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family still  
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## Gas crisis hits households, industries

ASIFUR RAHMAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Inadequate gas supply has been forcing Farzana Akter and Rabiul Islam to eat at restaurants every morning for two weeks.

The gas stove at their home near 60-Foot Road in the capital's Agargaon only works for around two hours after 4:00pm, and Farzana, a nurse at a government hospital, tries to cook within that period.

For a few hours after midnight, the gas supply becomes normal, and the couple often stays awake to cook their dinner at those hours.

"This has affected everything, including my work, because I feel drowsy all the time," Farzana says.

Since December 1, the daily supply of natural gas has hovered around 2,700 mmcfd against a demand, combining household and industrial users, of some 3,800 mmcfd, according to Petrobangla data.

Daily life in many neighbourhoods of Dhaka, Narayanganj, and Gazipur cities is being disrupted by the cooking gas shortage.

In the first four days of this month, the supply dropped even further as one of the two floating storage and regasification units (FSRU) in Moheshkhali, Cox's Bazar, was out of commission for maintenance work.

The Daily Star talked to at least 15 residents of different areas in Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Jigatola, Nakhalpara, Green Road, Uttara, Chakbazar, Nazimuddin Road, Gendaria, Mogbazar, Kazipara, Banasree, and Khilgaon who said the gas crisis began in December and worsened in recent weeks.

"I pay Tk 1,080 a month for gas, but what do I get? I have to use the electric stove every day and pay more for electricity," said Abdur Rahman Dipu, a resident of Kathalbagan area.

Shahnewaz Parvez, managing director of Titas Gas Distribution and Transmission PLC, said the supply often suffers disruptions when temperature drops in winter because gas condenses in the pipelines.

Maintenance work also lowered the supply, he said, adding that the FSRU is functioning now, but voids within the pipelines will have to be filled first before the supply improves. "It will increase within this week," he said.

In the months of December and January, less LNG is imported compared to the rest of the year because the demand at power plants falls, Shahnewaz said.

### PRODUCTION SUFFERS

M Jamaluddin, managing director of Jamaluddin Group, which owns a knitwear factory in Narayanganj, said he had cut production by almost a third.

The burners require gas pressure at 15 psi [pound per square inch], but it often falls to 2 or 3 psi.

"Gas pressure fluctuates a lot that results in waste. All the fabric in the dyeing machines becomes useless when this happens," he said.

Mohammad Hatem, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the current situation was unacceptable.

Five other factory owners in Gazipur and Narayanganj also expressed disappointment.

"We are struggling a lot," said a ceramic factory owner in Sreepur, Gazipur. "If gas pressure fluctuates, production stops."

### THE POOR SUFFER

This newspaper spent three hours in Bhasantek from 12:00pm to 3:00pm on Sunday and found that nobody was able to light their gas stoves.

Residents of Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project – where the low-income people live in one room flats -- say they were in serious trouble because they cannot afford to eat out.

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This photo shows damaged houses in Shigatse, southwestern China's Tibet region after a strong earthquake hit the area. At least 95 people were killed and many buildings collapsed in the 7.1 magnitude tremor that was felt in neighbouring Nepal's capital Kathmandu and parts of India.

PHOTO: AFP



Senior party leaders and relatives see BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia off at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport before she boarded a flight to London last night.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

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## JULY UPRISING Injured victims to be given jobs in police

Students, ex-staffers of  
security forces to get  
similar opportunity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to recruit those who were injured during the July uprising in police.

Students and retired members of the armed forces, police, BGB, and Ansar will also be eligible for recruitment.

The injured will be appointed to positions based on their physical condition, while students and retired personnel will be recruited to control traffic.

Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, the home adviser, yesterday made the announcement after visiting the offices of the Special Branch and Criminal Investigation Department of police.

He said that many were killed or injured during the mass uprising that ousted Sheikh Hasina-led government.

"We discussed how to employ those who were injured. We have already submitted a proposal from Bangladesh

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## Khaleda finally off to UK for treatment

Leaders, supporters filled the  
streets to bid her farewell

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

After years of relentless appeals and repeated denials by the Awami League government, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia flew to London last night for better medical treatment.

The 79-year-old former prime minister, who endured years of separation from her loved ones, is set to reunite with her son, Tarique Rahman, and other family members in what promises to be a long-awaited and emotional reunion.

Khaleda's departure marks a significant moment for her supporters, who have long campaigned for her right to receive proper medical care for severe ailments, including liver cirrhosis, diabetes, and arthritis.

The special Royal Air Ambulance, sent by Qatar's Emir, was supposed to depart Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 10:00pm. However, due to her late arrival at the airport, the flight left at 11:47pm.

The BNP chairperson's office had already completed the necessary immigration formalities.

The flight is scheduled to make a

stopover in Qatar before continuing to London.

Accompanying the BNP chairperson on the journey was a 15-member team, including Syeda Sharmila Rahman, the wife of her late son Arafat Rahman Koko; several doctors, air ambulance specialists, BNP leaders, personal staffers, and caregivers.

Khaleda is expected to arrive at Heathrow International Airport this

**She is scheduled to be  
taken directly to The  
London Clinic from  
the airport for her  
treatment.**

morning (Wednesday). She will be received by her son Tarique, his wife Zubaida Rahman, and their daughter Zaima Rahman.

She is scheduled to be taken directly to The London Clinic from the airport for her treatment, BNP leaders said.

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Govt scraps  
passports of  
Hasina, 96  
others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Immigration and Passports has cancelled passports of 97 individuals, including ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, over their alleged involvement in enforced disappearances and killings during the July-August mass uprising.

Of them, passports of 22 people were scrapped for their alleged involvement in enforced disappearances, Azad Majumder, chief adviser's deputy press secretary, told a press conference at Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

He said passports of 75 others, including Hasina, were revoked for their alleged involvement in violence during the uprising that killed hundreds.

Azad, however, did not disclose the names of 96 others.

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## Govt to speed up rice import to contain prices

Cabinet committee approves  
50,000 tonnes of rice import

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken an initiative to accelerate rice imports to strengthen the buffer stock of food grains and to arrest the upward trend of the staple's price.

At a meeting yesterday of the cabinet committee on purchase, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed directed the relevant ministries to move faster with their processes for rice import without further delay.

The meeting approved the import of 50,000 tonnes of rice for \$458.84 per tonne from an Indian company named M/S Bagadiya Brothers.

"Even at the meeting, I have asked them to import rice immediately from wherever they can to strengthen the buffer stock of food grain," he told reporters after the meeting at the secretariat.

About the current price of essentials, Salehuddin said: "The price of a specific item has increased while the prices of other items are stable."

The government will soon introduce a special Open Market Sales (OMS) programme with the view to bringing relief to fixed and low-income people struggling with inflation.

Rice prices have surged in the last two weeks despite the arrival of new Aman season rice. The price of all varieties of rice increased yesterday, according to data from the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

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## Clarification

Our investigative report, "Parking wealth under the Dubai sun" published on January 7, 2025, is self-explanatory about why we chose to name the specific Bangladeshi property holders in Dubai. Please read paragraphs 9-16 of the report for a detailed explanation. Below we reaffirm the reasons why we only named a select few and did not mention others:

1. This newspaper accessed the online database of the Center for Advanced Defense Studies (C4ADS), a non-profit based in Washington DC, United States, and found information on 461 Bangladeshi property owners in Dubai. We selected 19 of these individuals and their families for this report, excluding the other 442.

2. This rationale is based on two grounds: a) those who faced investigations, allegations, or convictions or were acquitted after being charged with financial misconduct. b) those whose property-related information could

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SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Investigators get new warrant to arrest S Korea President Yoon

AFP, Seoul



South Korean anti-graft investigators yesterday secured a new court-ordered arrest warrant for impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol, whose failed martial law bid threw the country into turmoil.

The former star prosecutor has refused questioning three times after his bungled December 3 martial law decree plunged South Korea into its worst political crisis in decades.

As anti-graft officials and police got a fresh warrant from the same court that issued the first order, Yoon was believed to be holed up in his residence surrounded by hundreds of guards preventing his detention.

"The arrest warrant re-requested for the suspect Yoon was issued today in the afternoon," the Joint Investigation Headquarters said in a statement.

Seoul Western District Court declined to confirm when contacted by AFP.

## Iran begins military drills near Natanz nuclear site

AFP, Tehran

Iran's military has begun drills near the Natanz nuclear enrichment plant in the centre of the country, state media reported yesterday, as part of exercises planned nationwide.

The drills -- dubbed Eqtedar, or "might", in Farsi -- have involved the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the ideological branch of Iran's military, alongside the army.

"The first phase of the joint Eqtedar exercises in the air defense zone of the Natanz nuclear facility has commenced under the orders of the air defense headquarters commander," state TV said.

It added that IRGC air forces were undertaking "an all-out point defense" of the site "against a multitude of air threats in tough electronic warfare conditions".

On Monday, IRGC spokesman Ali Mohammad Naini said the drills, which will also cover other parts of Iran until mid-March, were being conducted in response to "new security threats", without elaborating.

Several branches of the IRGC, including the navy and the paramilitary Basij forces, will also take part in the exercises, he added.

Last week, US news website Axios reported that White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan had presented President Joe Biden with options for a potential US strike on Iran's nuclear facilities if Tehran moved toward developing a nuclear weapon before January 20, when Donald Trump takes office.

## Gas crisis

FROM PAGE 1

"We pay a monthly rent of Tk 3,000. But we are having to spend more to be able to cook," said Meghla Akter, a resident of the project. "We pay for the gas but do not get it."

Residents said they can cook only from 3:00am-6:00am. Sometimes on weekends and holidays, they get gas for one or two hours.

Toma Sarker said, "Our lifestyle has changed due to the gas crisis. We have to wake up at midnight to cook."

Uttara Sector-11 resident Sakhawat Hossain Mukter said they faced a gas crisis every winter, but it was unbearable now.

## Polls by Dec

FROM PAGE 1

an address to the nation. On December 16 last year, during a Victory Day address, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus stated that the next general election could be held either at the end of 2025 or in the first half of 2026 after completing necessary reforms.

## Clarification

FROM PAGE 1

be obtained from the Dubai Land Department and other official sources.

3. In our report, we refrained from naming 442 individuals based on these two criteria.

4. We reiterate that we did not apply any personal bias or "pick-and-choose" method to either include or exclude any individual in our report.

We only followed the criteria mentioned above. Thank you for your understanding.



A woman sunbathing her seven-day old nephew, who was admitted to Dhaka Shishu Hospital with a cold, after having his echocardiogram done yesterday. The child, born on December 31, was admitted to a Shariatpur clinic the very next day with a cold and then referred to the hospital in the capital. According to doctors, around 40 new patients are admitted every day, 60 percent of them with cold-related issues.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Khaleda finally off to UK for treatment

FROM PAGE 1

Khaleda will be meeting her son for the first time in seven years on her first overseas visit since July 16, 2017, when she travelled to London for treatment.

Tarique, acting chairperson of BNP, has been residing in London with his family since 2008. Khaleda's younger son, Arafat Rahman Koko, died in Malaysia in 2015.

Khaleda set out from her Gulshan residence "Firoza" at 8:12pm. Her motorcade reached the airport at 10:51pm. The journey from her home to the airport took over two hours due to severe traffic congestion caused by the presence of hundreds of party leaders and supporters on the streets.

Senior BNP leaders greeted her at the Gulshan residence before departure while party supporters gathered along the route, cheering and chanting slogans in her support. A significant number of law enforcers were deployed to maintain order.

Earlier, Khaleda's family members, including her younger brother Shamim Eskander, his wife Kaniz Fatima, and her late brother Sayeed Eskander's wife Nasrin, also greeted her at her residence.

The former PM's deteriorating health had been a matter of grave concern for years. Despite repeated appeals from her party and physicians to allow her to seek treatment abroad, the AL government rejected over 20 such requests.

Khaleda's personal physician Dr Zahid Hossain 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 in Maryland, USA, that will be looked into."

According to doctors in Dhaka, the BNP chairperson may require a liver transplant because of the cirrhosis and the entire treatment process, including recovery, may take several months.

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

Khaleda's eventual departure only became possible after the fall of the AL regime on August 5, 2024, signaling a major shift in the country's political landscape. She was fully freed by an order from President Mohammed Shahabuddin the very next day, paving the way for her overseas treatment.

Her health crisis, compounded by political resistance, had become a rallying point for BNP leaders and activists, who are now hopeful for her recovery and the opportunity for her to reunite with her family in peace.

BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury told The Daily Star, "We've long been demanding that she receive treatment abroad, but we were unsuccessful. Due to the lack of adequate medical care, she reached a critical point, where her life was at risk. She is now slightly better and will fully recover once she receives treatment abroad."

"Khaleda Zia made the greatest contribution to the July-August movement because she inspired the entire country and gave strength without any compromise."

## Injured victims to be given jobs in police

FROM PAGE 1

Police to hire some of the people who suffered injuries," he said.

"We are trying to recruit as soon as possible those who have recovered from their injuries. Those who are still recovering can also be considered for employment," the adviser said.

He mentioned that each injured victim faces unique challenges. "One has lost an eye, another a finger. They will be placed in departments where their abilities can be best utilised."

"Initially, we plan to start with 100 wounded victims. We will increase the number in phases."

Asked if the recruitment would be limited to police, he responded, "We are starting with the police as it falls under my ministry's jurisdiction. However, we have a plan to expand this initiative to other departments."

Jahangir also talked about the issue of traffic management, saying, "A proposal was submitted to recruit 1,000 students for controlling traffic. So far, 400 students have been recruited."

Besides, another proposal was sent to employ retired employees of army, navy, air force, police, BGB, and Ansar, under the traffic division, he said.

He, however, found a lack of interest among the retired employees.

"I expected more participation, but we have so far got only 50-60 people. We had a plan to start with at least 500 retirees."

Student's managing traffic will work for two or three hours a day, so that their studies are not affected, he said. "They will receive an honorarium."

Responding to a query, Jahangir said money laundering was a major problem under the previous government.

"I have instructed the CID chief to prioritise investigations into money laundering cases including that of the Bangladesh Bank reserve heist."

He added that he had asked the CID to come up with the probe reports without any delay.

He hoped that students would get all textbooks by the end of this month. He also blamed the delay on non-cooperation of some of the textbook printers and said, "The education ministry will probe the incident."

Meanwhile, CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman held a meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at state guesthouse Jamuna in the evening.

Topics of discussion included electoral reforms, national unity, and reforms in the banking sector.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "During madam's imprisonment, she fell critically ill. We repeatedly urged Sheikh Hasina to allow her to seek medical treatment abroad, but she ignored our requests."

"She prays for the well-being of the people and the establishment of democracy."

### CASES

According to Khaleda's lawyer, of the 37 cases filed against her during the caretaker government and AL government tenures, seven cases are still pending with the courts as of yesterday. These include the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case, the Niko corruption case, three sabotage cases in Cumilla, and two defamation cases.

On February 8, 2018, Khaleda was jailed in a corruption case.

In April 2019, Khaleda's health deteriorated due to inadequate medical treatment. On March 26, 2020, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, she was released from prison after 776 days.

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 2021, 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.

The journalist said after receiving

About the law and order during the interim government's five months in office, the adviser opined, "You can judge for yourself whether there has been any improvement. Police have resumed their work and are continuously trying to improve the situation."

He, however, acknowledged challenges, including the time required for the new officers to familiarise with their roles, as previous ones have been changed. Besides, there are shortages of vehicles and damaged police stations have yet been repaired fully.

"We are taking these matters seriously and working to address the issues."

The adviser said, "There was no government in place between August 5 and 7. Many fled during that time, some crossed borders into neighbouring countries. However, since we assumed office, no one has fled. If anyone attempts to leave, we will investigate the matter."

Talking about the next election, Shafiqul referred to what the chief adviser said during his address to the nation on December 16.

Prof Yunus said the next polls can be held between the end of 2025 and the first half of 2026 after accomplishing necessary reforms.

Responding to a query about abduction along the Teknaf border, Shafiqul said the government is making significant efforts to improve law and order. According to information from law enforcement agencies, the situation has improved.

About the border killings, he said the previous government remained largely silent on the issue. But the current government has been protesting every such incident.

The government took the initiative to import food grain after the flood in August. As of Monday, 24,720

## Meta shelves fact-checking program in US

REUTERS

Social media giant Meta yesterday scrapped its US fact-checking program for a community-based system similar to X and reduced the curbs on discussions around contentious topics such as immigration and gender identity.

The move marks a reversal in Meta's policy as CEO Mark Zuckerberg has long championed active content moderation despite criticism from conservatives over alleged censorship on its platforms.

It also comes shortly after the company named Republican policy executive Joel Kaplan as global affairs head and elected Dana White, CEO of Ultimate Fighting Championship and a close friend of President-elect Donald Trump, to its board.

"We've reached a point where it's just too many mistakes and too much censorship. It's time to get back to our roots around free expression," Zuckerberg said in a video.

"We're going to focus on reducing mistakes, simplifying our policies and restoring free expression on our platforms. We're going to tune our content filters to require much higher confidence before taking down content."

The end of the fact-checking program, started in 2016, caught some partner organizations by surprise.

## 7 arrested over gang rape of 14-yr-old girl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police have arrested seven men for their suspected involvement in the gang rape of a 14-year-old girl in Badarkhali of Chakaria upazila in Cox's Bazar.

They were arrested from different areas of Moheshkhali between Monday night and yesterday morning, said Jasim Uddin, additional superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar, without revealing the names.

The ASP said the arrestees were sent to jail via a court order.

The victim, who was allegedly gang-raped by eight to ten men, was receiving treatment at Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, he said.

The incident has enraged the locals who have been assisting police in identifying and catching the culprits, said Alauddin Alo, a local journalist of Bodarkhali.

Since the incident, protest programmes -- road blockades, human chains, and processions -- have been held in Cox's Bazar Sadar, Moheshkhali, and Chakaria demanding the arrest of the perpetrators and their trial.

Hundreds of people also staged a demonstration yesterday in Moheshkhali.

The journalist said after receiving

information that three alleged rapists had taken shelter at a shrimp enclosure in Shaplapur of Moheshkhali, locals along with police surrounded them and apprehended them.

The victim was gang-raped at Badarkhali union in Chakaria upazila around 10:00pm on Sunday, when the girl, who lives in Moheshkhali upazila, was returning home from Banskhali upazila, Chattogram.

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

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.

Later, six others joined the perpetrators in raping her.

After the incident, the girl made her way back to the ferry ghat, where with the help of locals she was admitted to Badarkhali General Hospital.

be seen in a video on social media showing the aftermath in the town of Lhatshe, with debris spilling out onto the road.

Three townships and 27 villages lie within 20 km (12 miles) of the epicentre, with a total population of around 6,900, and more than 1,000 houses have been damaged, Xinhua reported.

Southwestern parts of China, Nepal and northern India are often hit by earthquakes caused by the collision of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates.

Since 1950, there have been 21 earthquakes of magnitude 6 or above in what is known as the Lhasa block, the largest of which was the 6.9-magnitude quake in Mainling in 2017, according to CCTV.

Crumpled shop fronts could

## Govt to speed up rice import to contain prices

FROM PAGE 1

The price of coarse rice, which was Tk 50 to Tk 55 a kilogram a

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## PUBLIC ADMIN REFORM

# 90pc of employees feel overlooked

BAHARAM KHAN

The Public Administration Reform Commission has neither engaged with lower-grade government employees nor included their representatives in the commission, leaving them feeling marginalised.

The reform initiative is ignoring nearly 90 percent of government employees by excluding dialogue with their representatives, according to lower-grade employees from several ministries.

Government employees are categorised into 20 grades. Those in grades 9 and above are considered high-level employees, while those in grades 10 to 20 are classified as lower grade employees.

According to the public administration ministry's latest survey, titled "Statistics of Government Servants-2023," there are 14.40 lakh government employees. Among

them, 190,928 are in the first-class category, while the remaining 12.50 lakh are second, third, and fourth-class employees.

Even grade 9 employees, who are not part of the cadre, have been excluded from the reform dialogue.

Lower-grade employees argue that all members of the commission are former cadre employees or individuals from similar ranks, leading to a prioritisation of feedback from officials of their own level.

They feel their voices are being overlooked, even though they are the most involved in delivering public services to citizens.

Nazrul Islam, spokesperson for the Inter-Ministerial Employees Association of the Secretariat, told The Daily Star, "Every commission talks about reforming public administration, but the benefits

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**Every commission talks about reforming public administration, but only the benefits and opportunities of high-ranking officials are considered.**

NAZRUL ISLAM  
Spokesperson for Inter-Ministerial Employees Association of the Secretariat

**Khaleda was convicted to bar her from polls  
Her lawyer tells SC**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



DIPAN NANDY

B N P Chairperson Khaleda Zia's lawyer, Kaysar Kamal, told the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday that the High Court's verdict in the Zia Orphanage Trust case was politically motivated, aiming to bar her from elections.

He argued that the verdict, which doubled her jail term to 10 years, violated the law as she was not involved in corruption or embezzlement, and the funds in question remain secure in the trust's bank account.

Kamal presented these

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## GRAFT PROBE INTO FORMER WHIP

# Where did Tk 10.77cr come from?

83 pc of Iqbal Karim's wealth unaccounted for

## AT A GLANCE

Income declared-Tk 12.9cr
Income verified by ACC-Tk 2.13cr
Income unaccounted for-Tk 10.77cr
Suspicious Transactions-Tk 35.71cr across 24 bank accounts
Owned properties- house and properties in Bashundhara, Uttara, Dhanmondi
Wife's assets-Tk 74 lakh

alongside her husband.

### SUSPICIOUS TRANSACTIONS

The ACC's investigation, launched on August 28, revealed suspicious activity in 24 bank accounts linked to Rahim. Of these, 18 accounts were opened after the Awami League came to power in 2009.

The accounts recorded transactions totalling Tk

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ACC launches probe against Nayeemul Islam Khan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) has initiated an investigation against senior journalist and former press secretary to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Nayeemul Islam Khan, over allegations of amassing illegal wealth.

The decision was made during an ACC meeting yesterday morning, a source from the commission confirmed to The Daily Star.

Earlier, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) flagged 163 bank accounts linked to Nayeemul and his family members. ACC officials suspect that he has laundered money abroad.

Following an analysis of preliminary information, the ACC decided to launch a formal investigation, aiming to uncover significant undisclosed assets allegedly belonging to Nayeemul Islam Khan and his family.

**FELANI KILLING  
14 years on, family still awaits justice**

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Fourteen long years have passed, yet the haunting image of Felani Khatun's lifeless body hanging from the barbed fence at the India-Bangladesh border lingers in the nation's collective memory. For Bangladesh, the teenager's killing remains a painful scar, with justice still remaining elusive for her family.

"I have been waiting for justice for the last 14 years. My daughter was an innocent girl," Felani's father Nurul Islam told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

He said he visited India twice years ago and filed a complaint with the BSF special court, but justice has yet to be served.

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**43RD BCS  
Govt justification for excluding 227 candidates baseless  
Says University Teachers' Network**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Teachers' Network has expressed deep concern about the gap between the aspiration for a non-discriminatory Bangladesh and the reality in different sectors.

In some cases, a lack of accountability is evident, it said. The foundation of the July uprising was the dream of a non-discriminatory Bangladesh, said the network in a statement sent to the media yesterday.

"We still hope that Bangladesh will not deviate from this path," the statement added.

On January 2, 2025, the Ministry of Public Administration issued a notice regarding the 43rd Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS), where the ministry provided an explanation for excluding 227 candidates who were previously recommended for appointment.

The statement said the excluded candidates had been recommended for appointment during the tenure of the interim government.

"Allegations and concerns raised by many excluded candidates, as seen on social media, have come to our attention. Members of the University Teachers' Network have communicated with many of the victims. We have also reviewed relevant media reports on the issue," said the statement.

"After careful consideration, we find the Ministry

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Students of Primeasia University yesterday marched to the Secretariat with various demands, including the removal of the university's trustee board chairman and the establishment of a permanent campus. When the students reached the Secretariat, police charged batons and dispersed them, alleging that they were "causing chaos."

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

**PROTEST AT SECRETARIAT  
Police disperse students of Primeasia univ**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police charged batons and dispersed Primeasia University students protesting in front of the Secretariat yesterday afternoon, leaving several injured, witnesses said.

Khalid Monsur, officer-in-charge (OC) of Shahbagh Police Station, told The Daily Star that the students created chaos by banging on the entrance. "Students should refrain from protesting at the Secretariat as there is a ban on holding protests there," he added.

The protesters, numbering several hundred, marched towards the Secretariat demanding the suspension of the university's trustee board chairman and the establishment of a permanent campus.

Police blocked them near the Jatiya Press Club, allowing a seven-member delegation to enter the Secretariat to meet the education adviser. However, the adviser was unavailable, and the delegation had to wait, according to a police official.

Tensions escalated as other students clashed with police and marched towards the Secretariat despite repeated

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Jubeida  
Khatoon  
passes away  
STAR REPORT



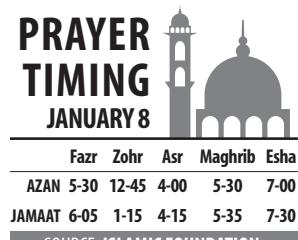
Dr Jubeida Khatoon, a renowned gynecologist and feminist social reformer, passed away on January 3, aged 95.

Born to educationist Osman Gani, she graduated from Lady Brabourne College, Kolkata, and became the first woman from East Pakistan to achieve MRCOG in London.

As a young student, she witnessed the communal riots of 1946, which deeply influenced her commitment to social justice.

Dr Khatoon began her career at Dhaka Medical College in 1957 and later served as a professor and surgeon at Rajshahi Medical College for decades.

She established the first private gynecological clinic in Rajshahi and trained generations of medical students. Beyond medicine, she chaired the Rajshahi Diabetic Association and served as a Rajshahi Municipality Commissioner. Her daughter, anthropologist Nehraz Mahmud, survives her. Dr Khatoon was laid to rest at Hatem Khan Graveyard in Rajshahi.



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

## Khaleda was convicted

FROM PAGE 3

TK 2.1 crore intended for orphans, the special court cited Khaleda's age and status to impose a lighter sentence.

On November 11, the Appellate Division stayed the High Court's decision and allowed Khaleda to file appeals challenging it. Her appeals seek to overturn the judgement and secure her acquittal.

Khaleda currently faces 37 cases, filed during the caretaker government (2007-08) and Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Of these, 12 cases were dismissed by the High Court last year, nine

defamation cases were scrapped by lower courts, and two sentences were overturned through presidential clemency.

The BNP chief is now on bail in the remaining cases.

Yesterday's hearing involved lawyers from both sides, including Kayser Kamal, AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, and Zainul Abedin for Khaleda, while Additional Attorney General Aneek R Haque and lawyer Md Ashif Hassan represented the state and the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The court will continue hearing the appeals today.

## 47 citizens condemn attack

FROM PAGE 5

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh; Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori; Swapan Adnan, visiting research fellow at University of Oxford; Advocate ZI Khan Panna, chairperson of Ain O Salish Kendra; Meghna

Guhathakurta, executive director of Research Initiatives Bangladesh; Barrister Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of BLAST; Shireen Parveen Huq; founder of Naripokkho; Dr Samina Luthfa, associate professor at Dhaka University, and others.

## Govt justification for excluding

FROM PAGE 3

of Public Administration's justification for excluding gazetted candidates, as stated in its notice, to be baseless. We interpret this notice as a continuation of the discriminatory culture within the republic, which is deeply disappointing.

"Yet, the government and the relevant ministry have not provided the nation with any detailed explanation regarding this matter to date," it also said.

"We have observed efforts to prioritise identity over performance, bypassing due process, while certain groups and communities are being deemed ineligible. This politics of identity is divisive and, therefore, unjust. Our position remains firm against all forms of injustice," said the

signatories of the statement include Dhaka University teachers Gitia Nasreen, Kamrul Hasan Mamun, Rushad Faridi, Tasneem Siraj Mahboob, and Kajalie Shehreen Islam; former Jahangirnagar University teacher Anu Muhammad and incumbent teachers Swadhin Sen and Sharmind Neelormi; Jashore University of Science and Technology teacher Ovinu Kibria Islam; Jagannath University teacher Shehreen Ataur Khan; and Chittagong University teacher Khadija Mitu.

Discussions with Touhid Hossain included enhancing Bangladesh's regional standing. "We will provide support to strengthen the country's position," she said.

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**"Candidates who meet all the conditions of and agree to comply with Bangladesh Bank's Circular (DFIM Circular No. 03, dated 25 March 2024) are requested to send their application with CV to hrdepartmentdac@gmail.com by 14 January 2025."**

Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)  
Road Division, Bhola.  
Phone: 02-4799-66160  
E-mail: [gebho@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:gebho@rhd.gov.bd)

Memo No. 35.01.0918.404.34.001.20-27

Date: - 07/01/2025

### Invitation for e-Tender (LTM)

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal for the following works:

Tender ID	1059812
Name of Tender	Bulih Palisiding Work at 11th km(p), 13th km(p), 14th km(p) & 15th km(p) of Borhanuddin (Udaypur)-Tazumuddin-Monpura-Shikerhat (Z8905) under Bhola Road Division During the year 2024-2025. Package No-14/e-GP/Bho/Min/LTM/2024-25
Tender Last Selling Date and Time	21-Jan-2025 17:00
Tender Closing & Opening Date and Time	22-Jan-2025 12:45
Tender ID	1059813
Name of Tender	Repair of Pavement with Premix Bituminous Carpeting, Sealcoat work at Ch. 9:00 to 11:00km of Guingarhat-Charpata-Dalikharchat-Daulatkhan Heliap-Daulatkhan Bazar Road. (Z-8916) under Bhola Road Division during the year 2024-2025. Package No-15/e-GP/Bho/Min/LTM/2024-25
Tender Last Selling Date and Time	21-Jan-2025 17:00
Tender Closing & Opening Date and Time	22-Jan-2025 12:15
Tender ID	1059814
Name of Tender	Estimate for Painting work of Divisional & Sub-Divisional Office of RHD, Bhola in the year of 2024-25. Package No-16/e-GP/Bho/OB/LTM/2024-25
Tender Last Selling Date and Time	21-Jan-2025 17:00
Tender Closing & Opening Date and Time	22-Jan-2025 12:55

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline /hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system. (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details please contact e-gp help desk. [helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

(Md. Maidul Islam)  
ID No-602361  
Executive Engineer (C.C.), RHD  
Road Division, Bhola.

GD-77

4 DHAKA WEDNESDAY JANUARY 8, 2025

## Police

FROM PAGE 3

warnings, witnesses said. A chase and counter-chase ensued, with police using batons and stun grenades to disperse them.

Live broadcasts showed police charging at students, with some officers seen kicking a student who had fallen during the chaos.

Following the incident, former and current students expressed outrage on social media over the police action.

On August 26, Dhaka Metropolitan Police imposed an indefinite ban on protests near the Bangladesh Secretariat and the Chief Adviser's official residence at the Jamuna state guest house.

## Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 5

Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, Environment Adviser Sveda Rizwana Hasan, and Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur, among others. She will also meet business leaders and development partners.

The EU remains Bangladesh's largest trading partner, with exports growing from €2.4 billion to €24 billion annually over the past two decades.

In October 2023, the EU, EIB, and Bangladesh signed €400 million in agreements for renewable energy projects to support climate goals.

Beer described her visit as an opportunity to hear from ministries, economic leaders, and citizens about the country's challenges and plans.

"The EU stands behind the interim government to serve Bangladeshi citizens, and the EIB will support investments," she said, adding that energy remains a critical focus of cooperation.

Discussions with Touhid Hossain included enhancing Bangladesh's regional standing. "We will provide support to strengthen the country's position," she said.

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## CITY

Bangladesh stable for investment  
Says EIB VP

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

European Investment Bank Vice-President Nicola Beer yesterday expressed confidence in Bangladesh's current stability for investment and confirmed the Bank's plans to finalise agreements for water, sanitation, and energy projects.

"I see the current situation as stable for investment, so we proceed with what we have already decided. Further signatures are expected this year," she told reporters after meeting Foreign Adviser Md Touhid Hossain at the foreign ministry.

Asked if EIB investments would depend on the election or political transition, she said that such matters are for the people of Bangladesh to decide.

Nicola emphasised EIB's support for the interim government and its engagement with various ministries and sectors to determine investment priorities. "I am optimistic about signing deals on significant projects, especially in water and sanitation, this year," she said.

Leading a high-level delegation on a three-day visit, Beer is set to meet Finance and Planning Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, Power and Energy

SEE PAGE 3 COL 5

## Two sent to jail over trader's abduction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A Jashore court has sent two men to jail in connection with the abduction of a gold trader in Chaugachha upazila.

The accused, Abu Said Al Mamun Babu, 42, of Bodhkhana village, and Firoz Hossain, 45, of Ichali village, were produced before the court after a case was filed by the victim's son, said Kamal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Chaugachha Police Station.

Dhirendra Nath, 50, who owns a jewellery shop in Chaugachha, was abducted on Monday night while returning home.

The criminals demanded Tk 20 lakh in ransom, which was reported to the police. Officers later identified a suspicious microbus near Chaugachha bus stand, and after a brief chase, the abductors abandoned Dhirendra and fled. Based on his statement, police arrested Babu and Firoz, seizing the vehicle after multiple drives.

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Hakaluki Haor, one of the largest freshwater wetlands in Bangladesh, spanning five upazilas in Sylhet and Moulvibazar districts, was once a safe haven for migratory birds during winter.

Each year, the arrival of thousands of migratory birds of various species transformed the haor into a vibrant sanctuary, enhancing the natural beauty of the region and drawing tourists from across the country and beyond.

In recent years, however, the population of these winter visitors has significantly declined, raising alarm among bird experts and environmentalists.

According to the Bangladesh Bird Club's census data, the number of birds in 40 wetlands within the Hakaluki Haor area plummeted from 58,281 in 2017 to 18,660 in 2020.

The bird census was not conducted in 2021 due to the pandemic and in 2022 due to financial constraints.

In January 2023, a joint survey by

the Bangladesh Bird Club and IUCN Bangladesh recorded 37,778 birds of 52 species, including 12,732 ducks and 4,537 small waterfowl, in Hakaluki Haor. The increase compared to 2020 was attributed to the absence of new development projects in the area.

However, the rise in bird numbers also saw an increase in illegal hunting activities, with poachers using traps and baits in the unprotected waters of the haor. This has made the wetlands increasingly unsafe for migratory birds.

Additionally, a sharp decline in the fish population and the depletion of aquatic vegetation have caused food scarcity, further discouraging the birds from returning to Hakaluki Haor.

"Soon after the birds begin arriving with the onset of winter, poachers actively prowl the wetlands to hunt

them. Climate change, environmental pollution, and human activities further threaten their safety," said Fakhruzzaman, a resident of Ashighar village in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar.

Kamrul Hasan Noman, an environmental activist and member of the Patharia Wildlife Conservation Team, said rivers flowing into the haor are polluted with plastic, polythene, and other waste discarded by neighbouring communities.

"Hunters are also using nets and poison baits to capture birds, exacerbating the decline. It is an alarming scenario," he said.

Sahadat Hossain, a student of Kulaura Degree College, said, "If indiscriminate hunting doesn't stop, a time will come when birds will stop coming to Hakaluki Haor."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



## 3 killed in truck-autorickshaw collision in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Three people were killed in a collision between a brick-laden truck and a passenger-carrying autorickshaw in Kaliakoir yesterday.

The accident occurred on the Fulbaria-Kaliakoir regional road in the upazila in the afternoon, said Kaliakoir Police Station Sub-Inspector Niharika.

The deceased are Karim Mia, 42, of Boro Gobindapur village in the upazila, Ayan Roy, 35, of Nayanagar village in

Sutrapur, and Sudip Das, 37, of Tan Sutrapur village.

Police and locals said the brick-laden truck was heading towards Maona from Kaliakoir Bazar around 4:30pm. When it reached the Kanchanpur Chairman Bari Bazar area of Chapair union, it collided with the autorickshaw.

Kaliakoir Police Station SI Zahid Hasan said the truck loaded with bricks was seized.

However, the truck driver and his assistant fled.

## 47 citizens condemn attack on Santal community

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-seven eminent citizens of the country in a statement yesterday strongly condemned the assault on a Santal woman and the arson attack on their homes in Gobindaganj of Gaibandha.

They called upon the government to ensure the safety of the Santal community and demanded punishment for those responsible. Additionally, they also asked for a high-level impartial investigation into how 250 acres of land and the government-owned pond belonging to the Santals of Rajahar Union in Gobindaganj were illegally occupied, according to a statement sent to media yesterday.

Since the era of Pakistan, influential groups and political leaders in Gobindaganj, or their agents, have repeatedly sought to take control of the Santals' land. At times, the state seized their land in the name of sugar mills. On other occasions, the police and administration set fire to their homes to evict them, the statement said.

"At a time when the nation is raising its voice to break the chains of discrimination, such unjust oppression and persecution of the Santals is unacceptable. We strongly condemn and protest this heinous act. We demand an impartial investigation into the physical assault on the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Electric fence kills elephant, man dies in retaliatory strike



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Amid the escalating conflict between humans and elephants in the country, fuelled by the loss of the latter's habitat, another tragic incident occurred in Bandarban on Monday, resulting in the death of an elephant and a man.

A pregnant elephant, who entered a paddy field with the other members of her herd in search of food, got electrocuted by an electric fence protecting the land.

Meanwhile, her death led to a retaliatory attack by its herd that claimed the life of a farmer.

The incident occurred late Monday night in Kumari Para village of Bandarban's Lama upazila. The deceased was identified as Faridul Alam, 44, of the Bichamay Chara area.

He had placed the live wire around the field to deter wild elephants, in which the pregnant elephant got caught and died.

After her death, the other elephants, angered by the death of their pregnant member, kept roaming the area around the field, according to witnesses.

Seeing the elephants, Faridul went to his field to drive away the elephants. The herd attacked him.

"Locals rushed him to Chakaria Hospital, but

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

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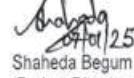
08 09 10 11 JAN 2025

International Convention City, Bashundhara, Dhaka.

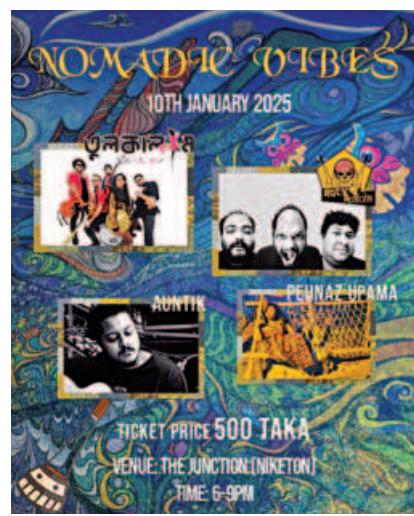
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Expo Timings 11.00am to 7.00pm (Entry Free)

  
Shaheda Begum  
Project Director  
Email: s.rchowdhury@yahoo.com

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?



### Nomadic Vibes

An intimate musical evening, *Nomadic Vibes*, celebrating original Bangla music, will feature performances by Auntik, Pehnaz Upama, Rock-A-Baula, and Tulkalam. Set to take place at The Junction in Niketon, the event promises a captivating blend of melodies, rhythms, and raw creativity, offering an unforgettable experience for music enthusiasts.

Date: Friday, January 10, 2025

Time: 6pm - 9pm

Venue: The Junction Dhaka, Niketon

## A stacked 2025 for MOSHARRAF KARIM

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The year 2025 is looking to be another great year for ace actor Mosharraf Karim. His film *Bildakini*, directed by Fazlul Kabir Tuhin, is set for release in cinemas, while his new OTT project, Vicky Zahed's *Ondhokarer Gaan*, premieres today on Binge. Additionally, another film, *Chokkor 302* has recently received its censor certificate.

Speaking to The Daily Star about *Bildakini*, the *Mohanagar* star shared, "The narrative is truly remarkable for this film – you'll need to watch it to experience what I'm talking about."

"Just as the story is exceptional, so is the character of Manik Majhi. It offered me a great opportunity to perform. The character's depth and diversity drew me in, and I poured my heart into the performance," said Mosharraf Karim.

The actor further reflected, "I don't work just to entertain, I also feel a sense of social responsibility. This has always been my philosophy."

Karim shares a long standing bond with director Fazlul Kabir Tuhin, whom he has known since 1991. "We've spent years together, performing in stage plays. He's a talented individual who acts, sings, and composes music alongside directing," he shared. "I've worked under his direction before, and though he was abroad for a while, I'm eager to see more of his work."

In *Bildakini*, Indian actress Parno Mittra plays a significant role. On her performance, Mosharraf remarked, "Parno is a skilled actress, and it's commendable how quickly she mastered the regional dialect."

When asked about the immense love he receives from fans, the actor concluded, "It's a recognition of my work. It never gets tiring when people appreciate your hard work."



PHOTO: COLLECTED



### Eight directors to spearhead Cultural Ministry's filmmaking initiative

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs has launched a filmmaking initiative in eight divisional cities to promote cultural development and decentralisation.

This workshop-based project will engage young creatives from the capital and beyond, allowing them to develop filmmaking skills under the guidance of renowned filmmakers.

Eight selected directors, namely, Anam Biswas, Humaira Bilkis, Nuhash Humayun, Shankha Dasgupta, Shaheen Dill-Riaz, Robiul Alam Robi, Tasmin Afrin Mou, and Mohammad Touqir Islam will collaborate with novice and trained film workers to produce eight medium-length films.

The initiative aims to promote artistic expression among youth, encouraging politically aware, youth-driven content in filmmaking.

### 'The Last of Us' Season 2 confirms debut month

Sony Pictures and HBO have confirmed the official release date of much awaited second season of *The Last of Us*.

Neil Druckmann, head of Naughty Dog, confirmed *The Last of Us* Season 2 will premiere in April, with a teaser showing brief glimpses of key characters, including Pedro Pascal's Joel and Bella Ramsey's Ellie.



The intense one-minute teaser introduces Kaitlyn Dever as Abby, a new character from the game, who delivers a cryptic line about morality.

The official logline suggests a conflict between Joel and Ellie, taking place five years after Season 1, in a world that has become even more treacherous.

### 'Putul': The only Bengali entry in Oscars' Best Film category

The Oscar 2025 race is officially underway. On Tuesday, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences unveiled a list of 324 films eligible for the Best Picture category, stirring excitement across film industries. Out of the 207 films competing for the esteemed Best Picture category, seven Indian films have made it to the list.

Among the contenders, *Putul* stands out as the only Bengali film from West Bengal to have earned a place in the Oscars' Best Picture category race. This marks the

first time a Bengali film has been selected among the 207 films competing globally for the prestigious award.

Directed by Indira Dhar, the film features Tanushree Shankar, Mumtaz Sorcar, and Koneenica Banerjee, and explores the lives of street children. It premiered at the 77th Cannes Film Festival's Marché du Film.

Apart from *Putul*, other Indian films that have made it to the list are *Kangava* (Tamil), *Aadujeevitham (The Goat Life)* (Hindi), *Santosh* (Hindi), *Swatantrya*

*Veer Savarkar* (Hindi), *All We Imagine as Light* (Malayalam-Hindi), *Girls Will Be Girls* (Hindi-English).

The voting period for the official nominations of the 97th Academy Awards will open on January 8 and conclude on January 12. The nominees will be revealed on January 17, with final voting for the winners scheduled between February 11 and 18. The Oscars ceremony is set for March 2 at the renowned Dolby Theatre in Hollywood.

# COUNTRYWIDE

MYMENSINGH CITY CORPORATION

## Dumping of garbage in open spaces continues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Ignoring repeated protests from local residents, Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC) authority has been dumping waste in the open space beside a busy city road for long, leading to serious environment pollution and health hazards for city dwellers.

Locals said their suffering is getting worse to worsen every day since the city corporation do not have a designated dumping spot and proper waste management system.

Workers of MCC have been dumping garbage at an open place beside the busy Bolashpur by-pass road for the last several months, paying no heed to protests from the city dwellers, they alleged.

Usually, MCC workers dump waste materials in the open space during midnight, when almost everyone remains in their sleep, said Abdul Barez of the area.

"Despite repeated protests, the menace is yet to stop. Due to mindless dumping of waste the area has now turned into a breeding ground for mosquito, hampering our normal life," housewife Aysha Akter said.

Moreover, dumping of waste into the Brahmaputra river, including Old Ferry Ghat and Jubilee Ghat areas, have also been continuing for many years, locals said, adding that such harmful acts will surely affect health of the already dying river.



Mymensingh city corporation has been continuing waste disposal in this open space beside the Bolashpur bypass road, causing serious health and environmental degradation.

PHOTO: STAR

## Dhaka needs to urgently prepare for a major quake

FROM PAGE 12

possibly the 1897 Assam earthquake, which had a magnitude of eight or more.

Smaller tremors occur in this region regularly -- 550 earthquakes with a magnitude of four or above have struck within 300km of Bangladesh in the past decade. This comes down to an average of 55 quakes per year, or four per month. On average, there are earthquakes near Bangladesh every six days.

Experts say these small seismic events can be a warning sign of a bigger earthquake in regions with active faults, such as the

Dauki fault or the Indo-Burma subduction zone.

The Great Assam Earthquake of 1897 shook the Indian subcontinent, reaching parts of Dhaka. More than a century later, experts warn that the region is overdue for another seismic event -- one that could have devastating consequences for the Bangladesh capital's 22 million residents.

As one of the world's most densely populated cities, Dhaka is alarmingly ill prepared to face such a disaster.

While minor tremors have been felt over the years,

the city's collective response has been nothing more than a fleeting concern. It is no longer a question of what will happen if an earthquake hits, but when it hits.

With dense urbanisation and poorly enforced building codes, the city is at risk of catastrophic damage in the event of a major quake.

Dhaka is more vulnerable to earthquakes due to its geological location, and human and economic exposure. According to the earthquake disaster risk index, the capital tops the list of the 20 most vulnerable cities in the world.

Even though Bangladesh

achieved remarkable success in disaster management, especially managing events like cyclones and floods, the

scenario would be different in case of a catastrophe in Dhaka and require meaningful government attention.

According to experts, the government should conduct extensive mass awareness programmes among citizens with regular earthquake drills; enhance children's education about natural disasters using digital platforms; ensure volunteer training; and form a coordination platform with government and non-

government agencies for rescue operations.

Also, as part of long term measures, the government must enforce the proper implementation of the National Building Code. If needed, the code should be updated by incorporating a proper implementation plan.

We can no longer afford to be complacent.

The risk grows with every single day of delay. Earthquake drills, stricter building codes, and public awareness campaigns are no longer optional -- they are a necessity.

The time to prepare is now, before it's too late.

### Five killed as train rams microbus

FROM PAGE 12

people dead on the spot and six others injured.

The injured were taken to Faridpur Medical College Hospital.

"The microbus was salvaged. No bodies were found trapped inside or underneath it."

Faridpur Medical College Hospital Ward Master Atiar Rahman said of the six, two were declared dead on arrival.

"The rest have been sent to Dhaka for better treatment; the microbus driver is among them as well."

Meanwhile, police have handed over the bodies of the deceased to their family members without autopsies at their request.

There is no authorised level crossing of the rail division in Gerda, Faridpur, confirmed Taqdir Hossain, station master at the Faridpur Railway Station.

"However, this crossing is important. I will request the senior officials to provide a gate and gatekeeper here, so that future accidents may be avoided."

Meanwhile, the Israeli army said it killed three Palestinians in separate

"counterterrorism" raids in the north of the occupied West Bank yesterday, with Palestinian officials saying one of the dead was a teenager.

Two Palestinians were killed when the Israeli air force struck an "armed terrorist cell" that opened fire at Israeli forces who were conducting a raid in the village of Tammun, the military said yesterday.

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Greenland belongs to the Greenlanders  
Says Danish PM as Trump Jr visits the country

AFP, Copenhagen

Denmark's Prime Minister insisted yesterday that Greenland's future should be decided by its inhabitants, amid talk of Washington annexing the Danish autonomous territory.

"Greenland belongs to the Greenlanders," Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said, adding that the Arctic territory "is not for sale" as Donald Trump Jr, son of US President-elect Donald Trump, visited Greenland weeks after his father suggested the US take control of the island.

This is not the first time Trump has shown an interest in Greenland, where the US already has a military base.

He said he wanted to buy it in 2019, during his first term as president, an offer quashed by Greenland and Denmark.

ASSEMBLY POLLS  
Delhi to vote on Feb 5

Result on Feb 8

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
New Delhi

Over 1.55 crore Delhi voters will vote in the assembly elections on February 5 and the votes will be counted on February 8, the Indian Election Commission announced yesterday.

The voting sets the stage for a high-octane triangular political battle in which former chief minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal faces his toughest political battle to retain power for a third successive tenure.

Delhi has 70 Assembly constituencies, 12 of them reserved. A total of 13,033 polling stations will host the election for choosing members of the eighth Delhi Assembly.

The polls will pit AAP against his estranged opposition INDIA ally Congress and traditional rival BJP in an electoral face-off as over 1.55 crore eligible voters are expected to reshape the political fortunes of three major parties and several leaders.

In power in Delhi for a decade with an overwhelming majority, AAP was the first to take to campaigning much before yesterday's polls schedule announcement and firmed up all 70 candidates.



A man searches through the contents of a salvaged clothing shelf in the street outside an apartment building hit by the Israeli bombardment in the Bureij camp for Palestinian refugees in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## US shifts military aid to Lebanon from Egypt

Says report; the move comes as Lebanon faces shift in Syria, enforces ceasefire

REUTERS, Washington

US President Joe Biden's administration will divert \$95 million in military aid allocated for Egypt to Lebanon, which faces threats from Hezbollah and other non-state actors and is enforcing a ceasefire with Israel, according to a document seen by Reuters on Monday.

The State Department notification to Congress of the planned shift calls the Lebanese armed forces "a key partner" in upholding the November 27, 2024, Israel-Lebanon agreement to cease hostilities and to prevent Hezbollah from threatening Israel.

The move comes after some of Biden's fellow Democrats in Congress expressed deep concerns about Egypt's human rights record, particularly the arrests of thousands of political prisoners.

The State Department and the Egyptian embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

In September, the state department said the Biden administration was overriding human rights conditions on military aid to Egypt, granting Cairo its full allocation of \$1.3 billion, including \$95 million tied specifically to Egypt's progress on the release of political prisoners.

The notification did not spell out that the \$95 million was for funds specifically, but a congressional aide said he did not believe the amount was a coincidence.

Egypt has been a vital partner in Biden administration's efforts to get more aid to Gaza and has helped mediate the so far unsuccessful efforts to secure a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

The September decision on the money for Egypt prompted objections from within

**The White House is to send \$95m to Lebanon, citing regional security, while eyeing human rights concerns in Egypt**

the shift in power in Syria.

"The United States remains Lebanon's security partner of choice, and US support to the LAF directly helps secure Lebanon and the wider Levant region," the notification said.

Bolstering Lebanon's army could also help ensure Syria's transition is not disrupted by Iran-backed Shia group Hezbollah, which previously played a major part in propping up Assad during Syria's civil war.

Under US law, Congress has 15 days to object to a reallocation of military assistance, but a congressional aide familiar with the process commented on Monday that he expected lawmakers would welcome the administration's shift of the funds to Lebanon.

## FLOODED PIT IN ASSAM Three miners feared dead, six others trapped



REUTERS, Guwahati

Three miners were feared dead inside a flooded coal mine in a remote district of India's northeastern Assam state, authorities said yesterday, and the men were part of a total of nine still trapped as rescue teams worked to reach them.

The mine, in an area controlled by the government, appeared to be illegal, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, adding that local police had arrested one person in connection with the case.

Rescuers have spotted three bodies but have not yet recovered them, the local government said in a statement, a day after the nine miners were trapped by heavy flooding that police said was likely triggered underground.

"The well is about 150 feet deep, of which almost a hundred feet is filled with water," Kaushik Rai, a local minister who is at the site, told Reuters. "Three teams have attempted to enter it since morning and have managed to go as far as 30 to 35 feet," Rai said.

## What's next for Canada after Trudeau's resignation

REUTERS, Ottawa

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday said he would step down in the coming months after nine years in power, bowing to legislators alarmed by his Liberal Party's miserable pre-election polling numbers. Here is what might happen next:

**WILL TRUDEAU LEAVE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY?**  
No. Trudeau will stay on both as prime minister and head of the ruling Liberal Party for now. Unlike the process in other countries like Australia, where party leaders are elected by legislators and can be removed overnight, in Canada they are chosen by special leadership conventions that can take months to organize.

**WILL AN ELECTION BE HELD?**  
No. Trudeau announced that parliament - which had been due to resume work on Jan. 27 - would instead be prorogued, or suspended, until March 24. This means opposition parties who had originally planned to unveil non-confidence motions to bring his minority government down as soon as they could after January 27 will now have to wait until some time in May since the government controls the agenda for most of each session.



**HOW ELSE COULD THE LIBERALS BE REMOVED FROM POWER?**

Under the original parliamentary calendar, the House of Commons elected chamber had been due to vote on spending measures in late March. This would trigger a confidence vote. It is unclear whether that vote would still be scheduled for late March and if it were, whether the opposition parties would vote to bring down the Liberals, whether they are led by Trudeau or a new party head.

**HOW LONG DOES THE PARTY HAVE TO CHOOSE A NEW LEADER?**

The nightmare Liberal scenario is that the party takes so long to choose a new leader that it has to fight the next election with Trudeau still in charge. It is likely therefore to announce a shortened contest designed to ensure that Trudeau's replacement is in office as soon as possible.

**WOULD A NEW LEADER HELP THE LIBERALS AVOID DEFEAT?**

Polls strongly indicate that the Liberals will lose the election, no matter who the leader is. But the scale of the defeat could be tempered if Trudeau is not in charge.

**WHO MIGHT RUN TO REPLACE TRUDEAU AS LIBERAL LEADER?**

The prospect of an election mauling might deter some candidates, especially if the party is crushed and ends up a shadow of its current self. Those who could run include Innovation Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne, Transport Minister Anita Anand, Foreign Minister Melanier Joly as well as former finance minister Chrystia Freeland.

**IS THERE ANY OTHER WAY TRUDEAU CAN BE FORCED OUT?**

Ultimate constitutional power in Canada lies with Governor General Mary Simon, who is the personal representative of Britain's King Charles, the head of state. She can in theory remove Trudeau, but there is virtually no chance of that happening. "The governor general won't dismiss a prime minister who still holds the confidence of the Commons," said Philippe Lagasse, a professor and constitutional expert at Ottawa's Carleton University.

**সামরিক চিকিৎসা সার্ভিস মহাপরিদণ্ডন**

**প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস**

**জরুরি দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

১। সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর জন্য দেশীয় মুদ্রা ছাড়ে উচ্চারিত চিকিৎসা সামরিক মহাপরিদণ্ডন প্রযোর্বে প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের তালিকাভুক্ত ব্যবস্থা/প্রক্রিয়াকরণ/ইতেমিং প্রার্থনারের নিকট হতে সীল মোহরকৃত থামে সর্বপ্রত্যক্ষ আহ্বান করা যাবে।

২। সরপত্রের সিডিটিল নিম্নের ছাড়ে উচ্চারিত তারিখ ও সময় মোতাবেক সামরিক চিকিৎসা সার্ভিস মহাপরিদণ্ডন, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস থেকে নগদ মুদ্রা (প্রেক্ষিত্যযোগ্য) সংযোগ করা যাবে এবং সীল মোহরকৃত থামে এই মহাপরিদণ্ডনের প্রতিক্রিয়া কর্তৃত টেক্সের ব্যর্থ আগমনী ২৩ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে যে কোন কার্যক্রমে ১০০০ হতে ১২০০ ঘণ্টার পর্যন্ত দাখিল করা যাবে। ২৩ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ তারিখ বেলা ১০০০ ঘটিকায় মন্ত্রণালয়ের উপর্যুক্ত প্রতিক্রিয়াতে (যদি কেবল উপর্যুক্ত থাকেন) মালিকান্ত দরপত্রসমূহ উত্পুক্ত করা হবে।

৩। সরপত্রের সাথে নিম্নলিখিত তথ্যাদি/নথি/পত্র সহ্য করতে হবেঃ

ক। প্রিসিপাল এর নিকট থেকে হালীয় এজেন্সি সনদপত্র।

খ। প্রস্তুতকৃত কোম্পানির নাম ও দেশ।

গ। সরপত্রের সাথে আইটেমের নম্বর/কাটালগ।

ঘ। বাল্কনেশ প্রশাসন অধিবেশন কর্তৃক প্রস্তুত মেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বর/এমএ নম্বর/অনার্টি সনদ (NOC) এর কপি।

ঙ। সরপত্রের হাত কর্তৃত সাথে MS Word এ প্রস্তুত সহ্য কপির স্লেন ড্রাইভ।

৪। কার্যালয়ে প্রাপ্তির ২৮ (আঠাশ) দিনের মধ্যে আইটেম সমূহ মেডি টক হতে সরবরাহ করতে হবে।

৫। কার্যালয়ে কোন কারণ দর্শনীয়ে ছাড়াই যে কোন সরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা রাখেন।

তারিখ : \_\_\_\_\_ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫

আই এস পি আর/বিবিধ/০৮  
০৮/০১/২৫

GD-72

**সামরিক চিকিৎসা সার্ভিস মহাপরিদণ্ডন**

**প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস**

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তারিখ : \_\_\_\_\_ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫

আই এস পি আর/বিবিধ/১  
০৭/০১/২৫

জে. কর্মসূল  
ভাবপ্রাপ্ত সহ-মহাপরিদণ্ডনক (স্টোরাস)  
সামরিক চিকিৎসা সার্ভিস মহাপরিদণ্ডন  
প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়

GD-73

## Mandate wealth disclosure for judges

Transparency is key to ensuring judicial integrity

It is high time the practice of submitting wealth statements by Supreme Court judges—which has been stalled for the past 13 years—was revived and made mandatory by the government. The last time Supreme Court judges submitted their wealth statements was in 2011, when then-Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque initiated the practice by submitting his own wealth statement to then-President Zillur Rahman. However, in the absence of a specific law or rule, this initiative has not continued.

Rights activists and legal experts have often called for a legal framework requiring judges to disclose their income and assets. This demand has become more relevant now as advisers to the interim government are themselves expected to disclose their wealth, with an ordinance to this effect reportedly in the works. Therefore, public disclosure of Supreme Court judges' wealth statements would not only enhance public trust but also reinforce the judiciary's prestige and integrity. Such a measure would help ensure that those entrusted with delivering justice and upholding the law are beyond reproach and free from corruption—qualities essential for maintaining the credibility of the judicial system.

Last September, in a significant step towards accountability, the interim government amended the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979, making it mandatory for public servants to submit annual wealth statements for themselves, their spouses, and dependents. Public servants who fail to comply with this requirement risk facing disciplinary action. Over the years, in the absence of such transparency measures, corruption has become widespread across the public service sector. Implementing wealth disclosure for judges should be seen as critical to addressing the potential risks of such corruption in the judicial system.

One may recall that Chief Adviser Prof Yunus had previously underscored the need for government employees to regularly submit wealth statements, highlighting the current government's clear stance against corruption. Extending this requirement to all Supreme Court judges—as well as judges in lower courts—seems only to be the right thing to do to ensure the integrity of all public institutions.

The interim government's stated goal is to create a governance system that is accountable to the people. To that end, it should promptly issue an ordinance mandating both the submission and public disclosure of judges' wealth statements, which could be formalised into law by a future elected government. Additionally, a robust mechanism should be established to thoroughly scrutinise these statements, so that anyone found involved in corruption can be held accountable.

## Stop illegal extraction of natural resources

Combined public-private initiatives can prevent such practices

We are concerned about the rampant illegal sand extraction reported at the Barachhara canal in Sharsharshee village of Sreemangal, Moulvibazar. According to a report by this daily, the extraction has continued unabated despite a High Court order banning sand mining in the area, causing parts of a sluice gate to sink. Built to provide irrigation water to local farmers, the gate's functionality is now compromised, jeopardising agricultural activities and the livelihoods of around 25,000 farmers in surrounding villages. Furthermore, several sinkholes have appeared in the nearby Dinarpur Tea Garden, while roads have been severely damaged by heavy vehicles transporting the sand.

Locals allege that an influential group, led until recently by a Jibon League leader who is now on the run, is behind this operation. Even though his two-year lease for sand extraction has expired, there has been no let-up in sand extraction. Who, then, is doing it in his absence? The local administration is apparently in the dark about this. We have seen a similar trend in Sylhet's Companyganj where two hillocks have been stripped bare since August 5 through illegal stone quarrying. There, too, the local administration's role has left a lot to be desired.

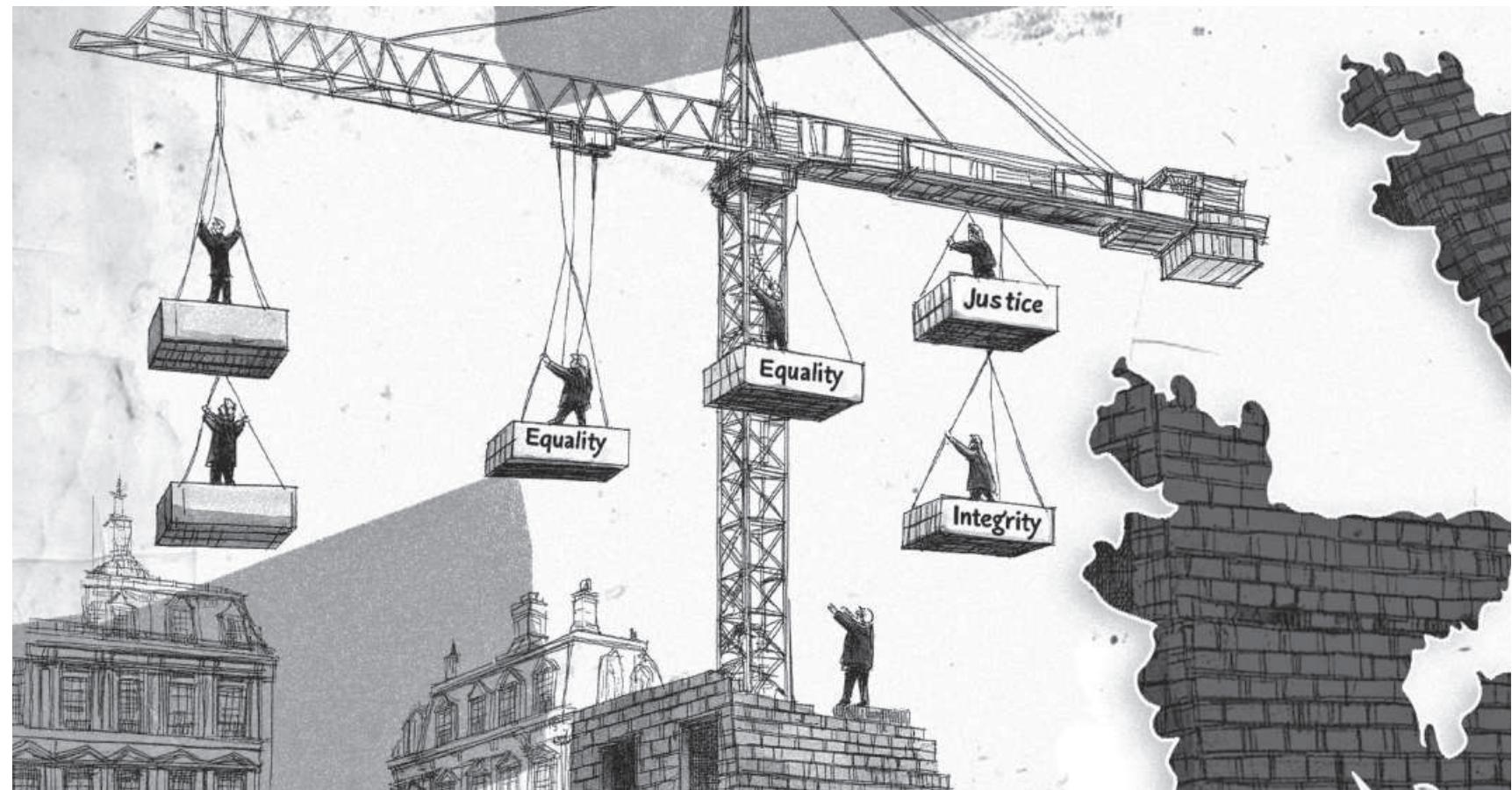
In Bangladesh, we have no shortage of laws, regulations, and court orders prohibiting illegal and destructive resource extraction. Yet, enforcement has remained woefully inadequate. Even with a non-political government in place, the entrenched political-administration-business nexus continues to wreak havoc on our precious environment and ecology. This needs to change.

We expect the environment adviser, herself a prominent environmental activist, and her ministry to use their authority and experience to stop all illegal operations in extracting natural resources. Given the scale of the problem, it may not be possible for the government to guard every canal, hill, or natural resource on its own. However, community-based initiatives can play a crucial supportive role. Locals can be educated, empowered, and included in the protection and maintenance of these resources. The idea of community policing, supported by local administration and environmental groups, should also be pursued to curb these activities. Only collective efforts can help protect our natural resources on which the livelihoods and well-being of countless citizens depend.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### El Chapo captured

On this day in 2016, Mexican criminal Joaquín Guzmán ("El Chapo"), head of the Sinaloa drug cartel, was captured in Los Mochis after escaping prison some six months earlier; he was later extradited to the United States, where he was convicted of various crimes.



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

## On reforming our imported institutions and governance



### THE ICONOCLAST FILES

**Tariq Karim**,  
a former ambassador of Bangladesh, is currently  
president of the Bay of Bengal Institute and adviser  
emeritus of the Cosmos Foundation, and concurrently  
distinguished research fellow at the Institute of South  
Asian Studies of the National University of Singapore  
(ISAS NUS).

**TARIQ KARIM**

The July uprising of 2024 has yielded for Bangladesh's long beleaguered people a "second liberation" from continuous oppression and tyrannical rule. Just as 54 years ago, people decided to take to the streets to wrest liberation from an oppressively neo-colonial rule, this time round, in the "36 days of July," people heeded the call by valiant students to challenge a government that they looked upon as tyrannical and fascist and overthrew it, demanding a complete revamping of our state institutions to ensure that no abuse of authority could ever revisit their future. Notably, and not surprisingly, one of the full-throated slogans of the students this time, "Ae baarer shongram, mukti shongram," was a reprise from the Liberation War in 1971.

However, having wrested our liberation in 1971, we were unable to rid the state of usurpation by power-hungry rulers driven by greed and self-aggrandisement in increasingly efficient ways to the detriment of the people. No matter how much people struggled to change this, they found their state circling back to the same place at regular intervals, regardless of which dispensation of rulers controlled the state. What national hubris embedded within our institutions firewalled itself against efforts at change?

Our institutions are essentially derived from the institutional concepts that were imported and transplanted by the British colonial rulers. However, the actual way they operationalised these imported institutions was not the same as the original British ones. The institutions in Britain were designed to govern and deliver services for the welfare of the Crown's subjects, while their replicas on colonised soil were designed to rule over conquered people. They were also designed to extract everything from colonised subjects to fill the coffers at home, and project their imperial power overseas.

I have long argued that, in order to secure our future, we need to bolster a sense of overriding confidence among the public that our core institutions are indeed secure against any political tampering. The separation of judiciary, making it completely independent of the executive branch, is a *sine qua non* for ensuring that the rule of law prevails in the state and that "Justice" truly acts blindfolded, without partiality towards anyone. We must also uphold and safeguard the independence and integrity of the Election Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), and resolutely address the malaise that plagues the bureaucracy and prevents it from acting professionally and neutrally, diminishing its capacity to deliver effectively. Civil servants must rediscover the lost creed that should define any bureaucracy: "To take decisions, justly and honestly, without

fear or favour." Coupled with this, the freedom and independence of the print and electronic media must be guaranteed. Above all, leadership across the political divide needs to take constructive criticism in their stride.

Currently, there is a "chicken and egg" debate going on in our social spaces on whether we should have elections immediately, or first set in place critically long-overdue reforms demanded by the student leaders and talked at length above. At the heart of this conundrum perhaps lies the question: who will bell the cat of reforms?

An analysis of our history of the last 80 years, firstly of our fractured subcontinent itself at the macro level and secondly of our schizoid polity in the micro space of Bangladesh, one conclusion that one cannot fail to ignore is: if the process of selection of leaders and system of government is not inclusive, and if significant segments of society are excluded from the process of exercising their right to franchise, then the result inevitably leads to a state of explosive societal disequilibrium and institutional destabilisation, sooner or later.

Perhaps the imported institutions we acquired had embedded within them inbuilt flaws triggered awake by their transplantation from the mother soil to distantly located colonial-nurtured soils. Perhaps the method of choosing our leaders, when we were allowed to practise self rule by our British colonial masters, itself was not suitable for us.

Let's not forget that the British system of parliamentary democracy had a great deal of stability since the 19th and early 20th centuries, there being only two principal political parties, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, with no significant minor or even lesser party around to challenge this diarchy. Since the Magna Carta of 1215, schisms within British society had been whittled down exponentially through an organic process following a series of struggles over the next several centuries. By the 1900s, the time when the concept of "self rule" was imbued in us by a reluctant British Imperium, there had evolved a large space of political consensus between these two who were expected to, and did, play strictly by a variation of the Marquess of Queensberry Rules, applied to their sparring in political fistfights, with the monarch serving as the neutral referee. The British parliamentary elections were contested by all these parties on the basis of "first past the post" and "winner takes all" system largely accepted by all sections of society, with no fractious minority upsetting the apple cart!

However, when the denizens of the undivided subcontinent adopted this British system of Westminster-style parliamentary institutions and

the extant method of electing leaders to govern them, they were already plagued by multiple societal divisions within them. Not only was there the major schism between Hindus and Muslims (with numerous other smaller faiths jostling for a place in the sun), there were sub-divisions within each religion as well, not to mention the regional differences based on language and cultural ethos separating north from south, east from west.

In 1947, India was partitioned principally in its two largest states, Bengal and Punjab. But the genie of marginalised politics in each neo-Westphalian state that emerged in August 1947 inexorably, and relentlessly, triggered within each new state smaller fragmentations, smaller partitions. What triggered these subsequent fulminations and multiple sub-partitions? I would argue in response that the feelings of disenfranchisement took possession of the souls of the smaller factions/groups who felt increasingly excluded by that insidious "first past the post/winner takes all" system, which could, it was discovered progressively, be skilfully manipulated by the winner to capture all state powers and then largely abuse the same for control and allocation of all resources of the state for themselves and chosen coterie.

In fact, the British "first past the

**The burden of initiating reforms now falls on the interim government. If there are questions on the constitutionality of this task, I would argue that there exists today a historical necessity for the interim government to pursue its own policies if it deems such actions necessary for the well-being of the state and the larger welfare of people.**

post/winner takes all" electoral system has now come home to roost in British politics as well. Take the UK general election held on July 4, 2024, for example. With under 60 percent turnout of voters, the Labour Party won 33.7 percent of votes (both these figures reportedly lowest in over half a century). There were eight parties in the fray, including the Reform UK Party (a relatively recent, Brexit-championing fringe breakaway from the Conservative Party led by Nigel Farage). Reaping the benefit of the time-honoured "first past the post" system, Labour won 411 seats in parliament (out of 650) despite its record low voter turnout; meanwhile, Farage's Reform UK, despite having garnered 14.3 percent votes (almost half the votes of Labour) managed to get a paltry five seats. Among the other contestants, Conservatives managed to retain 121 seats with 23.7 percent of the votes, Lib-Dems got 72 seats, Scottish Nationalists Party got nine seats, the Sinn Fein seven seats, Independents got six seats, and the Green Party four seats. Today, perhaps the British too would be forced to

consider reforms to their ancient system, while we stubbornly cling to what failed us to bridge our many rifts and schisms.

South Asia was fragmented in 1947 at the macro (regional) level, but even more egregiously so at the micro (nation-state) level. This is what prevents us at the national level from arriving at much needed consensus. The lack of such consensus at the regional level prevented SAARC from successful operationalisation; the same failing prevents Bangladesh from successful consolidation of its nation state. It is essentially the same hubris at both levels, derailing both processes.

And what if a section of society does not like a party? Should that party be banned? Once again, we should glean a lesson from history. Vinayak Damodar Veer Savarkar, founder-member of the Hindu Mahasabha, asserted in a treatise in 1923 that India on gaining independence from British rule should be governed by Hindutva, being a Hindu-majoritarian state; neither the liberal British and the liberal Hindus nor any Muslim could accept the assertion. His follower Nathuram Godse, a member of both the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right-wing Hindu paramilitary volunteer organisation, assassinated Gandhi in 1948. The RSS was banned consequently, but resuscitated after a year and reorganised and gave birth to its political arm, the Jan Sangh. Jamaat-e-Islami was banned twice—both in Pakistan and in Bangladesh. In both instances, it lived to revive with greater vigour. There are numerous other examples around the globe, in recent and not so recent times as well. Quite a few of these banned parties or entities, after being comatose or in the cold for varying periods of time, sprang back to life, quite reinvigorated! As greater powers than us have discovered to their chagrin, banning a party, destroying its infrastructure or decapitating its leadership does not kill or make that entity simply fade into the sunset.

With hindsight, we all would have been wiser to have adopted a proportional representation system that would, at the very minimum, have given smaller entities in the political landscape a feeling of participation in matters of governance and resource allocations, as well as inclusion within the state. At the very least, the street mayhem generated by those left-out "minor" or "fringe" parties would have felt part of an inclusionary process of negotiating with other major stakeholders, to try and forge an acceptable modicum of consensus through an organic, melding process.

The burden of initiating reforms now falls on the interim government. If there are questions on the constitutionality of this task, I would argue that there exists today a historical necessity for the interim government to pursue its own policies if it deems such actions necessary for the well-being of the state and the larger welfare of people. It could do worse than considering the above and absorbing in the various lessons of history, while going forward with its onerous task of reforming the state institutions towards the next national election.

## How Trump's economic policies will impact South Asia

Dr Md Abdul Latif, a global ambassador and ADB-JSP scholar, is additional director at the Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management (BIGM).

Shirin Sultana is research associate at BIGM.

MD ABDUL LATIF and SHIRIN SULTANA

As Donald Trump prepares to be inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States on January 20, marking the start of his second term, this occasion highlights essential democratic traditions and carries significant implications for his economic policies that will resonate globally.

Joseph Liow Chin Yong, dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore, told the Time magazine after the election that Trump would be "more prepared" in 2025. His anticipated economic policies, driven by an "America First" agenda, are set to transform not only the financial landscape in the US, but also that across South Asia, a region home to nearly two billion people and with vast opportunities and substantial challenges.

Trump, branding himself as a "tariff man," centres his economic platform on trade levies. A Trump 2.0 administration would likely focus on economic nationalism, prioritising US interests with potential tax

currency. Further tariff threats are expected as Trump views them as vital to diplomatic leverage. Advisers' proposals may enable the president to impose "reciprocal tariffs" matching those of other nations.

Infrastructure spending may be prioritised, with plans for significant investment in transportation, energy, and technology to create jobs. Policies aimed at energy independence would support fossil fuel production and relax environmental regulations. Economic initiatives could align with immigration reform, limiting immigration to safeguard jobs while seeking skilled labour for growth. Trump may advocate for domestic manufacturing through subsidies or tax breaks, and assist small businesses by enhancing access to capital and easing regulatory burdens. Additionally, he may pursue healthcare reforms to reduce costs and boost competition, including efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Overall, these strategies would prioritise

**A second Trump presidency might reshape the current dynamics of South Asian geopolitics and economics. Trump opposes rerouting US-China trade through third countries, with Oxford Economics predicting that his tariffs could decrease US imports by three percent and exports by eight percent, impacting 'non-China Asia.'**

cuts for individuals and corporations to spur growth, possibly making parts of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 permanent. He intends to reduce regulations in energy, finance, and healthcare to lower compliance costs and boost economic activity. Maintaining a protectionist trade approach, he aims to renegotiate agreements, impose tariffs on imports—especially from China—and foster domestic manufacturing. In his 2024 campaign, he proposed at least 60 percent tariffs on Chinese imports and 10-20 percent on global imports. He has threatened tariffs on companies like John Deere for considering offshoring, and could levy 100 percent tariffs on the BRICS nations if they create a trade

national security by protecting US industries and jobs from foreign competition.

**How Trumponomics 2.0 could impact South Asia**

Washington's South Asia policy will align with its Indo-Pacific vision initially established during Trump 1.0. His foreign policy could significantly influence the region's security and economy, with India playing a key role due to its contributions to the Indo-Pacific. A second Trump presidency might reshape the current dynamics of South Asian geopolitics and economics. Trump opposes rerouting US-China trade through third countries, with Oxford Economics predicting that his tariffs could decrease US imports by three percent

and exports by eight percent, impacting "non-China Asia." The ongoing US-China trade tensions could drive a restructuring of global supply chains, potentially shifting 20 percent of manufacturing away from China by 2025. During the previous administration, countries like Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand benefited from the trade war as factories relocated there to establish new supply chains. However, the competition

on immigration, including ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme and the Public Charge Policy. This could strip protective status from over half a million DACA recipients and amplify fears among immigrant families about accessing essential services like healthcare. Stricter immigration policies may also reduce the flow of skilled labour and remittances, affecting various South

more sophisticated products and enhancing backward and forward linkages. Although product diversification has occurred, areas such as design, branding, sales, and after-sales services remain largely unaddressed. Strengthening backward linkages is crucial for increasing domestic value addition. Moreover, diversifying the export base is essential to mitigate vulnerabilities associated with tariff hikes. Promising sectors like ICT, pharmaceuticals and agro-processing, which showed significant growth in 2023, offer viable alternatives to reduce economic risks.

Other serious needs include infrastructure development, in which Bangladesh is ranked 88th out of 139 countries regarding logistics performance (2023), far from Vietnam's 43rd and India's 38th positions. In the current realignment of global supply chains, how Bangladesh will be able to attract FDI to its industrial zones is a challenge that needs consideration, along with the rationalisation of regulations. Migration and remittances remain critical, with \$2.6 billion received from the US in 2023; exploring partnerships with countries like Canada, the UK, and Australia that have friendlier immigration policies could bring relief.

It is also important that in the education sector, much effort should be invested in strengthening local institutions and building international academic collaborations as a hedge against the risk of more stringent visa policies by the US, given that over 9,000 Bangladeshi students pursue higher education there every year. Finally, when India is increasingly strengthening its role within QUAD, Bangladesh will have to go further in regional cooperation through SAARC and ASEAN, forging partnerships with other countries like Vietnam and Indonesia for its protection of economic and strategic interests.

For South Asia and Bangladesh to navigate the challenges posed by Trump's policy agenda, proactive measures are essential. The region must lead efforts to foster cooperation in response to shifting global dynamics, while Bangladesh should focus on diversifying exports, attracting foreign investment, and improving infrastructure. Innovative strategies are necessary to promote a fair migration agenda, ensuring equitable benefits from labour migration for countries of origin and destination, employers, and all workers—both nationals and migrants. Strengthening ties with new destination countries and enhancing domestic educational opportunities are vital steps to mitigate risks and leverage emerging opportunities for sustainable growth in an evolving world.



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

**Trump 2.0 administration would likely focus on economic nationalism, prioritising US interests with potential tax cuts for individuals and corporations to spur growth.**

for low-cost manufacturing remains fierce, particularly with Vietnam attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) at a much higher rate—\$36.6 billion in 2023—compared to Bangladesh (\$3 billion). India has a robust infrastructure to appeal to export-oriented manufacturers, but regional trade partnerships face challenges.

An "America First" agenda under the Trump administration could impose tariffs detrimental to export-reliant economies like Bangladesh and India. A five percent tariff increase on Bangladeshi exports, valued at \$9.74 billion (2022), could result in a \$487 million annual loss. Additionally, tighter immigration policies may reduce remittances—a crucial income source for South Asia. In 2023, Bangladesh received \$2.6 billion in remittances from the US, making up 15 percent of its total inflows.

Trump aims to implement strict measures

Asian countries. Additionally, educational exchanges might suffer, as over 200,000 South Asian students currently studying in the US could choose more welcoming countries like those in Europe, Canada or Australia. Lastly, India's rising influence in the QUAD bolsters its strategic role but may marginalise smaller economies that overlook regional cooperation through bodies like SAARC or ASEAN.

### Challenges and opportunities for Bangladesh

Bangladesh will encounter various challenges and opportunities during Trump's second term. The ready-made garment (RMG) sector, which comprised 84.7 percent of total merchandise exports in FY23 (ERD, 2024), offers low added value compared to the overall product value. To ascend the global value chain, Bangladesh must focus on creating

## Russia-Ukraine conflict and the shifting alliances in Central Asia

Md Tariqul Islam Tanvir

is Erasmus scholar in the International Master in Central & East European, Russian & Eurasian Studies programme at the University of Glasgow.

MD TARIQUL ISLAM TANVIR

The war between Russia and Ukraine has become a major geopolitical crisis of the 21st century. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, numerous countries, including the US, UK, EU, Australia, Canada, and Japan, have imposed over 19,535 sanctions against Russia. Their primary focus has been on Russia's financial resources. Approximately half of its total reserves—amounting to \$350 billion—were frozen, impacting its foreign currency reserves. According to the EU, approximately 70 percent of the assets of Russian banks were frozen by a high-speed messaging service for financial institutions.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has undoubtedly influenced the relationship between Moscow and its allies. Following the imposition of sanctions on Russia, Russian President Vladimir Putin made a significant swing towards China, signing a series of agreements. The impact of this war was not only on Western and Russian relations but also on Russia's close allies. In this regard, Central Asian countries are now forced to strike a difficult balance between their long-standing relations with Russia and other large powers. While the region has historically relied on Russia for economic and security relationships, the protracted conflict has produced new challenges and possibilities, prompting these countries to pursue a more assertive but cautious foreign policy. At the same time, this upheaval and Russia's dependence on China create a golden opportunity for China to strengthen its ties with Central Asia.

Though, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the five Central Asian countries have gained more political and economic independence. Historically, the Central Asian Republics (CARs)—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—have always viewed Russia as a guarantor of security for internal stability

(IOM), remittances from Russia to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan accounted for 31 percent and 27 percent of GDP, respectively, in 2020. The majority of this money is expected to come from their employees in Russia. In 2021, remittances from Russia accounted for 55 percent of total transfers to Uzbekistan and 51 percent to Kazakhstan.

However, the CARs' internal unrest, Russia's actions in Ukraine, and growing

"vector" foreign policy approach, aiming for balanced relations with Russia as well as other countries such as China, the West, and Turkey. The states of the region refused to accept Russia's recently seized areas in Ukraine, and some issued public declarations in support of Ukraine's territorial integrity in the early days of the 2022 war.

Nonetheless, these powers did not openly condemn Vladimir Putin and his "special



**Presidents Tokayev (Kazakhstan), Japarov (Kyrgyzstan), Putin, Rahmon (Tajikistan), Prime Minister Pashinyan (Armenia), Stanislav Zas, Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), and President Lukashenko (Belarus) hold a CSTO meeting at the Kremlin, Moscow, May 16, 2022.**

FILE PHOTO: AFP

concerns about sovereignty have forced Central Asian nations to look for new allies for long-term security cooperation and are diversifying their foreign policy in an effort to reduce Moscow's influence. Furthermore, Western sanctions on Russia led the CARs to seek alternate channels to sell commodities to the world market. Therefore, CARs have responded to the altering geopolitical landscape in a variety of ways, including preserving economic links with Russia, avoiding outright criticism of Moscow, and increasing partnerships with other global powers such as China, the West, and Turkey.

Since the beginning of the Russian-Ukraine war, Central Asian leaders have also been at the forefront of the so-called "multi-

military operation." Various factors are at play here, including economic reliance, Central Asian immigration, and membership in Russia-led institutions.

Moreover, according to polls, the majority of Central Asians—70 percent in Kyrgyzstan, 55 percent in Kazakhstan, and 30 percent in Uzbekistan—attribute the region's current economic difficulties to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The popularity of the Russian language is declining, entertainment venues are refusing to host Russian performers, and there have been multiple anti-war protests in Almaty and Bishkek. Russia has blocked Central Asian media sites for attempting to provide unbiased coverage of the conflict in Ukraine. The public conversation has

returned to the topic of decolonisation.

On the other hand, Central Asia is a strategically important region for China due to its abundant resources, transit links, and shared border, which are vital for China's security. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) underscores its interest in the region, leveraging growing unease and Russia's focus on Ukraine. Central Asian nations increasingly rely on China for both security and economic resources, potentially challenging Russian dominance and jeopardising Moscow's security interests. Despite a recent decline in historical hostility between the two sides, Russia believes that China's increasing economy might soon enable it to contest Moscow's geopolitical sway in Central Asia.

Notably, China is assisting the CARs in strengthening their security and law enforcement capabilities by capitalising on their worries about Russia. During his visit to Central Asia in September 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that he supported Kazakhstan's territorial integrity in light of these exceptional circumstances. When Xi called the China-Central Asia Summit to order in Xi'an in May 2023, he emphasised the significance of the security, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the CARs. In the midst of the intensifying powerplay among the world's strongest nations, Beijing is taking big measures to expand its regional influence in order to counter the US's encirclement of China.

China is still dedicated to its long-standing regional objectives. With over half of China's trade and investment going to Kazakhstan, Beijing sees the country as its main economic partner in Central Asia. China's economic interests are further supported by the transportation opportunities that have emerged since Russia's invasion.

Beijing is becoming increasingly interested in playing the role of a security supplier in the region due to its rising concerns about the unrest in Afghanistan and Central Asia. This development may cause future difficulties with Moscow. China-Central Asia's security cooperation has already been strengthened by BRI efforts. More robust security allies like China could undermine Russia's position as the principal security guarantor. China's growing influence in Central Asia after the invasion presents a challenge to Moscow's dominance, potentially altering the dynamics of security cooperation and posing future complications for Moscow.

**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 **Professor** in the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, University of Dhaka. Scale of Pay: Tk. 56,500-74,400/- (National pay scale 2015).

**Qualifications:** Candidates must be distinguished scholar with M. Pharm. degree in Pharmaceutical Chemistry. They must have a Ph.D. or an equivalent degree. They must have at least 12 years of teaching experience in a university and at least 12 (twelve) research publications in the indexed/quality journal with DOI (Digital Object Identifier). Articles published in predatory journals will not be accepted. Candidates with research excellence and publications in high impact journals may be given preference. For relevant notes and detailed conditions for application, visit the Dhaka University Website.

**Application guideline:** Eleven 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. 1000/-** (One thousand) only, payable to **the Registrar, University of Dhaka**, should reach him on or before **09/03/2025**. Candidates already in service must apply through the proper channel.

GD-76

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD  
Sylhet Road Circle, Sylhet.  
Phone: 0299-6631506  
E-mail : sesyl@rhd.gov.bd

Dated : 06/01/2025

Memo No. 35.01.9100.010.07.5/608(ka).24-51

**Tender Cancellation Notice**

The Tender Package No. 01/PSN/SRC/2024-2025(Re-Tender), Tender Package Name: "Upgradation, Operation and Maintenance of a Real-time Web based Toll collection system of "Fenchugonj Bridge" Toll Plaza at 36th Km of Moulvibazar-Rajnagar-Fenchugonj-Sylhet Road(N-208) Under Sylhet Road Division during the year 2024-2025 for 03 (Three) years" which was circulated vide of this office Memo No. 35.01.9100.010.07.5/608(ka).24-3636; date 11-11-2024 is hereby canceled due to unavoidable circumstance.

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

GD-69

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**INVITATION FOR RE-TENDER(OTM)**

Date. 07-01-2025

e-Tenders is invited in e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by executive Engineer, Sherpur for the procurement of following works.

SL No.	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Last selling Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
01	1056157	Construction of District NSI Office Building 5-Storied Building with 5-Storied Foundation and 2-Storied Garage cum Barrack Building with 2-Storied Foundation (Including Civil, Internal & External Water supply & Sanitation, Internal & External Electrification, Road, Boundary wall, Site Development, Drain & Apron, Arboriculture etc) at Sherpur Sadar, Sherpur. FY: 2023-24.	04-Feb-2025 17:00	05-Feb-2025 13:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted to submit e-Tender please register on e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>)

Executive Engineer  
Sherpur PWD Division, Sherpur  
e-mail: ee\_shpr@pwd.gov.bd

GD-78

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
PWD Division, Shariatpur  
[www.pwd.gov.bd](http://www.pwd.gov.bd)

Memo No. 690(3)

Dated: 07.01.2025

**e-Tender Notice**

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

Sl No.	Tender ID Ref No.	Name of work	Publishing date, closing date
01	ID:1060200 MEMO: 688, Date: 07/01/2025.	Construction of Angaria Police Fari (3-Storied bldg. with 6-storied foundation in type-2) Plan at Shariatpur District. (Including Sub-head: Boundary wall).	07-Jan-2025 13:40:00 22-Jan-2025 12:40:00
01	ID: 1059754 MEMO: 689, Date: 07/01/2025	Establishment of 10 bed dialysis unit at 6th floor of newly constructed building of Shariatpur Sadar Hospital, Shariatpur.	07-Jan-2025 16:12:00 22-Jan-2025 12:00:00

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 banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP desk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Md. Mahabubur Rahman  
Executive Engineer  
PWD Division, Shariatpur  
Mob: 01894421901  
E-mail: ee\_shtpr@pwd.gov.bd

GD-80

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আপনার শহর  
পরিচয় ও সরুজ রাখুন

Date: 07/01/2025

**e-Tender Notice-CCC/CCO/2024-25/02**

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 of following package from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to 29-Jan-2025 13:00pm.

Sl No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID	Last date & time of selling document	Last date & time of submission document
1	CCO/MMCO/GR- 02	Procurement of 25,000 liter Adulcicide (Deltamethrin) and 3,500 liter Larvicide (Temephos) for Malaria and Mosquito Control Department of Chattogram City Corporation.	1059112	29-Jan-2025 13:00pm	29-Jan-2025 14:00pm

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Md. Sarful Islam

Malaria & Mosquito Control Officer  
On behalf of Chief Conservancy Officer  
Chattogram City Corporation  
Tigerpass, Chattogram

CCC/PRD-35/24-25(4"x4")

GD-81



**Jahangirnagar University**  
Department of Microbiology  
Savar, Dhaka 1342, Bangladesh

**INVITATION FOR TENDERS (IFT)**

Date: 08.01.2025

Ref No.: Microb/2024-25(OTM)067			
1	Division/Ministry	Bangladesh Ministry of Education	
2	Agency	University Grants Commission	
3	Procuring entity name	Professor Dr. Md. Anowar Khasru Parvez, Project Director, "Development of novel vaccines and rapid diagnostic kits for viral diseases in the poultry of Bangladesh" Project, Department of Microbiology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342.	
4	Invitation for	Supplying, installation, testing and commissioning of equipment, molecular reagents, media, reagents, glassware and accessories etc.	
5	Invitation Ref No.	Microb/2024-25(OTM)067	
6	Procurement method	National Competitive Tender	Open Tendering Method
7	Budget and source of funds	Bangladesh Govt.	
8	Tender Package No.	Microb/2024-25(OTM)067	
9	Tender package name	Supplying, installation, testing and commissioning of equipment, molecular reagents, media, reagents, glassware and accessories etc.	
10	Tender publication date	08.01.2025	
11	Tender last selling date	27.01.2025	
12	Tender closing date and time	28.01.2025 2:00pm	
13	Tender opening date and time	28.01.2025 2:30pm	
14	Name & address of the office(s)	Professor Dr. Md. Anowar Khasru Parvez, Project Director, "Development of novel vaccines and rapid diagnostic kits for viral diseases in the poultry of Bangladesh" Project, Department of Microbiology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342.	
No conditions apply for sale, purchase or distribution of tender documents			
15	Eligibility of tenderer	The Tenderer shall have:	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The maximum of <b>one (01)</b> number of arbitration against the Tenderer over a period of <b>last five (05) years</b>.</li> <li>The Tenderer shall have a minimum of <b>five (05)</b> years of overall experience in the supply of goods and related services.</li> <li>The Tenderer shall have satisfactorily completed supply of similar goods of minimum <b>80,00,000.00</b> (eighty lakh BD Tk. only) under single contract in the last three (03) years, i.e., years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper.</li> <li>The Tenderer shall have a minimum amount of liquid asset or working capital or credit facility of <b>90,00,000.00</b> (ninety lakh BD Tk. only).</li> </ul>	
16	Brief description of goods	Supplying, installation, testing and commissioning equipment, molecular reagents, media, reagents, glassware and accessories etc.	
17	Price of tender document (BD Tk)	Cash. 4,000/- (four thousand BD Tk only) non-refundable.	
18	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location
	Single	Supplying, installation, testing and commissioning of equipment, molecular reagents, media, reagents, glassware and accessories etc.	Dept. of Microbiology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka 1342
19	Name of official inviting tender	Professor Dr. Md. Anowar Khasru Parvez	
20	Address of official inviting tender	Project Director, "Development of novel vaccines and rapid diagnostic kits for viral diseases in the poultry of Bangladesh", Department of Microbiology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342, Bangladesh.	
21	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 02224491045-5, EXT-1566	Fax: + 02224491052 E-mail: <a href="mailto:khasru73@juniv.edu">khasru73@juniv.edu</a>
22	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.		

GD-75



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
কার্টেমস গোয়েন্দা ও তদন্ত অধিদপ্তর  
আইডিইবি ভবন (১০ম তলা), ১৬০/এ কারুরাইল ভিআইপি রোড, ঢাকা-১০০০



তারিখ: ০৫/০১/২০২৫

**অকেজো গাড়ির পুনঃনির্মাণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

কার্টেমস গোয়েন্দা ও তদন্ত অধিদপ্তর অকেজো ঘোষিত ০২(দুই)টি কার ক্রয়ে ইচ্ছুক এমন ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তসম্পর্কে সিলমোহরণ্ত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রম নং	গাড়ির বিবরণ	যেখানে অবস্থান	উক্ত মূল্য
01	ঢাকা মেট্রো-ক- ০৩- ৮৪৩৬ ব্র্যান্ড: মিংসুবিশি মোটর তৈরির সন-১৯৯৯, সি.সি.ঃ ১২৯৮	আইডিইবি ভবন (১	

## Smaller boundaries, bigger problems

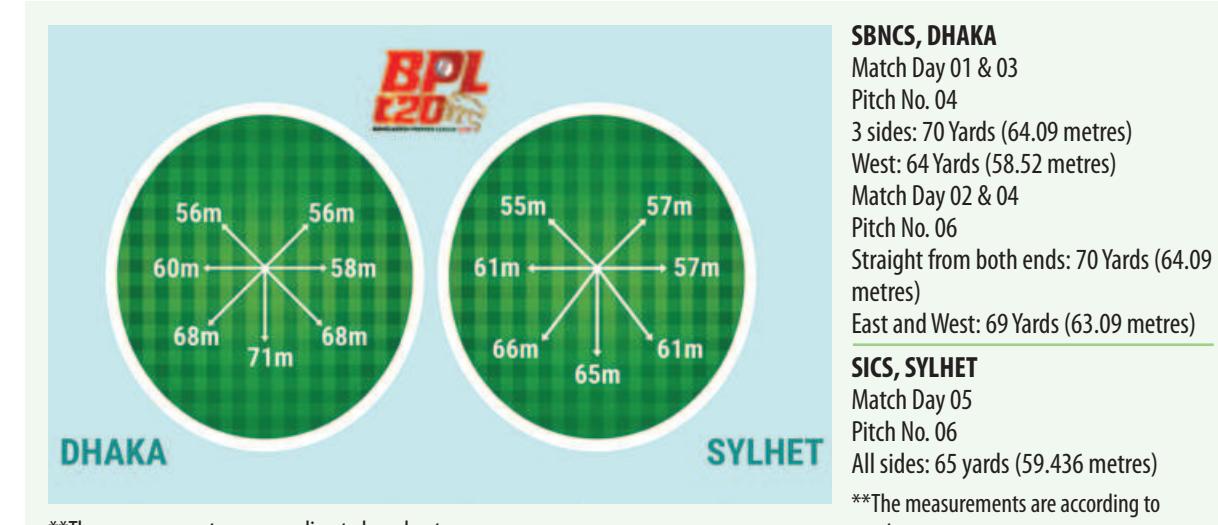
SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

High-scoring fixtures have been one of the highlights of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) with the wickets in both Dhaka and Sylhet receiving applause from all corners for providing exciting contests so far in the meet.

Sixes and fours have been raining down at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium and the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium with the record for the most number of sixes in a BPL match broken twice within the first 10 games of the tournament.

Although the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is currently struggling with many off-field issues, the BCB officials can pat themselves on the back for ensuring that the wickets in BPL this year have been up to par so far, which hasn't always been the case in this competition.

However, after Fortune Barishal skipper Tamim Iqbal expressed discontentment regarding the boundary length of the venues after their match against Durbar Rajshahi in Sylhet on Monday, fresh doubts



\*\*The measurements are according to broadcasters

gave crept up about whether the high scores are all cooked up.

Tamim said in the post-match presentation: "The way grounds have been prepared is very good. What I would like to see are bigger boundaries. I don't know why we are playing with 58-60 metre boundaries when there is space available."

According to the International Cricket Council's (ICC) playing conditions guidelines, in men's T20 cricket, the maximum boundary length is 90 yards (82.29 metres) while the minimum is 65 yards (59.43 metres) from the centre of the pitch.

According to a list obtained by The Daily Star, till match Day 5 of BPL on

**SBNCS, DHAKA**  
Match Day 01 & 03  
Pitch No. 04  
3 sides: 70 Yards (64.09 metres)  
West: 64 Yards (58.52 metres)  
Match Day 02 & 04  
Pitch No. 06  
Straight from both ends: 70 Yards (64.09 metres)  
East and West: 69 Yards (63.09 metres)

**SICS, SYLHET**  
Match Day 05  
Pitch No. 06  
All sides: 65 yards (59.436 metres)

\*\*The measurements are according to curators

Monday, the maximum boundary length was 70 yards (64.09 metres) while the minimum was 64 yards (58.52 metres).

The list is provided by the curators in Dhaka and Sylhet. However, the players' and others present at the ground have expressed doubts about the accuracy of the information.

During Monday's match between Rajshahi and Barishal, broadcasters measured a six that travelled only 52 metres.

The broadcasters also provided separate figures about boundary dimensions, according to which the shortest boundary length at the Sylhet venue was 55 meters. So how could a shot travel three metres less than that and still be counted as six, is a puzzling question.

When contacted, BCB Grounds Committee Manager Abdul Baten denied having any knowledge on the matter although he insisted that the boundary lengths adhere to the international standards.

"The boundary lengths follow the international rule. I have to check it again, but I don't agree with what you are saying," Baten told The Daily Star. Meanwhile, Mirpur curator Ganimi de Silva and Sylhet venue manager Joydeep Das denied speaking on the matter.

BPL governing council member secretary Nazmul Abedeen Fahim told The Daily Star that he had expressed his dissatisfaction to the curators after seeing the truncated boundaries

and said he has no knowledge about anyone from his department giving any such instruction.

"I told him [pitch curator] that the boundary lengths should be increased. I don't know if anyone from the BPL governing council had given any such instructions [about reducing boundary length]. I certainly didn't give any such direction."

Fahim also talked about the problems that can stem from having shorter boundaries.

"It will create a false sense of confidence among the batters. Spinners will have no impact in the matches and pacers will also lose confidence. There are many effects of it and none of them are positive."

"There are some venues where the grounds are small or a particular area is small and it can be an exception. But as we have space here, my question is why should we shorten the boundary? We will gain nothing out of it," Fahim concluded.

As neither the BPL governing council nor the grounds committee is accepting the blame, the question arises, did the boundary ropes just magically shrunk themselves?

## TWO-TIER TESTS

### Revival or setback?

**"I think it will be terrible for all those countries who worked so hard to get the Test status. Now they'll be playing among themselves in the lower section. How are they going to make it to the top? When you play against better teams. We were the cash cows for a lot of countries over the years ... people must recognise that. But we are at that situation now where we need the help, and we can't get it."**

West Indies great Clive Lloyd

**"If you don't create a two-tier system, you'll continue to have unmatched teams up against each other and then it's very unlikely they'll be able to take a game into the fifth day. Then there'll always be talk of four-day Tests."**

Former India coach Ravi Shastri

**"I was delighted to read in this masthead the ICC are considering a two-tier structure from 2027 which could see the Ashes staged twice every three years. I have been saying for a long time this is the way to keep Test cricket relevant by ensuring the best play the best as often as possible, and we get fewer mis-matches."**

Former England captain Michael Vaughan

**ABDULLAH AL MEHDI**

The International Cricket Council (ICC) had shelved the two-tier system in Tests in 2016, but arguments in its favour have been gathering steam of late.

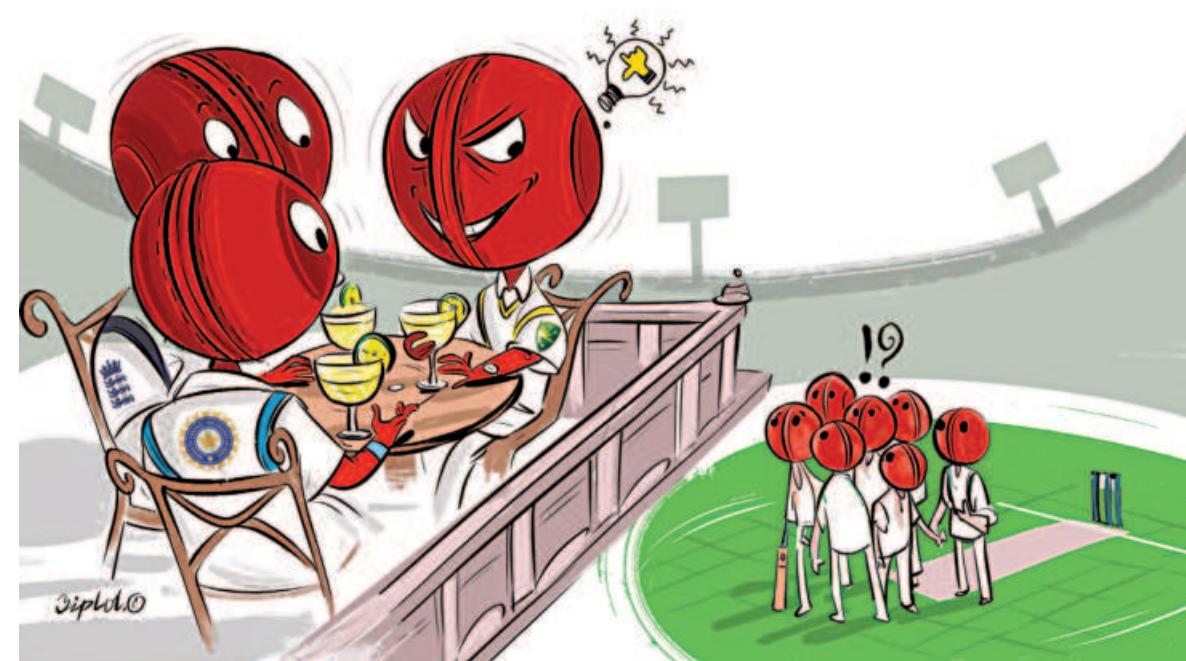
During the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Ravi Shastri and Mark Taylor voiced in favour of the two-tier system, due to the enormous crowds and broadcast audiences making the series between the "two best teams" reportedly the most-watched Test series.

Test cricket, far from needing a revival through the two-tier system, has hardly ever been more exciting. There were just two drawn Tests last year, and West Indies have beaten Australia in Australia, while Bangladesh have swept series against Pakistan in Pakistan. However, both West Indies and Bangladesh are likely to be placed in tier two if the system is implemented in tier two if the system is implemented after the 2025-2027 World Test Championship (WTC) cycle.

How does the exclusion of certain countries from playing the top nations help with the expansion of cricket or Test cricket? Ideally, it serves fewer games in the calendar for Tests but opens slots for shorter-format versions.

In 2016, Bangladesh Cricket Board had BCCI and others on their side when opposing the two-tier system.

"During former BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon's first



tenure, I was the first one to object to the two-tier proposal in a board meeting, when most of my colleagues were in favour of it," former BCB director Sajjadul Alam said.

"I've said this before, and I'm saying this again, that this will completely destroy our cricket, because we will lose our ground for development. If we can't play against big teams, the interest from our sponsors, fans, and media will gradually fade away. As a result, we will end up depending on ICC's development fund."

Asked how will competitiveness between nations come through if the lower-tier teams don't play in Australia or England, Tanjil responded, "Even after you have

climbed from the lower tier, you [smaller teams] will be dominated by teams when you make the upper tier because you don't have the experience."

"This time it's more serious," Tanjil echoed Sajjadul's sentiments. "This is counterproductive if you want to make cricket inclusive, because if you see recent times, the notion that Test cricket is dying is being broken," the former BCB director argued.

Asked how will competitiveness between nations come through if the lower-tier teams don't play in Australia or England, Tanjil responded, "Even after you have

climbed from the lower tier, you [smaller teams] will be dominated by teams when you make the upper tier because you don't have the experience."

"We are going back to square one, and I don't see anything but the spirit of revenue at play. If you talk about revenue from attendance, then maybe India and Australia are able to generate," Tanjil said.

"The cricket calendar year is dominated by shorter formats, so if you make WTC a two-tier thing, where will competitiveness come? You see that India, Australia, or

England are generating most revenue because their TV and media rights are most expensive, but it's not creating a democratic process geared towards cricket's development," he added.

Tanjil has specific remedies he feels could factor in to help stave off a two-tier system. For instance, he argues about a league system where Tests are played in neutral venues.

"Bangladesh and West Indies playing in England can help both boards earn revenue... More Pink Tests could be on the cards to match TV prime time. We can exhaust options before thinking of a two-tier system," he added.

Even under the existing WTC system, Bangladesh have not played Tests in Australia so far. Even without a two-tier system, in reality, a two-tier system was sort of in place, and it will find a structure if ICC takes the decision.

One source claimed that BCCI had put in a lucrative offer to BCB during the previous regime to be on their side in return for some revenue as "development cost". Such instances already put the two-tier system within reach.

Former BCB director Sajjadul Alam remarked on the matter, "I have thus one request to the ones in the board, that they should do whatever it takes to prevent this two-tier system from being a reality; otherwise, our survival will be threatened. Also, it's crucial that we do not give in to the financial impetus to be in favour of two-tier system."

## Ibrahim drives Abahani against Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER

National team discard Mohammedan Ibrahim has been struggling in the Bangladesh Premier League, but the forward is shining in the Federation Cup, the latest of his efforts was the all-important goal which guided Abahani to a 1-0 victory over archrivals Mohammedan in Cumilla yesterday.

After watching his team play out a goalless draw against Fortis FC in their last league match due to an injury, the lad from Cox's Bazar scored the decisive goal yesterday which doubled his tally in the current Federation Cup campaign.

The winger tapped home a square pass from Shahriar Emon in the 74th minute -- a goal that consigned Mohammedan, who have won all six matches in the league this season, to their second defeat in three Federation Cup matches, all but ending their chances of qualifying for the next stage.

It was also Abahani's first win against Mohammedan in two years following a 2-0 win against their archrivals in a league match in January, 2023.

"This squad features talented players who have speed. Today the boys executed the plan in right way as they stopped the two key players of the opposition -- midfielder Muzzafarov Muzzafarjon and forward Souleymane Diabate -- before finishing the task with a quick attack," Abahani coach Maruf Haque told The Daily Star on the way back to Dhaka.

With this victory, Abahani joined Group B leaders Rahmatganj with six points from two matches while Mohammedan have three points from three matches.

## Dhaka Capitals in disarray

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Capitals made six changes but could not improve their fate as they succumbed to a fourth straight defeat in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) following a seven-wicket loss against league leaders Rangpur Riders in Mirpur yesterday.

Thisisara Perera's side got a serious boost with the arrival of English opener Jason Roy and the inclusion of local heavyweights Mosaddek Hossain and Sabbir Rahman but it could not stop their slide as they stayed bottom of the table.

After being put into bat first, Dhaka were bundled out for 111 in 16.3 overs. Regular opener Tanzid Tamim, who came in at three on the day, top scored with a 16-ball 20, while Roy (18 off 12 balls), Liton Das (9 off 12 balls), Sabbir (2 off 7 balls), and Mosaddek (12 off 9 balls) fell cheaply.

Dhaka's change in personnel was also accompanied by a change in tactics as both openers -- Tanzid and Liton -- were pushed back in the lineup. It was the first

time in six years that Liton played outside the top three.

On the other side of the coin, Rangpur were firing on all cylinders. Pace sensation Nahid Rana's sizzle proved too much to handle for Dhaka as the 22-year-old starred with three wickets, while Pakistan's left-arm pacer Aqib Javed scalped two.

With the bat, Alex Hales, who scored a blistering century in his last match, smashed a 27-ball 44 and Khushdil Shah took Rangpur across the finish with a 13-ball 27 to chase down the paltry total in 13.2 overs.

The losing streak seems ominous for Dhaka as in the last edition, the Dhaka franchise, then called Durdanto Dhaka and captained by Mosaddek himself, made a world record of losing the most matches on the trot in franchise cricket with 11 defeats in 12 matches.

"Everyone is trying but until you get that momentum, it's difficult. Perhaps, the momentum will come if we win a match," Mosaddek told reporters after the match.



AC Milan players celebrate after staging an incredible comeback to win 3-2 from two goals behind against defending champions Inter Milan in the final of the Italian Super Cup in Riyadh on Monday. The win capped off an extraordinary first week at AC Milan for Sergio Conceicao, who replaced the sacked Paulo Fonseca as manager last Monday, as he managed to help Milan, placed eighth in Serie A, to their first silverware since their Serie A title in 2022.

PHOTO: AFP



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## UNAUTHORISED LEVEL CROSSING

## Five killed as train rams microbus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

At least five people were killed and four others injured when a train hit a microbus at an unauthorised rail crossing in Faridpur yesterday afternoon.

The deceased were identified as Mamun Chowdhury, 50, his wife Fahmida Sharmin, 40, Sajji Saju, 45, Atifa Rahman, 36, and Umme Tansuma, 30.

They were relatives who, after visiting Faridpur, were returning home to Narayanganj.

The accident occurred around 12:30pm, when the microbus, unaware of the oncoming train, got onto the unauthorised level crossing at Munshibazar area in Faridpur Sadar, said Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Faridpur's Kotwali Police Station.

The level crossing is unprotected; it does not have any gates or a gateman. Furthermore, the adjacent road is lined with shops and tall trees, which makes it difficult to detect oncoming trains.

On information, three fire engines from the Faridpur Fire Service and Civil Defence rushed to the scene and began rescue operations, said Nazrul Islam, senior station officer of the Faridpur Fire Station.

He said the train had tossed the microbus into a roadside ditch.

"We reached the spot at 12:28pm and found three

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Fisherman Ferdous's mother welcomes her son with hugs and kisses after he was handed over to his family by the Bangladesh Coast Guard at No-15 jetty of Karnaphuli channel in Patenga yesterday morning. Like Ferdous, 90 fishermen and sailors were detained by the Indian Coast Guard while fishing on December 9. They were brought back yesterday after a prison exchange programme at the Bangladesh-India Maritime Boundary Line.

## KILLING OF BOY Hasina, 15 others sued at ICT

DU CORRESPONDENT

Another complaint has been filed against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 15 others with the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) for allegedly committing crimes against humanity during a demonstration protesting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh in 2021.

Shafiqul Islam filed the complaint yesterday over the killing of his 17-year-old son Asadullah in a police attack in Brahmanbaria allegedly ordered by the then government in 2021.

After submitting the complaint, Shafiqul Islam spoke with journalists at the ICT building.

Describing the events, Shafiqul Islam said his son Asadullah went out to buy medicine during the protest on March 28. When Asadullah reached the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## Confiscate 22 flats of Nafeez Sarafat, family Court orders ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ADhaka court yesterday ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission to confiscate 22 flats owned by former Padma Bank chairman Chowdhury Nafeez Sarafat, his wife, and their son over allegations that they embezzled Tk 887 crore from banks and the share market.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Md Masudur Rahman, who is the head of an inquiry team, submitted an application in this regard.

The flats are in the capital's Gulshan, the Cantonment area, Banani, Baridhara, Bashundhara Residential Area, Nikunja, Panthapath, and Pallabi, as well as Gazipur and Kaliakair.

Of them, Sarafat owns nine flats in Gulshan, Dhaka Cantonment, and Bashundhara Residential Area, a 20-storey building at Gulshan, and 43.20 decimals of land in Badda and Nikunja in the capital, and Gazipur, and Kaliakair.

Sarafat's wife Anjuman Ara Shahid owns six flats in Panthapath, Gulshan, Pallabi and Bashundhara Residential Area and owns 21.25 decimals of property at Bashundhara, Nikunja, Badda and Gazipur while their son Chowdhury



SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

## Strong tremor kills 126 in Tibet

188 hurt; hundreds of houses flattened

REUTERS, Beijing

A strong earthquake struck the foothills of the Himalayas near one of Tibet's holiest cities yesterday, killing at least 126 people and flattening hundreds of houses, Chinese authorities said.

The magnitude 6.8 quake's epicentre was about 80 km north of Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain. Tremors also shook buildings in neighbouring Nepal, Bhutan, India and Bangladesh.

The impact was felt across the Shigatse region of Tibet, home to 800,000 people. The region is administered from Shigatse city, the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, one of the most important figures in Tibetan Buddhism.

Many homes in Shigatse city were reduced to rubble, video released by Tibet Fire and Rescue showed. Rescue workers searched through the debris of a ruined home and pulled out one injured person, it showed.

Adding to the misery for those left homeless, temperatures in the region had fallen to minus 6 degrees Celsius late yesterday, and were forecast to drop as low as minus 16 C (3 F) overnight.

The China Earthquake Networks Centre located the epicentre at Tingri county, known as the northern gateway to the Everest region, at a depth of 10 km. The US Geological Service put the quake's magnitude at 7.1. It struck at 9:05am.

At least 126 people were known to have been killed and 188 injured on the Tibetan side, China's state-run Xinhua news agency reported. There were no reports of deaths elsewhere.

More than 1,500 firefighters and rescue workers have been despatched to the affected areas, Xinhua said. Some 22,000 items including tents, coats, quilts and folding beds have also been sent, it said.

Footage broadcast on state television CCTV showed rescuers

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Epicentre was around 80 km north of Mt Everest

Tremors felt in Nepal, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh

1,500 firefighters, rescue workers dispatched

## Dhaka needs to urgently prepare for a major quake Say experts

PINAKI ROY

Having experienced two earthquakes in the span of a single week, an obvious question looms – are we taking this silent threat seriously enough?

Luckily, none of the two earthquakes – one on January 3 with a moderate magnitude of five that originated in Myanmar and another yesterday morning with a 7.1 magnitude originating in Tibet – were close enough to affect us.

Yesterday's quake had its epicentre near the Nepal-Tibet border and reportedly killed at least 126 people. Dhaka residents woke up to the tremors early in the morning, content with the thought that the quake was not big enough in the country.

Experts, however, say that Dhaka sits precariously on a seismic time bomb.

Research indicates that the Indo-Burma subduction zone, encompassing Sylhet and Chattogram, is accumulating strain capable of generating a significant seismic event, with the capability of releasing the energy of up to a magnitude of eight.

Another very active zone is the Dauki fault, which has been associated with several large earthquakes. It is believed to have ruptured three times in the past millennium, with significant events occurring in 840, 920 and 1548 AD.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

## WFP accuses Israel of firing on Gaza aid convoy

31 more Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

AFP, United Nations

The UN's World Food Programme has accused Israel of firing on one of its aid convoys in the war-torn Gaza Strip, saying at least 16 bullets hit the clearly marked vehicles but no staff were injured.

Condemning the "horrifying" and "unacceptable" incident, the WFP called again for "all parties to respect international humanitarian law, protect civilian lives, and allow safe passage for humanitarian aid."

The "clearly marked" WFP convoy was shot at by Israeli forces near the Wadi Gaza checkpoint, putting the lives of our staff at tremendous risk and leaving the vehicles immobilized," the agency said in a statement on Monday evening.

"The convoy, consisting of three vehicles carrying eight staff members, came under hostile fire despite having received all of the necessary clearances from Israeli authorities. At least 16 bullets struck the vehicles," it added. "Thankfully, no staff members were injured in this terrifying encounter."

Questioned by AFP, the Israeli army said it had received reports of shots being fired at the convoy, without specifying the origin.

"The incident was reviewed, operating procedures have been clarified, and findings from the inquiry will be analyzed," it added in a statement.

Gazans face dire conditions after 15 months of offensive, with humanitarian agencies repeatedly warning not enough aid was reaching Palestinians in need due in part to looting as well as Israeli restrictions.

Israel's relentless bombardment of Gaza continued with at least 31 Palestinians killed and 57 injured over the past 24 hours, according to the enclave's health ministry yesterday. The offensive has so far killed at

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Qatar say meetings on truce ongoing

Israeli troops kill 3 Palestinians in West Bank raids

Death toll in Gaza rises to 45,885

## Youth hacked to death on his way home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Police recovered the body of a young man from a paddy field in Jhalakathi Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased Suddeb Halder, 28, was a resident of Betra village and owner of a mobile phone shop in Bawali Bazar, said police.

Police suspect that Suddeb was hacked to death by criminals in the Rampur Jorapool area while he was returning home from his shop Monday night.

On information, police recovered the body around 10:00am. Injury marks were found on the victim's head, said Jhalakathi Sadar Police Station OC Moniruzzaman.

The body has been sent to a hospital for autopsy.

Police are trying to identify and arrest the suspects. The victim's father, Subrata Halder, filed a murder case against unidentified individuals, added Moniruzzaman.



Rangpur Riders' English batter Alex Hales celebrates with Nahid Rana after one of the three dismissals by the Bangladesh speedster during their seven-wicket victory against Dhaka Capitals in a Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. Five wins from five matches consolidated Rangpur's lead while Dhaka remained winless after four matches.

PHOTO: STAR

## BFIU seeks bank account info of Tulip, family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) yesterday sought information on the bank accounts of Tulip Siddiqi, niece of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and UK city minister, and her family members.

The anti-money laundering agency has also asked for details of the accounts of Azmina Siddique, Tulip's sister, her brother Radwan Mujib Siddiqi, and mother Sheikh Rehana.

Banks have been instructed to submit all the relevant information, including transaction records, account opening forms, and other related information.

Earlier, the BFIU sought information on the bank accounts of Hasina, her son Sajeeb Wazed, and daughter Saima Wazed.

Tulip recently made headlines in international media as she is now under increasing pressure to resign due to her ties with the fallen Awami League government. Tulip, who is responsible for anti-corruption efforts, has been linked to multiple properties associated with Hasina and her party. The AL has been accused of siphoning funds from Bangladesh's banking system, although they deny the allegations, reports British daily Financial Times (FT).

The FT disclosed last Friday that Tulip became the owner of a two-bedroom flat near King's Cross in London in 2004 without making any payment for it. The flat had been purchased three years earlier for £195,000 by Abdul Motalif, a developer connected to senior AL figures.

