document		
23	Brief Description of Physical Services	Physical Services (Non-Consulting Service) for Vehicle hiring for transport services.		
24	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	4,000.00 (Four thousand) Taka		
25	Package No	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)
	Package No: HELP/S-16 (Single lot)	Vehicle hiring for transport services: a) One-4*4 Cross country Service Vehicle, Seat capacity 7 persons b) Two-4*4 Cross country Service Vehicle, Seat capacity 5 persons c) One-Sedan Car, Seat capacity 5 persons d) One-4*4 Cross country Service Vehicle (Double Cabin Pick up), Seat capacity 5 persons	Office of the Project Director, HELP, LGED, HQ.	10,00,000.00
26	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Abdus Salam		
27	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director, Host and FDMN Enhancement of lives through Infrastructure Improvement Project (HELP), LGED, Dhaka.		
28	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Workshop Bhaban, Level-03, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh. e-mail: pdhelp.lged@gmail.com		
29	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceeding			

(Md. Abdus Salam)
Project Director
Phone: 55006730
pdhelp.lged@gmail.com

GD- 43

ANJANA

A legacy of 300 films and an unbeatable smile

‘Dasyu Bonhur’ marked the debut of Anjana in the film industry. Sohel Rana played the lead role, and also produced the movie. The film scored massive success at the theaters. Following this, they co-starred in Jadunagar, which also did well. Anjana and Sohel Rana became a popular on-screen pair, collaborating on numerous films.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Veteran actress Anjana Rahman, a beloved figure in Bangladeshi cinema, passed away at 1:10 am on Saturday while receiving treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital. Her passing marks the end of an era, leaving behind a legacy of exceptional contributions to the film industry.

Anjana fell ill with a persistent fever in early December. After initial treatment at a private hospital, where she was admitted to the Coronary Care Unit (CCU), she was transferred to BSMMU, where tests revealed a blood infection.

The actress was taken to the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) at 11 am on Saturday, for fans and colleagues to pay their respects. Following the first namaz-e-janazaat FDC, a second one was held at Banani graveyard before her burial.

Born on June 27, 1965, Anjana made her acting debut with the critically and commercially successful *Dasyu Bonhur*, based on Romena Afaz’s popular series. Directed by Shamsuddin Togor and produced under Sohel Rana’s banner, the film paired her with Rana and established her as a promising talent.

Dasyu Bonhur marked the debut of Anjana in the film industry. Sohel Rana played the lead role, and also produced the movie. The film scored massive success at the theaters. Following this, they co-starred in *Jadunagar*, which also did well. Anjana and Sohel Rana became a popular on-screen pair, collaborating on numerous films.

Reflecting on his memories of Anjana, Sohel Rana shared that she was an accomplished dancer. During the Pakistan era, at just 9 years old, she received an award from Ayub Khan. “I first came to know her through her dance performances, having watched her at an event. Impressed, I decided to introduce her to the world of cinema.”

“In *Jadunogor*, Anjana delivered an exceptional dance performance, moving gracefully like a doll. I believed no one else could replicate that dance the way she did. From then on, I affectionately called her ‘Doll Dancer,’ a name I continued to use for her throughout her life,” said the noted actor.

In her later years, Sohel Rana believed that she appeared to be quite lonely. “Now, she has left behind the confines of this life and will face solitude in the next. The news of her passing deeply shocked me, and I feel a profound sense of loss. I pray that the Almighty grants her a place in

Razzak, became a massive hit. The film resonated with audiences across urban and rural areas, cementing her status in the industry. Over her career, she acted in a record 30 films with Razzak, including notable titles such as *Anarkoli*, *Ram Rahim John*, *Saheb Bibi Golam*, *Matir Putul*, *Rojonigondha*, *Sohag*, *Sanai*, *Bidhata*, *Mana*, and *Abhijan*.

Both Rozina and Anjana have worked on several movies together. Most notably, their films *Abhijan* and *Matir Maya* left an impression on their audiences. During the filming of these movies, they developed a strong bond. Rozina fondly reminisced about the special moments they shared while working on *Abhijan*.

“She dedicated her

and Bhuwan KC. Her performance in *Desh-Bidesh*, a blockbuster shot in the United States and co-starring Jashim, Shabana, and Mahmud Kali, further exemplified her global appeal.

Anjana’s talent earned her two National Film Awards: one for *Gangchil* and another for *Parinecta*, where her portrayal of Lolita garnered immense praise. As a producer, she made significant contributions through her company, Anjana Films, producing acclaimed titles such as *Pran Sajani*, *Bondhu Jokhon Shotru*, and *Chalu Sardar*.

Beyond

acting, Anjana was actively involved with the Bangladesh Film Artists’ Association, winning elections within the organisation. Her presence at industry events and camaraderie with colleagues underscored her deep connection to the film community.

Her career included numerous memorable films such as *Rakhe Allah Mare Ke*, *Premier Shomadhi*, *Jiddi*, *Eemandar*, *Shonar Palonk*, *Bedona*, *Chokher Moni*, *Dojokh*, *Didar*, *Agnipurush*, *Target*, *Maharaj*, *Rajar Raja*, *Jadu Nogor*, *Nepali Meye*, *Shukhe Thako*, *Jinzir*, *Sanai*, *Bou Kotha Kou*, *Rupali Soikote*, *Bagdader Chor*, *Mohona*, *Onobodhu*, *Rajbari*, *Himmatwali*, *Nantu Ghotok*, *Gunai Bibi*, *Abhijan*, *Noori*, and *Desh Bidesh*.

In a previous interview with The Daily Star, Anjana fondly recalled watching *Dasyu Bonhur* at Gulshan Cinema Hall. “There were thousands of people,” she said. “Sohel Rana told me to wave at them, and when I did, the sight of the massive crowd cheering for me remains one of the most unforgettable moments of my career.”

Her last film, *Bhool*, released in 2008, marking the conclusion of an illustrious career. With her extraordinary talent, dedication, and grace, Anjana remains an enduring icon of Bangladeshi cinema, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of audiences and colleagues alike.



‘Chokkor 302’ gets censorship clearance, release date to be announced soon

Filmmaker Saraf Ahmed Zibon’s debut film, *Chokkor 302*, has secured clearance for theatrical release. Backed by government funding, the film has successfully obtained certification from the Bangladesh Film Certification Board without requiring any edits.

Sharing the news on Facebook, Zibon expressed his excitement, stating, “Our film *Chokkor 302* has received its certificate without any cuts or modifications, bringing us one step closer to our dream. See you all soon in theatres!”

In the upcoming psychological thriller, acclaimed actor Mosharraf Karim takes on the lead role, with Reekita Nondine Shimu joining him as the female protagonist.

Zibon was awarded a government grant of Tk 65 lakh for the 2021-22 FY for his film *Chokkor 302*. The project initially bore the title *Bicharaloy*, but following a directive from the ministry, it was later renamed *Chokkor 302*.

Tahsan to tie the knot

Musician and actor Tahsan Khan will tie the knot with US-based makeup artist, Roza Ahmed.

Roza Ahmed, a graduate of New York University, is a successful entrepreneur. After completing her studies, she obtained a cosmetology license and subsequently founded “Roza’s Bridal Makeover” in Queens, New York.

For over a decade, she has been renowned as a bridal makeup artiste in both Bangladesh and the United States. Additionally, as a makeup educator, she has trained thousands of women and helped many become entrepreneurs.

Even though the news of the artistes getting married became viral on social media, Tahsan said that the formalities are yet to be done.

In the evening, the singer himself uploaded a picture with his beloved, dedicating a poem to her. “On a day of leisure, as my fingers dance across the keys/ Swaying to the melody, a vision of you I seize/ Whose enchanting rhythm will fill my life’s every part/ In the soothing steam of tea, forever you’ll be in my heart”, the lyrics roughly translate to this soulful ballad.

Tahsan Khan is a prominent figure in the Bangladeshi entertainment industry, renowned as a singer-songwriter, actor, and television presenter. He began his musical journey with the band Black before embarking on a successful solo career, known for his unique blend of classical and modern music. His acting career has seen him grace both the silver screen and television.



Prabir Mitra hospitalised as health deteriorates

Veteran actor Prabir Mitra has been hospitalised due to severe health issues. Facing complications from oxygen deficiency and other ailments, the 79-year-old was admitted to a private medical facility in the capital on December 22. His younger son, Sifat Islam, confirmed the news to Prothom Alo.

Sifat Islam shared that his father’s health is worsening. Initially in the ICU for oxygen deficiency, he was moved to the HDU (High Dependency Unit) due to blood loss and a significant drop in platelet count.

Born on August 18, 1943, in Chandina, Cumilla, Prabir Mitra spent his formative years in Old Dhaka, where his passion for acting took root. His early exposure to theatre began during his school days, and he notably performed in *Dak Ghar*, a celebrated play by Rabindranath Tagore.

In 1969, Prabir Mitra made his cinematic debut under the direction of the story H Akbar in *Jolchhobi*. Although his first on-screen appearance was filmed that year, the movie premiered on January 1, 1971.

With a career spanning over four hundred films, he delivered remarkable performances in notable titles including, *Titash Ekti Nadir Naam*, *Jibon Trishna*, *Seyvana*, *Rokto Shopoth*, *Charitrohin*, *Joy Porajoy*, and many others.



Bono, Messi, get highest US civilian honour

AFP, Washington

Joe Biden was set to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to 19 honourees, bestowing the highest civilian honour in the United States to entertainers, sports stars, politicians and diplomats.

Among those to receive honours from the outgoing US president are singer and activist Bono, basketball legend Earvin “Magic” Johnson, longtime fashion editor Anna Wintour, soccer superstar Lionel Messi, actors Denzel Washington and Michael J Fox, and fashion designer Ralph Lauren.

The honourees “are great leaders because they are good people who have made extraordinary contributions to their country and the world,” the White House said in a statement.

Others honoured in this year’s crop are chef Jose Andres, founder of the World Central Kitchen NGO, and primate researcher Jane Goodall, a leading environmentalist voice.

Some of the recipients selected by the 82 year-old Democrat have a more political profile, such as billionaire financier and left-wing philanthropist George Soros – a boogeyman of sorts for Republicans – and Hillary Clinton, the former first lady, senator and US secretary of state who unsuccessfully ran against Donald Trump for the presidency in 2016.

Soros was honoured because he “has supported organisations, and projects across the world that strengthen democracy, human rights, education and social justice,” according to a White House statement.

Clinton, meanwhile, “made history many times over decades in public service,” including being the first woman nominated by a major party for a US presidential election.

Biden also chose to posthumously award a Presidential Medal of Freedom to Robert Francis Kennedy, better known as “Bobby” Kennedy or his initials, “RFK.”

On Thursday, in another slight to Trump, Biden awarded a Presidential Citizens Medal to Liz Cheney, a former Republican congresswoman from Wyoming who sat on the house panel investigating the January 6, 2021 insurrection on the US Capitol.



Relatives celebrate with a released prisoner (C) outside Insein prison on Myanmar’s Independence Day in Yangon yesterday. Myanmar’s embattled junta government said it would release almost 6,000 prisoners as part of an annual amnesty to mark the country’s independence day.

PHOTO: AFP

FAILED ATTEMPT TO ARREST SOUTH KOREA PRESIDENT

Rival protests rock Seoul

AFP, Seoul

Thousands of rival South Korean protesters rallied in the capital yesterday, a day after a failed attempt to arrest suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol for imposing a short-lived martial law decree that led to his impeachment.

The country has been plunged into political chaos since last month, with Yoon defiantly holed up in the presidential residence, surrounded by hundreds of loyal security officers who have so far resisted efforts by prosecutors to arrest him.

Thousands of protesters, both for and against Yoon, gathered in front of the residence and along major roads in Seoul yesterday – either demanding his arrest or calling for his impeachment to be declared invalid.

Supporter Kim Chul-hong, 60, said Yoon’s arrest could undermine South Korea’s security alliance with the US and Japan.

“Protecting President Yoon means safeguarding our country’s security against



threats from North Korea,” he told AFP.

Members of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, South Korea’s largest umbrella union, attempted to march to Yoon’s residence to protest against him but were blocked by police.

It said two of its members were arrested, and several others were injured in clashes.

Yoon faces criminal charges of insurrection, one of a few crimes not subject to presidential immunity, meaning he could be sentenced to prison or, at worst, the death penalty.

If the warrant is executed, Yoon would

become the first sitting South Korean president to be arrested.

Investigators have asked Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok, who was installed as acting president a week ago, to back the warrant by ordering the presidential security service to cooperate.

In scenes of high drama on Friday, Yoon’s guards and military troops shielded him from investigators who eventually called off the arrest attempt citing safety concerns.

The showdown – which reportedly included shoving but no shots fired – left the warrant in limbo, with the court order set to expire on Monday.

CIO officials could make another bid to arrest him before then. But if the warrant lapses, they may apply for another.

The Constitutional Court slated January 14 for the start of Yoon’s impeachment trial, which if he does not attend would continue in his absence.

Former presidents Roh Moo-hyun and Park Geun-hye never appeared for their impeachment trials.

China vegetable market fire kills 8

AFP, Beijing

A fire at a vegetable market in north China killed eight people and injured 15 yesterday, local authorities reported.

“The injured have been sent to hospital for treatment and are currently not in life-threatening danger,” the Qiaoxi District People’s Government said after the blaze in Zhangjiakou city, northwest of Beijing.

The fire at the Liguang market broke out at around 8:40am (0040 and was extinguished after 10:00am, the district government said.

The cause of the blaze was under investigation.

World’s oldest person dies at 116

AFP, Tokyo

The world’s oldest person, Japanese woman Tomiko Itooka, has died aged 116.

Itooka, who had four children and five grandchildren, died on December 29 at a nursing home where she resided since 2019, the southern city’s mayor said in a statement.

She was born on May 23, 1908 in the commercial hub of Osaka, near Ashiya – four months before the Ford Model T was launched in the United States.

Itooka was recognised as the oldest person in the world after the August 2024 death of Spain’s Maria Branyas Morera at age 117.

Gunmen ambush Pak aid convoy

AFP, Peshawar

Gunmen ambushed a Pakistan convoy travelling to bring aid to a region besieged by sectarian fighting yesterday, local government said, wounding several officials despite a ceasefire announced three days ago.

The Kurram region of northwest Pakistan has been wracked by Sunni-Shia violence for decades, but around 140 people have been killed since a fresh bout of fighting broke out in November.

As feuding tribes have battled with machine guns and heavy weapons, the remote and mountainous region bordering Afghanistan has been largely cut off from the outside world.

After a truce was called on January 1, the convoy was attacked as it travelled to collect the first aid delivery of food and medicine sent by road since November, officials said.

US announces \$8b arms sale to Israel

AFP, Washington

The administration of US President Joe Biden has notified Congress of a planned \$8 billion arms sale to Israel, a source familiar with the plan said on Saturday.

The State Department “has informally notified Congress of an \$8 billion proposed sale of munitions to support Israel’s long-term security by resupplying stocks of critical munitions and air defense capabilities,” the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The preliminary notification gives congressional committees an opportunity to scrutinize the proposed sale, ahead of a formal notification to Congress.

The weapons package includes medium-range air-to-air missiles to defend against aerial threats; Hellfire AGM-114 missiles; 155mm projectile artillery shells for long-range targeting; and 500-pound warheads, the official said.

The Biden administration has provided Israel with billions in arms aid since Israeli forces launched a massive attack on Hamas militants in Gaza response to their deadly October 7 surprise attack in southern Israel.

The outgoing US president has repeatedly vowed “ironclad” support for Israel.

But against the backdrop of a

rising Palestinian death toll – now over 45,700, according to the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza – and the increasingly dire conditions facing civilians, the US support has become a sensitive political issue.

Many Arab and Muslim Americans, joined by some progressives, vowed not to vote for Biden in the November presidential election unless he halted the weapons aid to Israel. Students on dozens of US campuses protested the aid.

But the official said Saturday that “the president has made clear Israel has a right to defend its citizens, consistent with international law and international humanitarian law, and to deter aggression from Iran and its proxy organizations. We will continue to provide the capabilities necessary for Israel’s defense.”

Donald Trump, an outspoken supporter of Israel, said during the US presidential campaign that if elected he would quickly end the Gaza war, although he did not explain how.

United Nations officials say as many as 70 percent of those killed in the Gaza hostilities have been women or children, and aid agencies have described harrowing conditions facing civilians.

The Biden administration has urged Israel to increase humanitarian aid, but after threatening to curb arms shipments if the aid situation did not improve, it declined in November to do so.

More than 3.5m displaced in Myanmar: UN

AFP, United Nations

More than 3.5 million people have been displaced by armed conflict in Myanmar, an increase of 1.5 million from last year, the United Nations said Friday, warning that the country’s humanitarian crisis could worsen.

Since the military seized power in a 2021 coup, Myanmar has been rocked by fighting between numerous ethnic rebel groups and the army.

Those groups have battled the military since independence for autonomy and control of lucrative natural resources.

Sacked major Zia

FROM PAGE 2 Sarwar said he had yet to get a response from the ministries.

“We have so far come to know about seven cases. Of the cases, Zia was awarded the death penalty in three, and four others are under trial.”

He added that Zia contacted him on social media to make the requests on his behalf. “I have no idea about Zia’s whereabouts.”

Contacted, Kazi Mohammad Saiful Islam, joint secretary (political 2) of home ministry’s Public Security Division, said his office had not received the applications.

On February 16, 2021, an Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal sentenced Zia and four others to death.

Writer Avijit was hacked to death while he and his wife were walking out of Amar Ekushey Boi Mela in February 2015.

Students

FROM PAGE 12 draft should the government seek its input.

Nasiruddin Patwary, convener of the citizens’ platform, warned of tougher programmes unless the government showed visible progress by a few days.

Nasiruddin said he thought an election for a constituent assembly was necessary to enshrine the people’s rights.

“Both parliamentary election and a constituent assembly election can take place simultaneously.”

The press conference was moderated by Abdul Hannan Masud, chief organiser of the student platform.

Santal woman assaulted

FROM PAGE 12

Islam, 40, and four of the chairman’s men yesterday.

Bulbul said he heard that there was a land dispute and a Santal woman was slapped in the ear by the chairman, but no one saw who set the house on fire at night.

British Soren, another son of Filimona, told The Daily Star that Rafiqul and his men started filling a piece of empty and low-lying land in their village, Rajabirhat, around 10am on Friday. He claimed it was a piece of the Santals’ ancestral land, but Bengalees occupied it by showing false documents.

He said Rafiqul’s men beat his cousin Nicholas Murmu when the Santals protested against the filling of the land.

“When I visited him and protested against the incident, the chairman brought a bamboo stick to beat me as well. He slapped my mother in the ear when she tried to grab his stick. My

mother fell to the ground and blood started coming out of her ear,” said British Soren.

The Santal man said his brothers took Filimona to the upazila health complex around 11:30am. She was later sent to the Bogura hospital.

British Soren said while accompanying his mother at the Bogura hospital around 11:00pm, they heard that the chairman’s men set fire to their house. Fire Service and Civil Defence officials came to extinguish the fire, but the house was burnt down, British Soren added.

He also said although Filomona was released by the doctors, she still had pain in her ear.

Locals who spoke to this newspaper corroborated Soren’s claims, but UP Chairman Rafiqul denied the allegations and told The Daily Star that he had bought a 16 decimal piece of land from a local Bengalee owner 10-12 years ago.

“I have the land documents. The

land is also registered in my name,” he said.

He also claimed Soren and some other “drunk” Santal youths stopped him and his men from filling the land. “I did not beat his mother,” the chairman added.

When asked about the arson attack, Rafiqul said, “I do not know who set the house on fire. I was at the police station to meet the OC [officer-in-charge] at that time.”

Filimon Baske, a Santal activist working for their land rights, told The Daily Star that they would hold a protest rally against the beating of the Santal woman and the arson attack on her house.

Filimon, president of the Sahebganj Bagda Farm Bhumi Uddhar Sangram Committee, alleged many Santal families moved to other places from Rajabirhat village after about 250 bighas of their land were occupied by local Bengalees since independence.



Fighters affiliated with the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army faction, patrol through a road in the northeastern Manbij region, in Aleppo province yesterday, amid ongoing battles between Turkey-backed groups and Kurdish-led forces near the Tishreen Dam.

PHOTO: AFP

59 more killed in Gaza

FROM PAGE 12

The army has not yet responded to the accusation.

United Nations rights experts said on Monday that the north Gaza “siege” appears to be part of an effort “to permanently displace the local population as a precursor to Gaza’s annexation”.

Rescuers said strikes elsewhere in Gaza killed 10 other people, including a child and two other members of the same family, when their house was bombed in Khan Yunis.

AFP images showed Palestine

Red Crescent paramedics in Gaza City moving the body of one of their colleagues, his green jacket laid over the blanket that covered his corpse.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said a total of 136 people had been killed over the previous 48 hours.

Since October 7, 2023, Israel’s retaliatory military campaign has killed at least 45,717 people in Gaza, the majority of them civilians, according to figures from the Gaza health ministry which the United Nations considers reliable.

Police must stop using lethal weapons

There are many better ways to control crowds

The proposal to restrict the use of lethal weapons by the police while controlling crowds is a timely and welcome step. According to a report published in *The Daily Star*, a special committee in the Police Headquarters made such recommendations in its arms policy, which will be sent to the home ministry and Armed Forces Division for approval.

The recommendations include a ban on the use of revolvers and lead pellets in shotguns, replacing 7.62mm calibre pistols with 9mm ones that have a shorter range, and replacing 50 percent of long-barrel firearms with short-barrel ones to lower casualties. Many of these ammunitions were used during the July uprising, killing more than 800 and injuring over 11,000 people, according to the health ministry data. Lead pellet injuries alone took away the eyesight of more than 400 protesters. This daily's analysis of 204 fatalities showed that 95 percent of people were shot with live rounds or shotgun pellets, mostly in the head, chest, and stomach. The committee also recommended that only two officers in a 30-member platoon will carry lethal weapons for use in extreme cases and officers will be instructed to target lower body areas to reduce fatality risks.

The police force has been increasingly militarised over the last 15 years. In fact, as this daily reported, the use of lethal weapons for crowd control began in 2012 and gradually increased with time. Police became a political tool to intimidate the opposition and squash dissent rather than a public agency that is responsible for protecting and serving the people and upholding the law. While the unnecessary use of force by police during the July uprising was unprecedented in our history, the gradual militarisation of this law enforcement agency has given it an aggressive outlook. In the past one and half decades, the force has engaged in widespread human rights violations during numerous protests and movements.

The first response of police in controlling unruly crowds should be de-escalation, followed by warning. Even the use of non-lethal weapons should be limited while lethal ones should be the very last resort—only to be used in life-threatening situations. However, we have not seen our force practise such restraints.

While the recommendations police made are positive, a mechanism should be in place to review police actions during any crowd-controlling operations. An independent body should be formed to assess whether the use of lethal weapons by an officer or even non-lethal ones was justified—with persons responsible for unnecessary use being held to account. Since the Police Reform Commission also made similar recommendations restricting the use of lethal weapons, we hope that the de-militarisation of the police force will take place soon. In Bangladesh, no more lives should be lost or maimed at the hands of police for protesting wrongs or demanding justice.

Economy needs more private investment

Govt and other stakeholders must work together for its growth

It is worrisome that private sector investment isn't rising in the country, even though our foreign exchange reserves demonstrate promising stability, driven by record remittance inflows and growing exports. According to the latest data from the Bangladesh Bank, private sector credit grew by 9.86 percent year-on-year in August but slowed to 7.66 percent in November of the previous year. Furthermore, during the July-November period of the current fiscal year, the settlement of letters of credit (LC) for capital machinery imports declined by 21.9 percent compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year, while LC openings for such imports fell by 26.45 percent. Economists have identified political instability as a primary factor behind the lack of private investment activity, along with other contributing factors. They also warn that this sluggish growth could persist for another year unless the government implements effective measures. Since taking office, the interim government has introduced several initiatives to stabilise the economy. For the first time since the interim administration assumed power in August, the country's forex reserves surpassed \$21 billion, reaching \$21.36 billion on December 31. This achievement is largely attributed to high remittance inflows, creditable to both our overseas workers and government initiatives. Additionally, Bangladesh's exports reached \$50 billion in 2024, reflecting an 8.3 percent year-on-year increase. In December alone, exporters earned \$4.62 billion, an 18 percent rise compared to the same month the previous year. These successes have been facilitated by the central bank's foreign currency policies and stable exchange rates.

However, such progress may not be sustainable without an increase in private investment. The country's private investment levels have been low for several years, and the current political uncertainty has exacerbated the challenges. Rising business costs, high interest rates, liquidity shortages, and a distressed banking system are key barriers to growth. Additionally, many business owners with ties to the previous government have ceased operations or are struggling, further deterring new investments. Persistent high inflation and interest rates have also increased business expenses, making it difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises to secure loans and expand.

To address these challenges, the government must prioritise maintaining political stability while taking immediate steps to curb inflation and eliminate barriers to doing business. Many local and foreign investors believe that certain rules and regulations from the National Board of Revenue and the Bangladesh Bank hinder investment. The government should engage with investors and other stakeholders to make these regulations more business-friendly. Furthermore, fostering greater collaboration with the private sector in policy-making during ongoing reforms is crucial.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Dwarf planet Eris discovered

On this day in 2005, the dwarf planet Eris was discovered in images taken two years earlier at Palomar Observatory in California.

A school curriculum to nurture thoughtful learners



Dr Manzoor Ahmed is professor emeritus at Brac University, chair of Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN) and adviser of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE). The views expressed in this article are the author's own.

MANZOOR AHMED

As an interim step, the education authorities under the interim government have decided to revert to the curriculum introduced in 2012. Textbooks for the school year 2025 have been printed according to the old syllabus. The old system of secondary-level three-way arts-science-commerce separation starting from class 9, which had been deferred to class 11, has now been restored. Secondary-level public examinations have been conducted according to a curtailed old syllabus (with some tests cancelled due to the turmoil).

In the wake of the political change, the default position of the government has been to discard the work on the new curriculum initiated by the previous regime, which had been under heavy criticism from educationists, teachers, and parents since its inception in 2021. Obviously, there was no time to recast the curriculum and the learning content for the academic year 2025. However, the idea of rejecting every past curricular initiative without weighing

Work on curriculum and learning content undertaken in 2025 is likely to be reflected in the academic year 2026 and beyond. At this point, it appears that the focus will be on assessing students' learning and preparing and supporting teachers to achieve the learning objectives in the classroom—two areas identified as most problematic in the reform



FILE VISUAL: AFIA JAHIN

efforts of the past government.

Experience with advanced educational systems indicates that the critical issue with the school curriculum is not its content—what is written in the curriculum—but the ancillary and supportive actions and provisions that ensure the curriculum is actually applied in the classroom and that students acquire the skills and competencies they are expected to gain.

It is hoped that an education commission will be formed to consider objectives and priorities in education and to address the challenges holistically. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) has proceeded to name a nine-member committee, headed by this writer, to recommend quality improvement measures in primary and non-formal education. Crucial curriculum-related questions have arisen in the committee's deliberations, as noted below.

1) Since we are not doing a good job of teaching foundational literacy and numeracy skills in primary schools, how can much greater emphasis than at present be given to Bangla reading and writing and basic arithmetic in the learning content, learning time, student assessment, and teacher training? Should the current six subjects in primary school and the tendency to treat them equally be reconsidered? Can much of the content of subjects other than Bangla and math be incorporated into supplementary reading and writing rather than as separate subjects?

2) We have observed that the rigid and uniform classroom routine of 35-minute periods does not allow lessons to be conducted and completed properly, making classroom teaching a mechanical exercise. Can there be

flexibility for schools to organise their daily and weekly teaching schedules to allow varying time for lessons with active learner participation, while maintaining total annual time for subjects within curricular guidelines?

3) Given the inadequate total learning time in schools (with 80 percent operating double shifts), the importance of foundational skills in Bangla and math in the early grades, and the shortage of qualified English teachers, should Bangla and math be prioritised in the first three grades, and English language lessons deferred to class 4, with proper English teaching emphasised in the secondary grades? At present, neither English nor Bangla is taught effectively.

4) Should physical exercise, games, and co-curricular activities be made essential (rather than optional) components of daily primary school instruction? These are crucial for children's small and large motor skills, mental development, and social growth.

5) Can textbooks be made more attractive, properly bound, and

printed on high-quality paper with colourful illustrations so they can be used for at least three years by making them the property of the school, lent to students for the year, and taken back at the end of the year (as is done in many developed countries)? This would save money, spare millions of trees, and prevent the annual scramble to print and distribute millions of books.

6) Multi-year textbooks require that textbooks are not changed annually due to current political events and demands. Is it necessary to include materials in school textbooks, especially at the primary level, that stem from contemporary political and social demands which may be more suitable for older students? Can children's textbooks focus on neutral and foundational content that successive governments will not be inclined to alter?

7) There is much confusion regarding student learning assessment and examinations. Some wrongly advocate for the return of the Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE) and scholarship exams. Can guidelines and manuals be provided for ongoing school-based (formative) and periodic (summative) assessments for each grade? Can assessment tools, including multiple sets of sample periodic exam questions, be made available online for subject and grade teachers? It is surely the wrong message to parents that there is no assessment or test in grades one to three, as testing is an integral part of teaching and learning. What should be the stance on system assessment (large sample surveys of grade-wise competencies, such as ASER in India or simplified National Student Assessments in Bangladesh)?

Other questions remain, such as transforming the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) into a truly professional body with skilled personnel capable of curriculum and learning content development, research, and evaluation; separating the technical tasks of curriculum and textbook development from the printing and distribution of textbooks and learning materials; and ensuring coordination with the directorates for teacher training and student assessment, as well as the education boards. These are broader educational system issues, rather than just primary education, to be considered by a commission on the education sector.

The goal surely is to make the curriculum a guide to help teachers and schools nurture our children to become thoughtful and capable learners.

Signs of hope emerge for human rights and fairness



Magdalena Sepúlveda is director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and a member of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation (ICRICT).

MAGDALENA SEPÚLVEDA

Do you wonder if the world is crumbling before your eyes? You are not alone. The global human rights map is alarming: everywhere wars, massacres that aggravate natural disasters and other crises whose solution requires urgent funding. However, recent advances in multilateralism at the Brazil-led G20 and at the United Nations indicate that not everything is lost.

"I don't read news anymore," this phrase is not a trend only in my environment. A Reuters report indicates that "interest in news continues to decline, fuelling disconnection and selective news avoidance."

It's not hard to empathise with disconnected citizens. A quick glance at the headlines is enough to dampen the mood.

Wars in Ukraine, Africa and the Middle East add to geopolitical tension unprecedented since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The threat of nuclear war, which used to keep me awake at night in my childhood, is more latent today than ever before. The wave of polarisation and extreme thinking threatens multilateralism, the foundation of global coexistence and the protection of human rights. Moreover, the extreme concentration

of wealth and power in the hands of multinationals and the super-rich is eroding the democratic system of governance and depriving states of essential revenues to finance public services and protect human rights.

According to a recent Oxfam report, the wealth of billionaires increased by 46 percent during the Covid pandemic, while the wealth of the poorest half of the world's population declined by 2.5 percent.

So much for all of us wanting to stop reading. However, all is not lost.

There are spaces where things are changing. I am referring not only to social initiatives that protect victims and the environment, but also to advances in the global multilateral system.

In September, UN member states agreed on a new roadmap to save multilateralism and avoid the obsolescence to which the inaction of the UN Security Council or the corporate lobby seems to want to throw it. In the Pact for the Future, world leaders have pledged to create mechanisms that better reflect the realities of the 21st century and can respond to the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow. The goal is to achieve a more secure, peaceful, equitable, egalitarian,

inclusive, sustainable and prosperous future.

These efforts are beginning to be reflected in actions. In late October, the UN General Assembly approved the Terms of Reference (TOR) for a Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, a significant step towards a fair global tax system that will raise the resources

Implementing global minimum taxes on transnationals and the super-rich, and sharing information on corporate profits are crucial steps towards a fairer and more equitable economy. In November, Australia passed the world's first legislation on country-by-country public reporting of taxes and profits recorded by multinational corporations.

needed by all countries to close the development gap, combat inequality and address the catastrophes of climate change. Negotiations for further progress on this framework convention will begin in 2025, and the new tool is expected to be operational by 2027.

This progress has been largely due to the efforts of developing countries and emerging economies. In just a few months of negotiations at the UN, these countries have made significant progress in rectifying the global tax

system. The green light is now in sight, to achieve a fair allocation of taxation rights between countries, and to ensure that countries do not undermine human rights around the world through selfish and short-sighted tax policies.

Shortly before, G20 leaders under the leadership of Brazil had issued a communiqué that marked a significant milestone in the global quest for fair and progressive taxation, opening the door to make the ultra-rich pay their fair share of taxes.

Implementing global minimum taxes on transnationals and the super-rich, and sharing information on corporate profits are crucial steps towards a fairer and more equitable economy. In November, Australia passed the world's first legislation on country-by-country public reporting of taxes and profits recorded by multinational corporations.

Strengthening global tax cooperation is vital if all countries are to have the resources they need to meet today's challenges of human rights and the climate crisis. The current international tax system is outdated and unfair and allows corporations and super-rich individuals to evade their responsibilities to contribute their fair share. The adoption of a specific UN Framework Convention is the way in the right direction. South Africa's presidency of the G20 begins this month in an auspicious way, following in the footsteps of Brazil.

These advances may not be enough to bring disconnected people back to trusting news. But it offers hope that progress is possible, and that all is not lost.

The new year through my lenses



AN OPEN DIALOGUE
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ABDULLAH SHIBLI

As I write this column, my first in 2025, I feel optimistic, whichever lens, whether economic, political, or geopolitical, that I use to view the prospects for this year. The outlook, on a scale of 0-10, is almost a 7, which means I see signs that our nation will be able to overcome the remnants of the storm we overcame last year. While I cannot claim that I can see with 20/20 clarity how events this year will turn out, I am confident it will be way better than the nightmare we overcame in August.

I jokingly told my 88-year-old mother-in-law, while I cannot forecast with 100 percent accuracy whether the prices of essential items in the kitchen market will come down, or all her bank accounts will be fully restored, the vibes all indicate that as the year progresses, things are heading in the right direction. However, political uncertainty in Bangladesh could lead to downward pressure on the country's rating. And, prolonged political violence or policy paralysis could exacerbate fiscal or external stresses, but only slightly.

To reiterate, the year 2025 revives for us hopes for a better future. Like many of you, I feel that the new year will bring about a true change, in our political system and everyday life. The masses in the country wanted a clear break from the past decade, and the July uprising delivered a deliverance of sorts.

Now let us turn to the matter at hand. The economy, the institutions, and the moral fabric of our society were left in shambles by the previous regime, whose chief sought refuge in India, with our coffers empty, the civil service demoralised, and the masses angry and frustrated. Admittedly, things have calmed down, and while we can look forward to a brighter and less mangled socioeconomic system, the new year will be a time for vigilance, and renewed determination to rebuild the nation to take it to a higher level where it deserves to be and make up for the lost time.

For the world as a whole, the OECD is predicting 3.3 percent economic growth for 2025. That's higher than the past few years. Inflation is trending lower, and despite the heightened risk of a trade war, interest rates can be expected to be heading downwards. Because we're seeing lower levels of inflation, that will lead to lower interest rates, which can only bring in higher levels of demand and spending.

We need to bear in mind that the economy might appear a little different depending on where in the world you are located. While the US has grown relatively fast in recent times, other developed countries have grown slower. Inflation has come down in the Eurozone area, but GDP growth will continue to be slow this year because of a slowdown in the

manufacturing sectors. In addition to that, the ongoing structural issue of monetary policy in the Eurozone persists. Monetary policy is difficult because of diverse economic situations across different member states due to the single currency—that means that a policy that might be appropriate for one country could be too tight or too loose for another,

too. On the other hand, while we wait for the new US administration to formulate its threatened higher tariff barriers against China, as well as the rest of the world, the impact on China's exports and the economy might take a few months to manifest. At this point, I can only add, "let us wait and see."

According to the World Bank, the

slow the pace of Federal Reserve rate cuts, that could be bad for the borrower nations.

The Asian Development Bank, on the other hand, revised the region's inflation forecast for 2024 and 2025 as price pressures ease due to the lagging effects of monetary tightening.

Inflation in "developing Asia"—

analyses, Bangladesh's economy is projected to improve in 2025 due to anticipated positive factors like inflation control, banking sector reforms, increased domestic resource mobilisation, a better business climate, and expanded trade. The two recent floods have disrupted this year's Aman production. Nonetheless, there are reasons to believe that the pro-active steps taken by the interim administration will bridge the gap between last year's production and this year's expected harvest.

Even though some concerns remain regarding political stability and public order, many business leaders are expressing optimism about earnings growth if the economic reforms are implemented successfully.

Key reasons for potential economic improvement in Bangladesh in 2025 are the RMG sector's resilience, growth in the digital economy, and the focus of the interim government on improving the business environment, tackling corruption, and facilitating foreign direct investment. Nonetheless, the government will need to be vigilant about the youth unemployment situation, the cost of borrowing, exchange rate oscillations, and the terms of trade.

I am betting that inflation globally will slow down, the bellicosity levels in Ukraine and the Middle East will die down, and the forthcoming elections in Bangladesh will be a harbinger of good times ahead. I cannot but add that I was thrilled to note that the prestigious British magazine, The Economist, recognised Bangladesh as the "Country of the Year" in 2024 for toppling an autocratic regime in an unprecedented student-led mass uprising. I look forward to further inspirational happenings in the coming months.



Students Against Discrimination holds the 'March for Unity' to mark the student-led uprising five months ago that led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Central Shaheed Minar, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 31, 2024.

PHOTO: REUTERS

leading to potential imbalances and economic disparities within the Eurozone.

China is expected to bounce back from the slow growth it experienced last year. Their government recently passed fiscal and monetary stimulus to enhance growth in 2025, and this will provide a boost to its economy—the ripple effects will be felt elsewhere

poorest countries are in their worst economic state for two decades, having missed out on the post-pandemic recovery. For many other economies, the prospect of a stronger dollar is bad news. That would suck investment away from them and make their dollar-denominated debt dearer. Also, if Trump's tax cuts or higher tariffs create inflation and

which comprises 46 members of the ADB, such as China and India—is now forecasted at 2.7 percent this year, slightly slower than the projection in July, according to the December 2024 Asian Development Outlook. For 2025, the outlook was revised downward from 3 percent to 2.6 percent.

According to the latest economic

The strategic significance of José Ramos-Horta's Bangladesh visit



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RAKIB AL HASAN

In the ever-evolving geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia and the Bay of Bengal, few diplomatic visits stir as much intrigue and potential as the recent four-day visit of Timor-Leste's President José Ramos Horta to Bangladesh. Arriving as the only foreign guest invited to celebrate Bangladesh's Victory Day, President Ramos Horta's visit has ignited discussions that extend far beyond the ceremonial and symbolic. Why was Timor-Leste, a country with a population barely exceeding 1.3 million and a GDP far smaller than Bangladesh's, granted such a warm welcome? Why did Dr Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel laureate and the chief adviser of the interim government of Bangladesh, personally receive the president with a red-carpet reception? What does Timor-Leste's relationship with Bangladesh signify in terms of regional diplomacy, economic partnership, and long-term strategy?

Timor-Leste is no ordinary small nation. Emerging as the first independent country of the 21st century, it symbolises resilience and the struggle for sovereignty. Under the direct supervision of the United Nations, Timor-Leste declared its independence in 2002 after a bloody liberation war, having been under both Portuguese and Indonesian rule for centuries. The young nation is unique, not only because it is a Christian-majority state but also because it emerged from a predominantly Muslim region—separating itself from the world's largest Muslim-majority country, Indonesia. This historical backdrop echoes Bangladesh's own independence struggle, albeit under very different circumstances. But it's more than shared histories that bring these two countries together—it's their respective ambitions to carve out a strong presence in the changing geopolitics of Asia.

The timing of President Ramos Horta's visit is undeniably significant. Sheikh Hasina, the recently ousted prime minister of Bangladesh, had, in June 2024—two months prior to her removal—made an explosive claim that rattled the political airwaves. She alleged that there was an ongoing plot to carve out a Christian-majority

state in South Asia by breaking off parts of Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts as well as areas in Myanmar. The vision she described was eerily reminiscent of Timor-Leste's trajectory to independence.

The geopolitical calculations surrounding Myanmar complicate matters even further. Myanmar, now embroiled in a civil war, has witnessed rebel groups steadily gaining ground. Reports suggest that the rebels are on the cusp of victory, and with their success, there is growing speculation that they may seek to declare a new independent state in the region. This would have far-reaching implications for neighbouring Bangladesh, already grappling with the presence of over 1.3 million Rohingya refugees displaced by violence in Myanmar. Could these tumultuous events play into the larger narrative that the ousted prime minister spoke of, or is it simply a tempest of political rhetoric?

This brings us to the central question: why Timor-Leste? To answer this, we must delve deeper into Bangladesh's foreign policy trajectory. In the midst of strained relations with Myanmar, Bangladesh has strategically pivoted towards cultivating alliances within Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on ASEAN. In this regard, Malaysia's role has been critical. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, whose country assumed the ASEAN chair this year, has already engaged with Dr Yunus to discuss two pressing issues: pressuring Myanmar to address the Rohingya crisis and accelerating the repatriation process. Malaysia's role as a key player within ASEAN cannot be overstated—it is a nation that has the ear of Myanmar, and its backing could prove pivotal in pushing forward Bangladesh's goals in the region.

Yet, it is Timor-Leste's role as an observer country in ASEAN that makes its relationship with Bangladesh so strategic. While Timor-Leste is not yet a full member of ASEAN, it is expected to join the bloc in the near future. In that capacity, the country could become an influential voice in ASEAN discussions, including on critical issues like the

Rohingya crisis. This explains the political importance of President Ramos Horta's visit: Bangladesh is not simply cultivating ties with a friendly neighbour but aligning itself with a nation poised to take a more prominent role in Southeast Asia's multilateral framework.

Economic ties are another key dimension of this evolving relationship. Timor-Leste's oil and gas reserves, especially in the Timor Sea's Bayu-Undan and Greater Sunrise fields, present an exciting opportunity for collaboration. As global energy markets become increasingly volatile, Bangladesh, which is heavily dependent on energy imports, could find Timor-Leste to be a valuable partner. Joint ventures in energy, including renewable energy and green technologies, were discussed during President Ramos Horta's visit. These ventures could serve as a foundation for deeper economic cooperation, laying the groundwork for long-term bilateral trade that benefits both nations.

Bangladesh's own economic evolution under the interim leadership of Dr Yunus—who is no stranger to global change-making—also plays a role in shaping this diplomatic direction. Bangladesh's growing strength in fields like microcredit, sustainable development, and social business aligns with Timor-Leste's economic needs. In his discussions with President Ramos Horta, Dr Yunus offered his microcredit model as a potential tool for combating poverty in Timor-Leste, a country that shares many of Bangladesh's developmental challenges.

The cultural and educational dimensions of the visit are equally compelling. Bangladesh, with its deep expertise in education and healthcare, stands to play a significant role in Timor-Leste's development. Scholarship programmes, cultural exchanges, and joint educational initiatives could help foster long-term collaboration between the two nations. Bangladesh's growing prowess in fields like technology, textiles, and pharmaceuticals also holds the potential to open new markets for Bangladeshi products in Timor-Leste, particularly in industries where Bangladesh has established a competitive edge.

Moreover, Bangladesh's business community has already made substantial inroads into Timor-Leste's market. Bangladeshi entrepreneurs have established a strong presence in Timor-Leste's furniture and electronics industries, sectors essential to the country's economic development. Bangladeshi products,

renowned for their affordability and quality, have found a ready market in Timor-Leste, further cementing the ties between the two nations.

The role of Bangladesh's police force in Timor-Leste's fight for independence is another dimension of this bilateral relationship that is often overlooked. During Timor-Leste's struggle for independence in the late 1990s, Bangladesh played an active role in supporting the UN peacekeeping mission, contributing police forces to the operation. Bangladeshi peacekeepers helped stabilise the region and ensured peace and security in the aftermath of the conflict. This history of cooperation between the two nations serves as a foundation for their growing diplomatic and strategic ties today, with both countries recognising the value of working together in the peace and security sector.

Beyond the tangible economic


and diplomatic factors lies a larger question: what does this burgeoning relationship signify for Bangladesh's role on the global stage? As global powers shift alliances and recalibrate their strategic priorities, Bangladesh's engagement with Timor-Leste signals an attempt to carve out a unique role in Southeast Asia, a region increasingly defined by its economic dynamism and geopolitical significance. Strengthening ties with Timor-Leste is not just about energy cooperation or trade; it is about positioning Bangladesh as a player in a broader, more diverse network of alliances. Timor-Leste, despite its relatively small size and population, represents a strategic entry point into ASEAN's ever-expanding sphere of influence.

This vision of Bangladesh's future is at the heart of Dr Yunus's diplomatic strategy. By deepening ties with Timor-Leste and other like-minded nations in Southeast

Asia, Bangladesh can begin to shape a new narrative—one centred on collaboration, regional solidarity, and sustainable development.

Bangladesh's path forward is fraught with both challenges and opportunities. The visit of President Ramos Horta marks the beginning of a new chapter in Bangladesh's diplomatic evolution. As a nation with a vision of progress and resilience, Bangladesh is learning to balance regional cooperation with strategic foresight.

As the world turns its gaze towards Southeast Asia, Bangladesh's role as a diplomatic leader—emboldened by the leadership of Dr Yunus and the ongoing support of nations like Timor-Leste—will become increasingly vital. The journey is just beginning, but the destination is clear: Bangladesh is on the path to becoming a key player in a new era of global diplomacy.



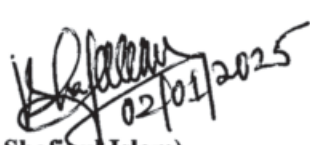
North-West Power Generation Company Limited
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Office of the Chief Engineer
Sirajganj Power Station
NWPGCL, Soyadabad, Sirajganj-6700.

Ref: 27.28.8878.004.18.007.19.003
e-Tender Notice
The following e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1	1054036	Procurement of PC, Conference System, and Accessories	01/01/2025 2:00 PM	22/01/2025 02:30 PM	22/01/2025 03:30 PM
2	1054215	Purchasing of Official Uniform	01/01/2025 2:00 PM	22/01/2025 02:30 PM	22/01/2025 3:30 PM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



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GD- 40



Reflecting on five decades of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI)

Vaccines have long been a cornerstone of public health, preventing the spread of deadly diseases and saving countless lives. In 1974, the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), a global initiative to ensure equitable access to life-saving vaccines for every child, regardless of geographic location or socioeconomic status. Over the past five decades, EPI evolved and achieved remarkable milestones that reshaped global health.

The 50th anniversary of EPI in 2024 marked a pivotal moment to celebrate its achievements, reflect on its impact, and renew efforts to strengthen immunisation initiatives.

EPI, initiated during the momentum of the smallpox eradication effort, aimed to provide universal access to life-saving vaccines for children worldwide. By the 1980s, the program had established a robust vaccine supply chain and achieved unprecedented success, with global childhood immunisation levels reaching 80% by the early 1990s.

EPI's milestones included the eradication of smallpox in 1980 and reducing polio by over 99% through partnerships with WHO, UNICEF, Gavi, and others. The program expanded from six childhood vaccines to 13 universally recommended vaccines, including Hepatitis B, Hib, and HPV, alongside context-dependent vaccines like Yellow Fever and Cholera.

EPI innovations extended beyond immunisation, influencing injection safety, solar power integration, and health system strengthening, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

The 50-year journey of EPI underscored immunisation's role as a cornerstone of public health, saving millions of lives and advancing global health equity.

Source: World Health Organisation

SNEEZING, COUGHING, OR SOMETHING ELSE?

Unravel the mystery of your symptoms!

DR NUR-A-SAFRINA RAHMAN

When it comes to sneezing, coughing, and stuffy noses, many people often wonder whether they are dealing with a cold or allergies. While both conditions share some similar symptoms, they have different causes, and knowing the difference can help you find the right treatment and understand how long you might be feeling under the weather.

Colds and allergies are often confused because they both affect the respiratory system, but they stem from different causes. Colds are caused by viruses, which are contagious. These viruses spread when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches surfaces that others then come into contact with. Once a cold virus enters your body, your immune system reacts, leading to symptoms such as a sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and fatigue. You typically start feeling the symptoms a few days after being exposed to the virus, and they last for about 3 to 10 days. After that, your body fights off the infection, and you start feeling better.

Allergies, on the other hand, are caused by an overactive immune system. When your body mistakes harmless substances—such as pollen, dust, or pet dander—for harmful invaders, it releases chemicals to protect itself. This immune response causes symptoms like sneezing, itchy eyes, and congestion. Unlike colds, allergies are not contagious. They happen when your body comes into contact with an allergen, and symptoms can last as long as you are exposed to that allergen. For example, if you are allergic to pollen, you might notice your symptoms worsen during certain seasons when pollen levels are high.

The key to distinguishing



between a cold and allergies is the duration of your symptoms. If your symptoms last more than a week or two, and especially if they persist for months, it is more likely you are dealing with allergies. Cold symptoms, on the other hand, generally clear up within a few days to a couple of weeks. Another major difference is that colds can cause fever and body aches, which are rare in allergy cases.

While both conditions can cause a stuffy or runny nose, allergies are more likely to cause itchy, watery eyes, which are not common in colds. Also, unlike colds, allergies do not usually cause a sore throat or fatigue, though they can make you feel worn out if your symptoms are persistent.

If you are experiencing cold-like symptoms that linger for a long time, or if you notice your symptoms are triggered by specific allergens like

pollen or pet dander, it is a beneficial idea to consider allergies. On the other hand, if your symptoms appear suddenly, often during the winter months, and you have a fever or body aches, it is probably a cold.

In terms of treatment, colds usually get better on their own with rest, fluids, and over-the-counter medications to relieve symptoms. If you have allergies, avoiding triggers is key. You can also use antihistamines, nasal sprays, or allergy shots to manage symptoms.

So, the next time you are sniffing and sneezing, take a moment to think about how long the symptoms have been around and what might be causing them. Knowing the difference between a cold and allergies can help you manage your symptoms and get back to feeling better faster.

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HMPV

A silent threat to respiratory health

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a common but often underrecognised respiratory virus that primarily affects the respiratory tract. Discovered in 2001, HMPV belongs to the Pneumoviridae family and is closely related to respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). It is a leading cause of acute respiratory infections, particularly in young children, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals.

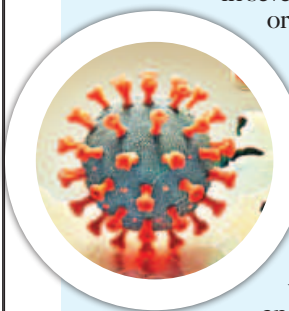
HMPV is transmitted through respiratory droplets, direct contact with infected individuals, or contaminated surfaces. Infections are most common during late winter and spring, and symptoms range from mild cold-like illness to severe respiratory conditions, such as bronchiolitis or pneumonia. High-risk groups, including children under five and adults over 65, often experience more severe complications.

There is currently no vaccine or specific antiviral treatment for HMPV. Management focuses on supportive care, including hydration, fever reduction, and, in severe cases, oxygen therapy or mechanical ventilation.

Early identification and appropriate clinical care can significantly improve outcomes.

Preventive measures, such as frequent hand washing, avoiding close contact with sick individuals, and maintaining good respiratory hygiene, can help limit the spread of HMPV. Health professionals emphasise the importance of monitoring high-risk populations during seasonal outbreaks.

HMPV's global burden underscores the need for continued research to develop effective vaccines and treatments. Greater awareness and diagnostic efforts are crucial in mitigating the impact of this often-overlooked pathogen and improving outcomes for affected populations.



Updated vitamin D guidelines: what clinicians and patients need to know

In 2024, the Endocrine Society issued updated guidelines on the evaluation, treatment, and prevention of vitamin D deficiency in adults, reflecting recent research. The new recommendations, which replace a 2011 guideline, aim to simplify the approach to vitamin D testing and supplementation.

Key changes in vitamin D guidelines

Previously, the Endocrine Society defined vitamin D levels in terms of "deficiency" and "insufficiency" based on serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25[OH]D) levels. However, the new guidelines no longer categorise vitamin D status in this way. Research has not confirmed a clear connection between specific vitamin D levels and clinical outcomes, leading to this shift.

For most adults aged 19 to 74, the guideline advises against routine vitamin D testing or supplementation. Instead, it recommends following the U.S. National Academy of Medicine's daily intake guidelines: 600 IU until age 70 and 800 IU daily for those over 70.

Special recommendations for older adults and pregnant women

While routine testing is not advised for people aged 75

and older, empirical vitamin D supplementation is recommended due to its potential to lower mortality, although the evidence is modest. Supplementation in older adults should focus on low daily doses (about 1,000 IU), either through fortified foods or supplements.

Pregnant women are also advised to take vitamin D, either from fortified foods or supplements, to ensure sufficient intake.

Other key considerations

The guideline also recommends vitamin D supplementation for adults with high-risk prediabetes, as research suggests it may help lower the risk of progressing to type 2 diabetes. However, there is no clear definition of "high-risk prediabetes" compared to regular prediabetes.

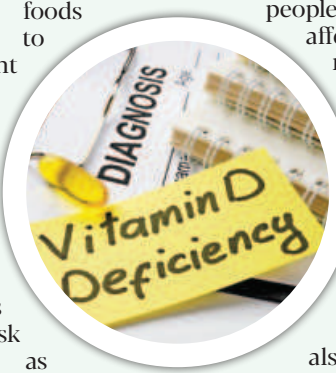
In contrast, the guideline advises against routine testing for vitamin D levels in individuals with obesity or darker skin tones, as no evidence supports the need for routine screening in these populations.

Impact on clinical practice

The new guideline could significantly change how clinicians approach vitamin D testing and supplementation. The practice of routinely testing vitamin D levels and prescribing supplements to raise levels to 30 ng/mL or higher is no longer recommended. However, this guideline does not apply to people with conditions affecting vitamin D metabolism, such as malabsorption, chronic kidney disease, or bone disorders like osteomalacia, for whom testing and treatment remain necessary.

Clinicians should also be aware that while diet and sunlight contribute to vitamin D intake, it is challenging to accurately assess vitamin D status through routine history-taking during office visits. Despite these challenges, familiarity with these updated guidelines is essential for primary care providers to ensure effective care and avoid unnecessary testing and supplementation.

Source: The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism



New insights into treating adult ADHD

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is not just a childhood condition—it affects millions of adults too. While the focus has often been on children, the increasing number of adults being diagnosed with ADHD has sparked interest in whether treatments that work for kids can also help grown-ups. A new large-scale study has provided some answers, confirming that certain medications are highly effective in the short term but raising questions about the usefulness of non-medication therapies.

Published in The Lancet Psychiatry, this study analysed data from over 100 previous studies, involving about 15,000 people. The researchers aimed to assess various treatments, including medications, psychological therapy, and newer approaches like neurostimulation and neurofeedback. The key takeaway? Stimulant medications and a non-stimulant option proved to be the most effective treatments for reducing core ADHD symptoms like inattention, restlessness, and difficulty completing tasks—at least for the first 12 weeks.

Interestingly, non-drug treatments like cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness, and transcranial direct



current stimulation (tDCS) showed mixed results. Patients did not report significant improvement compared to a placebo, although doctors noticed symptom improvements. This highlights the need for further research to explore the true benefits of these treatments.

Another finding was that while ADHD medications were effective at managing symptoms, they did not have a significant impact on broader aspects of life, like quality of life. This suggests that while medications can help manage symptoms, a more holistic approach is needed to address the overall well-being of adults with ADHD.

In conclusion, while medications are the most effective short-term treatments, more research is needed to fully understand the long-term impact of these treatments and the potential of non-medication therapies for adults with ADHD.

The risk of developing cyst in the lungs

Avoid eating at roadside open food stalls

DR K K PANDEY

These days, quite often you would have heard people talking about a word, 'Cyst.' Somebody had had a problem of epilepsy, and the treating doctor had told him about a cyst in the brain. Quite often you would have heard your acquaintance complaining about pain in the right upper side of the abdomen and jaundice, and it was found later that a cyst in his liver was the cause of it. Also, you would have heard or seen your relative suffering from severe dry cough along with chest pain and coughing out blood. When on a doctor's advice a chest X-ray was done, a cyst was found in the lung. Sometimes you do not have any problem, and when you get a routine medical check-up for job placement or for going abroad, you will be surprised to see a large round white shadow of a cyst in the chest X-ray on one side or both sides.

How does this cyst enter a human body?

In our country, there is an abundance of filth, dirt, and a network of open drains. The stray dogs infested with cysts empty out their stools in these very spots, leading to pollution of not only ground soil but also air. In close proximity to these contaminated sites along the roads, you will find open stalls of Indian fast foods like "chaat," "bhelpuri," and fruit juice vendors. As soon as you eat this cyst-infested fast food, not only food alone but eggs too will enter your intestine, and you just cannot notice these cysts as they are too tiny to be seen with your naked eyes.

How does this cyst reach the lung?

After reaching the intestine, the worm inside the cyst breaks out of the covering and roams freely. It then punctures the wall of the intestine and enters the adjacent blood pipes and then blood circulation. It then, through these blood pipes, reaches various parts of the body, especially the liver and lung, where it makes its permanent abode. After settling down in any of these favourite places, it starts growing in size and constructs for itself an outer covering for safety and gives birth to a hydatid cyst, which gradually starts increasing in size.

Who are the victims of the disease of cysts in the lung?

If you or your children play with stray dogs or your pet dog, and he is neither vaccinated regularly nor his proper hygiene is maintained, or your pet spends most of the daytime outside the house near open dirty drains rather than inside the house, you and possibly your children can become victims of cysts. If you and your children do not wash hands with soap before eating or after touching the earth and soil and then, without washing their hands with soap straightaway, go for dinner/lunch, you and your children are most likely to be infested with lung or liver cysts.

What will happen if no treatment is done?

If you refuse to get treated for the lung cyst, sooner or later you will lose your life. Because of the enormous space available inside the chest, the lung cyst has an ample opportunity to enlarge rapidly and becomes gigantic in size in a very short time. If ever such a patient coughs severely or receives a strong blow on the chest or sustains a chest injury, the enlarged hydatid cyst of the lung gets ruptured.

What is the correct treatment of the lung cyst?

To decide the treatment of a lung cyst, you have to take into account some factors like the size of the cyst, the location of the cyst, and other associated medical conditions of the patient. Surgery is the ideal and the best treatment for a lung cyst. A person suffering from a cyst in the lung must get it removed surgically as early as possible.

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Can AI in healthcare mimic human biases and improve clinical decisions?

AI models like GPT-4 and Gemini 1.0-Pro can make expert-level decisions in healthcare, but they also show human-like biases. Recent studies have shown that while these AI models can help doctors with diagnosing, they do not always improve the decision-making process. In one study, doctors who had access to GPT-4 did not perform better than those using just regular tools. This suggests doctors need training on how to use AI tools effectively.

Researchers also tested AI for biases using different medical cases. In one example, AI was more likely to recommend surgery for lung cancer



when survival rates were shown instead of death rates. This is known as the 'framing effect.' In another case, AI was more likely to think a person with a cough and blood in their

sputum had a pulmonary embolism when the symptom was mentioned first, which shows the 'primacy effect.' In a third case, when a woman with knee pain was shown two outcomes—one where she recovered and another where she died—AI judged her care as appropriate in the first case but not the second, showing a 'hindsight bias.'

These biases in AI were even stronger than those in human doctors. This means that while AI can help doctors, it is important for doctors to question the AI's suggestions and explore other possibilities to avoid making mistakes.

BCB LACKING CLARITY in decision-making

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

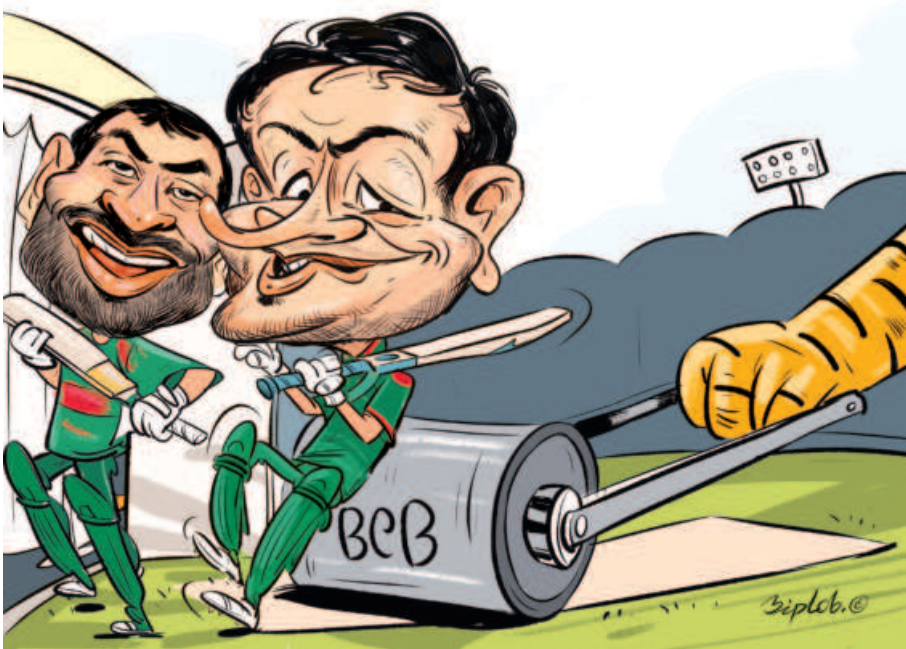
One can never fall to boredom when following what transpires in Bangladesh cricket.

The decision-making process, in particular, as well as the outcomes, often relating to simple issues, are commonly shrouded in mystery, most of it done unnecessarily.

Say for example, Tamim Iqbal's retire-
unretire conundrum that has yet to come to a long-awaited resolution.

It almost seems that the former ODI skipper has been playing hard to get with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) after his retirement quandary as no one from the board can say for certain what the left-
hander plans to do regarding his future in the national team.

Tamim himself did not speak about his future previously but on Friday the southpaw was caught on camera affirming that he was indeed done with the national team.



During a conversation with Chittagong Kings mentor Shahid Afridi that took place in a hotel room in Dhaka, Afridi causally asked, "Tamim, you've completely retired, finished?" to which Tamim answered, "Yes, from the national team."

The 35-year-old has not played for Bangladesh since September 2023 and has not retired from ODIs and Tests. And

now it seems that everyone apart from the BCB knows that Tamim won't be making a comeback to the national team but it can be expected that he would not be conveying this message to the BCB anytime soon. With the Champions Trophy coming up next month, it can be assumed that the possibility of Tamim's inclusion into the side could continue to cause further stirs.

On the other hand, ace all rounder Shakib Al Hasan has had to see the other side of the coin. He has kept himself available and shown willingness to play but faces an uncertain and tricky situation in assignments at home due to security concerns for his involvement with the ousted Awami League government. Shakib's involvement in the Champions Trophy is still up in the air as he has not played an ODI since the 2023 World Cup in India.

"Since the Champions Trophy is not at home, we will decide about it [Shakib's involvement] at some point during the BPL," BCB president Faruque Ahmed told reporters on Friday.

"Shakib still has not retired. Nothing of that sort has happened to him. He often talks about his issues with the ministry and it is up to them to solve his issues. (If those issues are solved), there is his fitness, mental state, and the selection committee (to consider)," Faruque added, keeping more grey areas than required regarding the Shakib issue.

There is little clarity from the BCB in what it is looking to do with Shakib and Tamim, keeping the Champions Trophy in mind. A hiatus the duo has had in the format should definitely have prompted any other board to make clear cut decisions but the BCB works in its own pace and has its own mysterious ways of doing things that often lack clarity.

Liverpool primed to heap more misery on Man Utd

REUTERS

When Liverpool won 3-0 at Old Trafford in September, Manchester United fell to 14th and that is where they still find themselves more than four months later but 23 points behind the Premier League leaders ahead of Sunday's game at Anfield.

Such has been United's downfall that they are no longer looking up at European spots but looking over their shoulder at teams below them steadily improving and dragging Ruben Amorim's side into a potential relegation scrap.

On his part, Amorim is well aware of the reality facing England's most successful club that has not won the league since 2013 while their fans look forlornly at rivals Liverpool, who are well on course to equal their record tally of 20 titles.

With a game in hand, Arne Slot's Liverpool are six points clear of second-placed Arsenal while they have more than double United's tally with 45 points.

While Amorim is struggling to bring in the changes in United after the departure of Erik ten Hag, one manager who does not need to change things much is Slot as his team looks to extend their unbeaten run to 24 games in all competitions.

Liverpool have lost only one game this year and

- ⚽ No player has scored more goals (12) and provided more assists (six) against Manchester United in Premier League history than Liverpool's Mohamed Salah.
- ⚽ Arne Slot could also become the first Liverpool boss in 88 years to accomplish the league double over United in his debut season.

their form against United, who have beaten their rivals only once in the last 13 league games, makes them outright favourites on Sunday.

Off the pitch, however, the contract situations of the league's top scorer Mohamed Salah, captain Virgil van Dijk and Real Madrid-linked Trent Alexander-Arnold have routinely been distractions.

But Slot has batted away any question thrown at him without batting an eyelid while Salah, who has 17 goals and 13 assists this season, continues to set new milestones as he looks ahead to playing his favourite opponent.



Ryan Rickelton became only the third South African batter to smash a Test double ton at home on Saturday, scoring 259 off 343 deliveries to help the Proteas pile up 615 first-innings score on Day 2 of their second Test against Pakistan in Cape Town. The two other South Africans to score 250-plus scores at home were Gary Kirsten (275 vs England in Durban in 1999) and Graeme Pollock (274 vs Australia in Durban 1970).

PHOTO: AFP

Tiger batters yet to find their feet in high-scoring BPL

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Although local batters flourished in the high-scoring opening phase of the ongoing 11th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) in Dhaka, which concluded on Friday, most batters of the national T20I team struggled to get going, something they would be hoping to change in the upcoming Sylhet phase.

In the Dhaka phase, which had eight matches, batters like Anamul Haque Bijoy, Yasir Ali, Mahidul Islam Ankon and Saif Hassan stepped up and made an impact for their respective franchises, more than the overseas batters in some cases.

But other than Shamim Hossain, who hit a 38-ball 78 for Chittagong Kings against Khulna Tigers, the other national team batters could not score big on the good batting surfaces at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

Dhaka Capitals opener Liton Das, who recently led Bangladesh to a 3-0 series sweep over the West Indies in the Caribbean, is still searching for form, amassing just 33 runs in three innings, which has not helped his side's cause either, who are winless after three

matches and are currently at the bottom of the points table.

Meanwhile, Najmul Hossain Shanto, who returned to competitive cricket through last month's National Cricket League T20 after a month-long rehab for his groin injury, is yet to find his feet as he made only nine runs in two games for the star-studded Fortune Barishal.

Barishal have chosen to sit out marquee English batter Dawin Malan to make way for Shanto to open the innings alongside skipper Tamim Iqbal. But if Shanto fails to get going, he could be demoted in the line-up or even lose his place to Malan.

Shanto's Barishal teammate Towhid Hridoy (36 runs in two games) and Dhaka's Tanzid Hasan Tamim (58 runs in three matches) failed to shine in the

Dhaka phase while Sylhet Strikers' Jaker Ali made a 33-ball 24 against Rangpur Riders in his only innings so far.

For Habibur Bashar, current head of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) women's wing and a former national selector, Tiger batters failing to make their mark was the only blemish in an otherwise promising opening phase.

"I can't say I'm fully satisfied. I really expected our front-line cricketers like Liton, Tanzid Tamim, Towhid Hridoy and Shanto to do well and dominate during this BPL. There can't be any excuses because this year the wickets are really good," Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bashar hoped that in the Sylhet phase, which is set to begin on Monday, and in the Chattogram phase, which will begin



Six-star Boateng fuels Rahmatganj resurgence

SPORTS REPORTER

Ghanaian forward Samuel Boateng struck a whopping six goals in Rahmatganj MFS's 6-1 victory over Dhaka Wanderers Club in a Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) fixture in Munshiganj yesterday, as the underdogs from Old Dhaka continue to defy expectations.

A fifth win in six matches left Rahmatganj just three points behind leaders Mohammedan, who thumped Chittagong Abahani 5-1 in Mymensingh yesterday.

"The boys have really been toiling hard in practice sessions and transforming their hard work into results on the pitch. This is just the outcome of their hard work as they are truly hungry for victory," Rahmatganj head coach Kamal Ahmed Babu told The Daily Star after the match.

"A spirit of doing better in every match is driving all the players, from the local to the foreign recruits, and they are determined not to give up until the final whistle. That's why we are seeing results," said Babu, who once guided Rahmatganj to finish top of the first-phase table of the BPL in 2016.

Babu also heaped praise on Boateng, who is now the league's top scorer with 10 goals from six matches. Boateng's remarkable feat made him only the second player in the league's history

to score six goals in a single match. He matched the record set by Nigerian forward Nwachukwu Paul Macjames, who achieved the milestone in 2007, guiding Mohammedan SC to a 7-1 win over Rahmatganj during the league's inaugural season.

"Boateng once played for a top club in Ghana. He came to Bangladesh to prove himself in a bid to join a better team in the future.

"He is a talented forward who possesses both speed and power, allowing him to race past opposing defenders and beat goalkeepers with his powerful shots," said Babu.

At the Rofique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium, title contenders Mohammedan initially faced a challenge against winless Chittagong Abahani after being reduced to ten men in the 20th minute, as defender Shakil Ahmed Topu saw a red for fouling Anik Ghosh.

Following an evenly balanced first half, the Black and Whites came back strongly in the second. Defender Mounzir Couliadiati from Burkina Faso opened the floodgates with a header in the 47th minute before Emmanuel Sunday doubled the lead, and Sourov Dewan netting home twice.

Adding to their misery, Chittagong Abahani's defender Salim Reza struck an own goal before substitute Imtiaz Sultan Jitu converted a stoppage-time penalty to break Mohammedan's clean sheet.

- Rishabh Pant's explosive knock helped India to a 145-run lead with four wickets left on Saturday. At the close in Sydney, India were 141-6 in the second innings with Ravindra Jadeja on eight and Washington Sundar six after they dismissed Australia for 181 in reply to their first-innings 185.
- It was only the second time in the last 70 years at SCG that both teams were bowled out under 200 in their first innings. The other instance happened in the Test between England (123) & Australia (145) in 1979/80.
- Pant's 29-ball fifty is the second-fastest Test fifty by an Indian, only behind his own record of a 28-ball fifty against Sri Lanka in Bengaluru in 2022.
- It is also the fastest half-century by a visiting batter on Australian soil, bettering the 33-ball efforts by England's John Brown (Melbourne 1895) and West Indies' Roy Fredericks (Perth 1975).
- Australia pacer Scott Boland had Virat Kohli caught at second slip yesterday, claiming the wicket of the India great for the fourth time in five innings in this series.
- India's stand-in skipper Jasprit Bumrah, who was taken for scans midway through Australia's first innings due to a back spasm, took his 32nd wicket in this series -- most by an Indian in a series in Australia, surpassing Bishan Bedi's 31 wickets in a series in 1977/78.



Rishabh Pant plays a shot on way to a blistering knock, reaching fifty off just 29 deliveries on Day 2 of their fifth and final Test against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday. Pant smashed six boundaries and four maximums during an exhilarating 33-ball 61-run knock.

PHOTO: AFP

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MANUFACTURER

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TO BUILD TOMORROW'S BANGLADESH

BSRM
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SHAH
CEMENT

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JULY PROCLAMATION Students to hold nationwide campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Students Against Discrimination and Jatiya Nagorik Committee will campaign from January 6-11 across the country to listen to what people want so that their hopes and aspirations are reflected in the proclamation on July uprising.

Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the students' platform, announced the programme at a jointly held press conference at the organisation's central office in the capital's Bangla Motor yesterday afternoon.

"We will distribute leaflets, hold rallies, and engage with people from all segments of the society," he said.

Hasnat said the campaign will cover all districts and upazilas.

"The July-August uprising saw participation from all segments of society, from marginalised communities to urban residents. We hope this proclamation will reflect their hopes and aspirations."

The government pledged to issue a proclamation through national consensus, but no visible progress has been made, Hasnat noted.

"Drafting this proclamation is a critical matter. Although we were ready to announce it on December 31, we refrained when the interim government assumed responsibility. Now, we urge the government to act promptly."

Hasnat said the student platform is ready to share its

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3



A young Palestinian sits beside the bodies of a family at the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital after their home was hit in an Israeli strike in the Shujaiya neighbourhood of Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Santal woman assaulted, her house torched Son files case against UP chairman, 5 others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Santal man has filed a case against a local union parishad chairman and five others on allegations of beating the complainant's mother and burning their house in Gaibandha.

The incident occurred at Rajabirat village of Gobindaganj upazila on Friday over a land dispute between the Santals and Rajahar Union Parishad Chairman Rafiqul Islam, a former BNP leader.

The Santal woman, Filimona Hasda, 55, was admitted to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital for treatment of injuries she received during the assault, her family said.

She was discharged yesterday, said Sub-Inspector Krishna, in charge of the police camp at the hospital.

Bulbul Islam, officer-in-charge of Gobindaganj Police Station, told The Daily Star that Filimona's son Julius Soren, 35, filed the case against Rafiqul, 45, his brother Mezbahul

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

Jamaat holds demo to free arrested AL leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Gazipur

About 80 leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday staged a protest procession at the Joydebpur Police Station in Gazipur demanding the release of an Awami League leader who is a suspect in an ongoing case.

Shafiqul Sikder, the organising secretary of an AL ward under Mirzapur in Sadar upazila, was detained around 7:00pm. Yet, Jamaat leaders said he was a member of their organisation and attempted to secure his release, according to police officials.

"I cannot release him as he is a suspect in a case – they can bring their demands, but we will act as per the law and departmental guidance," said Md Abdul Halim, officer-in-charge of the police station.

No misconduct occurred during the protest. "If necessary, I would have called for additional police support, but the situation remained under control. The protesters eventually left peacefully," he added.

"The person held by police is now a member of our organisation," said Abdul Bari, Jamaat nayebe ameer.

59 more killed in Gaza

Seven children among 11 members of a family among the dead

AGENCIES

At least 59 people, including seven children of a family, were killed in Israeli air strikes across the Palestinian territory in the past 24 hours, said the enclave's health ministry yesterday.

The civil defence agency said a dawn air strike on the home of the al-Ghoula family in Gaza City killed 11 people of a family, seven of them children.

AFP images from the neighbourhood of Shujaiya combing through smoking rubble. Bodies including those of small children were lined up on the ground, shrouded in white sheets.

Late on Friday Hamas had said indirect negotiations with Israel were to resume in Qatar that same night for a truce and hostage release deal. There has since been no update.

Mediators Qatar, Egypt and the United States have been engaged in months of effort that have failed to end nearly 15 months of war.

A key obstacle to a deal has been Israel's reluctance to agree to a lasting ceasefire.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he had authorised Israeli negotiators to continue talks in Doha.

In December, Qatar expressed optimism that "momentum" was returning to the talks following the US election of Donald Trump, who takes office in 16 days.

But Hamas and Israel then accused each other of setting new conditions and obstacles.

Gaza City area showed residents

- » Hamas says Gaza truce talks to resume in Qatar
- » Israeli forces kill teenager in raid of the occupied West Bank
- » Gaza death toll hits 45,717

On January 1, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz warned of even more intense retaliatory strikes if rocket fire continued from Gaza and militants did not release hostages they still held.

Such rocket launches had become rare but have intensified since late December as Israel presses a three-month offensive in the north of the territory.

Meanwhile, seven children were among 11 family members killed in an Israeli air strike in northern Gaza City.

According to the civil defence agency, the attack at dawn on the house of the al-Ghoul family killed 11 people and more victims are buried in the debris.

"The home, which housed several displaced people, was completely destroyed," said civil defence spokesman Mahmoud Basal.

"It was a two-storey building and several people are still under the rubble," he added, saying Israeli drones "also fired on ambulance staff" who tried to treat the wounded.

Contacted by AFP, the Israeli army did not immediately comment on the strike.

Elsewhere, the civil defence agency said an Israeli strike killed five security officers tasked with accompanying aid convoys as they drove through the southern city of Khan Yunis.

Bassal accused Israel of having "deliberately targeted" them to "affect the humanitarian supply chain and increase the suffering" of the population.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



Silver-screen legend Anjana no more

A & E DESK

Veteran actress Anjana Rahman, a beloved figure in Bangladeshi cinema, passed away early yesterday in the capital's Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital. Her passing marks the end of an era, leaving behind a legacy of exceptional contributions to the film industry. The entire entertainment industry mourned her passing, and so did her fans and well-wishers.

Colleagues, fans, and journalists gathered to pay their final respects at the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation at 11:25am. Following the first Namaz-e-Janaza after Zuhr prayer, her body was taken to the Channel i premises for a second Janaza. Later, she was laid to rest at the Banani Cemetery.

STORY ON PAGE 6

SHOPPING MALL HEIST 159 bhoori gold robbed in seven minutes

STAR REPORT

Burglars made off with gold and diamond ornaments, estimated to be worth around Tk 2.5 crore, from a jewellery shop at a mall in Dhaka.

The burglary of Crown Diamond and Jewellers occurred at Simanta Square in Jigatola on Friday, police said yesterday.

The shop's owner Kazi Akash had filed a case over the stolen 159 bhoori of gold ornaments and some diamond jewellery, said Abdul Alim, inspector (investigation) of Dhanmondi Police Station.

"We have launched an investigation. However, no one was arrested till 8:30pm," he told The Daily Star last night.

After going through CCTV footage, the inspector said the incident occurred when the staff locked and left the shop on the ground floor for Juma prayers. Nine men were seen entering the market.

One of them was seen holding a piece of cloth to cover and guard two others who broke the shop's lock. Then another person entered it at 1:01pm. Their accomplices were seen roaming the area and keeping other shopkeepers busy. Most of the burglars were seen wearing masks.

After just over seven minutes, the man who entered the shop was seen coming out with a bag, the police official said.

In another incident, police recovered 32 bhoori of gold ornaments stolen from a house in Adabar yesterday. Police also arrested two individuals over the theft that occurred between December 28 and 30. The burglars took away 45 bhoori of gold.

SM Jahangir, officer-in-charge of Adabar Police Station, said the two suspects broke into the house while the family was away.

The family filed a case on Friday, prompting the police to launch an investigation.

"The arrested individuals are currently under interrogation, and efforts are underway to recover the rest of the gold," Jahangir said.

He also said one of the arrestees is the complainant's nephew who along with a friend looted the gold ornaments to buy mobile phones and for entertainment purposes.

POST-COUP MYANMAR

Junta to release 5,800 prisoners

AFP, Naypyidaw

Myanmar's embattled junta government yesterday said it would release almost 6,000 prisoners as part of an annual amnesty to mark the country's independence day.

The military has arrested thousands of protesters and activists since its February 2021 coup that ended Myanmar's brief democratic experiment and plunged the nation into turmoil.

More than 5,800 prisoners – including 180 foreigners – will be freed, the junta said in a statement on Saturday, when the country marks 77 years of independence from British colonial rule.

Around 600 of those included in the amnesty had been sentenced under Section 505 (a) of the penal code, junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said in an audio statement to media.

The law prohibits any action deemed to undermine the military and carries a maximum jail term of three years.

He added that "most" of the foreigners pardoned were Thai nationals who had been arrested in casinos on the border.

The military said it ordered the pardons "on humanitarian and compassionate grounds".

The junta also announced that 144 people who had been sentenced to life in prison would have their sentences commuted to 15 years.

Myanmar frequently grants amnesty to thousands of prisoners to commemorate holidays or Buddhist festivals.

Last year, the junta announced the release of more than 9,000 prisoners to mark independence day.



Commuters pass through the dust flying over a broken road in the capital's Shyampur yesterday. Dust pollution is known to intensify significantly during the winter, making people more prone to respiratory diseases.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Businessman abducted at gunpoint, shop robbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A group of armed assailants robbed a wholesale grocery shop and abducted its owner, Shibu Banik, 65, at gunpoint before making away with Tk 5 lakh in cash.

The incident occurred in Kalaiya Bazar of Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila around 10:00pm on Friday.

Two employees, Shankar, 34, and Taposh, 35, who were at the shop, said 8-10 masked criminals stormed the shop as they were closing up.

They tied up Shibu, Shankar, and Taposh at gunpoint. Then they looted over Tk 5 lakh from the cash register and took Shibu with them.

Shibu's wife, Krishna Roy Banik, filed a case against unidentified individuals over the incident.

"We don't know why he was kidnapped. I'm afraid for my husband. He is ill. I urged the local police to rescue my husband as soon as possible," she told this newspaper.

Contacted, Bauphal Police Station OC Kamal Hossain said the police are trying to rescue Shibu Banik.

Mgi
Meghna Group of Industries

STEPPING INTO
50 Years
ADVANCING
BANGLADESH
TRUSTED BY MILLIONS

From a humble beginning five decades ago on the bank of the Meghna River, Meghna Group of Industries (MGI) has become a symbol of trust & confidence for millions of Bangladeshis. The small stream has now become indomitable. We are moving forward with the spirit of breaking boundaries, enhancing the economic prosperity of the nation, fostering development and empowering the people of Bangladesh.

We thank you for being a part of our journey thus far. Furthermore, we convey our heartfelt gratitude to all our well-wishers, customers, administrative & regulatory bodies, banks & financial institutions, and business community. You have been an integral part of this auspicious occasion, marking the 50th year of our timeless story.



Fresh

No.1
NUMBER 1

SUPER
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GEAR

DHALAI
SPECIAL
CEMENT

MEGHNA CEM
SUPER
DELUXE
CEMENT



50 Years' Journey of MGI

1976

Kamal Trading Company was established

1989

Meghna Vegetable Oil Industries Ltd. was established

1993

Meghna Dairy and Food Products Ltd. started its journey, and thus, 'Fresh Milk Powder' was introduced to the Bangladesh market

1993

Mercantile Shipping Line Ltd. sets sail

1998

Meghna Flour and Dal Mills Ltd. was founded

1999

United Fibre Industries Ltd. started its journey

2016

Won the National Export Trophy (Gold) 2011-2012

2016

Awarded with the Meghna Economic Zone (MEZ) licence, Bangladesh's first ever private economic zone

2017

Awarded with the 2nd economic zone licence, Meghna Industrial Economic Zone (MIEZ)

2018

Recognized with 'One World's Greatest Leaders 2017-2018 Award'

2022

Won the National Export Trophy (Gold) 2018-2019

2022

First ever PVC factory in Bangladesh 'Meghna PVC Ltd.' started commercial operations

2023

Grand inauguration of the 4 brand new Ultramax Dry Bulk Carriers, for the first time in Bangladesh

2000

Recognized with Gold Medal from The Honorable President of Bangladesh for significant performance towards industrialization

2001

Unique Cement Industries Ltd., United Mineral Water & PET Industries Ltd. and United Edible Oils Industries Ltd. was established

2004

United Sugar Mills Ltd. was established

2009

Tasnim Chemical Complex Ltd. was established

2013

Won the National Export Trophy (Gold) 2010-2011

2018

Grand inauguration of 8 new industrial units

2020

Grand inauguration of 9 new industrial units

2020

Awarded with '1st HSBC Business Excellence Award'

2022

Awarded with the 3rd economic zone licence, Comilla Economic Zone (CEZ)

2023

'Fresh' recognized as the 'most chosen food brand of Bangladesh' by Kantar Worldpanel

2023

Awarded with the pre-qualification licence of 4th economic zone, Titas Economic Zone (TEZ)

2024

Groundbreaking of Grand Hyatt Hotel in MGI Tower

MGI Business Verticals

FMCG



Daily Essentials

MGI's flagship brand 'Fresh' is a name loved by the Bangladeshis, with daily essentials such as Super Fresh Fortified Soybean Oil, Fresh Rice Bran Oil, Fresh Mustard Oil, Fresh Refined Sugar, Fresh Super Premium Salt, Fresh Atta-Maida-Suji, Fresh Instant Full Cream Milk Powder, Fresh Chinigura Aromatic Rice, Fresh Boiled Rice, Fresh Lentil, Fresh Premium Tea, Fresh Spices, No.1 Condensed Milk and many more. Currently, 1 in every 2 households in Bangladesh uses MGI products.

Beverage

MGI's Super Fresh Packaged Drinking Water is recognized as the no.1 packaged drinking water brand in Bangladesh. Besides, MGI also has well accepted beverage brands including Gear, Fresh Cola, Fresh Up, Fresh Googly, Fresh Mojito, Fresh Mejanda etc.

Noodles, Snacks & Confectionery

MGI's noodles, snacks and confectionery category items are also popular to the Bangladeshi consumers. Some of the products in this category include Fresh Instant Noodles, Fresh Noodles in Cup, Fresh Biscuits & Cookies, Fresh Bread & Bun, Fresh Cake, Fresh Chanachur, Fresh Jhal Muri, Fresh Puffed Rice, Fresh Crispee Wafer, Fresh Candy etc.

Building Materials



Cement

MGI's Fresh Cement is one of the leading brands in the cement sector of Bangladesh, with the daily production capacity of approximately 25,000 metric tons. Currently, MGI is marketing cement under 3 brands- Fresh Ultra Strong, Meghnacem Super Deluxe and Dhalai Special.



Ceramics

Launched in 2021, Fresh Ceramics has become the highest selling tiles brand in Bangladesh in just 3 years' time. Fresh Ceramics has the largest kiln in Bangladesh under one shed. The 2nd unit has already started its operations.



Steel Fabrication

MGI's sister concern Sonargaon Steel Fabricate Ltd. (SSFL) is operating with modern and high precision equipment to produce best quality steel based building materials at the daily capacity of approximately 105 metric ton.

Aviation



MGI operates one of the largest private aviation fleets in Bangladesh with 6 state of the art helicopters. Meghna Aviation Ltd. is the first & only aviation corporation in Bangladesh to conduct night-flying mode. Apart from commercial requirements, these helicopters are also being used to provide emergency air ambulance services and delivering necessary supplies during national emergencies.

Energy & Power

LP Gas

Starting its journey in 2019, Fresh LP Gas has already established itself as one of the leading players in the sector with its nationwide distribution network and quality product. Besides providing gas in cylinder, Fresh LP Gas is also providing quality product and service through Reticulation System at both commercial & household level. Eco-friendly Fresh Autogas service for the vehicles is also expanding over time throughout the country.

Power Generation

Currently MGI has 5 power plant units to meet the demand of its different units. The combined capacity of the units is 200 Megawatt/hour.

Solar Energy

Specializing in On-Grid Rooftop solar systems, MGI's sister concern Sonargaon Solar Energy Ltd. has become a prominent player in the renewable energy sector of Bangladesh. Currently, approximately 50 MWp of rooftop solar power is successfully operating at multiple MGI factories. As of December 2024, MGI has replaced approximately 30,000 MWh of grid electricity with solar power, reducing approximately 20,000 metric tons of CO₂ emissions.



Basic & Petrochemical



PVC & PET

MGI has established Meghna PVC Ltd., the first ever PVC & PET resin production factory in Bangladesh by investing approximately USD 400 million. This is the largest ever private investment in Bangladesh. Meghna PVC Ltd. is playing the role of PVC (commonly used in making pipes) & PET Resin (commonly used in making bottles) import substitute as well as an export oriented industry.

Basic Chemicals

MGI's sister concern Tasnim Chemical Complex Ltd. (TCCL), has been fulfilling a large portion of the local industrial chemical demand such as Caustic Soda, Hydrochloric Acid, Hydrogen Peroxide, Chlorine etc. and has also been exporting chemicals in large scale at different Asian, African, North & South American and the Middle Eastern countries.

Shipping & Shipbuilding



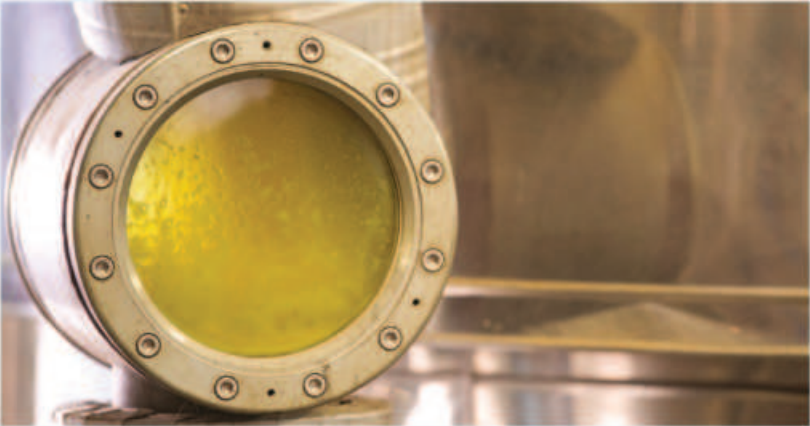
Currently, MGI has 23 bulk carriers & 2 oil tankers in its oceangoing vessel (OGV) fleet. Besides, MGI's sister concern Sonargaon Ship Builders and Dockyard Ltd. is working relentlessly round the year and now has more than 100 inland/lighter vessels in its fleet.

Fiber



Established in 2018, Meghna Bulk Bag Industries Ltd. (MBBIL) has achieved a significant milestone by exporting 1,000 containers of Jumbo Bags to European and North American markets in 2024.

Seeds Crushing



MGI has one of the largest seeds crushing plants in Bangladesh, contributing as a backward integration initiative and extending MGI's value chain for greater efficiency. This Soybean & Rapeseed processing plant is committed to produce high-quality Soya Meal, Rapeseed Cake, Extruded Full Fat (Soya), Soya Hulls, Liquid Lecithin, Powder Lecithin and Lecithin Oil for feed mills across the country.

Pulp & Paper



Tissue Paper

MGI has one of the largest tissue paper manufacturing factories in Bangladesh- producing facial tissue, paper napkin, toilet tissue, hand towel, kitchen towel, wallet tissue from 100% virgin pulp using completely automated machines. Fresh Tissue has become a very popular name in every household.

Commercial Paper

MGI is a leading Liner & Medium Paper producer & seller in Bangladesh. The group is also producing different types of paper in GSM control machine including A4, Demy Paper, PaperSheet etc. for commercial use from world's finest imported raw materials.

Stationery



MGI is contributing to the education sector by ensuring affordable stationeries including ballpen, exercise book, eraser, sharpener, pencil box, scale, clipboard etc. New items are being included in its stationeries range to meet the demands of the growing education sector.

Private Economic Zone



MGI is the first ever conglomerate in Bangladesh to be awarded with the license of a private economic zone. Currently, MGI has 3 economic zones- Meghna Economic Zone (MEZ), Meghna Industrial Economic Zone (MIEZ) and Cumilla Economic Zone (CEZ). MGI has also received the pre-qualification license for the 4th, Titas Economic Zone (TEZ).

Printing & Packaging

MGI's printing & packaging factory produces a diverse range of packaging solutions, including corrugated and foil options such as cartons and boxes, to meet the growing demand. It uses the most advanced technology available today. Packaging produced by MGI is used in different industries including food products, cosmetics & toiletries, pharmaceuticals, insecticides & pesticides, spices, dairy products, frozen food products, detergent etc.

Health & Hygiene

For the wellbeing of the people, MGI is ensuring health & hygiene products at an affordable price. With the existing products like Fresh Happy Nappy Diaper, baby wipes, Fresh Anonna Sanitary Napkin- the product line is expanding over the course of time.

Feeds

MGI's sister concern United Feeds Ltd. is contributing to the economy by providing quality feeds to the Poultry, Fisheries and Cattle Farms of the country.



Steel

MGI's upcoming steel project is projected to have an investment of approximately USD 400 million to establish a steel industry with the latest Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) technology in Comilla Economic Zone (CEZ). The expected annual production capacity of the project will be approximately 1.5 million metric ton billet and approximately 1 million metric ton of rebar from the billet.



Glass

The upcoming Meghna Glass Industries Limited (MGIL) will produce various types of float glasses. Additionally, an Aluminum Extrusion Process plant will be established to produce a wide range of aluminum profiles. These aluminum profiles will be used in doors, windows, partition walls, and in combination with glass sheets.



Paper Unit Expansion

MGI will be investing approximately USD 200 million for making Swedish Board, Art Card, Duplex Board, and Kraft Liner. This first of its kind investment in Bangladesh will have the daily production capacity of approximately 400 metric tons. This investment will reduce the import dependency of these products in Bangladesh. Besides, MGI has already invested approximately USD 3 million in producing thermal and sublimation paper.



Investment in Petrochemical

MGI is also working for further investments in Petrochemical sector at a larger scale.

TOUCHING THE LIVES
OF MILLIONS



“We always strive to contribute to the economy of Bangladesh and create employment at every step. As a symbol of trust and quality, we are committed to empowering people to improve their lives and lifestyles.”

Mostafa Kamal

Chairman & Managing Director
Meghna Group of Industries (MGI)



Sustainability

MGI is committed to eco-friendly initiatives to promote sustainable development of our environment and economy. The group's unique 'Plastic Farming' program has been recognized both locally and internationally. Major efforts, such as green energy projects and effluent treatment plants (ETP) in MGI industries, highlight the group's commitment. MGI has planted more than 1 lac trees in different factory premises. The company supports community-based cleanliness initiatives like 'My Green Initiative' and has installed sea-bins for waste management. Furthermore, approximately 70-75 kg per hour capacity incinerator has already been installed for waste management.



Mother & Child Care

MGI is involved in community works that enhanced the convenience of common people. As a part of the group's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), MGI has established the first ever baby care zone in Bangladesh at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) in both domestic & international terminals and has been taking different initiatives to spread awareness against breast cancer. Additionally, MGI regularly contributes to orphans, the needy, and the other helpless groups in society.



MGI's Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives

Community Development

MGI actively engages in social awareness and community development initiatives. MGI's 'Am I Driving Safely?' campaign addresses critical road safety issues. MGI also supports both government and non-government programs through donations. During national crises and natural disasters, MGI contributes through distributing donations and reliefs.



Healthcare

MGI has undertaken several initiatives to improve healthcare access. MGI contributes regularly to Central Hospital and The Barakah General Hospital Ltd. as directorial body member. The group has also contributed significantly to national efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic by supplying funds, oxygen cylinders, and essential medical equipment. MGI has also established a community clinic at Kankapait Union of Chauddagam Upazila of Cumilla, with the cooperation of Community Based Health Care Programme of Government. Primary health care and 27 types of medicines are being provided to the people from the clinic.



Education

MGI's education initiatives extend beyond urban areas to rural communities. MGI has provided the largest single scholarships to Dhaka University Marketing Department, and donated to BUET Chemical Engineering Department for research and education. The group has established educational institutions such as Alhaj Noor Miah Degree College, Alhaj Ayesha Khatun Polytechnic Institute, Mostafa Kamal High School, Kankapait Primary School, Buddin Primary School, Alhaj Ayesha Noor Welfare Foundation, and Alhaj Ayesha Noor Mohila Dakhil Madrasah. MGI also offers regular financial assistance to underprivileged and talented students.

