



Inflation eased slightly in December

B1



Illegal sand extraction threatens livelihood

P5



Warring sides battle in western Russia

P9



Kabaddi fed eyes historic SL series for growth

P15

Parking wealth under the Dubai sun

At least 461 Bangladeshis own 929 properties worth Tk 5,000cr in the city of skyscrapers

ZYMA ISLAM

From prestige acquisitions along Dubai's many Millionaires' Miles to quiet villas in suburban desert oases, the glittering city's property market has long been known as a crowd favourite among the Bangladeshi elite for building second homes.

The city's booming real estate has also been used by Bangladeshis as an offshore haven to park wealth for a big reason – cash payments are widely accepted even by top property developers in this city of skyscrapers and beaches, where sun tourism is flourishing ever faster.

Time and again, Dubai has been identified by Bangladeshi law enforcers as one of the top hubs for hundi transactions by Bangladeshis because of a long history of migration for work and a robust presence of Bangladeshi diaspora.



Dubai also offers "golden visas" for those owning property worth more than \$544,000 or Tk 6.6 crore in today's conversion rate.

"This service [golden visa] allows the real estate investor owning a property the purchase value of which is equal to or more than 2 million AED [Arab Emirates Dirham] at the time of purchase, to apply for a 10-year renewable residence permit. The husband or wife, children and parents can be sponsored. In the event that a mortgaged property, a bank letter indicating 2 million AED paid amount as a proof to be provided," says the website of Dubai Land Department.

A 2021 estimate by the EU Tax Observatory found that \$0.26 billion (Tk 3,114 crore) of offshore real estate in Dubai is owned by Bangladeshis, making it the second top global destination for second homes after Singapore.

However, a dataset of property records compiled by Center for Advanced Defense Studies (C4ADS), a non-profit based in Washington, indicates that the figure is at least twice that.

The dataset, gleaned by C4ADS from Dubai Land Department's 2020 and 2022 records, as well as some utility companies, was previously used in early 2024 for a global investigation by Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) called Dubai Unlocked. Bangladesh did not feature in that investigation.

The Daily Star has now seen the database and found 929 properties

SEE PAGE 6
COL 1

Economy slows to 1.81% in volatile first quarter

Floods, political turmoil to blame

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh economy saw its lowest quarterly growth in three-and-a-half years in the first quarter of the fiscal year on the back of political upheaval and severe flood in August.

Between July and September, the GDP growth was 1.81 percent, the lowest since the second quarter of fiscal 2020-21, when the world was in the throes of the global coronavirus pandemic, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. A year earlier, the GDP grew 6.04 percent.

The latest GDP growth figure shows the true state of the economy and the BBS did not try to show a rosy picture, as was the case previously, according to economists.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

GDP GROWTH (JULY-SEPTEMBER)

SECTOR	FY24	FY25
Agriculture	0.35%	0.16%
Industry	8.22%	2.13%
Service	5.04%	1.54%

Major gas price hike in the works for industrials

BERC now assessing new pricing formula

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Industrial and captive power connections would soon have to pay a much higher tariff for gas usage after the ministry of power, energy and mineral resources decided in principle to implement a new pricing structure to reflect the fluctuating global market.

Instead of a fixed rate, the new pricing structure will be based on the actual cost of imported liquefied natural gas (LNG).

In line with the decision, Petrobangla yesterday submitted a proposal to the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) to revise gas prices for industrial and captive power users.

If the BERC accepts the proposal, industrials and captive power users – which refers to self-generated, gas-fired electricity within industries – would have to pay Tk 75.72 per cubic meter for their gas use beyond the sanctioned load. At present, they pay a flat Tk 30.75 per cubic meter even if they breach their sanctioned load.

However, new industrial and captive connections will have to pay Tk 75.72 per cubic meter throughout.

Those who got the primary approval for new connections will have to pay 50 percent of their bills of sanctioned load at the existing rate and the rest at the new rate.

Under the proposed policy, the gas price will be determined by the cost of LNG imports calculated on

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

SOME TOP PROPERTY HOLDERS IN DUBAI

SAYEM SOBHAN ANVIR
Tk 12.4 crore

In the Burj Khalifa tower, Anvir's 2-bedroom flat is on the eleventh floor of the skyscraper, inside the Armani Residences

5



HBM IQBAL

Tk 35.5 crore

5-bedroom villa in Palm Jumeirah

4

JISSAN MIRZA

Tk 14 crore

3-bedroom flat in The Address Residence, Fountain Views in Burj Khalifa neighbourhood

10

SYED AK ANWARUZZAMAN

Tk 9.7 crore

One 2-bedroom flat in West Heights tower in Burj Khalifa neighbourhood

2

SAK EKRAMUZZAMAN

Tk 11.4 crore

5-bedroom apartment on the 7th floor of Al Shahla in Palm Jumeirah

7

ANISUZZAMAN CHOWDHURY

Tk 10.1 crore

One 2-bedroom flat on the fourth floor of Golden Mile 4 in Palm Jumeirah

9

AZIZ AL MASUD

Tk 11.4 crore

5-bedroom flat in Al Khudrawi in Palm Jumeirah

6

AZIZ AL KAISER

Tk 10.6 crore

4-bedroom flat in Al Khudrawi in Palm Jumeirah

8

MOHAMMAD OBAILDUL KARIM

Tk 42 crore

PROPERTY IN AL MERKADH

1

ARZUDA KARIM

Tk 21 crore

PROPERTY IN AL MERKADH

3

Khaleda to be taken to clinic from Heathrow

Says her personal physician

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is set to leave for London via Doha tonight and is expected to reach Heathrow International Airport on Wednesday morning. From there, she will be taken directly to the London Clinic for advanced medical treatment.

Khaleda Zia's eldest son Tarique Rahman, his wife Zubaida Rahman and their daughter Zaima Rahman will be receiving her from the airport.

This will be her first reunion with her son in seven years and her first overseas trip since her release from jail.

BNP's acting chairman Tarique and his family have been residing in London since 2008.

The party's media cell member Shairul Kabir Khan said Khaleda will leave her Gulshan residence at 8:00pm for the airport.

Accompanied by her medical team of six doctors from her medical board and four air ambulance specialists, she will depart from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 10:00pm.

She will be accompanied to the airport by several party members and family members, including her late son Arafat Rahman Koko's wife Syeda Sharmila Rahman; her

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A RIVER RUINED ... As the water level in the Buriganga goes down every winter, the river is thick with household sewage and dyes from nearby factories. This toxic mix of pollutants not only harms aquatic life but also emits odour foul enough to affect the people living in surrounding areas. The photo was taken from the capital's Postogola bridge recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Trudeau announces resignation

Says he will stay on until next party leader chosen

AFP, Ottawa



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his resignation yesterday, saying he will leave office as soon as the ruling Liberal party chooses a new leader after months of slumping polls and internal division.

"I intend to resign as party leader, as prime minister, after the party selects its next leader," Trudeau, who has been in power since 2015, told reporters in Ottawa following a protracted political crisis that saw top Liberal allies urge him to quit.

It was not immediately clear how long Trudeau will remain in office as a caretaker premier.

He said the Liberal leadership race will be "a robust, nationwide competitive process."

That means Trudeau will continue to lead Canada when incoming US president Donald Trump takes office this month and will be tasked with leading the country's initial response to the new

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Trader rescued 52 hours after abduction

Five arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A trader was rescued yesterday, 52 hours after his abduction from Kalaiya Bazar of Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila.

Police arrested five people, including a minor, in this connection.

The victim, Shibananda Roy Banik, alias Shibu Banik, was rescued from the Kachua area of the upazila, during a joint drive of police and Rab around 1:30am yesterday.

Shibu, 76, is a wholesaler of grocery items at Kalaiya Bazar.

The arrestees are Masud Sharif, 24, Miraj Mridha, 20, Zahir Pyada, 27, Bidhan Mistry, 22, and a juvenile (name withheld).

Police also recovered Tk 1.35 lakh looted from Shibu's shop, sharp weapons, and six mobile phones from the arrestees.

Anwar Zahid, superintendent of Patuakhali police, shared the information with reporters at a press conference at his office yesterday afternoon.

He said the gang abducted the trader for ransom.

It has initially been confirmed that nine people were involved in the incident. Efforts are underway to arrest

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Illegal shops being knocked down near Malibagh Bazar in the capital yesterday. Bangladesh Railway dismantled around 200 make-shift shops and reclaimed 1.2 acres of its land. The drive was part of recovering railway land from illegal occupation.

Unease at DU campus as some incidents

FROM PAGE 16

"My hand is hurting after beating this scoundrel... How is the body of a maal khor [alcohol consumer] so strong?" he boasted in a comment on a Facebook group of the university.

On the same post, Mohammad Shakir Hossain, a student of political science and resident of Masterda Surja Sen Hall, commented, "Mr Vice-President [indicating Shimul] was adamant about entering the campus on the rickshaw. So we got suspicious. We called in police, dragged them out of the rickshaw, checked their bags, and found the white bottles."

Contacted, Mobin said, "They misbehaved with us first, they were already drunk and were creating a scene. I was not there alone. The other students and I gave them a little beating. It was not much."

However, he could not answer who authorised them to conduct such searches and assaults.

Shimul said some members of the group were from Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) and Rover Scouts who misbehaved with Shimul and the two others, but did not assault them while the attackers were not wearing uniforms.

Shimul and his companions said they recognised some of the attackers as members of a DU group called "Campus Patrol".

Shimul said the gang handed them over to Nilkhel Police Station, from where they were transferred to Shahbagh Police Station.

He said Assistant Proctor Md Rafiqul Islam later arrived and told the police officers to give them "exemplary punishment so that no one dares to do such unethical acts on university premises again".

They were released after faculty members intervened the next morning.

Contacted, Assistant Proctor Rafiqul said, "After hearing both sides, I told the police to give them [Shimul and companions] the punishment they deserve as per the law. Then I left."

About the growing trend of moral policing on the campus, Rafiqul said, "This word [moral police] sounds nice. But no one should do whatever they want; there are rules and regulations."

When asked if students have the authority to search or assault others, he said, "Of course, I do not support students taking the law into their own hands. I have not seen the video you are talking about. If there are credible proofs, we will surely take

necessary actions."

Contacted three days after the incident, DU Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed said, "That night, on-duty police and BNCC members stopped rickshaw passengers at Nilkhel for identification. The passengers on that rickshaw behaved abnormally, so the police took them to the station."

Regarding assault allegations, he said, "I have heard about it but was unwell and couldn't look into it. If true, those involved will be held accountable."

The following day, DU authorities formed a three-member investigation committee led by Assistant Proctor Mahbub as the incident drew flak from students and teachers, particularly the University Teachers' Network.

'SO LATE!'

On Saturday night, a female DU student and her male friend were allegedly assaulted while walking in front of the Arts Building by two students from Bangabandhu Hall and others. One of them studies geography.

The group accused the female student and his friend of engaging in "indecent behaviour" on the campus. "I was on the phone, and my friend had briefly placed his hand on my back for a few seconds before they approached me," said the female student.

The group asked why she was outside late at night. "When I told them that it was my personal matter, they began hurling abusive words," she said.

"At one stage, they got very close to me. Thankfully, other DU students nearby intervened, forcing them to back off."

The Daily Star verified the incident with three eyewitnesses.

This newspaper received another video showing a group of students assaulting the pillion rider of a motorcycle as the vehicle was making excessive noise. They forced the rider to apologise and muffle the motorcycle.

The video, posted by Ali Asraful Emon, a student of DU's international business department, in a university group, read: "A chappi [South Asian slang] was caught in front of AF Rahman Hall. Students made him silence his bike. This is the reality, ha ha...."

Earlier, Mishu Ali Suhash, a student of a private university, said he was harassed while attempting to enter DU through Nilkhel on his motorbike on December 24.

'CAMPUS PATROL' CONTROVERSY

In November, Dhaka University student and journalist Nourin Sultana Toma alleged harassment by the Campus Patrol and others.

She said some students locked Suhrawardy Udyan's gate next to TSC, trapping hundreds inside. People scrambled to get out by scaling the railings, risking a stampede. Toma intervened and questioned the group's authority for such an action.

The students, led by Khaled Hasan and Hamiza Mahbub, both assistant co-ordinators of the Students Against Discrimination, then falsely accused her of planning to "attack the proctor". They demanded ID, grabbed her phone, and tried to snatch it as she recorded the incident, Toma alleged.

"I lodged a complaint with the proctor's office, but no action has been taken yet," she said.

On October 28, DU student Raihan Ferdous posted a photo on Facebook with the caption, "Campus Patrol DU, start of a dream." The image featured DU Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed, members of his team, student leaders, and others, seemingly at the launch of the Campus Patrol initiative.

An analysis of multiple Facebook posts from the same period reveals Campus Patrol members stationed at various DU entrances, enforcing no-vehicle entry rules, and performing tasks under the pretext of ensuring campus safety. However, the group reportedly disbanded after several allegations of harassment.

Despite claims that Campus Patrol had dissolved, this newspaper found that the group was operating under a Facebook page with the name Student Council for Ideal Campus (SCFIC).

Contacted, Raihan admitted renaming the "Campus Patrol DU" page to "SCFIC" rather than creating a new one but claimed the two groups serve different purposes.

"Campus Patrol was meant to be a joint effort with DU authorities. We expected training, certificates, and honorariums for assisting the proctorial team with crowd management and safety. None of that happened, so we disbanded," he said.

"SCFIC, though it includes former Campus Patrol members, is a different organisation. We'll identify campus issues and present proposals to the DU authorities but won't enforce anything ourselves."

Raihan denied any connection between Campus Patrol and the

December 31 incident.

"If any student is involved with unethical behaviour, it is the responsibility of the administration, not common students, to address it," Raihan added.

Mentionable, this newspaper found no evidence linking Mobin to Campus Patrol.

In September, Tofazzal Hossain, a man with psychological issues, was apprehended by students of Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall on suspicion of theft. He was beaten, fed, and then beaten again before he succumbed to his injuries.

The same month, photojournalist Jibon Ahmed encountered a gang of DU students at the Suhrawardy Udyan gate near TSC. The students locked the gate, declaring, "This is not a place for adda."

When Jibon questioned their authority, he was surrounded and verbally abused. "Had I not been a recognised journalist, I am sure they would have lynched me," Jibon said.

In August, during negotiations with the proctorial team over the fate of tea stalls at TSC -- some of which are decades old -- a group of students allegedly interrupted, labelling the stalls as "unregistered", sites of "anti-social activities" and criticised female students for smoking there, at least five DU students involved with the incident confirmed. Following the disruption, the proctorial team issued a notice banning the stalls, which reopened weeks later.

A similar incident occurred at Madhur Canteen in late August when students misbehaved with manager Arun Kumar Dey, setting arbitrary prices.

Proctor Saifuddin said only the proctorial team, Ansars, BNCC, and Rover Scouts are authorised to conduct searches and manage traffic.

When asked about footage showing students in plain clothes policing alongside DU employees, he said, "Mobile team members can't always tell students to leave. It's sensitive."

He said a memorandum has been signed with Green Future, who will train students for cleanliness and traffic.

He also said there are concerns about threats of activities by the banned BCL, prompting some students to conduct personal search initiatives. "We don't support arbitrary searches or assaults. I've warned accused students and will probe all complaints," he added.

another Liberal face to keep ripping off Canadians for another 4 years," he posted on X after Trudeau's announcement.

Trudeau's government narrowly survived three non-confidence votes brought by the Conservative in parliament late last year.

His minority government had been held up by a deal with the left-wing New Democratic Party but in December the NDP said they would vote to topple Trudeau at the next opportunity.

Trudeau confirmed that he had received permission from Canada's governor general to suspend all parliamentary business until March 24.

That could give the Liberals time to choose a new leader while restricting the opposition chances to bring a vote of non-confidence.

14-year-old girl raped in Cox's Bazar

Torchlight procession held in protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A 14-year-old girl has allegedly been gang raped at Badarkhali union in Chakaria upazila, Cox's Bazar.

According to the victim's statement, she was abducted at knifepoint and raped by around 8 to 10 men near the Bodorkhali bridge, said Manjur Kader Bhuyan, officer-in-charge (OC) of Chakaria Police Station.

The incident occurred on Sunday around 10:00pm, when the girl, who lives in Moheshkhali upazila, was returning home from Banskhali, Chattogram.

She boarded a CNG-run autorickshaw from the Badarkhali Ferry Ghat area. However, the driver abandoned her midway near the Badarkhali bridge, saying the vehicle had some mechanical issues. As she was walking back towards the ferry ghat area, two men abducted her at knifepoint, the OC said, quoting the victim.

They were later joined by six others, who raped her until she lost consciousness.

The girl regained consciousness and made her way back to the ferry ghat, where locals assisted her and took her to Badarkhali General Hospital.

Local residents suspect known criminals are involved, the OC said.

Police later transferred the victim to the Chakaria Upazila Health Complex in the early hours of yesterday, and were able to collect some evidence, said M M Rakibur Raja, assistant superintendent of police (ASP) in the Chakaria circle.

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Khaleda to be taken to clinic from Heathrow

FROM PAGE 1

Advisory Council member Enamul Haque Chowdhury; BNP Executive Committee member Tabith Awal; her private secretary ABM Abdus Sattar; and staffers and caregivers.

The party's standing committee members, at a meeting last night, decided that they would visit Khaleda at her residence to extend their greetings before she leaves for the airport.

The party also emphasised the importance of avoiding large gatherings of leaders and activists during her travel to maintain order and avoid any public disruptions.

Speaking to reporters at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office yesterday, the party's Standing Committee Member and Khaleda's personal physician AZM Zahid Hossain said, "Khaleda Zia will be taken directly to the London Clinic upon her arrival. Doctors there will assess her condition and determine the next steps for her treatment."

Sources said a special air ambulance, arranged by the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, arrived in Dhaka yesterday evening to facilitate her transport. He provided the aircraft upon learning about the former prime minister's illness.

Doctors have said the BNP chairperson has been suffering from liver cirrhosis and may require a transplant, adding that the entire treatment process, including recovery, may take several months.

Following her treatment, Khaleda is likely to visit Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah before returning to Bangladesh.

Zahid said doctors will decide the feasibility and timing of the liver transplant after a detailed evaluation at the specialised unit in London.

Responding to a question, he said, "If they [doctors in London] say she needs further treatment that they can't provide and there is a need to take her to Johns Hopkins University Hospital, Maryland, USA, that will be looked into."

Zahid added that Khaleda has been suffering from compensated liver cirrhosis (Grade 2), for which she earlier underwent the Transjugular Intrahepatic Portosystemic Shunt (TIPS) procedure.

"There are some technical aspects of the TIPS, including the adjustments. We could not check those, and we've not been able to determine if the stent set up in her heart is functioning

properly... There are several blockages in her heart," a UNB report quoted him as saying.

During the Awami League government's tenure, despite her deteriorating health and 20 appeals to the government along with protests, Khaleda was repeatedly denied permission to travel abroad for medical treatment.

Following the fall of the AL government on August 5, she was fully freed by an order from President Mohammed Shahabuddin the very next day, paving the way for her overseas treatment.

Along with liver cirrhosis, Khaleda Zia, 79, has been suffering from diabetes, arthritis, and complications in her kidneys, lungs, heart, and eyes.

Her doctors have been advocating for her overseas treatment since she was diagnosed with cirrhosis in late 2021.

On October 26, 2023, a team of three specialist doctors from the United States performed the TIPS procedure to address fluid accumulation in her stomach and chest, as well as a bleed in the liver.

Khaleda was jailed on February 8, 2018, in a corruption case. In March 2020, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the government temporarily released her on an executive order, suspending her sentence on the condition that she remain at her Gulshan residence and not leave the country. The term of her release had been extended several times.

In April 2023, she contracted Covid-19 and recovered while under treatment at home. However, as the other health complications surfaced, she was admitted to Evercare Hospital several times.

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

The BNP Standing Committee meeting also focused on several pressing issues, including the party's struggles, recent political movements, and the upcoming election.

Leaders expressed concern that BNP's 16-year-long political struggle is being overlooked.

A committee member, speaking on condition of anonymity, who was present at the meeting, said, "BNP has played a significant role in the current political scenario, but the response from the government has been far from satisfactory."

The committee also discussed the delay in announcing the election schedule, calling it a matter of concern.

ROHINGYA CRISIS

More than 260 refugees arrive in Indonesia

AFP, Banda Aceh

More than 260 Rohingya refugees, including women and children, arrived in Indonesia's westernmost province of Aceh after floating at sea for days, an official said yesterday.

The mostly Muslim ethnic Rohingyas are heavily persecuted in Myanmar and thousands risk their lives each year on long and dangerous sea journeys to reach Malaysia or Indonesia.

An East Aceh official, Iskandar -- who like many Indonesians goes by one name -- said this latest group of refugees arrived on a beach in the region's town of West Peureulak on Sunday night around 10:25 pm local time (1525 GMT Sunday).

"There are 264 of them -- 117 men and 147 women," Iskandar told AFP yesterday, adding that there were around 30 children in the group.

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'If chanting Joy Bangla a crime, then hang me'

ASM Abdur Rob tells event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ASM Abdur Rob, president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, yesterday at a programme said if chanting "Joy Bangla" is considered a crime, he should be hanged.

"I was the chief of the Joy Bangla Force, and many others were with me. If saying Joy Bangla is a crime, then hang me. There is an ongoing court case regarding this matter, so I will not comment further," he said.

Rob, who first hoisted the red-green flag of Bangladesh on March 2, 1971, made these remarks during a discussion

During the Liberation War, those who were shot and killed embraced death while chanting Joy Bangla. After achieving victory, these two words, Joy Bangla, were used to celebrate the triumph. They proclaimed Bangla Joy, Bangaleer Joy.

ASM Abdur Rob

organised by the Serajul Alam Khan Research Centre on the occasion of Serajul Alam Khan's 84th birth anniversary.

The discussion was held at the research centre's office at Baridhara DOHS.

"During the Liberation War, those who were shot and killed embraced death while chanting Joy Bangla. After achieving victory, these two words, Joy Bangla, were used to celebrate the triumph. They proclaimed Bangla Joy, Bangaleer Joy [Victory of Bengal, Victory for Bangalees]," he said.

He added, "You [interim government] have officially

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



People cross the Gulshan Lake using boats to get from Banani to Gulshan quickly. The boatmen charge Tk 10 per person for each trip. The practice, while saving time, also poses a risk as many like this child, inset, use makeshift rafts to avoid the fare. The photo was taken near the Banani bridge yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



EIB vice president arrives today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

European Investment Bank (EIB) Vice-President Nicola Beer is set to arrive on a three-day visit to Dhaka today to augment assistance for Bangladesh's trade and development.

"She will meet Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and other advisers. This is an extremely high-level visit at an opportune moment when the EU is seeking to broaden and deepen relations with Bangladesh," European Union Ambassador to Bangladesh Michael Miller told The Daily Star yesterday.

The EIB, owned by 27 EU member states, is the world's largest multilateral

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Wealth disclosure by judges stalled for 13 years

Experts say it will ensure transparency; call for formulating law

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The practice of submitting wealth statements by Supreme Court judges to the chief justice has been stalled for the last 13 years due to the absence of a specific law or rule.

Talking to The Daily Star, rights activists and legal experts emphasised the need for a specific law or rules for disclosing judges' income and wealth, especially since the interim government advisers are expected to disclose their income and wealth statements, with an ordinance likely to be promulgated to this effect soon.

They said the public disclosure of Supreme Court judges' wealth statements would enhance the judiciary's prestige, dignity, and public trust.

All judges and officials of the SC and lower courts should disclose their wealth statements to set a standard for others. A law should be formulated for them to do so mandatorily, which will help prevent corruption in the judiciary.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman
Executive director, TIB

In 2011, the then chief justice ABM Khairul Haque requested the judges to start the practice of transparency and accountability.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



People have set up makeshift shops, in between rail lines, right next to a signboard forbidding the activity. Such close proximity to oncoming trains could lead to a disaster at any moment, posing a risk to both train passengers and those nearby. The photo was taken near the Jurain Rail Gate recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Dismantle market syndicate: Hasnat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The interim government's job is to dismantle the market syndicate, not just say it has changed hands, said Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, yesterday.

"If syndicates are still intact, merely operating under different leadership, it indicates a failure to address the root issues," he said at a rally held at Rajendra College Field in Faridpur.

Hasnat explained how rising living costs, syndicates, and corruption have worsened the lives of people, urging the interim government to take immediate measures to control these issues.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

FOREIGNERS WITHOUT VISA
Legal action against them after Jan 31
Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign nationals staying illegally in Bangladesh will face legal action if they fail to obtain the necessary documents to stay or work by January 31.

Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury disclosed the updates after visiting the office of the Department of Immigration and Passport yesterday.

"There are many foreigners in the country without visas. Many of them are working. Legal action will be taken against them if they do not obtain visas by January 31," he said.

The adviser said if any foreign nationals are found without visas, they will be deported to their home countries.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

b1 The Daily Star
STELLAR WOMEN
SEASON 2

CALL FOR REGISTRATIONS / NOMINATIONS

The Stellar Women initiative aims to recognise twelve (12) extraordinary women throughout the year (From September '24 to August '25) for playing a remarkable role in their distinguished fields. Their work must have made positive contributions towards the development of society & the nation.

Inviting nominations/ registrations in the following categories:

Sports	Architect (Residential & Commercial)	Art & Culture
(31 st January '25)	(28 th February '25)	(31 st March '25)

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Spark Your Inner Power!

Rezanur Rahman new Petrobangla chairman

CITY DESK
Additional Secretary Md Rezanur Rahman has joined as chairman of Bangladesh Oil, Gas & Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) on deputation on January 2.

Rahman served as additional secretary in the Power Division before joining Petrobangla.

He belongs to the 17th batch of Bangladesh Civil Service (administration) cadre. He also served as first class magistrate, assistant commissioner (land), UNO and DDLG in field administration.

He also served in the health ministry, Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission and Anti-Corruption Commission in different capacities.

He did his graduation in Mechanical Engineering from BUET and Professional Master's degree in ITC, Netherlands.

Two die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two patients died from dengue while 70 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the latest, the death toll rose to three this year while the number of cases reached 357, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Currently, 400 dengue patients are undergoing treatment across the country. Of them, 198 are from outside Dhaka.

Plot Sale
Bashundhara R/A,
Block-L,
3 katha Corner,
Road Size: 40/25 Feet.
Contact: 01706617524



Illegal sand extraction

FROM PAGE 5
secretary of the Barachhara Water Management Cooperative Society Limited, said the sluice gate serves around 25,000 farmers from seven neighbouring villages.

He said since 2017, they have repeatedly appealed to higher authorities to stop the sand extraction, but their pleas have been ignored due to the culprits' political backing.

Mohammad Moshaddar Ali, president of the cooperative society, alleged that the illegal extraction has persisted for years due to the political influence of local Jibon League leaders, including Jewel.

"These individuals have threatened us, demanding Tk 16 lakh if sand extraction is halted through legal action. We remain hostage to them," he stated.

Contacted over phone, Jewel Mia claimed he had acquired a lease to extract sand from the canal for two

years.

"The president of the water management cooperative society demanded a bribe of Tk 2 lakh, of which I paid Tk 50,000. Even then they closed my leased sand mining site. With multiple cases against me, I am currently in hiding. How could I be extracting sand in this situation?" he said.

Md Islam Uddin, the upazila nirbahi officer of Sreemangal, said, "Sand quarry leases are issued by the Ministry of Mineral Resources. I have received an application and a petition from the High Court, along with an interim order to halt any agreement related to sand extraction from Baharchhara canal."

He said he has instructed the assistant commissioner (land) to take legal action and forwarded the petition to the Ministry of Mineral Resources for further review.

If chanting Joy Bangla

FROM PAGE 3
issued a gazette making the rebel poet [Kazi Nazrul Islam] the national poet. I, along with Abdul Kuddus Makhan, escorted him from the airport to his residence. The rebel poet also wrote Banglar Joy, Bangalee Joy."

Talking about the Constitution, he noted, "The Constitution cannot be annulled; it can only be amended."

He said Sheikh Hasina's rule has surpassed Hitler's fascism in terms of authoritarianism.

Speaking about Serajul Alam Khan, Rob said he was not just a person; he was an institution. As long as the Bangalee nation exists, it will remember Serajul Alam Khan.

Nagrik Oikyo convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna said if people desire a better country, they need a strong political party.

In the absence of a good political party, it is essential to create one.

Reflecting on Serajul Alam Khan, Manna said, "Serajul Alam Khan was my organisational mentor [guru]. His contributions

to the country's liberation are profound and deserve widespread recognition."

Nazmul Haque Pradhan, general secretary of Jatiyatabadi Samajtantrik Dal, said that students who led the anti-discrimination student movement are now talking about the proclamation of the July uprising.

"But proclamations are made before a movement, not after," he said.

Professor Salimullah Khan said, "If someone claims that after the 2024 July uprising, they will erase the history of 1971, it would not be wise."

He pointed out that the crisis in Bangladesh stems from a lack of creativity among political parties.

On the Chattogram Hill Tracts crisis, he said, "The country created the CHT crisis but failed to resolve it."

The event, chaired by Raihanul Islam, chairman of the Serajul Alam Khan Research Center, was also addressed by Gono Odhikar Parishad's General Secretary Rashed Khan, freedom fighters Moazzamul Haque Bir Pratik, and Anowar Hossain.

Govt to ramp up drives

FROM PAGE 5
and 600 student representatives at the field level.

Hafiz also mentioned that drives have been conducted against 54,457 battery-operated rickshaws and 5,979 paddle rickshaws.

A d d i t i o n a l l y, approximately Tk 49.98 crore in fines have been collected, and 13.9 lakh cases have been filed against traffic law violators.

Prof Moazzem Hossain of BUET said traffic signal management systems will be installed at four intersections using local technology.

February 6 on a pilot basis. Based on the outcomes, this technology will be implemented at 18 more intersections, he added.

Khuda Baksh Chowdhury, special assistant to the chief adviser, said steps have already been taken to formulate guidelines for battery-operated rickshaws.

Once finalised, the policy will help control the movement of these rickshaws on main roads, he said. Chowdhury urged the city corporations to complete road markings, traffic signs, and proper bus stop markings to improve traffic movement.

for judiciary reforms and to enhance judicial services, including the submission of judges' asset statements.

"The chief justice has taken the recommendations positively," he added.

As per TIB's recommendations to the chief justice, the wealth statements of all judiciary members have to be mandatorily disclosed and updated annually. Initiatives must also be taken to scrutinise these statements and take legal action if any irregularities are found.

SC lawyer and rights activist Advocate ZI Khan Panna said judges' wealth statements should be submitted to the chief justice and made public to ensure transparency and accountability.

Many district court judges have residences or flats in Dhaka, and they come to Dhaka every Thursday and go to offices outside Dhaka at Sunday morning, he said.

Their properties should be made public, he added.

Khurshid Alam Khan, senior lawyer and the editor of Dhaka Law Reports, said, "It will be better if the interim government issues an ordinance for the mandatory submissions and public disclosure of the judges' wealth statement. In the future, an elected government can formulate a law to this effect."

A law should be formulated for them to do so mandatorily, which will help prevent corruption in the judiciary, he added.

Iftekharuzzaman said he met the chief justice on September 8, where he presented a set of recommendations

Legal action

FROM PAGE 3

Regarding the passport department, he said discussions are underway to enhance its quality of service.

"Corruption in this institution has significantly decreased since the arrival of the current director general, but further reduction is needed. People still face difficulties in obtaining passports, and we are exploring ways to alleviate these challenges," he said.

Addressing allegations that many Rohingyas use Bangladeshi passports to travel abroad and engage in illegal activities, Jahangir said, "I considered removing the police verification process and issuing passports based solely on NID cards. Police verification causes harassment, delays, and other issues, which need to be addressed. The number of police is also less than required."

"But for this [Rohingya] issue, police verification cannot be lifted. But if we see that it can be done only with the NID card, then maybe the police verification will be removed," he said.

Regarding many expatriates not receiving MRPs, the adviser said, "MRPs have been sent from Bangladesh, but distribution issues remain. The Passport DG is addressing this, and steps are being taken for faster delivery."

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Iftekharuzzaman said he met the chief justice on September 8, where he presented a set of recommendations

Cauliflower now

FROM PAGE 5
wholesale, but now the winter variety is selling for just Tk 2.3 each. I will face a significant loss from my winter variety harvest and may not cultivate it next season," he said.

Nazrul Islam, a 65-year-old farmer from Mahipur village in Rangpur's Gangachara upazila, shared similar concerns.

Akkas Ali Bapari, a vegetable vendor in Rangpur city, said wholesalers from across the country purchased cauliflower from Rangpur region last year.

"Farmers who grew early variety cauliflower benefited more," he added.

drop in demand while supply remains high.

As a result, farmers are being forced to sell their cauliflower at extremely low prices, with many unable to sell their produce at all. Large quantities of cauliflower are rotting in wholesale markets.

Obaidur Rahman Mandal, additional director of DAE in Rangpur division, said the bumper yield of winter variety cauliflower created an oversupply in the market, pushing prices down and leaving farmers disappointed.

"Farmers who grew early variety cauliflower benefited more," he added.

EIB vice president

FROM PAGE 3

and Climate Change, and Water resources Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan; Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain and Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur.

The EU is Bangladesh's largest trading partner, with exports to the EU growing from €2.4 billion to €24 billion per year in the past two decades.

Miller said the EU wants to ensure that Bangladesh maintains fundamental rights of their citizens and don't end up being indebted as the EIB provides funding.

Dismantle market syndicate

FROM PAGE 3
He said there is still a lack of visible justice for key incidents such as the 2009 Pilkhana massacre and the electoral rigging of 2014, 2018, and 2024.

The student leader called for accountability from the interim government, demanding action by January 15, including recognising the sacrifices of revolutionaries and addressing their grievances.

historically submissive foreign policy.

"Who rules Dhaka will no longer be decided by Delhi," he said.

Sarijul Alam, chief coordinator of the Citizens' Committee, said the people of Faridpur, particularly on August 3-5, played a pivotal role in toppling Sheikh Hasina's regime. "She will eventually face trial and execution for her crimes," he said.

Wanted

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Applications in prescribed form, obtainable from the office of the Registrar, are invited from the Bangladeshi nationals for filling up 01 (One) permanent post of Lecturer and 03 (three) Temporary posts of Lecturer against the leave vacancy in the Department of Pharmaceutical Technology University of Dhaka in the Pay Scales of Tk. 22,000-53,060/- (National Pay Scales -2015).

Qualifications: Candidates must have a first class/a minimum CGPA 3.50 out of 4.00 both in B. Pharm (Honors) & M. Pharm degrees in Pharmaceutical Technology (thesis) with a first division/a minimum GPA 4.25 out of 5.00 in both SSC & HSC examinations. Requirements for either the SSC or HSC examinations may be relaxed for the candidates who have obtained the first position/the highest CGPA in both Bachelor and Master degrees. Candidates having a Ph.D. in the relevant field and research publication(s) in a quality journal may get preference. Relevant notes and conditions apply. (For details, see the Dhaka University Website). Eight copies of application together with attested copies of certificates, testimonials, mark sheets and proof of experience along with a Pay Order/Bank Draft of the value of Tk. 750/- (seven hundred fifty) only, payable to the Registrar, University of Dhaka, should reach him on or before 28/01/2025. Candidates already in service must apply through proper channel.

GD-61

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL KOLKATA (DRT 3)
8th Floor, Jeevan Sudha Building, 42-C, Jawahar Lal Nehru Road, Kolkata-700071
Case No: OA/1215/2016
Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993.

Ex. No.: 5224

SONALI BANK LTD
VS
MS ROHAN EXPORTS AND ORS

To,
(1) BANGLADESH KRISHI BANK PROFORMA DEFENDANT, KHULNA CORPORATE BRANCH, KHULNA, BANGLADESH
(2) UNITED COMMERCIAL BANK LTD PROFORMA DEFENDANT, KHULNA BRANCH, 47, K D GHOSH ROAD, KHULNA, BANGLADESH
(3) BASIC BANK LTD PROFORMA DEFENDANT, KHULNA BRANCH, KHULNA, BANGLADESH
(4) NATIONAL BANK LTD PROFORMA DEFENDANT, SATKHIRA BRANCH, 32-33, OLD COLLEGE ROAD, SULTAN BAZAR, SATKHIRA, KHULNA, BANGLADESH

SUMMONS

WHEREAS, OA/1215/2016 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 05/11/2024.
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 16386251.07/- (application along with copies of documents etc annexed).

In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:

(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties and financial institutions holding security interest over such assets.
You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 17/01/2025 at 10:30am failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 03/12/2024.

Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue summons
Registrar-in-Charge
Debts Recovery Tribunal-3, Kolkata

Request for Proposal (RFP)



International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites proposals from interested Firms/Organizations for the Request for Proposal (RFP) to undertake the development of Upgradation, Maintenance of Recruiting Agencies Information Management System (RAIMS) and capacity building on RAIMS. The bidding documents and guidelines to participate in the tender are available in the **United Nations Global Market Place UNGM** at <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/256609>
The deadline for submission of proposal is **Sunday, February 09, 2025, by 04:30 PM (BST time).**



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:
1. RFP/BAN/2025/001: Bangladesh Nutrient Profile Model - A tool to classify foods and non-alcoholic beverages high in saturated fatty acids, trans-fatty acids, free sugars and salt (HFSS Foods).

Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 23 January 2025 (Dhaka time).**

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from: [https](https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice)

People outside Dhaka more concerned about local polls

Says Prof Tofail Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People outside the capital are more concerned about local government elections, while national-level politicians remain largely silent on the issue, said Prof Tolail Ahmed, chief of the Local Government Reform Commission, yesterday.

He was speaking at a views exchange programme with journalists at the National Institute of Local Government in Agargaon.

"Local leaders of the parties advocating for early national elections are discussing two elections: local government elections and national polls. Some are proposing local government elections first, while others are calling for both elections to be held the same day," he added.

The interim government formed the reform commission on November 18, tasking it with submitting reports within 90 days.

Speakers also proposed non-partisan local elections, increased benefits for representatives, limiting MPs' control over local bodies, introducing a "no" vote option, and conducting local elections under a caretaker government, like national polls.

Tofail said locals feel a void in governance, with services disrupted as many representatives went into hiding or were later dismissed post-Hasina's fall on August 5.

These include holding direct election for only member or councillor posts in local polls. These elected representatives will then select or elect the chairmen or mayors in local government institutions among themselves.

The commission is also considering holding local government elections without party symbols, creating a unified law for all local government institutions, and conducting all such elections on a single day to reduce costs.

Special attention is being given to the hill districts, where Hill District Council elections have not been held since 1989, with obstacles under review.

At the views exchange programme, speakers also proposed non-partisan local elections, increased benefits for representatives, limiting MPs' control over local bodies, introducing a "no" vote option, and conducting local elections under a caretaker government, like national polls.



BAHARCHHARA IN SREEMANGAL

Illegal sand extraction threatens livelihood

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

An influential group, allegedly led by a local Juba League leader, has been engaged in illegal sand extraction near a sluice gate in the Baharchhara area of Sharsharshee village, located in Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila.

The sluice gate, constructed during the 2006-07 fiscal year with support from the World Bank, was intended to provide irrigation water for local farmers.

This illegal activity has severely compromised the sluice gate's functionality, endangering a nearby tea garden hill, and jeopardised the agriculture and livelihoods of around 25,000 farmers across seven villages.

Locals reported that parts of the sluice gate have already sunk, sinkholes have appeared in sections of the Dinarpur Tea Garden, and rural roads are being damaged

by heavy vehicles continuously transporting sand.

Despite a High Court order that banned sand extraction in the area for six months, following a petition by the Barachhara Water Management Cooperative Society



Limited, the group has continued its activities.

Residents allege that Jewel Mia, a Mirzapur union Juba League leader, is orchestrating the illegal sand extraction.

Jewel, who faces several criminal charges, including violations of the

Explosives Act and the Balumahal and Soil Management Act, has reportedly used his political influence to carry out various illegal activities in the area.

During a recent visit to Sharsharshee village, this correspondent observed sand being extracted and stockpiled for sale at different points in Barachhara. Rural roads were found in poor condition due to the constant movement of sand-laden trucks and tractors.

A significant portion of the sluice gate's rear side has collapsed, while roads and bridges connecting to the Dinarpur Tea Garden hill are at grave risk of damage.

Local farmer Shafiq Mia said, "The sluice gate's present condition puts our livelihoods in jeopardy, while destroying the canal and endangering our homes."

Sheikh Sabuj Alam, general

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Cauliflower now a burden for farmers

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Farmers in the Rangpur region are facing significant losses despite a bumper cauliflower harvest this season.

Each cauliflower, weighing around 1 kilogramme, is being sold wholesale for just Tk 2-3, while the cost of production is Tk 5-6.

Last year, during the same period, each cauliflower fetched Tk 10-12.

Unable to cover even the cost of production, many farmers are leaving their cauliflower in the field instead of harvesting them.



According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), cauliflower was cultivated on 20,000 hectares across five districts in Rangpur division - Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha, and Nilphamari. Early variety cauliflower was grown on 3,000

hectares, with the rest devoted to winter variety cultivation.

Officials noted that farmers who cultivated early variety cauliflower managed to make a profit.

Sekender Ali, a 50-year-old farmer from Fulgachhi village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said he cultivated early variety cauliflower on one bigha and winter variety on four bighas.

"Around 4,000-4,500 cauliflower can be grown on one bigha at a production cost of Tk 5-6 per piece. I sold the early variety at Tk 60-70 apiece

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches from 06/01/2025 to 15/01/2025.

প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দণ্ডন
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
ঢাকা-১০০০

তারিখ: ৫/১/২৫

e-GP Tender Notice

e-GP tender is invited in the National e-GP System (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of works mentioned below under University of Dhaka.

SL No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work	e-Tender last selling date & time	e-Tender closing date & time
1	1059298	Z-1/AC/R/2024/09	Construction of a women's prayer room and ablution facility at the north side of Dhaka University TSC auditorium.	15-01-2025 14:00	15-01-2025 16:00

Memo No. T-7/32
Dated: 06-01-2025
Invitation for e-Tender
e-Tender has been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following [work]

S. N.	Tender ID	Package No. & description	Location of the works	Tender document last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time
1	1056391	Renovate of water supply line of BRE Colony under Sirajganj WD Division BWDB, Sirajganj during the FY 2024-2025.	BRE Colony, Sirajganj.	21-Jan-2025 17:00	22-Jan-2025 13:30 Hours
2.	1056392	Repair of Residential Building of Executive Engineer under Sirajganj WD Division, BWDB, Sirajganj during the FY 2024-2025.	Amlapara, Sirajganj.	21-Jan-2025 17:00	22-Jan-2025 13:00 Hours
3.	1056393	Residential repair work at Amlapara Colony under Sirajganj WD Division, BWDB, Sirajganj during the FY 2024-2025.	Amlapara, Sirajganj	21-Jan-2025 17:00	22-Jan-2025 12:30 Hours
4.	1056394	Supply and Installation of CC Camera at Hard point under Sirajganj WD Division, BWDB, Sirajganj during the FY 2024-2025.	Hardpoint, Sirajganj	21-Jan-2025 17:00	22-Jan-2025 12:00 Hours

This is the 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 fee for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to banking hours on 21-01-2025. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (01762625528-31).

Md. Mokhlasur Rahman
Executive Engineer
Sirajganj WD Division
BWDB, Sirajganj
E-mail: xensrajbwdb@gmail.com

পানি-৪৯৭/২০২৪-২০২৫ (৭'X৩)

জিভি-৭০

Govt to ramp up drives against illegal vehicles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to intensify its ongoing drives against illegal vehicles to improve Dhaka city's traffic management.

This decision was made during a meeting chaired by Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Defense and National Reconciliation Affairs Abdul Hafiz.

The meeting was held at the Chief Adviser's Office.

The meeting reviewed the progress of decisions taken on September 19 to reduce traffic congestion to a tolerable level and improve traffic management.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police officials reported that they have deployed 4,200 police personnel

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

ATTACK ON FARUK HASAN 2 accused get bail hours after arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to two persons arrested in connection with the assault on Faruk Hasan, senior vice president of Gono Odhikar Parishad, hours after their arrest.

They are Sharif Mizi alias Abir Ahmed Sharif, 27, and Korban Sheikh Hillol alias Prakash Hillol, 35.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mahbub Alam granted bail after they were produced in court, sources said.

The two were arrested early yesterday, said Khalid Mansur, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station.

According to a forwarding letter by Sub-inspector

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

DHAKA TUESDAY JANUARY 7, 2025

POUSH 23, 1431 BS

The Daily Star

5

RAMU IN COX'S BAZAR

Allotment of forest land to school cancelled

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

The government has cancelled the allotment of 155.7 acres of reserved forest land allocated to Shaheed ATM Zafar Alam Cadet College in Ramu upazila of Cox's Bazar.

The Ministry of Land revoked the allotment on December 10 in favour of the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ICT and Education) and the principal (in charge) of Shaheed Zafar Alam Cadet College.

The cancellation order, signed by Deputy Secretary Masud Kamal, was issued following objections from the adviser of the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.

Md Rashidul Islam, upazila nirbahi officer of Ramu, said the institution's name was previously changed to Shaheed ATM Zafar Alam Multidiscipline Academy.

The UNO confirmed receiving the cancellation letter and stated that the land would be brought under their supervision.

He said, "There are two structures inside the premises of the educational institution. We haven't received any directive about the institution."

Sources at Cox's Bazar District Commissioner's Office said the Ministry of Lands had informed the district commissioner on February 16, 2016, about the decision to provide long-term settlement for the land in favour of the school.

A letter signed by Joint Secretary Zahidul Islam said 155.7 acres of land under 1,494 plots in Khas Khatyam 1 at Khuniaalong Mauza, Ramu upazila, were to be settled for a price of 7.7 lakh taka -- a significantly reduced rate from its assessed value of 77 lakh taka.

The institution was established by Shaiful Alam, former cabinet division secretary, in honour of his elder brother.

Shaiful served as cabinet division secretary under the Awami League government from 2015 to 2019.

Despite repeated objections from the Forest Department and environment ministry, who had written several letters requesting the cancellation of the settlement, the allotment was not revoked during his tenure.

According to the Forest Department, thousands of trees were felled immediately after the land allocation.

An official from the Cox's Bazar district administration claimed Shaiful used his position of power to secure the land allotment, leaving the administration unable to oppose it at the time.

BIGM

Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management

Enrich yourself and move to the next level

E-33, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka - 1207

www.bigm.edu.bd

Call for Papers

BIGM Journal of Policy Analysis

Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management (BIGM), a premier knowledge hub in Dhaka conducts academic, research, training and intellectual capacity building activities on broad areas of governance and public policy discourse, is inviting scholarly papers for its journal named 'BIGM Journal of Policy Analysis'. Manuscripts must be original and preferably, be of quantitative nature following interdisciplinary perspectives and approaches in areas of public policy, development, economics and adjacent fields. Papers that describe experimentation are earnestly encouraged.

All submitted papers will be considered based on the outcome of a double-blind peer review process. Aside from peer review, submitted manuscripts may undergo procedural review within the reviewer referee/ expert network of the Journal.

BIGM Journal of Policy Analysis follows the APA referencing style. The desired style of formatting is: Times New Roman font in 12 font sizes and 1.5 line-spacing in A4 size paper. Only a soft copy of the article, both in word and pdf format, should be submitted by email at journal@bigm.edu.bd on or before **March 31, 2025**. Every submission must be accompanied by a cover letter and should include contact details, institutional affiliation of author/authors and other relevant information, such as, non-submission of the article in other journals, funding information (if any), and authors' contribution in case of multiple authors.

Dr. Mohammad Tareque and
Director, BIGM Editor-in-Chief,
BIGM Journal of Policy Analysis

GD- 64



Clockwise from left: Mohammad Obaidul Karim holds stakes in the Reflections Hotel. Ashiqur Rahman Lasker, Aziz Al Kaiser and Aziz Al Masud all own flats in Al Khudrawi, a luxe apartment complex in Palm Jumeirah. Ex-cop Benazir Ahmed's wife Jissan Mirza owns a flat in The Address Residence-Fountain Views in the Burj Khalifa neighbourhood. Sayem Sobhan Anvir holds a flat inside the Burj Khalifa tower itself.

Parking wealth under the Dubai sun

FROM PAGE 1
registered in the name of 461 Bangladeshis.

Of the properties, 259 are registered in the names of politicians, business magnates and bankers.

All 461 names and the number of properties listed in their names are based on 2020 and 2022 data compiled by C4ADS, and it is possible that some of them sold some of the properties or bought new ones.

We gained access to that database in August 2024.

Using the land records, we collated the values of 271 properties (out of the 929) whose prices were readily available. We found the total value of these 271 properties and extrapolated it to all the 929 properties, to estimate that the total value of Bangladeshi-owned real estate in Dubai is \$0.4 billion (about Tk 5,000 crore).

ZOOMING IN ON 19
The Daily Star further narrowed down the list of properties to name 19 individuals whose property-related tax and service charge documents could be obtained directly from the Dubai Land Department website.

In addition, The Daily Star obtained the title deed numbers of the properties and validated the ownership using the same website. For verification, we used the same methods used by the OCCRP for its Dubai Unlocked project in early 2024.

Using these methods, we have been able to verify 82 properties belonging to these 19 individuals and their families in December 2024, five months after we first gained access to the C4ADS database. They include ex-land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed, ex-Dhaka 10 Awami League MP HBM Iqbal, ex-BNP lawmaker Mosaddak Ali Falu from the same constituency, ex-IGP Benazir Ahmed's wife Jissan Mirza, business tycoons Nafeez Sarafat, Sayem Sobhan Anvir, Orion Group owner Mohammad Obaidul Karim, and Partex Group founder MA Hashem's two sons Aziz Al Kaiser and Aziz Al Masud.

Also listed in the land department database are Shahab Sattar and Tasbirul Ahmed Chowdhury, who once owned or led the now-grounded private airlines GMG and United, respectively.

Together, Shahab and Tasbirul owe more than Tk 785 crore to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh as of October 2024, according to official documents seen by The Daily Star.

However, The Daily Star cannot confirm the source of the money with which these properties were bought. We also have no evidence that any money laundering from Bangladesh was involved in these cases.

Even though Bangladesh's strict currency controls disallow capital transfer out of Bangladesh, those with dual citizenship or foreign income can legally purchase

property anywhere in the world, as long as they disclose it.

We cannot confirm if they disclosed these properties in their tax files.

Our investigation, spanning over five months, revealed that these individuals currently face or previously faced corruption charges in Bangladesh, or were convicted of graft or were cleared by the court after being charged. (At least three such property holders have been cleared by courts in November 2024, when this investigation was underway.)

A few also face cases over unpaid loans worth hundreds of crores and other financial irregularities, while several are facing allegations of financial misconducts against their

family members because we could not contact them.

Again, The Daily Star has seen no evidence that any of these properties are the fruits of money laundering from Bangladesh.

The Daily Star phoned, emailed and texted 18 of these individuals (one of them is dead) and their immediate family members in November 2024. Only five of them responded. They either said they obtained the properties legally from their foreign incomes or declined to comment citing ongoing investigations against them.

These five are Bashundhara Group Director Salwan Sobhan, banker Nafeez Sarafat, Star Ceramics Chairman Syed AK Anwaruzzaman, RAK Ceramics MD

lavish palm shaped archipelago of artificial islands in the Gulf.

In fact, two Bangladeshis own flats inside the Burj Khalifa tower itself, according to the C4ADS database. The Daily Star is revealing the name of only one of them – Sayem Sobhan Anvir – because we were able to gather his property records from the Dubai Land Department.

Out of the 20 Bangladeshi-owned properties in Palm Jumeirah, eight are held by those facing cases over alleged financial conducts.

At least 61 Bangladeshi-owned properties are in the Burj Khalifa neighbourhood – 20 of them are owned by seven individuals facing allegations or investigations related to financial irregularities in

(over Tk 1,300 crore).

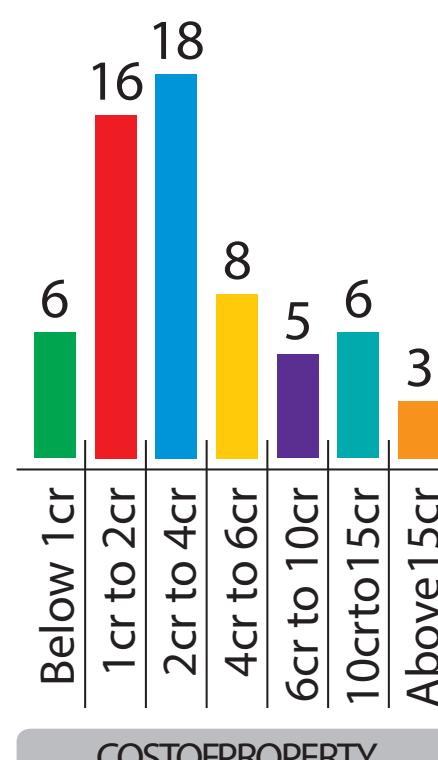
His brother Saifwan Sobhan's address in Dubai is Corniche 1 street in Emirates Hill Third, according to the UK's company registry. We were unable to verify the ownership of this property from the Dubai land department.

However, the UK company registry logs him as a Cypriot instead of Bangladeshi. The Daily Star obtained a clipping of a newspaper announcement from July 2014, published in the largest newspaper in Cyprus, *Alithia*, declaring his citizenship.

Under Cyprus's golden visa scheme, wealthy foreigners were offered Cypriot citizenship in exchange for investments of about €2 million (USD 2.5 million) in their

The Daily Star cannot confirm the source of the money with which these properties were bought. We also have no evidence that any money laundering from Bangladesh was involved in these cases.

Properties in Dubai owned by Bangladeshis investigated for corruption



name him as the owner of a company called Agri Products Europe which was founded on November 11, 2013, in Tirana, the capital of Albania. Up until 2023, Albania promoted a golden passport scheme offering citizenship in exchange for investment.

Records from the corporate registry of Bahrain show that Orion Pharma Ltd held 30 percent of a now-defunct company called Orion Pharma Bahrain, where he and his son served on the Board of Directors. While his son is listed as a Bangladeshi, Obaidul is listed as an Indian national. The company was formed on January 6, 2015.

Obaidul's daughter Zareen Karim owns a UAE-based company called Zeysha General Trading LLC where she was listed as a Dominican national as of 2023, according to Dubai's company registry.

Pursuing that lead, this newspaper collected a copy of Obaidul and his wife Arzuda Karim's Dominican passports, which were issued on November 14, 2022. Sources at Dhaka airport confirmed that the passports are genuine.

Zareen was appointed the Honorary Consul of Dominica to Bangladesh in 2024, and she still holds the post.

According to Henley & Partners, a top firm facilitating citizenship by investment, it is possible to get a second citizenship in Dominica by investing \$200,000 in real estate, or contributing that sum to the country's Economic Diversification Fund.

Former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed has at least 37 properties worth Tk 70 crore in his name in Dubai, the highest number of properties registered in the name of any Bangladeshi nationals there. Of them, at least 10 properties were bought as a resident of American Samoa, a US territory covering seven South Pacific islands.

The Daily Star also has documents showing that he held at least 16 more properties worth Tk 50 crore but they changed hands in recent years – four in 2024, nine in 2023, one in 2022 and two in 2021.

SOME TOP PROPERTY HOLDERS

TOTAL WORTH (IN BDT)

Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Tk 70.2cr	Mohammad Obaidul Karim and family Tk 66.6cr	Syed AK Anwaruzzaman Tk 36.2cr
MA Hashem and sons Tk 24.1cr	SAK Ekramuzzaman Tk 22.1cr	Hefjul Bari Mohammad Iqbal Tk 55.6cr
Ashiqur Rahman Lasker Tk 13.9cr	Jissan Mirza Tk 13.9cr	Sayem Sobhan Anvir Tk 12.4cr
Tasbirul Ahmed Chowdhury Tk 10.3cr	Chowdhury Nafeez Sarafat Tk 10.3cr	Anisuzzaman Chowdhury Tk 10cr

companies.

Using both the values stated in the official land records and the median price per square feet of each of those properties, this newspaper calculated the estimated total value of the 82 properties held by the 19 individuals and their family members at \$29 million or Tk 350 crore.

In some cases, the properties are listed in the name of multiple beneficiaries, including family members or other individuals. We are not naming some of these

Syed Ekramuzzaman and Orion Group owner Obaidul Karim (see their full response in the Profile Section of this story on page 7). The rest did not respond, or were unreachable by phone and email.

Property records reveal that their favoured locations include the most expensive areas downtown like the Burj Khalifa neighbourhood characterised by the city's iconic landmark, the swanky Marsa Dubai straddling the marina, Dubai's financial district called Business Bay, and Palm Jumeirah, the

Bangladesh.

GOLDEN VISA, LAYERING

Many of the properties were purchased by layering, using golden visas.

For example, Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir's flat was bought in the name of his UK company Worldera Corporation FZE where he is a director. The company lists Anvir as a Slovakian citizen. Slovakian golden passport is considered one of the most expensive in the world, requiring an investment of 100 million euros

real estate, along with another €200,000 in contributions to the Cypriot government's research and land development fund, according to a number of international business consultancy firms.

Orion Group owner Obaidul Karim appears to have pursued a similar path – none of the properties listed in his name in Dubai were purchased using his Bangladeshi passport.

In the registration records of a hotel in Dubai where he has stakes, Obaidul is listed as an Albanian. Albanian corporate registry records

Who owns WHAT IN DUBAI



SAIFUZZAMAN CHOWDHURY JAVED

➤ Ex-land minister & single-largest property buyer among Bangladeshis
➤ 37 properties worth over Tk 70 crore as of 2024. Another 16 properties worth at least Tk 50 crore listed in his name changed hand in 2021-2024.

Property description: In Dubai's Nad Al Shiba First neighbourhood alone, he has 28 flats in The Polo Residence, a cluster of 29 five-storey buildings. The average value of these flats is Tk 1 crore each. He owns at least two properties in the Burj Khalifa neighbourhood in the Mada Residences Tower. He also has two properties in Kempinski Residences in Business Bay neighbourhood. In addition, Javed has two studio properties in the Roy Mediterranean building in the Al Furjan neighbourhood, and two one-bedroom flats in the Hameni Tower in Jumeirah Village Circle.

The C4ADS records list another two dozen plus properties in his name, but there are no other details such as passport number and date of birth in the C4ADS database directly linking him to those properties.

His brother Anisuzzaman Chowdhury Ronny has a two-bedroom property in Palm Jumeirah's Golden Mile 4, worth an estimated Tk 1 crore.

Investigation: A week after the AL govt fell on Aug 5, 2024, BFIU instructed all banks to freeze all accounts related to Javed and his family members. Separately, a Dhaka court ordered confiscation of all movable and immovable assets belonging to Javed and his wife Rukhima Zaman.

Comment: Javed is thought to have fled to the UK amid the political changeover. His phone number has been found switched off over the last one month. Ronny also did not respond to our calls and WhatsApp messages.



OBAIDUL KARIM & FAMILY

➤ Owner, Orion Group
➤ One hotel, and 3 residential properties worth Tk 67 crore

Property description: He part-owns a four-star hotel named Palette Royal Reflections Hotel and Spa Dubai, where he has 49% stakes. Built in 2014, the 100-room hotel is in the neighbourhood of Bur Dubai. The business tycoon, his wife Arzuda Karim and daughter Zareen Karim have in their names three more properties in Dubai whose total worth is Tk 50 crore. Of them, the property listed in Obaidul's name is in Al Merkadh neighbourhood; it is worth Tk 42 crore. A similar property, worth about Tk 21 crore, is listed in his wife's name in the same neighbourhood. Their daughter Zareen Karim has a 3-bedroom flat in her name in Dubai's World Trade Centre Residences.

Conviction: In 2008, Obaidul was sentenced to 13 years in jail for amassing illegal wealth and hiding asset information. Recently, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit has frozen his family's bank accounts, while NBR blocked Orion Group's share transfers.

Comment: He denied having any wealth abroad. Although he admitted having Albanian and Dominican passports, he said he has no knowledge of his Indian citizenship.

In a written response, he said. "I wish to clarify that I do not own any significant asset in any country worldwide. Please be noted that the properties mentioned in the provided list do not belong to me. There is a rumor that I possess an asset in Dubai known as Reflections Hotel L.L.C.

"However, the fact is that the rightful owner of Reflections Hotel L.L.C. is Mr Ali Abdulla Mohamed Sharif Falaknaz who built this hotel by availing a loan from a commercial bank of Dubai. As a token of our strong relationship between Mr Ali Abdulla Mohamed Sharif Falaknaz and myself, he leased the property to me. As a lessee, my responsibility was to pay the bank installments instead of paying the lease rent to the owner. To further clarify, I have not made any investment in the mentioned property.

"My involvement was strictly as a guarantor as a lessee. Further to mention here that, after the passing of Mr Ali Abdulla Mohamed Sharif Falaknaz, I chose not to continue the lease arrangement. Subsequently, the property has been leased to another individual. Once again, I want to emphasise that I do not own any property anywhere in the world. If there are any doubts or concerns, you can conduct a thorough investigation to verify this matter."



SYED AK ANWARUZZAMAN

➤ Chairman of Star Ceramics & SM Group
➤ 6 properties in his name, one in his daughter's name worth Tk 36 crore

Property description: He has five properties in the Burj Khalifa neighbourhood worth Tk 32 crore. In two neighbouring skyscrapers called West Heights 1 and West Heights 2, he owns two two-bedroom flats, on the 22nd and the 29th floors. In the Burj Khalifa neighbourhood's Miska-4 highrise, he has a two-bedroom apartment. He has a penthouse apartment in a twin skyscraper called Two Towers B, in Barsha Heights area. He also has a booking for a 1-bedroom flat in an under-construction skyscraper in Dubai Sports City. In Burj Khalifa's The Address-The BLVD tower, he and one of his family members own a one-bedroom flat each.

Acquittal: In 2019, ACC sued him for laundering money to Dubai. On November 14, when this investigation was underway, a Dhaka court acquitted him of the charges.

Comment: The Daily Star first contacted him on November 5, and he spoke with us at his Gulshan office on November 14, 2024, hours after his acquittal. He confirmed that he bought these properties with foreign income.

However, in recent times he sold four of these properties - the 2-bedroom flat in West Heights 2, the 1-bedroom flat in Kempinski The Boulevard Dubai, the three-bedroom apartment on the 33rd floor of Harbour Views, and the penthouse apartment in Two Towers.

"These properties were bought with legitimate foreign income. My pursuit of success led me to go to the UAE. During my time in UAE, in 1992 and 1995, I along with a few foreign friends established three trading companies of construction materials in Dubai. The businesses are still running very successfully," he said.

"The allegations raised by ACC against me are unfounded and baseless. The court itself was not satisfied with the investigation," he added.



MA HASHEM AND SONS

➤ Ex-BNP MP from Noakhali-2 and founder of Partex Group
➤ Three properties worth Tk 24 crore

Property description: Partex Group's late chairperson MA Hashem has in his name a 2-bedroom apartment on the 40th floor of the 83-storey Ocean Heights in the affluent Marsa Dubai area, worth Tk 2.2 crore. His two sons Aziz Al Kaiser and Aziz Al Masud own one apartment each in the beach-facing Al Khudrawi tower in Palm Jumeirah, each costing around Tk 11 crore. Kaiser's is a four-bedroom flat on the fourth floor, while Masud's is a five-bedroom unit on the 10th floor.

Investigation: In 2022, the NBR asked bank and non-bank financial institutions to provide all banking details, including foreign currency accounts, of all 10 members of the family associated with the Partex Group. Currently, ACC is investigating Partex Group for illegally obtaining government khas land in Dhaka and Noakhali.

Comment: The Daily Star emailed Kaiser and Masud but did not receive any response.



SYED AK EKRAMUZZAMAN

➤ Managing Director, RAK Ceramics, and ex-BNP leader-turned AL politician
➤ Seven properties worth at least Tk 22.4cr

Property description: His apartment on the 7th floor of Palm Jumeirah's Al Shaha tower is worth Tk 11.4 crore. In Marsa Dubai, he owns a one-bedroom flat on the 23rd floor of the 46-storey Sadaf 6 tower. In Dubai's International City, one of his family members owns two one-bedroom flats in a residential building called Lady Ratan Manor. In Dubai Silicon Oasis, Ekramuzzaman has a two-bedroom terraced apartment and an office space on the 20th floor of Regal Tower in Dubai's financial district Business Bay.

Acquittal: In 2019, ACC sued him for laundering money to Dubai. On Nov 14, when this investigation was underway, a Dhaka court acquitted him of the charges. Ahead of the controversial 2024 election, he quit as BNP chairperson's adviser and ran from Brahmanbaria-1 as an independent candidate, and won. He joined Awami League after the election. His affidavit with the Election Commission shows he had outstanding loans and liabilities worth Tk 2,537 crore, making him the candidate with the highest debt.

Comment: Of the 7 properties registered in his and a family member's name, he confirmed owning 3 - the one in Al Shahid Tower, the one in Regal Tower and the one in Al Sadaf 6 tower. He said all these properties were bought with legitimate foreign income, and denied holding any other properties in Dubai at the moment.

[Read rest of his comment online]



HEJFUL BARI MOHAMMAD IQBAL

➤ Ex-AL MP (Dhaka-10), chairman of Premier Bank
➤ 2 villas and 5 apartments worth at least Tk 56cr

Property description: HBM Iqbal has three flats in the Burj Khalifa area: a two-bedroom apartment on the 25th floor of Windsor Manor tower; a three-bedroom flat on the 33rd floor of The Residences Tower E2; and a one-bedroom flat on the 20th floor of BD Standpoint Residences. He also owns an office space on the 12th floor of XL Tower and a one-bedroom apartment on the fourth floor of Tuscan Residences Arezzo-1 building in Jumeirah village. He has a five-bedroom villa in Palm Jumeirah, worth about Tk 36 crore. His another five-bedroom villa named Damac Hills-Queens Meadow is in Al Hebiah Third neighbourhood. One of his family members co-owns two of these 7 properties.

Conviction: In 2008, he was sentenced to 13 years in jail for concealing assets, which was upheld by the Appellate Division in 2016. In November 2024, ACC opened a probe over amassing illegal wealth in the last two decades and a three-member committee is currently investigating him.

Comment: He did not respond to our calls and emails.



SHAHAB SATTAR

➤ Honorary consul to Cyprus & owner of now-grounded GMG Airlines
➤ Two properties worth Tk 3 crore

Property description: He has a one-bedroom flat on the 24th floor of Marsa Dubai's Pier 8 skyscraper. He also owns a shop in a condominium complex in Goldcrest Views.

Unpaid loans: In 2012, GMG announced suspension of operations, but the grounded fleet still owes Tk 238 crore to National Bank and a Tk 190 crore to Sonali Bank, according to media reports. In August 2016, Sonali Bank attempted to auction off their property for failure to repay loans, but GMG went to the High Court and secured a stay order. As of October 2024, GMG owes Tk 396 crore to the civil aviation authorities.

Comment: We sent our questions via email through his personal assistant, but we have not heard back.



SAYEM SOBHAN ANVIR

➤ Managing director, Bashundhara Group
➤ One flat in Burj Khalifa tower worth Tk 12.4 crore

Property description: The Bashundhara kingpin has a flat in Armani Residences of the Burj Khalifa. This two-bedroom flat on the 11th floor of the Burj Khalifa tower is held in the name of his UK company Worldera Corporation FZE and its estimated value is Tk 12.4 crore.

Investigation: CID is currently investigating money laundering allegations against Bashundhara. Separately, NBR has frozen the transfer of Bashundhara Group's shares.

Comment: He did not respond to our calls and emails. He is currently thought to be outside the country.



ASHIQU RAHMAN LASKER

➤ Managing Director, Maheen Enterprise Ltd and ex-director of Meghna Bank
➤ Two properties worth at least Tk 23cr

Property description: The Chattogram-based shipbreaking company owner has a 3-bedroom apartment on the first floor of Al Hosseini tower in Palm Jumeirah. Until 2022, he had another 4-bedroom flat in Al Khudrawi tower in the same neighbourhood. Latest records show it is now held a family member.

Allegations: He has Tk 2,000 crore in unpaid loans. Multiple cases are pending against Ashiqur at Arthurian Adlak in Chattogram.

Comment: He did not respond to our calls and emails.



TASBIRUL AHMED CHOUDHURY

➤ Ex-MD and founder of now-grounded United Airways
➤ 7 properties worth about Tk 10.33cr

Property description: He has five two-bedroom apartments on the 3rd, 5th, 11th, 13th and 14th floors of the Milano Giovanni Boutique Suites in Jumeirah Village Circle. He also has two ground-floor flats in the more middle-class neighbourhood of Al Warsan, and a three-bedroom villa in a similar neighbourhood called Wadi Al Safa 7.

Allegations: United Airways was grounded in 2016. A year later, BSEC fined Tasbirul for insider trading causing loss to the general investors. As of October 2024, the airline owes Tk 388 crore to the civil aviation authorities.

Comment: We contacted him on Nov 6 and 7, 2024, and he texted back saying he will reply. We followed up with him again on Nov 9, but he did not respond.



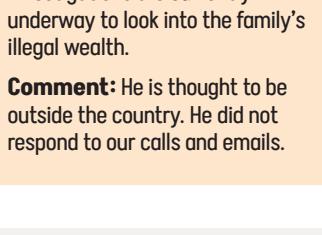
SAFWAN SOBHAN TASVIR

➤ Director, Bashundhara Group
➤ One villa; price unknown

Property description: According to the UK company registry, Tasvir holds a UAE residency and is linked to a villa in Emirates Hills, an area in Dubai known to be the home of the wealthiest of the world, including former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. However, we were unable to locate his property records from the Dubai registry.

Investigation: CID is currently investigating money laundering allegations against Bashundhara. Separately, NBR has frozen the transfer of Bashundhara Group's shares.

Comment: He is currently thought to be abroad. He responded via WhatsApp through East West Group's media department. He did not directly address the question about the property, but said, "As you are aware, certain members of our family are subject to ongoing investigations in Bangladesh. We strongly refute all allegations of wrongdoing and will robustly defend ourselves against these allegations. We consider the investigations to be legally weak and politically driven."



AL-HAJ MOHAMMAD MOSADDAK ALI FALU

➤ Ex-BNP MP from Dhaka-10, chairman of ntv
➤ One property in Dubai

Property description: In a suburban neighbourhood called Nadd Hessa, Falu has an office in the Silicon Information Technology Tower worth Tk 1.3 crore.

Acquittal: In 2022, the court ordered police to arrest Falu for allegedly smuggling Tk 183.92 crore to Dubai through offshore companies. He is currently on bail. On November 14, when this investigation was underway, he was acquitted of the charge.

Comment: The Daily Star called him and emailed him, but he did not respond.



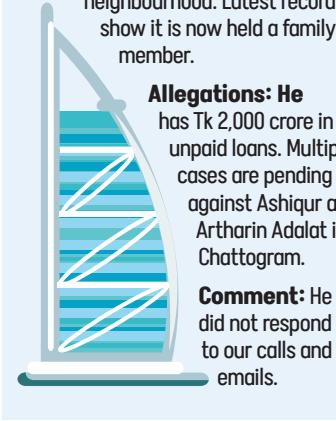
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Investigation: CID is currently investigating money laundering allegations against Bashundhara. Separately, NBR has frozen the transfer of Bashundhara Group's shares.

Comment: He did not respond to our calls and emails. He is currently thought to be outside the country.



Kurdish fighters will be 'eliminated'

Says Turkish FM

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey said yesterday that it was "only a matter of time" before Syrian Kurdish fighters – seen by the West as essential in the fight against Islamic State jihadists – will be wiped out.

"Conditions in Syria have changed. We believe it's only a matter of time before PKK/YPG is eliminated," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told a news conference in the capital Ankara.

Turkey sees the People's Protection Units (YPG) – the main component of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) – as a terror group linked to its outlawed domestic foe the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK).

Fidan warned against any Western support for Kurdish fighters in Syria.

"If you (the West) have different aims in the region, if you want to serve another policy by using Daesh as an excuse to embolden the PKK, then there is no way for that either," he said, using an Arabic acronym for IS group.

Turkey has long been ranked by the United States' support for the Kurdish-led SDF in northern Syria.

But Washington has long seen the SDF as crucial to preventing a resurgence of the group. New Syrian leader Ahmed al Sharaa, whose HTS group has long had ties with Turkey, told Al Arabiya TV on Sunday that the Kurdish-led forces should be integrated into the national army.



A farmer removes snow from his vegetable field after a fresh snowfall in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH INDIA US taking steps to clear hurdles: Sullivan

REUTERS, New Delhi

The United States is finalising steps to clear hurdles for civil nuclear partnership with Indian firms, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said yesterday, seeking to give fresh momentum to a landmark deal between the two countries.

Washington and New Delhi have been discussing the supply of US nuclear reactors to energy-hungry India since the mid-2000s.

But a longstanding obstacle has been the need to bring Indian liability rules in line with global norms which require the costs of any accident to be channelled to the operator rather than the maker of a nuclear power plant.

The deal was signed by then President George W Bush in 2007, a major step

toward allowing the United States to sell civilian nuclear technology to India.

"United States is now finalising the necessary steps to remove long-standing regulations that have prevented civil nuclear cooperation between India's leading nuclear entities and US companies," Sullivan said in New Delhi yesterday.

He is on a two-day visit to the Indian capital, days before President-elect Donald Trump is due to be sworn in.

Washington expects the impact of Chinese upstream dams, artificial intelligence, space, military licensing and Chinese economic overcapacity to be discussed while Sullivan is in New Delhi, a US official said on Saturday.

The two countries agreed in 2019 to build six US nuclear power plants in India.



Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
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Memo No.: 35.01.1800.409.05.001.24-35

Dated: 06/01/2025 Eng.

e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID	Tender No and Description	Last selling Date and Time	Closing Date and Time
1059686	e-GP/CHURD/16/2024-2025. Re-Construction of 1Nos RCC Box Culvert 1Vent 3.00m Span, 3.00m Height and 14.50m Wide at 33km Km (Ch. 32+800) of Chuadanga-Darsana-Jbannagar-Kotchandpur-Kaliganj Road (R-748) under Road Division, Chuadanga, during the year 2024-2025.	20-Jan-2025 17:00	21-Jan-2025 11:00

GD- 68

Iran executed over 30 women in 2024: report

AFP, Paris

Iran in 2024 executed at least 31 women, an NGO said yesterday, warning that female prisoners were increasingly being caught in a surge in the use of capital punishment in the Islamic republic.

Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR), which closely tracks executions in Iran, said in a report that the figure for 2024 marked the highest number of women to be hanged in Iran since it started documenting the use of capital punishment in 2008.

It added that 241 women were executed from 2010 to 2024, mostly on drug and murder convictions.

(Md. Golam Mostafa)
ID No. 602133
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Chuadanga.
01730-782778

Office of the Chuadanga Pourashava

District: Chuadanga

Date: 06/01/2025

Memo No. CHUA/Poura/2025/30

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 works as mentioned in the following table:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Nature of works	Online (e-GP System) tender publication date & time	Online (e-GP System) tender closing date & time
1055844	LGCRRP/Chuadanga/2024-2025/W-09.	Rehabilitation of Dense Carpeting Road and RCC Drain Work	08.01.2025 10:00am	30.01.2025 14:00pm
1055845	LGCRRP/Chuadanga/2024-2025/W-10.	Construction of RCC Drain Work	08.01.2025 10:00am	30.01.2025 14:00pm
1055846	LGCRRP/Chuadanga/2024-2025/W-11.	Rehabilitation of Dense Carpeting Road and RCC Drain Work	08.01.2025 10:00am	30.01.2025 14:00pm
1055847	LGCRRP/Chuadanga/2024-2025/W-12	Rehabilitation of Dense Carpeting Road Work	08.01.2025 10:00am	30.01.2025 14:00pm

These are an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tendering documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 30.01.2025 at 13:00pm.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Saifullah
Chief Executive Officer
Chuadanga Pourashava
Phone: 0247778781
E-mail: mayor16cp@gmail.com

GD-65

INTERNATIONAL

HUGE WINTER STORM 60m people across US under weather alert

AFP, Washington

Dangerous wintry conditions descended Sunday on a large swath of the central United States as a severe storm system tracked eastward, prompting travel and work disruptions from Kansas City to Washington.

Around a dozen states from Kansas to New Jersey were under winter storm warnings Sunday afternoon, according to the National Weather Service (NWS), while areas across the US South faced possible tornado and cold weather threats.

Nationwide, over 60 million people were under some sort of weather alert, according to broadcaster CNN, while air traffic monitoring site FlightAware showed almost 2,200 flight cancellations and over 25,000 delays.

Gusty winds from the storm system, the

first of the year, brought blizzard conditions to Kansas and Missouri, while states farther east were blanketed in multiple inches of snow. Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear implored residents to "please stay home" after reporting multiple vehicle crashes had closed a major highway.

The NWS also warned that accumulations of up to a half inch of ice in some areas -- as well as widespread tree damage from powerful wind gusts -- could lead to "prolonged power outages."

A mix of freezing rain, sleet and snow began hitting Kansas Sunday morning. Storm chaser Brian Emfinger said on X that roads around Kansas City were "a skating rink." Video posted by the Weather Channel showed cars skidding off ice-coated highways and tractor trailers jackknifing in Kansas, where some areas were expecting over a foot of snow.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

পরিকল্পনা মন্ত্রণালয়

পরিকল্পনা বিভাগ

সামাজিকবিজ্ঞান গবেষণা পরিষদ

ssrc.portal.gov.bd

তারিখ: ২২ পৌষ ১৪৫০

০৬ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫

নং-২০.০০.০০০০.৩০৯.০২.১১৬.২২-১২

গবেষণা প্রত্নতান্ত্রিক জ্ঞান অনলাইন এবং অফলাইনে আবেদন আবেদন

আগস্ট ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্ববছরে সামাজিকবিজ্ঞান গবেষণা পরিষদ, পরিকল্পনা মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক প্রযোগশীল, বেলোপিল ও প্রাইভেট সেক্টরে কাটারগুরি পরিষেবা প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে গবেষণা প্রত্নতান্ত্রিক জ্ঞান কর্তৃপক্ষের পরিকল্পনা দলিলের উপর লক্ষণের সাথে সামাজিকসম্পর্ক আর্থ-সামাজিক বিজ্ঞানগুলির উপর 'সামাজিকবিজ্ঞান গবেষণা নৈতিকাল-২০২৪' এবং জনুয়ারী উপর পরিকল্পনা দলিলের সেক্টরে নির্মান কর্তৃপক্ষের উপর গবেষণা প্রত্নতান্ত্রিক উপর গবেষণা প্রত্নতান্ত্রিক আবেদন করতে হবেও।

SL. No.	Research Field	Research Sub Field
01.	Education	(1) Education & Employment (2) Aligning Skill and Education (3) Policy Gap & Skill Gap of Technical and Vocational Education (4) Quality Training for Teachers (5) Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education (6) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
02.	Health and Population	(1) Hospital Management (2) Urban Issues (3) Maternal and Child Health (4) Non Communicable Disease (5) Sound Pollution, Air Pollution & Water Pollution in Health Respective (6) Health Care (7) Autism
03.	Agriculture	(1) Sustainable Agriculture & Food Security (2) Crops and Horticulture (3) Plant Factory (4) Live Stock & Fisheries (5) Land Use (6) Modern Agriculture (7) Market Linkage for Agricultural Products
04.	Social Welfare & Social Security	(1) Impact of Social Safety Net Programmes (2) Sustainable Food Security (3) Human Rights (4) Universal Pension Skim (5) Socio-economic Impact of Road Accidents (6) Elderly People and Wellbeing (7) Human Trafficking (8) Occupational Health and Safety in Different Sectors (9) Children Related Issues
05.	Women Affairs	(1) Skills Training for Women Provided by the Government (2) Working Environment for Women in Private /Public Sectors (3) Women Participation in the Workforce (4) Women in Politics, Civil Service and Education
06.	Socio-economic	(1) Effect of Global Inflation (2) Environmental Protection and Sustainability of Development Projects (3) Socioeconomic Transformation in Bangladesh (4) Simplification of Land based Procedures
07.	Science and Technology	(1) 4 th IR and Technical & Vocational Training (2) 4 th IR and ICT (3) Cyber Security (4) IR 4.0 Technology & Application
08.	Trade & Commerce	(1) Product Diversification & Market Diversification (2) Global Value/Supply Chain (3) LDC Graduation and Trade (4) Trade Diversification/Market Diversification (5) Blue Economy (6) Trade Facilitation and Liberalization (7) LDC Graduation
09.	Poverty Dynamics	(1) Analysing Poverty Dynamics Based on Genie Co-efficient. (2) Medium & Small Business (3) Financial Support to Cottage & SME (4) Informal Sector
10.	Industrial Development	(1) Automotive Engineering (2) Constructions (3) Pharmaceuticals (4) Transportation (5) Chemical Industry (6) Industrial Manufacturing (7) Prospects & Challenges of RMG (8) Entrepreneurship (9) SME (10) Textile Engineering
11.	Human Resource & Skill Development	(1) Efficiency Assessment of Training in Different Government Institutions (2) Training Activities for HR Development in Public & Private Sector (3) Training for the People of Special Needs (4) Freelancing (5) Skill Gap, Skill Mismatch, Skill Shortage
12.	Environment & Climate Change	(1) Climate Change & Mitigation (2) Air Pollution, Water Pollution and Sound Pollution (3) Disaster Management (4) Green Climate Resilient Development
13.	Public Service Delivery	(1) Professional Practice (2) Infrastructure and Utility Services (3) Law and Order Service (4) Digital and E-Governance Service
14.	Youth	(1) Sports Facilities and Programs (2) Arts & Culture (3) Skill Development

০১। গবেষণা প্রত্নতান্ত্রিক জ্ঞান আবেদনের শর্তাবলী:
(১) গবেষণা/প্রযোজন প্রত্নতান্ত্রিক জ্ঞান এবং অফলাইনে আবেদন করতে হবে;
(২) জনাব শুধুম শাখা বিভাগ, সহশর্তী প্রযোজন এবং অফলাইনে সামাজিকবিজ্ঞান গবেষণা প্রত্নতান্ত্রিক জ্ঞান আবেদন করতে হবে;

(৩) সরকারি চাকরিজীবীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিতে আবেদন করতে হবে।

INTERNATIONAL

Iran 'main security challenge' in ME

Says France's Macron

AFP, Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday said Iran was the main strategic and security challenge in the Middle East, citing the acceleration of its nuclear programme and support for Russia's war against Ukraine.

"Iran is the main strategic and security challenge for France, the Europeans, the entire region and beyond," Macron said in a speech to ambassadors, adding the issue would be a key subject of discussion with the new administration of US president-elect Donald Trump.

"The acceleration of the nuclear programme leads us nearly to the point of no return," Macron said.



Iran says it is enriching uranium for peaceful purposes and has stepped up the programme since US President-elect Donald Trump pulled Washington out of the 2015 deal during his first term of office and restored tough US sanctions on Tehran.

European powers France, Germany and Britain said last month Iran's actions had further hollowed out the deal and would heighten its stockpile of high-enriched uranium without a "credible civilian justification".

The head of the UN nuclear watchdog said in December that the Islamic Republic was "dramatically" accelerating enrichment close to the roughly 90 percent level that is bomb-grade.

The three European powers were co-signatories to the 2015 deal in which Iran agreed to curb enrichment, seen by the West as a disguised effort to develop nuclear-weapons capability, in return for a lifting of international sanctions.

French, German and British diplomats are set to hold a follow-up meeting with Iranian counterparts on January 13 after one last month held to discuss the possibility of serious negotiations in coming months to defuse tensions with Tehran with Trump due to return to the White House on January 20.



Pro-Yoon protesters attend a rally in support of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol near his official residence, in Seoul, South Korea yesterday. Impeached Yeol appeared set to evade arrest ahead of a last night deadline after anti-graft investigators asked for more time to enforce a warrant.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Fighting rages inside Russia's Kursk region

Moscow reports gains in Ukraine; Kyiv denies fall of Kurakhove

REUTERS

Russia said yesterday its forces had made important gains in eastern Ukraine while continuing to fend off a new Ukrainian offensive inside the Kursk region of western Russia, where a second day of fierce fighting was under way.

The Russian defence ministry said its forces had captured the town of Kurakhove, 32 km (20 miles) south of Pokrovsk, a Ukrainian logistics hub towards which Russian forces have been advancing for months.

The ministry said taking Kurakhove, which had held out for many weeks, would enable Moscow's forces to step up the pace of their advance in Ukraine's Donetsk region. It also said it had captured Dachenske, a settlement within five miles of Pokrovsk.

Ukrainian monitoring group DeepState, which tracks the front line using open sources, showed most of Kurakhove under Russian control. Ukraine's Khortytsia group of forces said Russian forces continued to attack Kurakhove but Ukrainian forces were working to identify and repel Russian assault groups on that part of the front.

Both sides are fighting to improve their battlefield positions before US President-elect Donald Trump, who has pledged to bring a quick end to the nearly three-year



old war, takes office on January 20.

Ukraine's main achievement in the past five months of fighting has been to capture and hold on to a slice of territory inside Russia's Kursk region that could provide it with an important bargaining chip in possible peace talks.

Ukraine has not revealed details of the new offensive it launched in Kursk on Sunday, though a senior Ukrainian official has said Russia is "getting what it deserves".

Russian accounts said Moscow's forces had beaten back the initial Ukrainian assaults but further waves were expected.

"Of course, this is not the end. Now we are recording a concentration of enemy equipment in another direction and naturally we understand that

he (Ukraine) will try to strike in this direction. Right now I won't say where," said Major General Apti Alaudinov, commander of a Chechen unit fighting for Russia in Kursk.

Ukrainian and Western assessments suggest about 11,000 troops from Russian ally North Korea have been deployed in the Kursk region to support Moscow's forces. Russia has neither confirmed nor denied their presence.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday more than 1,000 North Korean troops had been killed or wounded. Reacting to the new Ukrainian offensive, the United States, Britain and the European Union have reaffirmed their support for Kyiv.

ICT issues arrest warrants for Hasina, 10 others

FROM PAGE 16
is also an accused in the case, before it on February 12.

He is in prison in another case filed over crimes against humanity.

Last year, the ICT issued arrest warrant against Hasina in cases filed for her alleged involvement in crimes against humanity and genocide during the July-August uprising.

Hasina has been staying in India since she fled the country on August 5.

Briefing journalists after yesterday's court proceedings, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam said thousands of people have been subjected to enforced disappearances over the past 15 years of Awami League rule and most of them never returned.

He added that many were kept in secret detention centres, popularly known as "Aynagar".

"Some returned, but they were later shown arrested in cases. Some were killed, while others were released from 'Aynagar' after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5."

These acts are crimes against humanity as defined under the International Crimes Tribunal," he added.

The chief prosecutor claimed that members of law enforcement and intelligence agencies carried out the crimes on the instructions of Hasina.

Meanwhile, some families of enforced disappearance victims came to the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday and spoke to the media.

"We have been waiting for this moment for a long time. Today [yesterday] the ICT issued arrest warrants against those responsible for the enforced disappearances that took place between 2009 and before August 5, 2024," said Sanjida Islam Tuli, the coordinator of Mayer Daak, a platform for family members of the victims of enforced disappearances.

"We expect a fair trial and the perpetrators will be held accountable. The families of the victims want to know what happened to

their loved ones."

Former army officer Hasinur Rahman, a victim of enforced disappearance, said they hope the accused will be punished for their crimes. "These heinous acts were done under orders from Sheikh Hasina."

Mir Masum Ali, uncle of Ahmad Bin Quasem Arman, another victim of enforced disappearance, said he heard that Arman was picked up from in front of his two children by plainclothes men.

"He had been missing for eight years, and I had to stay out of the country for 15 years," he said, adding that Arman returned home after August 5.

Arman was picked up from his DOHS house in the capital's Mirpur on August 9, 2016, claimed his family.

His father Mir Quasem Ali, a member of the Jamaat-e-Islami's Central Executive Council, was hanged in September 2016 for crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

FROM PAGE 2

the other four, he said.

Lawyer Anuradha Roy Banik, Shibu's niece, told The Daily Star Shibu's wife received a call from an unknown number on Saturday afternoon, and the caller demanded a ransom of Tk 1 crore.

They sent Tk 96,000 to kidnappers via mobile financial services on Sunday and informed police of the matter.

Through mobile tracking, a team of police

and Rab members raided Boro Dalimar village in Kachua area and rescued Shibu, said SP Zahid, adding the kidnappers fled sensing the presence of law enforcers.

Police later held the five from different places and showed them arrested in an abduction case filed with Bauphal Police Station.

Atiqul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Bauphal Police Station, said Shibu was taken to Bauphal

Health Complex for a medical check-up and later handed over to his family.

Around 10:15pm on Friday, a group of masked abductors looted over Tk 5 lakh from Shibu's shop, tied up two of his employees, and abducted him using a trawler.

Meanwhile, Officer in Charge Salauddin of Bauphal river police outpost was withdrawn yesterday for his failure to take immediate action, the SP added.

Health Complex for a medical check-up and later handed over to his family.

"Let's assume that the then-government was involved, some conspirators from India were involved, and some Bangladeshi politicians were involved—I understand all of that. But if the army had gone there that day, would there have been a massacre? No, there wouldn't have been."

"I don't think this was a mutiny... it was a conspiracy to murder the officers."

Health Complex for a medical check-up and later handed over to his family.

DHAKA TUESDAY JANUARY 7, 2025

POUSH 23, 1431 BS

The Daily Star

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Cyberattacks on Taiwan gov't double in 2024

AFP, Taipei

Chinese hackers were involved in most of the cyberattacks against Taiwan last year, which doubled to a daily average of 2.4 million, Taiwanese security officials said.

China regards Taiwan as part of its territory and for years has been ramping up military, diplomatic and political pressure on the island to accept its claims of sovereignty.

Taiwan says cyberattacks have also increased as Beijing uses a range of "greyzone" methods to harass the island – tactics that fall short of an act of war.

Most of the daily attacks received by Taiwan's Government Service Network were attributed to China's "cyber force", the National Security Bureau said in a report on Sunday.

Defence, telecommunications and transport were among the top targets, with many of the cyberattacks "effectively detected and blocked", it said.

"The growing numbers of attacks pinpoint the increasingly severe nature of China's hacking activities," the report said.

"Its techniques have become increasingly sophisticated and covered a wide range of targets, such as government agencies, critical infrastructure and high tech manufacturing industry."

Chinese hackers carried out Distributed Denial of Service attacks on Taiwan's transport and financial sectors when Beijing held military drills near the island, "intending to intensify the harassment effect and military intimidation", the bureau said.

FLOODED COAL MINE

Around 18 Indian labourers feared trapped in Assam

NDTV ONLINE

Around 18 Indian labourers are feared trapped after water entered a "rat hole" mine in Assam yesterday. The 300-foot deep coal mine is located in Umrao, a remote industrial town in Dima Hasao district.

Water has reached about 100 feet of the illegal quarry, sources said. Police and rescue teams have reached the spot and using two motor pumps to pump out the water.

Teams of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have left for the area that is close to the Meghalaya border.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said the state has requested the Army's assistance in the ongoing rescue operation.

"Rat hole" mining is a hazardous technique where narrow tunnels are manually dug by workers. These tunnels lead to deep pits from which coal is mined. They also harm the environment because the acidic water and heavy metals discharged from the mines are toxic to water sources used for agriculture and human consumption.

In 2018, 15 miners were trapped in an illegal coal mine in the East Jaintia Hills district in Meghalaya after water from a nearby river gushed into it. Only two bodies were the National Disaster Response Force had seen, the then commandant, SK Sastri, had said.

In 2019, Meghalaya was fined Rs 100 crore by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for failing to curb illegal coal mining in the state. The NGT had found that most of the 24,000 mines in the state were illegal.

Govt to allocate

FROM PAGE 16

The July Uprising Directorate under the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs has been tasked with managing the entire process, Nahid added.

At a press conference at Rail Bhaban, Nahid, who is also the posts, telecommunications, and information technology adviser, said the new directorate dedicated to the July uprising will be set up in February, BSS reported.

Meanwhile, another adviser, Mahfuj Alam, said on his Facebook page that the government's current priority is to ensure justice for the July massacre through appropriate legal cases and fair investigation.

The process includes preparing a list of July uprising martyrs and injured individuals, providing treatment, and offering financial assistance as well as long-term rehabilitation to the injured and the families of the martyrs.

Mahfuj also highlighted other political priorities, including uniting the forces

of resistance against fascist systems and advocating for a new political framework.

The adviser said the government aims to uphold national interests in all areas, prioritising the people, life, nature, and environment over big corporations and foreign interests.

It will prioritise building consensus among political parties on national issues such as security, stability, and foreign relations, Mahfuj added.

WAR-TORN SUDAN Over 30m in need of aid: UN

AFP, Port Sudan

More than 30 million people, over half of them children, are in need of aid in Sudan after twenty months of war, the United Nations said yesterday.

The UN has launched a \$4.2 billion call for funds, targeting 20.9 million people across Sudan from a total of 30.4 million people it said are in need in what it called "an unprecedented humanitarian crisis".

PADDY ON TOBACCO LAND

Aman output on decline



Farmers harvest Aman paddy from a land, previously used for tobacco cultivation, at Sarpukur village in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
LALMONIRHAT

Farmer Soleman Ali of Baninagar village in Kaliganj upazila has a total 11 bighas of agricultural land.

For the last 25 years, the 60-year-old has been cultivating tobacco on eight bighas of land, during the tobacco season, and other crops on the remaining three bighas.

But during Aman season, he brings his entire 11 bighas under paddy cultivation.

While talking to this correspondent, Soleman said this year he got 44 maunds of Aman paddy from three bighas land, where other crops are grown, while he yielded 81 maunds of paddy from eight bighas, previously

used for tobacco farming.

"Land previously used for tobacco cultivation giving significantly less production, compared to the land that produces other food crops such as paddy, wheat or vegetables round the year," Soleman said.

Tobacco plants absorb a lot of nutrients from the soil, hindering its fertility, and hampers production of other crops including paddy and vegetables, he said, adding that it takes at least seven to eight years to improve the soil quality of the land used for tobacco farming.

Another farmer Maqbul Hossain of Sarpukur village in Aditmari upazila shared the similar experience and said, "Of my eight bighas land, I brought

five bighas under tobacco farming last season."

"Later in the year, I cultivated Aman paddy on entire eight bighas, but compared to the other three bighas of land, I got four maunds less yield from the five bighas used for tobacco cultivation," he added.

Echoing the same, Narayan Chandra Barman, another grower of the village, said local farmers opted to grow tobacco instead of other crops as many tobacco companies encourage them with lucrative offers and buy their products at a fixed price.

According to Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), tobacco is being cultivated on about 12,000 to 13,000 hectares of land in all the upazilas of

Lalmonirhat every year, but due to its lucrative profit more farmers are gradually turning towards tobacco cultivation now.

Omar Farooq, Aditmari upazila agriculture officer, said usually, farmers get 14 to 15 maunds of paddy from each bigha of land, but the harvest drops to 10 to 11 maunds in terms of the land previously used for tobacco cultivation.

Repeated cultivation of tobacco on the same land reduces the soil fertility and become less productive for other food crops like paddy and vegetables, he said, adding that they were trying to discourage farmers from tobacco farming by raising awareness campaigns regarding its harmful aspects.

14-year-old girl raped in Cox's Bazar

FROM PAGE 2

However, the victim's family kept insisting on returning home, and even though police tried to convince them to stay at the hospital overnight, the victim was taken home yesterday morning, claimed the ASP.

Meanwhile, locals accused the police of facilitating the destruction of evidence of rape by allowing the victim to return home before taking her to the one-stop crisis centre.

Efforts are underway to bring the victim to the one-stop crisis centre, the ASP

added.

No case has been filed over the incident yet, said Chakaria Police OC.

TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION

Protesting the rape incident, leaders and activists of Chhatra Union, Jubo Union, and Udichi brought out a torchlight procession from central Shaheed Minar and marched through the main roads of Cox's Bazar town before gathering at the old Shaheed Minar for a short protest rally.

Addressing the rally, Sourav Dev, general secretary of Udichi's

No more

FROM PAGE 16
officers must strictly adhere to the law and should not act on orders that violate legal boundaries, even if they come from him.

The term "Bhater Hotel" gained traction on social media after former DB additional commissioner H a r u n - O - R - R a s h i d introduced the practice of serving meals to detainees or visitors and shared the photos online.

He also said there were no irregularities in the recently-concluded sub-inspector recruitment tests, adding, "Even if I ever engage in corruption, expose me publicly but ensure the news is fact-based."

Jahangir expressed gratitude to the media for honest reporting, saying it has countered much of the misinformation spread by the Indian media.

"When the media reports truthfully, it helps us take action more effectively."

Responding to another question, he said incidents of mugging have increased, "but law enforcers are making regular arrests of muggers".

About the torture of Bangladeshi expatriates in Libya for ransom, he urged victims to report the incidents to help the authorities concerned to take legal action.

Regarding recent abductions along the Teknaf border, the adviser blamed the instability in Myanmar behind such incidents and said all abducted individuals have been rescued.

"The Arakan Army has taken control along the Myanmar side of the Teknaf border. There is no law and order there. We are contacting both the parties [Myanmar government and Arakan Army] but there is no scope to sit with them.... Our border is secure and under our control."

He added that significant amounts of drug consignments are still arriving in Bangladesh as agents of Abdur Rahman Bodhi, who topped multiple government lists of Yaba traders, are still active.

Hamas, Israel

FROM PAGE 16
injured in a shooting attack on a car and bus near the town of Kedumim in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Israel's national ambulance service Magen David Adom (MDA) said.

Israeli Army Radio said the military had imposed a cordon around all villages in the area to search for the suspects, who it believes fled to a nearby Palestinian village.

Separately, two Palestinians, including a 17-year-old boy, were killed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank on Sunday, according to the Palestinian Fatah party and the Palestinian Health Ministry.

Probe allegations against some SC judges

FROM PAGE 16

SC premises on October 16 last year, demanding the removal of the "pro-Awami League fascist judges".

On that day, SC Registrar General Aziz Ahmed told the protesters that 12 judges would not be assigned benches. Following this statement, the agitating

students postponed their demonstrations.

Eleven HC judges — Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan, Justice Naima Haider, Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif, Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar, Justice Ashish Ranjan Das, Justice Khizir Hayat, Justice SM Maniruzzaman, Justice

Khandaker Diliruzzaman, Justice Md Akhtaruzzaman, Justice Shahed Nuruddin, Justice Md Aminul Islam, and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon — have not been given judicial duties since then.

Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan has already retired.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)
Road Division, Gaibandha
Phone No. 0541-51674, Fax No. 0541-51435
E-mail: egai@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 13(27)

Date: 02/01/2025

e-Tender Notice (Opening Tendering Method)

This is to notify all concerned that the following tender have published through e-GP Portal.

ID & Package No.	Name of works	Publishing date/ closing date
ID No. 1056477 14/e- GP/EE/GRD/Rev/ 2024-2025	Repair with Carpeting. Seal Coat work at ch: 17th (P), 18th (P), 20th & 23th (P) Km of Gaibandha-Fulchari-Bharatkali-Shaghata Road (Z-5552) under Road Division, Gaibandha during the year 2024-2025	01-Jan-2025: 16:00 23-Jan-2025: 12:40
ID No. 10 15/e- GP/EE/GRD/Rev/ 2024-2025	Repair with Carpeting. Seal Coat work at ch: 2nd (P) & 3rd (P) Km of Gaibandha-Fulchari-Bharatkali-Shaghata Road (Z-5552) under Road Division, Gaibandha during the year 2024-2025	02-Jan-2025: 12:00 23-Jan-2025: 12:00

The interested firms/person may visit the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender. 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 Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).Piash Kumar Sen
Identity No. 602337
Executive Engineer (c.c), RHD
Road Division, Gaibandha

COUNTRYWIDE

Major gas price hike

FROM PAGE 1
the BERC like the ousted Awami League government used to.

The AL government curtailed the BERC's power as regulator and increased the gas price for industries by more than 150 percent by themselves and fixed it at Tk 30 per unit. The gas price for captive users was also increased several times.

Between July and September 2024, Petrobangla imported a total of 1,726 million cubic meters of LNG for Tk 10,979 crore. The per cubic meter cost of LNG during that period was Tk 63.58, and after including all additional charges, the final cost per unit reached Tk 75.72.

The move to initiate the gas price hike comes as the ministry looks to narrow the fiscal gap of Tk 16,162 crore this fiscal year.

If the price is not increased, the government will have to come up with subsidies, the proposal said.

BERC chairman Jalal Ahmed told The Daily Star

that they are yet to start work on the proposal.

"We will take a decision based on our standard operating procedure," he said.

As per the BERC procedures, they have to announce their decision within the next 90 days.

They will also hold public hearings within this time frame.

The new gas pricing structure could dampen enthusiasm for establishing new industries as the increased costs may make the ventures less economically viable, according to businesspeople.

"If the proposal is accepted, industrialisation will come to a halt," said Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, a major industrial gas user.

No new investment will come as the new units would not be able to compete with existing establishments with that much higher gas prices, he added.

Economy slows to 1.81%

FROM PAGE 1

"Earlier, it was seen that despite political unrest like hartals and blockades and transport shutdowns, economic growth was shown higher," said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling, a think tank.

Political disruption was a major reason behind the tepid GDP growth as it affected all sectors, said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

Because of industrial unrest in Gazipur, Ashulia and other areas, many garment factories couldn't operate for days, which affected the manufacturing sector.

Besides, the services sector grew by 1.54 percent compared with the 5.07 percent recorded for the first quarter of last fiscal year.

At least four to five factors were behind the low growth, said Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

The student protests and their impact, the floods, entrepreneurs leaving and shutting down factories after August, labour unrest -- all of these

decreased people's purchasing power noticeably.

As a result, even if things were normal, demand and business activities would still have been negatively impacted.

This had a particularly negative effect on the services sector, said Hussain, who was part of the 12-member committee that prepared a white paper on the Bangladesh economy.

"So, all these factors combined to define the first quarter. Yet, despite everything, the fact that there's still around 1.8 percent growth in this quarter, which, I think, is very good news," he added.

This affected industrial production and business activities.

Political instability, natural disasters, industrial unrest combined with high inflation also led to a problem of reduced demand."

High inflation has

5 cases of HMPV virus

FROM PAGE 16

case of HMPV virus in Gujarat state and he is undergoing treatment, state health minister Rushikesh Patel was quoted by Businessline newspaper as saying.

Two children in Chennai are currently undergoing treatment, a health official said yesterday. One of the two children, who was admitted to the Orange Hospital in Chennai, is absolutely alright and is ready for discharge, said Dr Nirav Patel who is monitoring the two-month-

old infant.

HMPV is a globally recognized respiratory virus whose outbreak was first reported from China. It is a viral pathogen that causes respiratory infections in people of all age groups.

The Indian government said that HMPV, along with other respiratory viruses like Influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), is not uncommon during the flu season.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer
Akkelpur Upazila Health Complex, Joypurhat.
Email: akkelpur@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd

Invitation no: UHC/AKKELPUR/2024-2025/12

e-Tender Notice

Date:-06-01-2025

This is an Online tender For MSR items (FY 2024-25) where only e-tenders will be accepted in the e-GP portal No offline/Hard copies will be accepted. To submit an e-tender please register on the e-GP Web portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/>) For more details please contact Support desk contact number. e-Tenders are invited in the e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/>) by Dr. Md. Abu Shafi Mahmud, UH&FPO, Akkelpur, Upazila Health Complex, Joypurhat for the Procurement of the following Tender ID:

SI No	Tender ID	Name of Goods	Tender Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1	1052191	Procurement of MSR Medicine NON EDCL	20-Jan-2025 14:00	21-Jan-2025 11:30	21-Jan-2025 11:30
2	1052192	Procurement of MSR Surgical Instruments	20-Jan-2025 14:00	21-Jan-2025 11:30	21-Jan-2025 11:30
3	1052193	Procurement of MSR Linen Items	20-Jan-2025 14:00	21-Jan-2025 11:30	21-Jan-2025 11:30
4	1052194	Procurement of MSR Gauge, Bandage and Cotton.	20-Jan-2025 14:00	21-Jan-2025 11:30	21-Jan-2025 11:30
5	1052195	Procurement of MSR Chemical Reagent and X ray film	20-Jan-2025 14:00	21-Jan-2025 11:30	21-Jan-2025 11:30
6	1052196	Procurement of MSR Furniture Items.	20-Jan-2025 14:00	21-Jan-2025 11:30	21-Jan-2025 11:30

(Dr. Md. Abu Shafi Mahmud)
Upazila Health & Family Planning officer
Upazila Health

Colleagues remember PRABIR MITRA

A towering figure of Bangladeshi cinema



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Reflecting on his passing, she added, 'I'm struggling to accept the news. Two losses so close together have left me deeply saddened. Our industry is losing its greats, leaving an immense void. I pray that his soul rests in peace.'

SHAH ALAM SHAZU
The loss of Prabir Mitra, a legend credited with 400 films left an irrevocable void in the Bangladeshi film industry, when he passed away on Sunday, January 5. Today, we pay tribute to him, as we talk to some pillars of our showbiz industry and reminisce about his legacy.

"Our first time acting together was in the film *Jibon Trishna* – it feels like a lifetime ago. In that movie, I played his sister," said renowned actress Suchanda. "From that experience, Prabir Mitra became more than just a co-star; he felt like a real brother to me, and I like a sister to him. Since then, we've shared the screen in countless films."

Reflecting on his passing, she added, "I'm struggling to accept the news. Two losses so close together have left me deeply saddened. Our industry is losing

its greats, leaving an immense void. I pray that his soul rests in peace."

Born on August 18, 1943 in Chandina, Cumilla, Prabir spent his formative years in Old Dhaka, where his passion for acting began to flourish. His early love for the stage was sparked during his school days through his performance in Rabindranath Tagore's iconic play *Dakghar*.

Legendary actor Ashraf Uddin Ahmed Uzzal, a longtime friend and colleague of Prabir Mitra, fondly remembered their early days. "Prabir and I started around the same time, both from the stage before entering film," Uzzal stated. "What set Prabir apart was his unwavering authenticity. You

could always trust him to deliver a performance that felt real."

"We didn't just lose a great actor; we lost a great man. His performances will keep him alive in the hearts of this country's people," Uzzal concluded.

Tariq Anam Khan reflects on Prabir Mitra's profound influence, both in his craft and character. "Prabir Mitra was an extraordinary artiste. We crossed paths many times at FDC and beyond. His presence on screen was unforgettable, and his acting still resonates with me."

The actor

directed by H Akbar. However, the film was not released until January 1, 1971. Despite initially playing lead roles, Prabir found lasting success as a character actor, captivating audiences with his depth, versatility, and innate ability to breathe life into complex roles. His performances in films such as *Titash Ekti Nadir Naam*, *Jibon Trishna*, *Fariyad*, *Rokto Shopoth*, *Charitrohin*, *Angaar*, and *Fakir Majnu Shah* are considered cinematic landmarks.

"Prabir Mitra was an extraordinary actor, a remarkable talent," shared Rozina, who worked with the legend in countless projects.

"Words cannot do justice to the extent of his brilliance. He was not only a skilled performer, but a figure who transcended the very definition of a legend."

She added, "There will never be another actor like him. Such luminaries grace us once in a generation. His departure has left me heartbroken. One by one, we are losing the prominent figures who shaped our industry. He was a guiding figure in Bangladeshi cinema, and now we must bear the grief of losing him too."

She further shared, "On set, he would transform entirely, his focus and dedication wholly devoted to his craft. It was in those moments that one could see the true hallmark of a great artiste."

From the depths of my heart, I pray for him. His legacy will endure, and his memory will forever inspire us," she concluded.



emphasised on Mitra's unmatched dedication: "An actor of his caliber doesn't come around often. We've lost someone truly irreplaceable. We've lost a great actor, mentor, and friend. Prabir Mitra was one of a kind, and we will miss him dearly."

Prabir made his silver screen debut in 1969 with *Jolchobi*,

MEHAZABIEN on the emotional toll of online trolling

Prominent actress Mehazabien Chowdhury recently shared the emotional impact of social media trolling in a candid Facebook post. "It's not just the person being trolled who suffers. Their families, their friends – they carry the pain, too," she said, addressing the far-reaching effects of online harassment. Mehazabien highlighted the unrealistic expectations placed on public figures to appear flawless, calling for empathy and kindness. "We forget that they are just human, with flaws, emotions, and struggles," the actress added, urging people to respect others' emotions and privacy.



Golden Globes 2025: 'Emilia Pérez', 'Brutalist' and 'Shogun' win big

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The 82nd Golden Globe Awards on Monday morning made a huge impact – With unexpected victories, touching speeches, and plenty of laugh-out-loud moments, the awards season began with flair.

Comedian Nikki Glaser, the host of the show, drew big laughs with jokes about Ozempic and politics, before playfully teasing several of the celebrities in the audience during her opening monologue.

Adrien Brody won the Golden Globe for Best Actor in a Drama Film for his role in *The Brutalist*, a three-

shock right now," Moore shared when she accepted the award. "I've been doing this for over 45 years, and this is the first time I've won anything as an actor. I'm so humbled and grateful", said the actress.

Netflix film *Emilia Pérez* continues to rack up awards, winning in categories such as female supporting actor for Zoe Saldaña, non-English language film, and original song. Demi Moore secured her first Globe, while *Conclave* earned the award for best film screenplay. In television, the drama *Shogun* claimed four awards – Best Drama Series, Best TV Drama Actor for Hiroyuki Sanada, Best TV Drama

FILMS
Best Motion Picture – Drama
The Brutalist
Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy
Emilia Pérez
Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy
Wicked
Cinematic and Box Office Achievement
Wicked
Best Motion Picture – Non-

Substance”
Best Performance by a Male Actor in a Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy
Sebastian Stan for "A Different Man"
Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture
Zoe Saldaña for "Emilia Pérez"
Best Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture
Kieran Culkin for "A Real Pain"
Best Director — Motion Picture
Brady Corbet for "The Brutalist"
Best Screenplay — Motion Picture
Peter Straughan for "Conclave"
Best Original Score — Motion Picture
Trent Reznor & Atticus Ross for "Challengers"
Best Original Song – Motion Picture
"El Mal," Emilia Pérez, Music and lyrics by Clément Ducol, Camille and Jacques Audiard

TELEVISION
Best Television Series – Drama
Shogun
Best Television Series – Musical or Comedy
Hacks
Best Television Limited Series, Anthology Series or Motion Picture Made for Television
Demi Moore for "The Baby Reindeer"
Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role on Television
Tadanobu Asano for "Shogun"
Best Performance in Stand-Up Comedy on Television
Ali Wong, for "Single Lady"



THE FULL LIST OF 2025 GOLDEN GLOBE WINNERS

Actress for Anna Sawai, and Best TV Supporting Actor for Tadanobu Asano.

Universal's *Wicked* scored a major win for musicals by earning the award for Best Cinematic and box office achievement at the 2025 Golden Globes, following its impressive performance during the year-end holidays.

Kieran Culkin won Best Supporting Actor for his role in *A Real Pain*, marking his second Golden Globe after a previous win for *Succession*.

Read the full article online.



'Besura' from 'Dui Shaw' debuts Sumaiya Shimu on OTT

Chorki has released the trailer for *Besura*, the final episode of *Dui Shaw*, set to premiere on January 8 at midnight. It features Sumaiya Shimu in her OTT debut and marks Ismail Uddin Palakar's acting debut. The episode explores the story of an artiste born without a sense of melody.

Directed by Nuhash Humayun, *Besura* blends horror and music, with compositions by Pritom Hasan. Initially hesitant about acting, Palakar was convinced by Pritom's involvement. Sumaiya Shimu praised the project's professionalism, while Nuhash promised viewers a unique cinematic experience with fresh elements in costumes, casting, and storytelling.

The team of 'Brutalist' posing at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards. The film won the 'Best Motion Picture - Drama' award.

PHOTO: REUTERS

and a half-hour epic about a fictional architect. This marks the actor's second nomination and his first Golden Globe win.

Moore received the award for Best Actress in a Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy for her role in *The Substance*. This was her third Golden Globe nomination and her first win. Despite her iconic career in films like *St Elmo's Fire* and *Ghost*, she had not won any other major industry awards, aside from People's Choice Awards honours.

"I really didn't expect this. I'm just in

Surge in child patients needs quick response

Raising awareness among parents is also crucial

It's alarming to see reports about thousands of patients—mostly children suffering from diarrhoea, pneumonia, and cold-related illnesses—being admitted to hospitals across the country every day. In the first four days of January alone, 139 children with pneumonia and 155 with diarrhoea were treated at Dhaka Shishu Hospital and Institute. This is just one example from Dhaka. Hospitals in other districts are also overwhelmed by the influx of diarrhoea patients as winter intensifies. At the icddr,b, an average of 675 children were admitted daily in 2024; this number has risen to 914 in the last 18 days. Among them, 60 percent of the children affected by diarrhoea were infected with rotavirus, which typically peaks in winter. Its vaccine is not yet part of the national immunisation programme in Bangladesh.

While the vulnerability of under-five children to cold related viral diseases is well-documented, it is disheartening that many parents across the country remain unaware of the risks. Children are often brought to hospitals only when symptoms worsen due to improper disease management. Many mothers, for example, lack the knowledge of preparing and administering oral rehydration solution (ORS) correctly. On December 30, a nine month old baby was admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital with diarrhoea after being given improperly prepared saline, resulting in high sodium levels in his body that led to kidney failure. Such incidents are unacceptable, especially considering Bangladesh's prior success in managing and raising awareness about diarrhoea.

A recent icddr,b study of 350 mothers revealed that 88 percent lacked correct knowledge about ORS, while 72 percent used incorrect methods to administer to their children. This underscores the urgent need for public awareness campaigns. Furthermore, the state of accommodation and treatment facilities in hospitals is alarming. In many hospitals, children with diarrhoea are treated on the floor due to a lack of beds, and parents are forced to stand for hours holding saline bags because of a lack of stands. Complaints about medicine shortages are also common. These challenges demand immediate action.

We urge the authorities to ensure that public hospitals are adequately equipped to handle the growing number of diarrhoea and pneumonia cases. Raising awareness about proper diarrhoea treatment and ORS preparation at home is also essential. Considering the significant number of rotavirus infections, the government should strengthen nationwide vaccination programmes, and diagnostic facilities for rotavirus must also be made available at all district level hospitals to expedite treatment.

Given the likely role of poor air quality in the rising pneumonia cases, especially in Dhaka, the government must also take urgent steps to improve air quality during winter. A holistic approach from our health authorities is crucial to address these interlinked issues effectively.

Govt must focus on creating jobs

Latest BBS data shows a bleak state of unemployment

Rising unemployment remains a cause for grave concern in Bangladesh, as highlighted once again by the latest data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). According to the BBS, the unemployment rate rose to 4.49 percent in July-September 2024, up from 4.07 percent the previous year. This means the number of unemployed individuals increased by 1.7 lakh in a year, totalling 26.6 lakh. Among them, 17.9 lakh are men and 8.7 lakh women. The data has been compiled using the latest methodology, giving us a more accurate picture of the situation.

This rise in unemployment has been attributed to economic and political instability, particularly during the July-August uprising, which disrupted industrial activities and caused a significant decline in both labour supply and demand, alongside security concerns, especially for women. However, while this data is more precise, experts believe it still doesn't fully represent the real scenario. In fact, one expert estimates that if the assessment were more accurate, the unemployment rate could be closer to 10 percent.

Indeed, we have known for a while that unemployment is worse than what the official data suggests. A major contributor to this crisis has been the stagnation in job creation. It is deeply frustrating that the economic growth experienced over the past decade under the Awami League regime was not geared towards creating employment. For example, while the manufacturing sector grew by 9.1 percent per year on average between 2016 and 2022, jobs in the sector paradoxically decreased by 9.6 percent. What is the point of such growth if it fails to generate employment? Another key factor is the continued lack of private sector investment, driven by political uncertainty and a still shaky law and order situation.

This growing crisis must be addressed promptly with well-planned, effective solutions. Authorities must first properly assess the situation to gather the most accurate unemployment data, which is critical for effective policymaking. Special attention must be given to understanding why women are falling behind in economic activities. The interim government should also take focused steps to restore investor confidence and encourage private sector investment. Upskilling our youth is also essential, as many are struggling to meet the demands of today's job market.

We urge the government to take these issues seriously and explore all options for creating equitable job opportunities for both men and women, so that we can get the wheels of our economy moving again.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Gunmen attack Charlie Hebdo

On this day in 2015, two gunmen connected to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, a Yemen-based militant group, stormed the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo and killed 12 people in retribution for the satirical magazine's portrayals of the Prophet Muhammad. The attackers were later killed by police.

EDITORIAL

How food prices can be stabilised



Dr Rushad Faridi
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RUSHAD FARIDI

In December 2023, the price of onions exceeded Tk 100 per kg in the retail market. News outlets widely reported that syndicates were allegedly manipulating the market by creating artificial shortages to drive up prices. However, just one year later, during the same period, the price fell below Tk 50 per kg. Some of the producers are incurring heavy losses due to the low price of onion. This raises a fundamental question: if these syndicates of suppliers are so powerful, why are they allowing prices to drop this time?

While the syndicate narrative is often compelling and easily resonates with the public, it does not hold up under scrutiny. In 2023, India, a major supplier of onions to Bangladesh, imposed an export ban due to weather-related disruptions that significantly reduced its domestic supply. This led to a sharp spike in the onion price in Bangladesh. In contrast, last year, Indian exports flowed freely, and local production in Bangladesh also remained stable. Consequently, the market experienced a glut, driving prices down.

It is simply market forces of supply and demand at work.

However, while there may be no syndicate at play in the onion market, the extreme price fluctuations severely impact both producers and consumers. This leads to a pressing question: how can prices be stabilised amid the shifting dynamics of domestic and international factors?

The conventional market-based approach to food price stabilisation assumes that all participating countries operate in a cooperative equilibrium. This presupposes a seamless exchange system where surplus-producing nations export their excess to deficit countries and vice versa during times of scarcity. For example, when a country experiences high domestic food prices, it is assumed that another country with lower prices will readily step in to supply the needed goods.

However, such cooperation is not binding, and no guarantees exist that this mechanism will function as envisioned. In practice, countries often prioritise their own food security over international cooperation, relying on trade policies tailored to their

domestic needs. A case in point is India's ban on non-basmati rice export during the 2007-2008 food crisis. This policy effectively shielded India from skyrocketing global rice prices, which rose by 160 percent between June 2007 and June 2008. Meanwhile, India's domestic rice prices increased by only eight percent, contributing significantly to then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's re-election in 2009.

This example highlights a divergence from the long-standing

reliance on India to meet its onion demand. However, whenever adverse weather events or other disruptions affect India's onion production, the Indian government often restricts exports to stabilise its own market. This leaves Bangladesh vulnerable to sharp price hikes, underscoring the risks of over-reliance on external markets for price stabilisation.

An alternative could be competitive storage driven by private incentives.

Prices can be stabilised if domestic onion producers can store onions during periods of low prices—such as during harvest surpluses—and sell them during lean seasons.

Yet, cooperation challenges persist even at the domestic level. Publicly managed storages often compete with private storages, leading to distrust and inefficiencies.

Policymakers frequently intervene in private storage activities, either by releasing publicly held stocks

or through imports, undermining private investors' confidence in



Onion prices skyrocketed in 2023 but came down last year, indicating market forces rather than syndicates at play.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

recommendations of academics and policy analysts since the 1980s, who have argued against direct market interventions. Instead, they advocate for social safety nets and market-based risk management tools to help populations cope with price volatility. Yet, the 2007-2008 food crisis revealed that countries with interventionist policies, such as China and India, performed better in maintaining price stability than those adhering strictly to market-based approaches. This raises critical questions about the effectiveness of the dominant economic paradigm in addressing food crises.

Bangladesh provides another illustrative case, particularly in its onion market. The country heavily

recommends of academics and policy analysts since the 1980s, who have argued against direct market interventions. Instead, they advocate for social safety nets and market-based risk management tools to help populations cope with price volatility. Yet, the 2007-2008 food crisis revealed that countries with interventionist policies, such as China and India, performed better in maintaining price stability than those adhering strictly to market-based approaches. This raises critical questions about the effectiveness of the dominant economic paradigm in addressing food crises.

Bangladesh's urban centres, particularly Dhaka, present numerous challenges that diminish the quality of life. Severe traffic congestion, poor air quality, and inadequate public facilities, such as healthcare and transportation, make day-to-day life difficult. For young professionals who have seen a better standard of living abroad, the decision to leave becomes easier for them. Many of them—planning to expand their families after one or two years of marriage—want to leave the country for the protection and betterment of their future generation.

Safety concerns, both political and personal, also play a significant role. Many young professionals view first-world countries as havens of stability where they can live without fear of unrest or uncertainty. Recent instances of civil unrest and political tensions in Bangladesh have only reinforced these perceptions.

The economic downturn and the rapid devaluation of our national currency have further fuelled the exodus. Many professionals find that their earnings at home hold little value compared to what they could earn abroad.

Bangladesh also struggles with extreme inequality, where merit often takes a back seat to connections and privilege. The lack of transparency and fairness in hiring practices frustrates many talented individuals, driving them to seek environments where opportunities are more accessible and merit-based.

stabilising food prices.

It is also worth examining the global dynamics of food trade. Export bans are often criticised for exacerbating global shortages. However, they reflect a pragmatic response to domestic pressures. Establishing international agreements that allow for conditional export restrictions can ensure that domestic needs are met without severely disrupting global markets.

Additionally, regional trade agreements and alliances can provide more reliable frameworks for cooperation. For example, South Asian nations could collaborate to establish shared food reserves or harmonised policies for essential commodities. Such initiatives can reduce dependency on global markets and provide a safety net during crises.

However, addressing food price volatility requires a broader perspective that considers the unique circumstances of each country. For instance, Bangladesh's reliance on India for onion imports is a structural vulnerability that demands a long-term strategy. Diversifying import sources, investing in domestic production, and developing robust supply chain infrastructure are all critical steps towards achieving greater self-reliance. Encouraging technological innovations in storage, such as climate-controlled facilities and improved preservation techniques, could further enhance the capacity to manage food stocks effectively.

In addition, the government should ensure that essential commodities remain within reach for low-income households during crises. This may involve direct subsidies, rationing systems or targeted cash transfers. Furthermore, educating farmers, traders, and consumers about the benefits of coordinated storage, transparent pricing mechanisms, and fair-trade practices can foster trust and cooperation. The government should also involve private sector actors in policy discussions to align incentives and create a shared vision for food security.

Ultimately, addressing food price volatility demands a multi-pronged approach that transcends the limitations of conventional market-based solutions. By integrating public and private efforts, leveraging regional cooperation, and adopting socially inclusive policies, countries can build resilient food systems capable of withstanding future crises. For nations like Bangladesh, the journey towards stability begins with recognising that market dynamics alone cannot ensure food security. Pragmatic, coordinated actions are needed to safeguard the livelihoods and well-being of millions.

Why are young professionals leaving Bangladesh?



MAMUN RASHID
is the chairman of Financial Excellence Ltd
and the founding managing partner of PwC
Bangladesh.

MAMUN RASHID

If you ask any multinational, regional, or large local corporate CEOs what keeps them awake at night, the most common reply is likely to be—employee retention. Be it Standard Chartered, Citibank, or PwC, many potential CEO candidates have been lost to first-world countries, and this exodus continues. They were mostly from reputed business schools or engineering universities. Their exit interviews revealed almost a common thread of answers.

Bangladesh has been witnessing a concerning exodus of young professionals, a trend referred to as "brain drain." Talented individuals across diverse sectors are leaving the country in search of better opportunities abroad, raising questions about the underlying causes and potential solutions to stem this outflow. While migration for career or education is not unusual, the scale at which young professionals are leaving has sparked debate about the nation's ability to retain its brightest minds.

One of the most significant reasons for this migration is the pursuit of higher education. Many young Bangladeshis dream of accessing world-class educational opportunities unavailable at home. For example, programmes in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence and biotechnology remain largely

underdeveloped in Bangladesh. In contrast, countries like Canada, the US, and Australia offer not only top-tier universities but also opportunities to gain hands-on experiences.

Analysts highlight that the gaps between education and the job market in Bangladesh are significant. Without competitive programmes and international-standard training, it is only natural that students will seek education elsewhere.

For those who stay in Bangladesh after completing their education, the challenges of career progression often become a driving factor for migration. The absence of multinational giants like Apple, Google, Facebook, or even Amazon creates a vacuum of high-quality jobs that could nurture local talent. Instead, young professionals look to the US, Singapore, and other countries where such opportunities abound.

Moreover, local firms often fail to provide competitive salaries, clear paths for career advancement, employee share option, or, at the very least, a performance-based remuneration structure, making the prospect of staying far less appealing.

Another issue is the lack of strong, visionary leadership to guide young professionals towards opportunities within the country. Many of them feel that the leaders in their industries fail

to offer mentorship or demonstrate how success is achievable at home. We, the leaders, are increasingly failing to foster an encouraging organisational culture or provide guidance about the career path. This lack of direction exacerbates their inclination to leave.

Bangladesh's urban centres, particularly Dhaka, present numerous challenges that diminish the quality of life. Severe traffic congestion, poor air quality, and inadequate public facilities, such as healthcare and transportation, make day-to-day life difficult. For young professionals who have seen a better standard of living abroad, the decision to leave becomes easier for them. Many of them—planning to expand their families after one or two years of marriage—want to leave the country for the protection and betterment of their future generation.

Safety concerns, both political and personal, also play a significant role. Many young professionals view first-world countries as havens of stability where they can live without fear of unrest or uncertainty. Recent instances of civil unrest and political tensions in Bangladesh have only reinforced these perceptions.

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Bangladesh also struggles with extreme inequality, where merit often takes a back seat to connections and privilege. The lack of transparency and fairness in hiring practices frustrates many talented individuals, driving them to seek environments where opportunities are more accessible and merit-based.

Though extremely tough, reversing this brain drain will require coordinated efforts from both the public and private sectors. Key solutions must include improving education and career opportunities, investing in infrastructure, strengthening leadership and mentorship, and creating a merit-based system, among other solutions.

Expanding higher education programmes to meet global standards and attracting multinationals to set up offices in Bangladesh could create opportunities for both students and professionals. Addressing traffic, pollution, and public health concerns would improve the quality of life and make urban centres more liveable. Additionally, industry leaders must mentor young professionals and demonstrate the possibility of achieving success in Bangladesh. Ensuring transparency in hiring and career progression would also build confidence in the local job market.

Many development partners suggest Bangladesh must work on creating a vibrant ecosystem combining quality education, career opportunities, and better quality of life. Without these elements, the exodus of talent will continue unabated.

The migration of young professionals is a symptom of deeper systemic issues that Bangladesh must address. While the pursuit of better opportunities abroad is understandable, creating a nurturing environment at home could ensure that the nation's brightest minds contribute to its progress rather than leaving it behind. It's time for Bangladesh to rise to the challenge and build a future that its youth can believe in.

The hope is not there

Aliza Rahman
is a writer based in Dhaka.

ALIZA RAHMAN

It feels wrong in myriad ways to say that hope isn't there when an autocrat fell, and that too by the efforts of not just the common people, but the student population as well. One may not expect tiredness in such a situation, but about half a year from the uprising, it seems to be the common feeling in many as the increased disruptions in normal life is wearing them out. This should be a new year, but in many ways it isn't.

For many, the lurch back to normalcy has been jarring. It's unusual after all, to be on the street and hear gunshots, and return to the classroom within the next few days. In classrooms, even as I've had students discuss the July uprising in essays or elsewhere, the mood seems—at least in my experience—to have shifted to the old ways of doing things. It's the same pushing and pulling to ensure that the students don't slack off after over a decade in an education system that likely beat out any interest in academics, or in fact any intellectual interests that may have come about on its own. It is the same in so many areas of our lives.

This, again, is understandable. If you think about it, Bangladesh is and remains surreal. Incidents that might have spawned books, series and podcasts in another country get a single column in page three of the dailies here. Perhaps the normal was to see an MP get cut up in a foreign country for reasons we don't fully know. Ultimately, in the blink-and-miss news cycle of Bangladesh, exhaustion is an understandable route.

Perhaps what has further dampened the happiness of ousting a 15-year dynastic autocrat has been the persistence of societal values that choke and snuff out any form of progress. From moral policing in Halloween to wasteful extravagance at weddings that do not need to be on this scale, in many ways it feels like the same old Bangladesh, over and

over again.

This is not to say that I expected an instant change—far from it. I joined groups and discussions and watched more Bangladeshi content on social media than I had ever done before in the hopes that an initiative or movement existed that could render me useful outside my jobs. I had the vigour to imagine permanent communities formed out of common areas of concern. The volunteering initiatives and the attempts to help the injured and the families of the martyred were encouraging.

Yet, violence remains an unerasable part of the city, and my imaginations for improvement have come to a halt. For some reason, months after the ouster of what seemed like an indomitable force, nothing shocks anymore.

One of the words still confined to academia but much needed for describing Bangladesh is "stuplifity." I found the most applicable form of the word in a text analysing Vikram Chadda's *Sacred Games*. It talked not only about spectacular acts of violence, but the routinised forms of it, or as the text put it, "quotidian violence." It's what comes to mind when I think of the Jahangirnagar University student brought to her death after being slammed by a battery-powered rickshaw and hitting a tree.

That this argument over this specific mode of transport existed even during the 15-year regime of the Awami League government is an indication of the stagnancy post-July. It is in line with the many protests, frustrating moments, and acts of atrocities that occurred after August 5, whether the horrific acts of violence against minorities, the unleashing of sealed misogyny and its terrifying outcomes, moral policing, property destruction, and the continued self-censoring practised by groups and individuals who ought to have experienced fully fledged freedom of speech in the absence of authoritarianism. Adding to these is the helplessness felt by those witnessing the sudden robustness with which another dynastic politician is seeking to make a comeback, and the associated political party acting as if it would be the default winner of the national election when it is held. Within



ILLUSTRATION: REHNUMA PROSHOON

the two parties that have continually vied for power, neither inspires confidence among people who know of or remember each regime's misrule.

This is complicated by the feelings different groups have towards the interim government's performance. Some remain defensive, the horrors of the former regime telling them to accept anything else besides the former party; some supporters of the former regime attempt, tacitly or openly, to undermine what progress has been made to implant the idea that the past was better; and some remain lost on the path forward, almost

rendered hopeless by the mammoth task of progress.

But to return to the point in the title, when I say the hope is not there, I do not mean that an attempt should not be made to find hope. As roughly explained by a friend who overcame hurdles far greater than mine to access the education that was simply expected for me to have, hopelessness is not only bourgeoisie, it's bougie. To lie down, to give up, to contemplate and complain, and not attempt improvement is often the go-to of one who did not need to fight for the bare necessities required for even a semi-decent

life. The fact of the matter is that one person's giving up is often not only an action affecting the individual, but others who may have benefited from their attempts.

Tasks remain ahead of us. Whether it is preventing the biased revision of recent events, the opportunistic grabbing of authority in a power vacuum, or attempts to destabilise a nation from outside, the roles we have to play, no matter how insignificant they may seem to us now, will need to be fulfilled. It is easy to fall into despair when one imagines what will come after the election. However, the alternative is to suffer in silence.

A long-term vision for our local government



Dr Nawshad Ahmed,
a retired UN official, is an economist and urban
planner. He has written books on local governance and
has working experience in this field.

NAWSHAD AHMED

The interim government formed a Local Government Commission on November 18, 2024, to recommend reform measures to strengthen local government institutions and good governance at the sub-national level. A long term vision for local government reform is needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Despite commitments made in the successive five-year plans of the country, adequate measures have not been taken to strengthen the local government bodies and thereby lessen the burden of development efforts on the central government.

Bangladesh has a fairly long history of both rural and urban local government institutions. But their performance has not been satisfactory. So local government reform must continue, keeping future demand for services in view. Future demographic and physical development trends should determine the allocation decisions of both national and local public expenditures in the coming decades. It is worth noting that the demand for infrastructure and services in the urban areas is constantly rising. About 40 percent of the country's population is already living in urban areas and the rate of urbanisation will remain high in the foreseeable future. Rural-urban migration will continue unabated since the rural areas cannot create adequate employment opportunities for a growing population. Within the next two decades, the urban population is expected to be 65 percent of the total population. If we cannot plan our urban areas now, and develop necessary roads, drains, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure and services, then many secondary cities and towns in the country will become congested. People will experience urban distress, similar to that faced by the residents of metropolitan Dhaka and Chattogram.

The Rajshahi City Corporation is a good example for successfully developing its infrastructure and maintaining decent urban services. The Local Government Commission should learn from the experience gained by Rajshahi City Corporation over the last three decades, and suggest reforms in urban local bodies in light of this experience. Furthermore, the local governments in urban areas must lead the planning and development control. Necessary coordination roles of city corporations and municipalities must also be ensured so that urban areas, where most of the country's population will eventually live, can enjoy a healthy life. As the demand for urban land, houses and other services rises, there should be a mechanism enabling urban local bodies to manage development around their official boundaries, ensuring that future physical growth is not hindered.

There should be some kind of collaboration between the urban and rural local bodies so that unplanned development does not take place in the peri-urban areas.

There is a rising demand for local services, in both urban and rural areas, due to population growth and increase in income. Failing to meet the local demand will lead to disastrous consequences for the country's future development. Urbanisation is happening haphazardly; there is no proper land-use

gap between responsibilities and available resources, causing frustration among the elected representatives and dissatisfaction among the residents; iii) discrimination in allocation of public funds to local bodies; iv) shortage of manpower, non-recruitment in vacant positions and low skills of staff; v) low compliance on the required stakeholder participation, which results in misplaced prioritisation of projects; vi) challenges in producing accurate budget and accounts, and management of asset; vii) lack of emphasis on environment and climate change issues, and lack of inclusivity in the local bodies; viii) poorly managed local information base, which is inaccessible to the public; and ix) use of archaic auditing method for finance and projects.

Taking examples of local government reforms in different countries, Bangladesh should have the following essential elements:

i) an electoral process by which the best quality of leadership in the local bodies can be

activities so that everyone in the community is benefited; vii) sincere willingness, interest, and proactiveness in planned development of the area and preparation of proposals and plans to that effect in a transparent and participatory manner; viii) securing funding and implementing projects while maintaining strict construction standards and social norms; ix) regular conduct of performance audit, asset valuation, and use of monitoring and evaluation; and x) strict imposition of laws, rules and administrative orders regarding functioning of local bodies, and adherence to national policies/laws related to environmental safeguards, climate change, urban planning, gender equality, child health, community health, persons with disability, industrial development, poverty alleviation, drug abuse and alcohol use, and preservation of historical buildings and structures, within respective legal jurisdictions.

A very important aspect of local government reform should be the

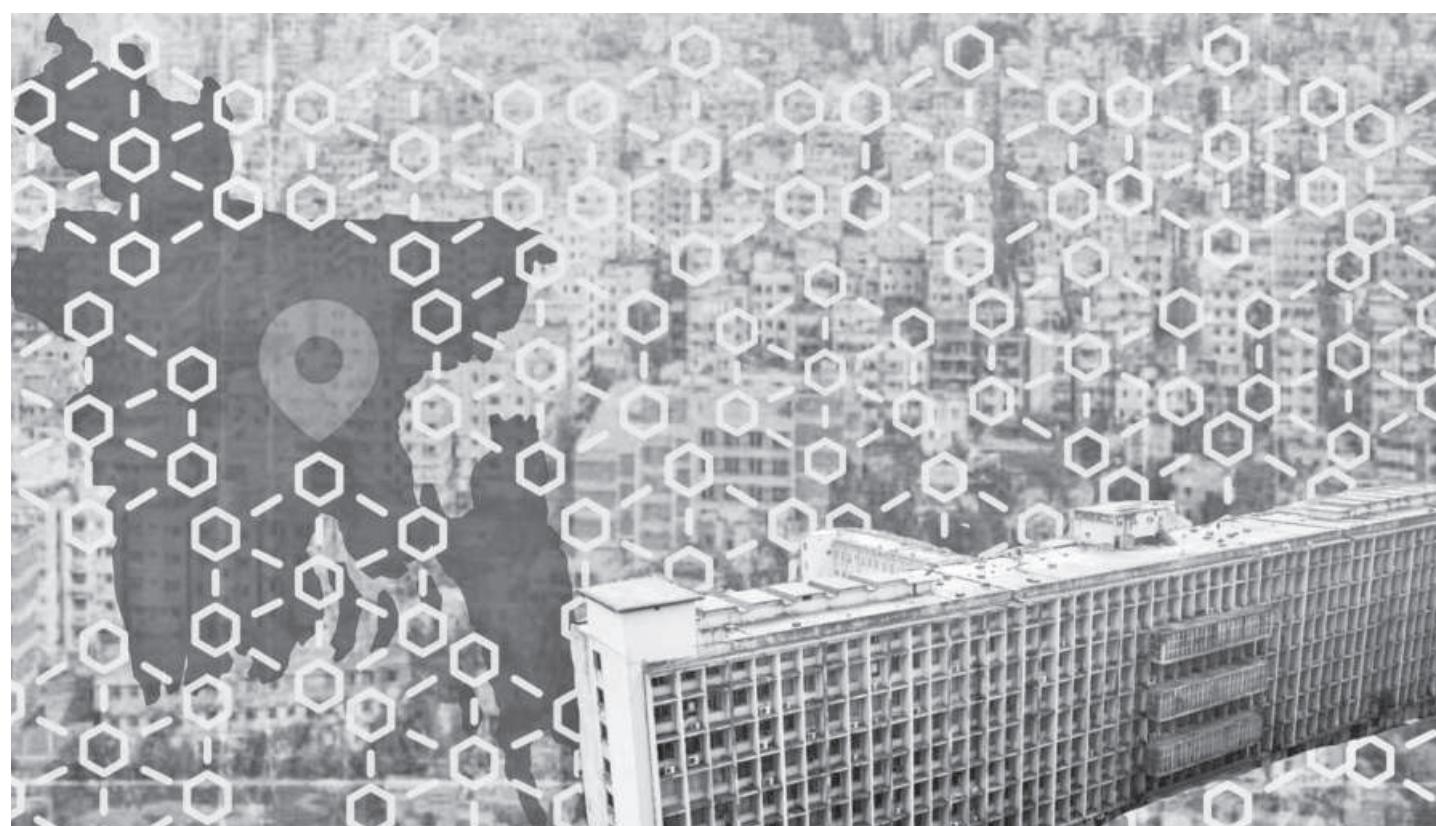
national policy formulation, annual budget-making process and policy implementation. This indicates that local government is not taken seriously in national development efforts. They are seen as local players engaged in small matters. Consequently, environmental, climate change, and economic policies are seldom internalised at the local level. The policies remain only as the central government's tools and thus are poorly implemented on the ground.

It is, therefore, critical to ensure synchronisation of national and local efforts to achieve optimum results. Therefore, the responsibilities of local bodies should be increased with regard to poverty alleviation programmes, inclusive growth, climate action, environmental management, low-income housing, education, health service delivery, child care centre and orphanage management, and meeting the needs of persons with disability. Local government reform efforts will not succeed if the image of local bodies is not improved by giving them additional, important responsibilities and allocating national budgetary resources to carry out these duties.

We should change our mindset about these local government bodies and be prepared to share more national resources with them so that they can undertake functions important to local people. While the efficiency of local tax collection is important, giving more developmental responsibility to local governments will require allocating funds from the national budget, because most revenue mobilisation tools lie with the central government.

In many countries, central governments are responsible mainly for national policymaking, formulation of laws, defence, construction and maintenance of nationally significant infrastructure such as national highways, and basic education and health. Local governments shoulder greater responsibilities and spend significantly higher amounts of money in comparison to their counterparts in Bangladesh. Local government expenditure as a percentage of GDP in Bangladesh is only one percent, which is very low. The proportion is significantly high in China (11 percent), Brazil (seven percent), South Korea (23 percent), South Africa (10 percent), and Indonesia (six percent), for example. Expenditure made by the local governments in the entire European Union is 10.6 percent of GDP; in the US, it is 12 percent. Therefore, Bangladesh has a long way to go in terms of catching up with other countries.

For Bangladesh to devolve a number of functions to the local level, a huge transformation at both national and local levels will be required. This calls for cross-party commitment to the reform measures, which should be taken forward sustainably over the next several years. The Local Government Commission must work with the Public Administration Reform Commission to reach a consensus about which functions should be devolved at what level of local government, and its implication on funding and staffing.



VISUAL: MONOROM POLOK

control and people are living under serious urban stress. The unplanned development in both cities and towns must be arrested, otherwise the whole country will become an urban slum. There is no alternative to the planned development of the urban areas. Therefore, local government reform must see urban centres as the country's future and accordingly strengthen the functional capacity of urban local governments, equipping them with required manpower, more responsibilities, and additional budget allocation.

The most important issues around local government are: i) controversy over party-based election to local bodies; ii) huge

attracted; ii) a code of conduct for chairman/mayoral position that ensures equal treatment of the entire council without discrimination and observation of highest level of ethical and moral standards; iii) technically well-trained and skilled local government staff who are motivated; iv) fair imposition of taxes and collection of revenue without bias and favour to anyone; v) willingness of the local government councils to improve their capacity through training and learning to enhance their ability for strategic long-term planning; vi) ensuring inclusivity to include the poor, women, persons with disability, children, senior citizens, ethnic minorities, etc in different development projects and

empowerment of women in local government bodies. Currently, there are reserved seats for women in each local government stratum. To ensure genuine representation of women in local bodies, all local council women member posts should be filled through direct election, rather than selection or indirect election. Also, a respectful central-local partnership should be established to ensure collaboration. While the central government should provide grants-in-aid to local government bodies based on an equity-based formula, it should ensure that national policies are understood well at the local level to support their implementation at the sub-national level. There is very little local participation in

Can Bangladesh become a key player in the global semiconductor industry?

MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

Semiconductors—small chips which can control the flow of electricity hide in plain sight inside our smartphones, computers, laptops, televisions, and air conditioners—are in almost any electronic device that one can think of. These tiny marvels form the foundation of virtually every modern innovation, which means that with the growing usage of electronic products, the semiconductor market—also called the 'chip market'—will scale up, offering tremendous potential for countries, businesses, engineers, and consumers alike.

According to a recent report by Fortune Business Insights, a global market research firm, the global semiconductor market size was valued at USD 611.35 billion in 2023 and is projected to grow from USD 681.05 billion in 2024 to USD 2062.59 billion by 2032, exhibiting a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 14.9% during the forecast period of 2024-2032.

However, the semiconductor manufacturing industry itself is a niche and well-guarded industry, one that requires highly trained personnel as well as costly equipment.

Building semiconductor fabrication plants—also known as fabs—is a capital-intensive endeavour, requiring billions of dollars in investment. These costly facilities manufacture integrated circuits (ICs) from raw silicon wafers, requiring advanced manufacturing tools, a clean environment with suits for workers, fan filter units, and a supply chain for raw materials.

While building these fab facilities and manufacturing chips may require a huge sum of investment and time, there is another field that launched Bangladesh into the stage of the semiconductor industry—the VLSI (Very Large Scale Integration), a process for creating complex ICs by designing semiconductor chips.

Current industry status in Bangladesh
The domestic semiconductor industry is still in its infancy in this country. While large-scale chip fabrication or testing facilities are absent, the sector is dominated by a few startups focusing on design and simulation.

A paper published by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) in July 2024 titled 'Developing the Semiconductor Industry in Bangladesh', mentions two chip designing firms, Ulkasemi and Prime Silicon, which were launched back in 2007. The paper also states that the industry of around 400 local chip designers now earns USD 6 million in export revenue.

Given Bangladesh's ongoing success in freelancing and IT outsourcing, the country is well-positioned to extend this model to semiconductor design services. With the right training and infrastructure, Bangladeshi engineers could contribute to global semiconductor projects, particularly in chip design and verification.

Educational foundations

As a niche sector, semiconductor manufacturing requires specialised knowledge and academia in Bangladesh, which has a growing interest in semiconductor engineering within its academic institutions.

Many universities have introduced courses on VLSI and microelectronics.

These courses provide a theoretical grounding in semiconductor design, though practical exposure remains limited.

Dr Md Mostofa Akbar, Professor of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) at BUET said, "I started teaching about VLSI at an undergraduate level from 1996. However, VLSI courses did not become popular as there was no related work in Bangladesh. But we are planning to buy equipment which will be helpful for the students."

Highlighting the importance of VLSI designing in regard to the semiconductor industry situation in Bangladesh, Professor Mostofa added, "There are four parts to semiconductor manufacturing—design, testing, structural verification, and fabrication. Most firms in Bangladesh focus on structural verification, but we need to give more attention to designing and testing if we want a sustainable

create resources in this sector by making students aware. We understand that a lot of the universities in Bangladesh do not have any dedicated professors or courses for this sector. So, we are trying our best to make more people aware of the semiconductor industry in Bangladesh."

"We have been working in this sector for 17 years and we aspire to make Bangladesh stand out in the chip industry. Through competitions like these, we offer opportunities and jobs for students who want to pursue a career in this sector," said Enayetur.

About the industry practices, Dr Satyendra Nath Biswas, Professor of Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE) at Ahsanullah University of Science of Technology (AUST) said, "The main problem is keeping talents in Bangladesh. For example, an engineer with 3 to 4 years of experience in this sector gets 5

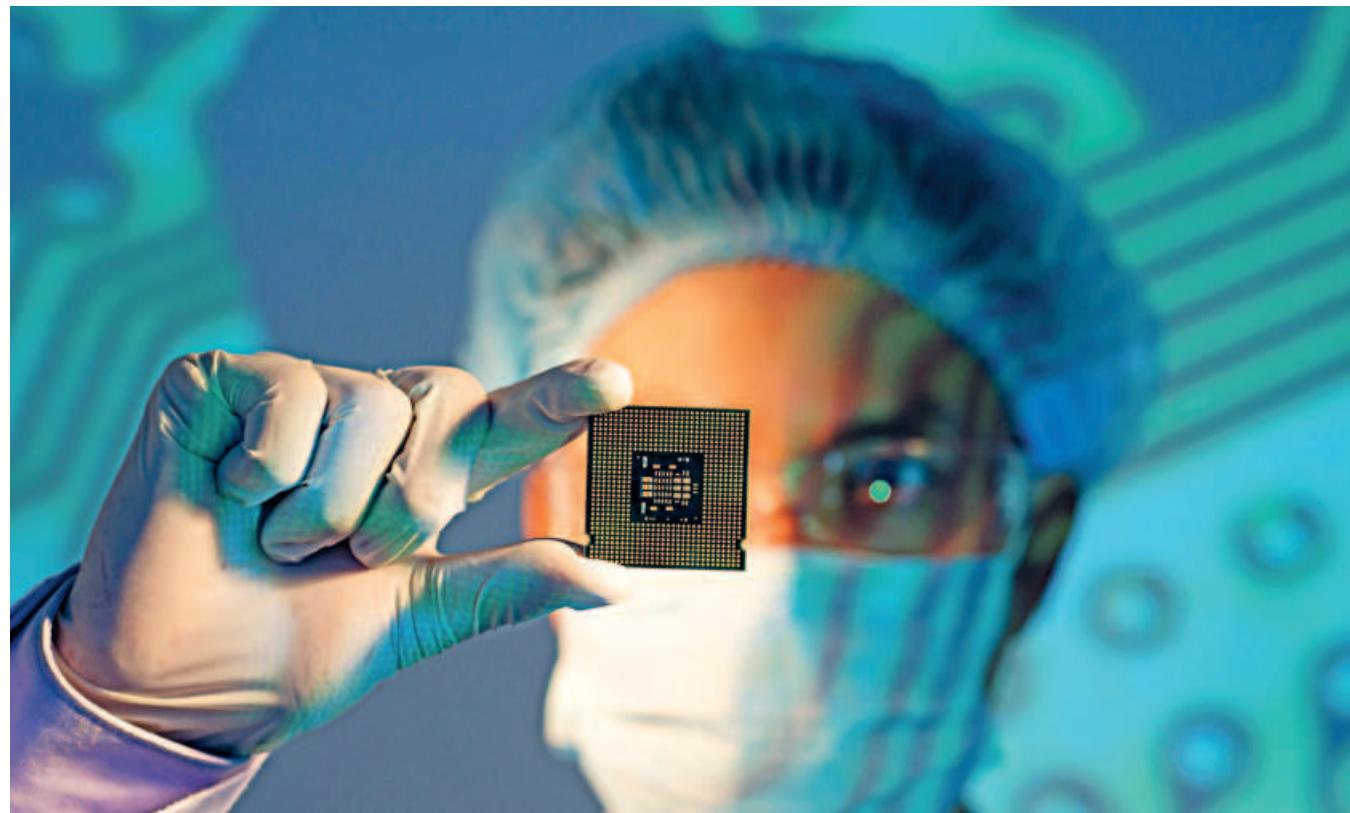
the country wants to sustain itself in the semiconductor ecosystem. The government also needs to listen to experts if they want to avoid the failures of previous initiatives."

Government initiatives

The government also acknowledged the importance of this industry in Bangladesh and is working fast to implement an actionable roadmap and policy.

During a stakeholder meeting on December 18, 2024, titled 'Semiconductors - A new frontier for the Bangladeshi economy and employment', it was announced that a high-level task force will be formed for the growth of the semiconductor sector in Bangladesh.

On January 1, 2025, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) announced a 13-member task



Representational image by DragonImages

ecosystem for this sector. The rise of AI and automation will soon shrink the opportunities for manual structural verification."

"Design, testing, and structural verification mostly use software meanwhile, and in the case of chip fabrication, we need high-end facilities. Taiwan produces the best chips. However, it is unlikely for them to share their proprietary knowledge," shared Professor Mostofa.

He added, "The government needs to coordinate with Bangladeshi expatriates so that Bangladesh can get more work and outsource in this sector. Proper investment and resource mobilisation is also crucial."

Competitions like VLSITHON, organised by Ulkasemi, a semiconductor design services company in Bangladesh, are stepping stones for young engineers to apply their knowledge. The 2nd edition of VLSITHON focused on RTL (Register Transfer Level) design and Analog design, and attracted 235 participants from 20 universities, highlighting the latent talent pool in Bangladesh.

Regarding the purpose behind the competition, Mohammad Enayetur Rahman, CEO and President of Ulkasemi, said, "Our main purpose is to

times more salary in the US compared to Bangladesh. India also pays 3 times more than Bangladeshi firms. Not just about industry standard payments but the quality of life is also a big issue for some if we think about the existing problems like the security of life, traffic jams, and air pollution in Bangladesh."

"Bangladeshi students have the talent it takes to navigate in this field. They just do not get the proper recognition," shared Professor Satyendra, who also teaches at the Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania in the US. "I have taken advanced-level courses on VLSI at AUST. However, only 36 students got the opportunity to enrol in this course due to the shortage of facilities. In 2016, we bought Cadence Design Systems software at a 90% discount for BDT 30 lakh with 4 years licence. Around BDT 4 lakh was spent on buying server computers which are essential for running the software. The software needs to be renewed every 3 years and that costs about BDT 17 to 22 lakh, depending on research resources."

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Regarding the sustainability of the chip industry in the country, Professor Satyendra said, "Bangladesh needs more contracts from abroad if

force to address policy gaps, recommend incentives, and identify immediate opportunities in the semiconductor sector in Bangladesh. The task force comprises 3 members of academia, 3 industry experts, 3 non-resident Bangladeshi (NRB), and 4 members from the government. The task force will present actionable outcomes by the end of January, says BIDA.

The future of semiconductor engineering in Bangladesh is a story of potential waiting to be realised. Bangladesh might not become Taiwan overnight, which dominates the global semiconductor market, led by companies like TSMC, but while the challenges are considerable, the opportunities are too significant to ignore. Bangladesh could adopt an approach prioritising VLSI design and gradually moving towards manufacturing in the long term.

With strategic planning, foreign and domestic investment in education and infrastructure, research, talent development, and industry-academia collaboration, Bangladesh can carve out a place in the global semiconductor industry as it did previously with the freelancing and garment sector.

Apple to settle Siri lawsuit for \$95 million

NEXT STEP DESK

Apple has agreed to a \$95 million settlement to resolve claims that its Siri voice assistant unlawfully recorded private conversations and shared them with third parties. The settlement, submitted for approval in a California federal court last week, follows allegations that Siri frequently activated by mistake, capturing sensitive discussions without users' knowledge.

The lawsuit spans a class period from September 17, 2014, to December 31, 2024. Plaintiffs claimed that these accidental activations led to recordings being made and disclosed to advertisers.

HTML, CSS, and you

5 YouTube channels to learn hands-on web development

MARWAN KHADEM

Starting your journey in web development can feel like learning a new language—except, instead of having conversations, you are creating websites. If you've been thinking of building beautiful websites, all you need is a bit of HTML and CSS. And, of course, the right instructions to guide you along the way. Here are some YouTube channels with which you can learn hands-on web development, from the comfort of your own home.

Programming with Mosh

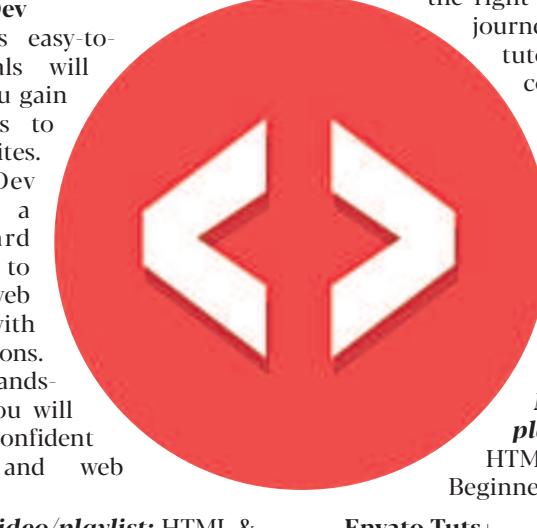
Whether you're just beginning or looking to level up your skills, Mosh's channel is the perfect place to kickstart your web development journey. His practical approach makes web development both easy and enjoyable. With Mosh Hamedani as your instructor, you'll gain the skills needed to create real-world applications confidently.

Must-watch video/playlist: HTML Tutorial for Beginners: HTML Crash Course

SuperSimpleDev

This channel's easy-to-follow tutorials will ensure that you gain practical skills to build websites. SuperSimpleDev provides a straightforward approach to mastering web development with clear explanations. By doing hands-on projects, you will become confident in coding and web development.

Must-watch video/playlist: HTML & CSS Full Course Beginner to Pro



Envato Tuts+
The channel provides tutorials on a

wide variety of topics, including web development. If you are looking to gain HTML and CSS skills at your own pace, this channel's the right place to begin your journey. Their in-depth tutorials make even the complex topics very easy to understand.

This platform is renowned as it offers high-quality coding tutorials and resources for both beginners and experienced developers.

Must-watch video/playlist: Learn HTML – Full Tutorial for Beginners

Envato Tuts+
The channel provides tutorials on a

wide variety of topics, including web development. If you are looking to gain HTML and CSS from scratch, Envato Tuts+ has some high-quality content that provides clear, step-by-step instructions. It is an excellent resource for both beginners and experienced learners who want to improve their technical skills.

Must-watch video/playlist: HTML & CSS for Beginners | Free Mega Course

GreatStack

GreatStack offers practical tutorials for web developers to create stunning and robust websites. This channel can help you master HTML and CSS with its easy-to-follow lessons. Whether you are creating your first website or improving your existing skills, this channel will help you take on real-world challenges.

Must-watch video/playlist: HTML And CSS Projects for Beginners 2024 | HTML & CSS Tutorial With 5 Projects Source Code

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Robi Axiata

PLC.

Manager/
Senior Manager,
Technology Audit,
Internal Audit



Deadline:

January 11

Eligibility:

• Bachelor's degree in Computer Science/ Computer Engineering/ Computer Science & Engineering/ Electrical Engineering/ Communication Engineering or equivalent from a reputed university.

Minimum experience: 4 years



Swisscontact

Officer – Policy and Communications, ASTHA

Deadline: January 16

Eligibility:

• Bachelor's degree in Development Studies, Communications, Business or any other relevant discipline.

Minimum experience: 1-2 years



MetLife Bangladesh

Manager, Finance (General Ledger Control)

Deadline: January 12

Eligibility:

• Master of Business Administration (MBA) with a major in Accounting, Finance or any related discipline.

Minimum experience: 3-4 years

Helen Keller Intl.
Bangladesh

Technical Officer,

IGA and Market

Development

Deadline: January 15

Eligibility:

• Bachelor's or Master's degree in Agricultural Extension or a related field, with prior experience in any development organisation.

Minimum experience: 5-7 years



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“However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.”



STEPHEN HAWKING

A never-seen-before Saif emerges

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Rangpur Riders' top order batter Saif Hassan may finally be getting into the T20 groove following a good run of form in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League.

Saif, who represented Bangladesh in a few Tests and T20Is in 2020-21, did not enjoy much success in the build-up to the tournament as he scored 41 runs in three matches in the Global Super League in Guyana for Rangpur Riders before managing only 47 runs in seven innings for Dhaka Division in the National Cricket League T20 in Sylhet.

However, since the start of the BPL, the 26-year-old has been in superb touch as he has already scored two half-centuries in four innings, including a swashbuckling 80 off 49 balls featuring seven sixes and three fours in the run-fest against Sylhet Strikers in the first match of the Sylhet phase yesterday.

Saif currently leads the run-getters' chart with 186 runs.

The Dhaka-born batter said he had a plan before the BPL and that he worked with national team's senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin.

"Definitely there was plan. I worked with Salahuddin sir, who backed me a lot. A lot of the members of this team also backed me," Saif told reporters after his



PHOTO: STAR

career-best T20 knock yesterday.

The pressure of a 205-run chase hardly had an impact on Saif, who came following the dismissal of Azizul Hakim Tamim after the opening over, and took a more attacking approach compared to his

partner from the other hand, Alex Hales.

In the previous game, too, this duo played similar knocks with Saif making an unbeaten 46-ball 62 in a partnership of 113 runs for the third wicket with Hales, who remained not out on 49 off 41 balls, in

Rangpur's eight-wicket win over Fortune Barishal in Mirpur on January 2.

At one stage yesterday, both players had scored 69 off their first 42 balls before Hales took charge by smashing Sylhet skipper Ariful Haque for three sixes and a four in the 16th to motor past Saif.

Hales eventually remained unbeaten on 113 off 56 balls to help Rangpur to an eight-wicket win in the match which witnessed a BPL record of 31 sixes hit. The win, which also the record second-wicket partnership of 186 runs between Saif and Hales, kept Rangpur firmly on top of the table with four wins in four matches.

"There was nothing specific. I only wanted to play according to the merit of the ball," Saif said. "He [Hales] also batted well...He also tries to bat according to merit. He has scored 13 thousand T20 runs. There is a lot to learn from him."

"The wicket was good. I tried to adjust to the wicket. The partnership gradually turned out to be good. But initially I tried to take time. It feels good to contribute to the team in two games," Saif said, adding that he has no regrets over missing out on a century.

With a strike-rate of 137.77 in this BPL, Saif, who had career strike rate of 112.46 in 58 T20s before the start of this tournament, seems to be on a new mission of turning things around.

Survival at stake for MSC, Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Archrivals Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani will lock horns in a Group B Federation Cup encounter in Cumilla today.

The match at Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium is scheduled to kick off at 2:45 pm.

Although Mohammedan lead the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) table with six consecutive wins, they have been on the back foot in the Federation Cup, despite beating Chittagong Abahani 6-0 in their previous match, following a 1-0 drubbing at the hands of group leaders Rahmatganj MFS in their tournament opener.

Two teams will progress to the knockouts from the five-team group. "It is a do-or-die match for us because a defeat will throw us out of the competition," said Mohammedan coach Alfaz Ahmed, whose side have not lost to Abahani in the previous six meetings.

In their last meeting, Mohammedan edged past Abahani 1-0 in BPL, courtesy of a strike from Soleymane Diabate. The Malian forward will be central to Mohammedan's chances after missing their BPL fixture against Chittagong Abahani.

Meanwhile, Abahani, sans their foreign players, have also been in good form. The Sky Blues last beat Mohammedan in the 2022-23 BPL season.

"Not thinking of the past; we also don't have an alternative but to win the match if we want to qualify for the second round," said Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu.

Jahanara opts out of WI tour for 'personal matters'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced the women's team squad for this month's West Indies tour, slated to be the Tigresses' first in the Caribbean.

The Tigresses will play three One-Day Internationals -- crucial for their direct qualification to the ODI World Cup this year in India -- and three T20 Internationals, scheduled to run from January 19-31 in St. Kitts.

Lata Mondol and Fariha Islam have returned to the side while Marufa Akter will be in action after sitting out the Ireland T20Is. However, pacer Jahanara Alam has "asked for a temporary break" from the national team due to personal matters, a BCB official informed The Daily Star.

Another source said that Jahanara sought a break due to mental health issues. "She is not retiring. She wants to improve her mental state. She also said that since she isn't playing, she will not be under [central] contract," a BCB official informed.

Jahanara, who played the last home series against Ireland, featured in the T20Is but was not part of the ODI playing eleven.

SQUAD

Nigar Sultana Joty (captain), Nahida Akter (vice-captain), Murshida Khatun, Dilara Akter, Sharmin Akter Supta, Sobhana Mostary, Shorna Akter, Lata Mondol, Rabeya, Fahima Khatun, Fariha Islam Trisna, Sultana Khatun, Farzana Haque, Taj Nehar, Shanjida Akther Maghla, Marufa Akter

Mahmud sees 'greed' in Faruque-Fahim fracas

Former BCB director Khaled Mahmud Sujon came down heavily on BCB president Faruque Ahmed and director Nazmul Abedeen Fahim over perceived 'greed' related to cricket operations department. Fahim, who had talked about resigning from the board earlier on Sunday, revealed in an interview that he wanted the cricket operations role, currently held by the BCB president himself. Mahmud was particularly scathing of Fahim's intentions. "I won't work if I don't get the cricket operations post, I will resign; this is just greed. I think they have it in them. Why do I need to have the cricket operations role? If I am the chairman of some other committee, why can't I serve there? Is he a master of cricket operations? Akram bhai [Akram Khan] is ahead in that regard; he is the master ahead of Fahim bhai... So why is he [Nazmul] saying that he must get that job? It is becoming a matter of ego, an ego problem between the two, I don't know what's happening," Mahmud said.

Read full story on The Daily Star website

'USA will try to play every World Cup'

A dinner conversation with a fellow cricketer led Aaron Jones, who grew up playing cricket in Barbados, to move to his birth country of USA and represent them in international cricket. Jones, who played a starring role in USA's qualification to the Super Eight stage in last year's ICC T20 World Cup, is now in Bangladesh, playing for the Sylhet Strikers in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). Recently, the 30-year-old spoke with The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan regarding his journey from Barbados to USA and the dream T20 World Cup run. The excerpts are as follows:

DS: You were part of the Rangpur franchise two years back. This time you are with Sylhet Strikers. Does this year's BPL feel different in any way to you compared to your previous stint?

AJ: I think there is much more hype. I think there's a much bigger fan base. I have seen a lot of comments on my social media accounts. So in that regard, it's much better. I didn't get to play much when I was with Rangpur two years ago. Hopefully, I can change that this season, get on the park and win some games for my team.

DS: How much have things changed for you and your USA teammates since last year's ICC T20 World Cup?

AJ: I think I had a really good 2024 to be honest. Obviously, the T20 World Cup brought a lot for me and the USA Cricket, which is really good. We're getting opportunities now. It's just about taking these opportunities and perform.

DS: You are from Barbados and played alongside current West Indies stars like Shai Hope and Jason Holder at age-level cricket. But then you moved to the

USA and started playing cricket over there. Why?

AJ: I was born in New York. My parents are from Barbados. So I was living in New York for the first five years of my life. Then my parents decided to go back to Barbados. So I played majority of my cricket as a youngster in Barbados and that's how I ended up playing with Shai Hope and all these guys who are playing for the West Indies right now.

There's a funny story. The USA was playing in our local List A tournament in Barbados. My good friend Steven Taylor, who is actually here for Rangpur this season, just called me to have dinner one night. Then

the conversation just came up about me having a USA passport. He was so excited and he talked to the coaches. I was not playing for Barbados in the tournament because I had broken my finger previously in a club game. I played for the USA in the same tournament. I scored like 70-something on debut and the rest is history.

DS: Talking about history, the USA created history when they beat

Pakistan in the T20 World Cup. How satisfying was the tournament for you guys?

AJ: Definitely. But this wasn't an overnight thing. This was something we had been working on for the last couple of years. Playing in a World Cup is a great honour. And then doing really well in the World Cup and getting into the Super Eight is fantastic, especially as an associate nation.

DS: The Super Eight finish has earned the USA a place in the 2026 T20 World Cup. What more has that World Cup brought to cricket in the USA?

AJ: A lot of people didn't know or follow USA cricket prior to the World Cup. When the ICC announced that the World Cup is going to be in the USA, a lot more focus started coming. Not only did we play and host the World Cup, but we actually did pretty decently and got to the Super Eight. I think it will now only get better. One thing that's important for us is targeting the locals. We want the American-born-and-raised public to really and truly follow and like cricket. We will try to play every World Cup. The standard is set now. We are going to try to play in every World Cup and hopefully some time soon, we can actually win a World Cup as well.

Kabaddi fed eyes historic SL series for growth

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's kabaddi team are set to play a five-match test series against Sri Lanka at the Palton ground in Dhaka from February 18 to 29.

The series aims to provide "more international exposure to the national kabaddi team," said Shah Newas Shohag, general secretary of the Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation ad-hoc committee, yesterday.

"As far as I know, Bangladesh hosted such a kabaddi test series involving India in 1974," he informed The Daily Star, adding that they plan to arrange similar series against stronger teams like Iran and Pakistan.

In preparation for the Sri Lanka series, the BKF has announced a 27-member preliminary squad for a residential training camp starting on January 10 at the Kabaddi Court. Six players will join the camp after competing in the franchise-based Nepal Kabaddi League, running from January 17 to February 1.

Badsha Mia, a former national player turned coach, has been appointed as the head coach, with Ashraful Alam and Bazlur Rashid serving as assistant coaches.

Responding to a query, Shohag explained that they could not appoint National Sports Council coach Abdul Jalil -- who led the national team to



their fourth consecutive Bangabandhu International Kabaddi Cup title last year -- as he is currently contracted with the Bangladesh Police kabaddi team for their preparations from December 10 to March 31.

Meanwhile, the BKF has also selected

27 players to prepare for the Women's Asian Championship in February in Iran and the Women's World Cup in March-April in India.

Additionally, the ad-hoc committee has finalised a six-month plan encompassing age-level training for boys and girls, national men's and women's championships, a youth festival, the junior services kabaddi league, and the corporate women's kabaddi league.

'Why can't United do this everywhere?'

REUTERS, Liverpool

Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim was delighted with the intensity his side showed in their breathless 2-2 draw with Premier League leaders Liverpool on Sunday, but said his team's performance left him wanting more.

A week after Amorim said his reeling team could face the threat of relegation, Lisandro Martinez and Amad Diallo scored United's first goals in the cauldron of Anfield since 2018, going toe-to-toe with the league's best team in a well-deserved draw.

"Today I'm allowed to be the only guy upset with the team," Amorim told reporters. "But today we were a team... We faced the competition in the way that we are supposed to face every day, training and match."

The draw saw United climb a spot to 13th in the table, still 11 points behind sixth-placed Manchester City and 13 behind fourth-placed Chelsea, but it felt like a win for the delighted travelling United fans who had braved the wintry drive.

United captain Bruno Fernandes, one of

their best players on the day, said, "If we show this level at Liverpool, first in the league, why can't we do this everywhere?" United nearly pulled off a victory with Harry Maguire missing a sitter with the last kick of the game.

"I don't think anyone would have predicted them

scoring two goals today or nearly nicking it at the end.. you can't just goals and choose when you want to turn up for a game at Manchester United," former United captain Roy Keane said on the Sky Sports broadcast.

Star leg spinner Rashid Khan took his seventh wicket of the innings as Afghanistan speedily wrapped up a 72-run victory over Zimbabwe on Monday to win the two-

Test series. Afghanistan have now won four of 11 Tests played since winning test



status in 2017 -- two of them against Zimbabwe. Rashid tormented Zimbabwe throughout a match interrupted several times by rain, taking four first-innings wickets as well. The 26-year-old deflected attention from himself after receiving the player of the match award, praising second-innings centurions Rahmat Shah (139) -- who was named player of the series -- and debutant Ismat Alam (101) instead. "The way they performed second time round got us back into the match," he said.

PHOTO: CRICKET AFGHANISTAN

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

BPL

Rangpur vs Dhaka

Live from 1:30 pm

Barishal vs Sylhet

Second Test, Day 5

Live from 6:30 pm

SPORTS 18-1 AND PTV

South Africa vs

Pakistan

Live from 2:30 pm

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**HAT-TRICK OF
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AWARD**

Probe allegations against some SC judges President asks Supreme Judicial Council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Mohammed Shahabuddin has instructed the chief justice-led Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) to investigate various allegations that have surfaced against several Supreme Court judges.

The president has made the decision under article 96(5)(b) of the constitution.

Accordingly, the SJC will start conducting the inquiry next week, according to a notification issued by the Supreme Court yesterday.

In December last year, the three-member SJC led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed sent a primary inquiry report about some judges, against whom there were some allegations, to the president for a decision, SC Spokesperson Muajjem Hussain told The Daily Star on December 15.

He, however, could not reveal the contents of the report.

The other members of the SJC are senior judges of the Appellate Division, Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury.

Eleven High Court judges are currently without benches after over 1,000 students demonstrated on the

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Alex Hales raises his bat after reaching a century for Rangpur Riders against Sylhet Strikers in the first match of the Sylhet phase of Bangladesh Premier League yesterday. The former England opener smashed an unbeaten 113 off 56 deliveries as Rangpur remained on top of the table with four wins from four matches while Sylhet are yet to open their account after two games.

PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Unease at DU campus as some incidents reek of vigilantism

MASHFIQ MIZAN and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

After the Awami League's fall and the ban on Chhatra League, improvement in the overall atmosphere is quite visible at Dhaka University. The notorious "Gonoroom" and incidents of torture are mostly a thing of the past. However, some recent incidents, where students enforced vigilante-style moral policing have brought forth issues like student freedom and safety.

Operating outside the purview of university authorities, they enforce their own brand of morality and order to operate with impunity. Unlike BCL, these groups lack a visible structure, making them harder to identify and hold accountable.

A number of incidents involving these groups have recently been reported at the university.

In one of these incidents, Shimul Kumar Paul, a fine arts student and former president of Chhatra Union's DU unit, and his two companions were assaulted by a group of DU students claimed to be

Only the proctorial team, Ansars, BNCC, and Rover Scouts are authorised to conduct searches and manage traffic.

Saifuddin Ahmed
DU Proctor

by the neck and shoving him towards the police. The student then grabbed the victim by the hair and neck. At one point, he slapped Shimul's companion in front of the police.

At least one of the attackers was identified, as MH Mobin, a student of Islamic history and culture and a resident of Sir AF Rahman Hall.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

5 cases of HMPV virus confirmed in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

Five infants tested positive for the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat yesterday, the first reported cases of the virus in India.

Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda sought to assuage rising public concerns over the spread of the virus saying the government is closely monitoring the situation and there is no reason to panic as the virus has been circulating throughout the world.

While two babies were infected by the virus in the same hospital in Bengaluru, capital of Karnataka, two other infants tested positive in two hospitals in Chennai and one case was reported from Ahmedabad city in Gujarat.

A 3-month-old female infant, who was diagnosed with HMPV, had been admitted



Despite the government ban on polythene bags (effective in superstores from October 1 and in smaller markets from November 1 last year), the use of the environmentally hazardous product has not yet stopped. In fact, in the capital's Town Hall Market, where this photo was taken yesterday, no jute or eco-friendly bags were seen being carried by any customer.



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JULY UPRISING
Govt to allocate Tk 637.80cr for victims' families
Announces Nahid; Mahfuj says ensuring justice govt's top priority

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has decided to allocate Tk 637.80 crore for the families of those killed and injured during the July uprising.

Of this amount, Tk 232.60 crore will be provided from the national budget of the current fiscal year, and the rest in FY26.

Information and Broadcasting Adviser Nahid Islam yesterday shared this information in a Facebook post.

He said the families of those killed will receive Tk 30 lakh each, while the injured will be provided with financial assistance ranging from Tk 1 lakh to Tk 5 lakh under various categories.

In this process, the family of a martyr will start receiving savings certificates worth Tk 10 lakh this month. The distribution of the remaining Tk 20 lakh in savings certificates will start in July.

Simultaneously, the injured will be provided with cash assistance while their treatment cost will be paid gradually, Nahid said.

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Hamas, Israel wrangle over ceasefire deal

Palestinian group approves a list of 34 hostages to be returned

REUTERS, Cairo

Israel and Hamas have wrangled over the details of a deal to halt fighting in the Gaza Strip and return hostages home, as Palestinian officials said intensified Israeli bombardments had killed more than 100 people over the weekend.

A Hamas official said the group had approved a list of 34 Israeli hostages to be returned as part of a deal that could eventually lead to a ceasefire. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office swiftly issued a statement saying Hamas had not provided a hostage list.

Later yesterday, the Hamas official provided Reuters a copy of the list showing the names of 34 hostages it agreed to set free in any possible ceasefire deal with Israel.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday that Washington wanted to see a ceasefire deal in Gaza concluded and the hostages brought out in the next two weeks.

A renewed push is under way to reach a ceasefire and return Israeli hostages before US President-elect Donald Trump takes office on January 20.

Meanwhile, three Israelis were killed yesterday and several

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No more 'Aynagar', 'Bhater Hotel' Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said there will be no secret detention centres known as "Aynagar" or any "Bhater hotel (eatery service)" of the Detective Branch on the DMP office premises on Minto Road.

"I told the DB officials that the pond inside their office must be as clean as an Ayna [mirror], but there will be no Aynagar here," he said while visiting the DB office.

He added, "DB personnel will not make arrests in plain clothes. They must wear jackets and show identification cards during any operation."

About his visit, Jahangir said it was a routine visit focused on improving law and order in the city.

The adviser said DB

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

BDR MASSACRE
Probe body may seek Hasina's extradition
Or it'll visit India to talk to her, says its chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Independent Investigation Commission, formed to re-investigate the 2009 BDR massacre, has said it will either seek Sheikh Hasina's extradition from Indian authorities or try to arrange a meeting with her over there.

Maj Gen (retd) ALM Fazlur Rahman, the commission chief and former director general of BGB, disclosed the developments yesterday following a views exchange meeting with the families of victims of the BDR massacre at the Retired Armed Forces Officers' Welfare Association (RAOWA) club.

"Those we suspect, especially Sheikh Hasina, are currently residing in India. We will either request her extradition through the Indian High Commission or send our team over there to question her. We will do whatever is legally permissible, either through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or directly," he said, adding that other people's names that appear on the inquiry commission's list will also be questioned.

He also said that the inquiry commission will give an opinion through investigation about the possible involvement of other countries.

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