



## Grameen Bank ownership, board to see major changes

- Govt to cut its stakes from 25% to 5%
- Borrowers to hold 95% stakes
- Govt-appointed directors reduced from 3 to 1
- Directors from borrower-shareholders to rise from 9 to 11
- Chairman to be elected by board, not govt
- Resignation of directors, MD to be approved by board

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameen Bank is set to get a fresh lease of life as the government plans to reduce its stake to 5 percent from the existing 25 percent.

Earlier in 2013, the parliament passed the Grameen Bank Act, 2013 to tighten the government's grip on the Nobel Peace Prize-winning organisation without increasing its ownership stakes.

Now, the government has taken a step to roll back many of the changes made in the Grameen Bank Act, 2013 by way of an ordinance, whose draft has been uploaded on the website of the Financial Institutions Division.

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The proposed amendment also seeks to bring down the number of government-appointed directors to one from three and remove the government's role in appointing the bank's chairman.

Consequently, the number of borrower-shareholders on the board will rise to 11.

Once the proposed changes are enacted through the ordinance, the chairman will be elected by the 12-member board instead of the government. This will reinforce the autonomy of the institution.

Grameen Bank, which was established in 1983 based on the Grameen Bank Ordinance 1983, came under significant scrutiny during the 15-year rule of the

## TK 1,114CR EMBEZZLEMENT ACC sues two sons of S Alam, 52 others

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has lodged a case against 54 individuals, including Ahsanul Alam and Ashraful Alam, sons of S Alam Group Chairman Mohammad Saiful Alam, over allegations of misappropriating about Tk 1,114 crore from Islami Bank's Jubilee Road branch in Chattogram.

S Alam Group owned as much as 82 percent stakes in Islami Bank, documents show, but the conglomerate maintained that it had 32 percent stakes.

Among those sued are Golam Kibria Chowdhury, owner of M/s United Super Traders; Mohammed Monirul Moula, former managing director of the bank; Qaiser Ali and KQMH Habibullah, former additional MDs; Sohel Aman and Shahadat Hossain, former managers of the Jubilee Road branch. The rest are bank officials.

According to the case statement, the embezzlement was orchestrated by Ahsanul and Ashraful by showing his relatives and employees as owners of different companies in the last three years.

Key accused Golam Kibria was shown as a supplier. He and the owners of other companies, in collusion with top bank officials, embezzled the money, said the

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## Israeli strikes kill 27 across Gaza

Women, children among dead; mediators step up efforts to seal ceasefire deal

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli military strikes across Gaza killed at least 27 people yesterday, Palestinian medics said, as international mediators stepped up efforts to seal a ceasefire and hostage exchange deal between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas.

An airstrike killed at least 10 people in a multi-storey house in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City, while another killed five in the nearby Zeitoun suburb, medics said.

In Deir Al-Balah city in central Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are sheltering, and in Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps, a total of seven people were killed, they said.

Israel's military said it struck Hamas members operating in a school in Jabalia, and that it took steps to minimise risk to civilians.

Later yesterday, an Israeli airstrike killed five Palestinians inside the public garden in Gaza City, medics said.

Such mass casualties are a daily occurrence in Gaza, where at least 45,936 Palestinians have now been killed in Israel's 15-month-long assault against Hamas, according to health officials in the enclave.

➤ Hamas, Israel accuse each other of blocking deal

➤ Trump criticised by Hamas for statements on hostage situation

➤ Death toll in Gaza rises to 45,936

'Be careful with phones, wallets when outside'

DMP chief says cops often have hard time catching muggers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali yesterday urged city dwellers to keep their mobile phones and wallets safe while travelling.

"Sometimes, mobile phones are snatched away while people are on the phone on buses or cars. Chasing down muggers can get quite difficult at times as our police personnel carry heavy arms, wear boots and are in uniforms while muggers are barefoot or in sneakers," he said while speaking at a programme of Crime Reporters' Association of Bangladesh at The Dhaka Club.

Sazzat said, "We will assist you, but please try to keep your bags and mobile phones safe. By doing this, you can help us in our efforts."

Most of those involved in

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## Trudeau rejects Trump threat to annex Canada

France, Germany slam his military action plan 'to secure' Greenland, Panama Canal

AFP, Ottawa

There is not a "snowball's chance in hell" that Canada will merge with the United States, outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Tuesday, while his foreign minister added the country will "never back down" from threats by Donald Trump.

The comments from Trudeau and Foreign Minister Melanie Joly followed the US President-elect's statement at a news conference about using "economic force" in pursuit of his unlikely plan for Canada to merge with the United States.

"There isn't a snowball's chance in hell that Canada would become part of the United States," Trudeau reacted on X, while also highlighting close bilateral security and trade ties.

Joly, meanwhile, accused Trump of showing with his remarks "a complete lack of understanding" of Canada.

"Our economy is strong. Our people are strong. We will never back down in the face of threats," she said on the social media platform owned by Trump ally Elon Musk.

Trump spoke in a meandering press conference Tuesday, a day after Congress certified his election victory. He also threatened military action to secure the Panama Canal, and Greenland.

Youth shot dead 'by BSF' at Sunamganj border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A youth was reportedly shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at the Bangladesh-India border in Bishwambharpur upazila of Sunamganj yesterday.

Saidul Islam, 23, was killed near the Machimpur border, said Lt Col AKM Zakaria Kadir, commanding officer of the Sunamganj Battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh.

Preliminary reports suggest that the youth was shot by the BSF, he said.

He said a flag meeting with the BSF is scheduled for 11:00am today, where they expect official confirmation in this regard.

According to locals, Saidul and several others had entered Indian territory to smuggle betel nuts when the shooting occurred. His accomplices took him to Bishwambharpur Health Complex and then to Sunamganj District Hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead.

## 'What can we do?'

Says Touhid on 'Hasina's visa extension by India'

### DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain yesterday said he has come to know about the reported visa extension of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who is staying in India since her ouster on August 5 last year, through media.

"Like you, I also got to know it from newspapers. What can we do?" he said when journalists asked him about the reported visa extension of Hasina at the foreign ministry.

Quoting sources in New Delhi, the Hindustan Times yesterday reported that New Delhi extended Sheikh Hasina's visa.

According to the report, the Union home ministry was required to sign off on the visa extension through the local Foreigners Regional Registration Office. Authorities, however, dismissed claims that the former leader had been granted 'asylum' in the country.

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People pull out bodies from the rubble of a building destroyed in an Israeli strike on the Bureij camp for Palestinian refugees in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

## Shakib fails bowling test again

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has failed his second test for suspect bowling action, confirmed The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) sources to The Daily Star in the wee hours of Thursday.

Shakib's bowling action was reported by the on-field umpires during his stint with Surrey County Cricket Club in September last year.

The all-rounder had failed his first test at the Loughborough University in England and gave his second test in India's Chennai on December 21, 2024. At midnight on Thursday, ECB sources confirmed to The Daily Star that Shakib 'failed the test' again.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was awaiting Shakib's results to see if they could include the all-rounder in the squad for the upcoming Champions Trophy, beginning next month. The deadline for squad



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