

DHAKA MONDAY JANUARY 20, 2025

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 7

MAGH 6, 1431 BS

[www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

RAJAB 19, 1446 HJRI

16 PAGES: Tk 15.00

## Forex market in disarray

Rigid restrictions lead to shadowy currency practices

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Bangladesh Bank has officially given the green light for banks to trade foreign currency at freely negotiated rates, but there's a catch. An unofficially imposed mechanism has upset the foreign exchange market, undermining the intent of liberalisation.

After a nudge from the International Monetary Fund, the central bank ditched the crawling peg exchange rate regime for a more flexible approach. It may sound promising. Not quite.

The regulator is still keeping a firm grip on things with an unofficial mid-rate, essentially a benchmark rate for transactions. That's ruffling feathers in banking circles.

The mid-rate climbed from Tk 117 to Tk 119 per dollar on the last day of 2024, stirring up plenty of debate. Bankers argue that this benchmark is more like a leash, preventing them from genuinely negotiating rates. On the other hand, central bank officials insist the system is all about keeping the market steady. But the result is confusion and complaints, and the foreign exchange market feels anything but free.

Bangladesh's forex market is teetering between reform and restriction as the central bank attempts to balance market flexibility with regulatory control. Economists and bankers warn that the central bank's tight grip on dollar rates, coupled with the growing reliance on a shadowy method, may harm remittances, a pillar of foreign exchange reserves.

Mustafa K Mujeri, executive director of the Institute for Inclusive Finance and Development and a former chief economist of Bangladesh Bank, said the universally accepted and straightforward solution to the chaos in the foreign exchange market is to avoid intervention.

"The exchange rate should be left entirely to the market, allowing demand and supply to determine the rate," he said. Mujeri emphasised that market interventions create disruptions, including the emergence of black markets and excessive demand.

### HIDDEN COSTS

Yesterday, the majority of the banks officially quoted Tk 121 per dollar for inward remittances and export proceeds and Tk 122 per dollar for selling dollars to importers, according to data from the Bangladesh Foreign

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

- » Unofficial mid-rate harms market flexibility
- » Remittances may dwindle due to disruptions
- » Economists warn of further instability



Displaced Palestinians return to the Jabalia refugee camp through a destroyed neighbourhood in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday, shortly before a ceasefire deal came into effect. A study estimated that 59.8% of buildings in the Gaza Strip had been damaged or destroyed since the start of the conflict on October 7, 2023.

PHOTO: AFP

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Clear \$845m by June to avoid late charges

Adani asks PDB about unpaid bills

ASIFUR RAHMAN

India's Adani power has asked Bangladesh Power Development Board to pay \$845 million in arrears by the end of June or face charges for late payment.

Adani Power (Jharkhand) Ltd (APJL) in a letter yesterday said it would waive surcharges if the PDB paid the invoices on time.

The company supplies power to the PDB under a Power Purchase Agreement. The \$845 million it demands is for outstanding bills since April 2024.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## 'Should we grieve, rejoice, or cry?'

Displaced Gazans head home through rubble as ceasefire begins

AGENCIES

Thousands of displaced, war-weary Gazans set off across the devastated Palestinian territory to return to their home areas yesterday after a long-awaited truce between Israel and Hamas took effect following an initial delay.

Minutes after the truce began, the UN said, the first trucks carrying humanitarian aid entered Gaza, where many residents are returning

» 59.8pc Gaza buildings destroyed

» At least 46,913 Palestinians killed

to nothing.

The ceasefire began nearly three hours later than scheduled. During the delay, Israel's military said it

was continuing to operate, with the territory's civil defence agency reporting 19 people killed and 25 wounded in bombardments.

Thousands of Gazans carrying tents, clothes and their personal belongings were seen heading back to their homes, after more than 15 months of war that displaced the vast majority of Gaza's population, in many cases more than once.

In the northern area of Jabalia,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

### FOREIGN ADVISER'S CHINA TOUR

Dhaka-Beijing relations to hit reset button

Say foreign policy experts

PORIMOL PALMA

Beijing may consider Bangladesh's political stability and diplomatic positioning before making any commitment on economic and trade benefits that Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain will seek during his four-day visit to China, said foreign policy analysts.

"China always emphasises on political stability -- it is unlikely that China will

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

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## Yunus listens to 'chilling' Aynagar stories, to visit secret prisons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will soon visit the "Joint interrogation cells" popularly known as Aynagar, said a statement yesterday.

The Chief Adviser's press wing issued the statement after the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances met Prof Yunus.

The commission members briefed him on the progress of investigations and requested him to visit Aynagar.

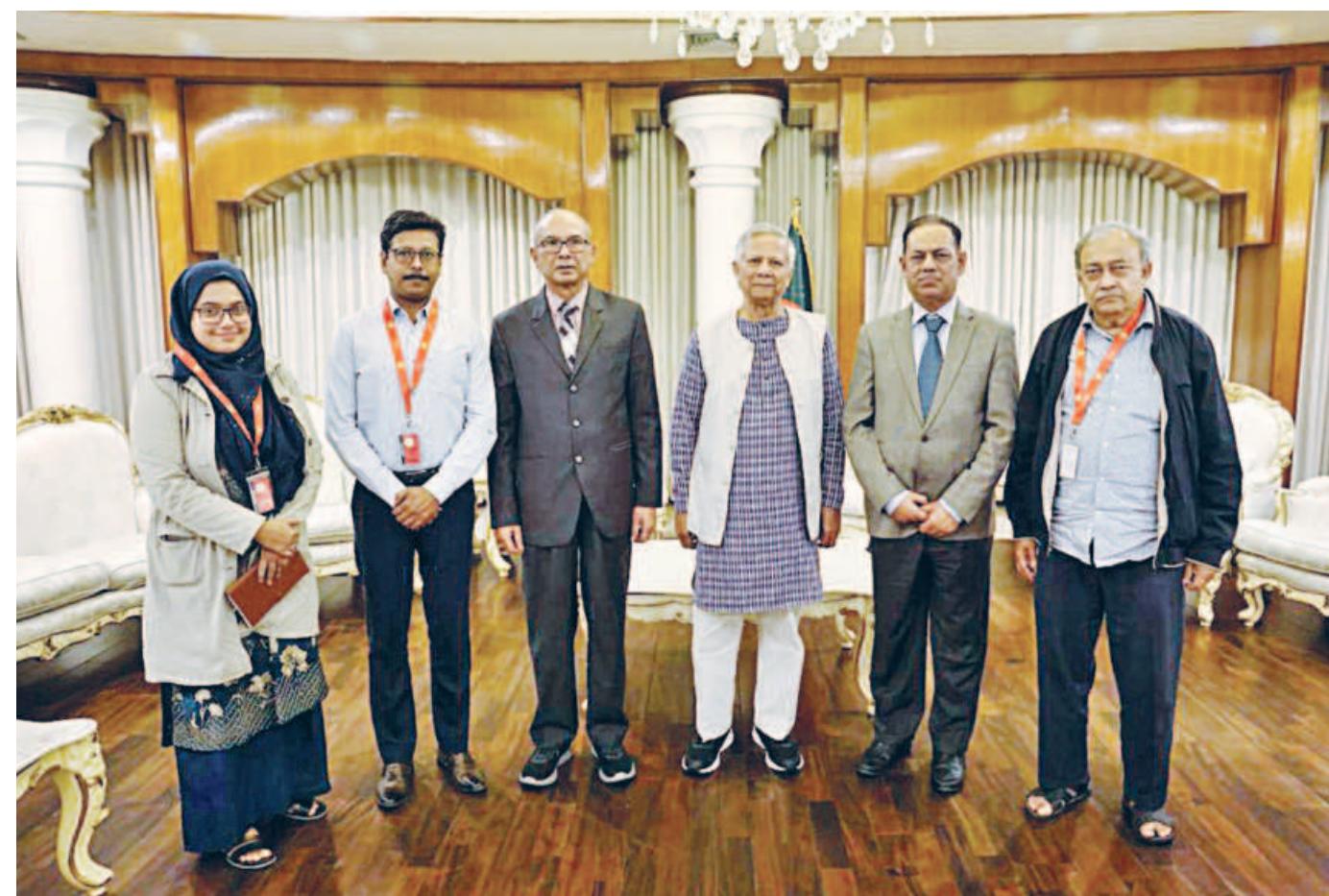
His visit would give hope to the families of the victims of enforced disappearances, they said.

The commission's investigation found an instance where a six-year-old was kept in a secret prison, said the release.

"The incidents uncovered by your investigation are chilling. I will soon visit Aynagar," the statement quoted Prof Yunus as saying.

The government formed the five-member inquiry commission led by Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury on August 27 last year to investigate the enforced disappearances

SEE PAGE 6 COL. 6



Members of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance pose for a photograph with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the state guesthouse Jamuna after a meeting yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

## Clear \$845m

FROM PAGE 1

APJL will waive Late Payment Surcharge applicable for the period of January to June 2025 if PDB pays the monthly invoices during this tenure within due date, the letter said.

The decision has been made as the company faces a severe cash crunch and to enable the PDB to clear the outstanding payments, adds the letter signed by MR Krishna Rao, president of APJL joint coordination committee.

"We request the PDB to consider the aforementioned proposal and clear the outstanding dues as per above modalities as the same is in the interest of both PDB and APJL."

Earlier this month, Adani asked the interim government for a timeline by which the dues would be paid.

The PDB signed a 25-year power purchase agreement with Adani power in November 2017.

Since August, Adani repeatedly requested the interim government to immediately clear the dues.

Over the payment issues, Adani shut one of its two coal-fired units in November last year. The 1,496 megawatts (MW) plant has since been supplying 400MW-700MW from a single unit.

## Govt to send teams

FROM PAGE 12

by the Entrepreneurs' Organisation at the Hotel Renaissance Gulshan, Dhaka.

Asked about a timeframe to bring back the money, Salehuddin said it would be difficult to say how long the process would take.

Noting that the white paper on the state of the economy last month unearthed how money was laundered abroad during the Awami League regime of Sheikh Hasina, the adviser said, "Now we are trying first to identify the money launderers and the places where the money has been transferred."

The panel on the white paper assessed that an average of \$16 billion was illicitly siphoned off from Bangladesh every year during the 15-year rule of Hasina.

As per the report, the laundered money was sent to or routed primarily through the UAE, the UK, Canada, the US, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and India, as well as a number of other tax havens.

Besides money laundering, Salehuddin also commented on a report recently published by a media outlet on the next budget.

## UK MPs withdraw

FROM PAGE 12

Hasina's niece Tulip Siddiq resigned as city minister over her previously undisclosed links to her aunt's party, the Awami League, triggering accusations that the party was interfering in British politics.

The report accused Prof Muhammad Yunus's administration of "using the law as a political weapon" and empowering "hardline Islamists".

Experts, however, criticised it for citing a relatively low estimate of deaths, and claiming that most had occurred after Hasina had fled the country rather than as a result of violence by her police and armed forces.

Rupa Huq, a Labour MP who has recently spent time in Bangladesh, criticised the report in the House of Commons this week, calling it a "hatchet job on the interim government of Bangladesh".

Rupa claimed that Chief Adviser Yunus had personally raised the report with her, asking: "What is your government doing, issuing these falsities in the name of parliament?"

A spokesperson for the APPG said: "The group has decided to shift its focus exclusively towards the Commonwealth of Nations as an institution and, as such, will no longer be producing country-specific reports."

## Forex market in disarray

FROM PAGE 1

Exchange Dealers' Association. Some banks even quoted Tk 122 per dollar for remittances and export proceeds, and sold it at the same rate. Market insiders claim these figures exist only on paper and do not reflect the actual rates in the market.

Then there's an interbank exchange rate of Tk 122 per dollar, according to central bank data. Yet, discrepancies abound. A treasury head at a private commercial bank explained that the new exchange rate regime's requirement to maintain uniform rates for remittances and export earnings has stripped banks of profitability.

"Banks have no margin now because we cannot buy dollars for less than Tk 122 per dollar, but we are forced to sell them at the same rate," he said, requesting anonymity.

In the face of these challenges, new practices are emerging in the market. For example, banks show the prescribed rate while providing dollars to some importers, but a portion of the foreign exchange

Cement Mills PLC, criticised the central bank's portrayal of the market, asserting that it misrepresents the actual conditions.

"The forex market has become more corrupt over the last two years. Banks officially quote Tk 122 per dollar, but the actual rates charged to importers range between Tk 125 and Tk 128," he said, highlighting the increasing burden on businesses.

Meanwhile, many banks are shifting away from spot transactions to forward contracts to avoid losses from the volatile spot exchange rates. Spot transactions involve the immediate exchange of currencies at the prevailing rate. Sudden and unpredictable fluctuations in the exchange rate can lead to significant financial losses for banks.

By opting for forward contracts, banks agree to exchange currencies at a pre-determined rate on a future date. This shields them from unexpected swings.

### IMPACT ON REMITTANCE

Bangladesh achieved a record \$2.64 billion in remittances in December, spurred by a more flexible exchange rate. Yet, during the first 11 days of January, many banks received minimal or no remittances -- an indication that the strict controls on dollar rates have begun to impact remittance inflows. Islami Bank was an exception, securing over \$100 million during the same period.

State-owned banks have been hit hard under the new exchange

rate regime, struggling to secure remittance inflows since its introduction on December 31. To address the issue, the central bank has urged exchange houses and aggregators to prioritise state banks for selling dollars. Mohammad Shahriar Siddiqui, assistant spokesperson for BB, described this move as a "moral suasion" to ensure timely payments for essential imports and government obligations.

But private bank executives said this approach could destabilise the market further, pushing remittance flows out of formal banking channels. Economists too fear that continued restrictions could suppress remittance flows, depriving the economy of a critical source of foreign exchange.

"The exchange rate should be freely floated, and the central bank must enhance its monitoring to ensure that no one artificially inflates the exchange rate," Mujeri said, stressing the importance of safeguarding the market against abuse.

Mujeri also explained that a freely floated exchange rate would help reduce the gap between official and unofficial rates, encouraging higher remittance inflows.

"If there are two types of rates in the market, it will harm remittances," he said, pointing out that the availability of higher rates in the hundi market diminishes the appeal of formal channels.

apart from lowering of the interest rates, Bangladesh will seek to speed up the disbursement of loans that have been slow over the last few months and buy four vessels and railway coaches.

He said Bangladesh will also seek detailed information on China's plan to build a mega-hydropower dam across the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet, which can have implications on the lower riparian countries including India and Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, during a meeting with Hossain at the foreign ministry yesterday, Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen said they are ready to sign

"implementation plan" on exchange of hydrological information with Bangladesh during the visit.

Yao also told Hossain that China is "seriously considering" lowering its interest rates for Bangladesh.

Hossain sought Chinese support for developing fruit storage and preservation capacity in Bangladesh.

He also said Bangladesh is ready to provide land and other logistics for setting up a full-fledged tertiary-level Chinese hospital in Purbachal.

He also requested China to designate at least three to four top-notch hospitals in Kunming so that Bangladesh nationals can go there for advanced treatment.

Rohingya issue will also feature prominently during Hossain's visit to Beijing, especially on improving the conditions in Rakhine State for the Rohingya to return, Hossain said.

Dhaka needs to engage the Arakan Army (AA) to secure the Bangladesh border with Myanmar as it is now controlled by the AA, Hossain said.

"India and China are both engaging with the Arakan Army. Why not us? We have greater security issues along the border," he said.

A foreign ministry official said

## SEDITION CASE

### HC may hear Chinmoy's bail petition today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court is likely to hear today the bail petition of Chinmoy Krishna Das, a former ISKCON leader, in connection with a sedition case filed over disrespecting the national flag.



"We will mention the bail petition of Chinmoy Krishna Das to the High Court bench of Justice Md Atoar Rahman and Justice Md Ali Reza for its hearing at the first half on Monday. If the court allows us to move the petition, then we will argue for his bail," Apurba Kumar Bhattacharjee, the principal lawyer for Chinmoy, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The lawyer said he submitted the petition on behalf of his client on January 12.

The petition has been included as item No 306 in yesterday's cause list of the HC bench for its hearing. But the petition was not heard yesterday as it was towards the bottom of the list, Apurba said.

Citing the petition, the lawyer said the sedition case against Chinmoy is not acceptable as there is no government order for filing the case.

A government order is mandatory for filing a sedition case under section 196 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) against a person, and

SEE PAGE 6 COL. 1

## 'Should we grieve, rejoice, or cry?'

FROM PAGE 1

hundreds streamed down a sandy path, returning to an apocalyptic landscape piled with rubble and destroyed buildings.

"We came here at six in the morning to find massive, unprecedented destruction," said Walid Abu Jiab, who returned to Jabalia.

"There is nothing left in the north worth living for."

Thaer al-Masri, 41, from Beit Lahia, said he could not describe his feelings. "Should we grieve, rejoice, or cry over what has happened? The only real emotion we feel is pain and loss – the loss of our home, our friends, and our city."

In the southern city of Khan Yunis, people who had not yet returned celebrated their pending homecoming.

"I feel like at last I found some water to drink after getting lost in the desert for 15 months. I feel alive again," Aya, a displaced woman from Gaza City, who has been sheltering in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip for over a year, told Reuters via a chat app.

"I'm very, very happy," said Wafa al-Habebi, a resident. "I want to go back and kiss the ground and the soil of Gaza. I am longing for Gaza (City) and longing for our loved ones."

Aid workers say northern Gaza is particularly hard-hit, lacking all essentials including food, shelter and water.

Jonathan Whittall, interim chief of the UN's OCHA humanitarian agency for the Palestinian territories, said on X that the first trucks started entering following the truce, after "a massive effort" to prepare for a surge of aid across the territory.

Hundreds of trucks had been waiting at the Gaza border, poised to enter. Some were loaded with prefabricated houses.

The truce had been scheduled to begin at 8:30am (0630 GMT) but a last-minute dispute over the list of hostages to be freed on the first day led to the holdup.

Qatar, a mediator of the truce, later confirmed it had gone into effect.

Later, the Israeli military said that three hostages had been released by Hamas and they were with its forces in the Gaza Strip.

The three released hostages are being accompanied by IDF special forces and ISA forces on their return to Israeli territory, where they will undergo an initial medical assessment," the military said in a statement.

Earlier, the Hostage and Missing Families Forum campaign group identified the three as women and named them as Emily Damari, Romi Gonon and Doron Steinbrecher.

Hamas said it was waiting for Israel to furnish "a list containing the names of 90 prisoners from the categories of women and children" also to be released on the first day.

A total of 33 hostages will be returned from Gaza during an initial 42-day truce, in exchange for around 1,900 Palestinians in Israeli custody.

The truce is intended to pave the way for a permanent end to the war, but a second phase has yet to be finalised.

It follows a deal struck by Qatar, the United States and Egypt after months of negotiations that had generated false hopes.

In a televised address on Saturday, Netanyahu called the 42-day first phase a "temporary ceasefire" and said Israel had US support to return to the

war if necessary.

In Gaza City, well before the ceasefire went into effect, people were already celebrating, waving Palestinian flags in the street. The Israeli army warned Gaza residents early yesterday not to approach its forces or Israeli territory. "We urge you not to head towards the buffer zone or IDF forces for your safety," military spokesman Avichay Adraee said on Telegram, adding that "moving from south to north via Gaza Valley puts you at risk".

Israeli forces had started withdrawing from areas in Gaza's Rafah to the Philadelphia corridor along the border between Egypt and Gaza, pro-Hamas media reported.

In Israel, the ceasefire was met with guarded optimism.

"I don't trust our side or their side," said taxi driver David Guterman. "Always at the last moment something, a problem, can pop up, but all in all, I'm happy."

Shai Zait, an employee at Tel Aviv's art museum, said he had "mixed feelings" but was "full of hope" that the hostages would return after so many disappointments in the last year."

Israel has prepared reception centres to provide medical treatment and counselling to the freed hostages before they return to their families. Health workers have warned of the psychological challenges the captives will face upon release.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdellatif said 600 trucks a day would enter Gaza after the ceasefire took effect, including 50 carrying fuel.

The war's only previous truce, for one week in November 2023, also saw the release of hostages held by militants in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

Since October 2023, Israel's military campaign has destroyed much of Gaza, killing at least 46,913 people, most of them civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry that the United Nations considers reliable.

The truce took effect on the eve of Donald Trump's inauguration for a second term as president of the United States.

Trump, who claimed credit for the ceasefire deal after months of effort by the outgoing administration of President Joe Biden, told US network NBC on Saturday that he had told Netanyahu the war "has to end".

"We want it to end, but to keep doing what has to be done," he said.

Under the deal, Israeli forces will withdraw from densely populated areas of Gaza and allow displaced Palestinians to return "to their residences", Qatar's prime minister said in announcing the deal.



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## USAID | BANGLADESH

## Position Vacancy Announcement

## Position: Human Resources Assistant, FSN-8

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Bangladesh is seeking applications from qualified Bangladeshi nationals for the position of **Human Resources Assistant, FSN-8** in the Executive Office, EXO.

Location: USAID/Bangladesh, Deadline for application submission: February 10, 2025.

For a complete job description, required qualifications and detailed information on how to apply please visit USAID/Bangladesh website: <http://www.usaid.gov/bangladesh/work-with-us/careers> and [www.bdjobs.com](http://www.bdjobs.com)

D-04

## ভাড়া হবে

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পৃথক - পৃথক ভাবে ফ্লোর  
প্রিয়ায় ভাড়া হবে = ৩০০,  
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৭১২ বর্ষাচূট পুরানা প্রস্তাৱ, ঢাকা  
০২৯৬২০৯৮০, ০১৭১১৯৩৫১২

সিরাজুল ইসলাম চৌধুরী  
সম্পাদিত

## সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতির তৈরামিক

## ২৩ বর্ষের দ্বিতীয় সংখ্যা

## প্রকাশিত হয়েছে

## স্টলে খোজ নিন/গ্রাহক হোন

## প্রতি কপি ৮০ টাকা

## বার্ষিক চাপা (সভাক) ৮০০ টাকা

## এজেন্সী ও পুরাতন সংখ্যার

## জন্ম যোগাযোগ করুন

## সম্পাদকীয় বেগামোপ

## উত্তর পদব্যৱস্থা কেন্দ্ৰ

## কক্ষ ২০৪ (টিএসি সংগ্রহ)

## ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০

## ফোন: ০১২৩৭০৫৯৮০

## ০১৬২০-২০৫৬৬১

## Conduct impartial probe

FROM PAGE 3  
perpetrators filmed during the recent attacks remain free.

Alik Mri,

of DU's Sociology

Department

suggested

forming

a

commission

to

address

indigenous

issues

and

prevent

future

attacks.

groups and called for the

restoration of the

graffiti

within three days.

Prof Khairel Islam

of DU's Sociology

Department

suggested

forming

a commission

to address

indigenous

issues

and prevent

future

attacks.

Shaheen Anam

executive director

of Manusher Jonno

Foundation,

strongly

condemned

the attacks,

saying,

"There are no

words strong

enough to

protest

this. The same

graffiti we

proudly display

globally is being

targeted

and attacked

here - this is

utterly unacceptable."

She criticised the lack of

dialogue and transparency

behind such decisions

affecting marginalised

communities.

"Simply

saying we are all

Bangladeshis

is not

enough. Minorities live in

constant fear, and that is

a shame for us as a nation.

Why should anyone live in

fear in their own country?"

Shaheen Anam

also highlighted the

government's

failure to

restore trust among

minority

communities and its

broader inaction

on women's rights and

ongoing oppression.

"An incident occurs, we protest,

and then go silent. Is this

the new Bangladesh?" she

asked.

Ruhin Hossain Prince

general secretary of the

Communist Party of

Bangladesh, condemned

the removal of graffiti,

calling it an insult to the

July uprising.

"The graffiti was removed

based on the demands of a

few individuals. What kind

of decision is that? We do

not want to witness any

incident based on mob

mentality," he said.

Meanwhile, Naripokkho,

a women right's

organisation, in a statement

yesterday, demanded that

the government conduct

an impartial probe into the

attack on the indigenous

group and reinstate the

graffiti along with the term

adivasi (indigenous) in the

textbooks.

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an impartial probe into the

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group and reinstate the

graffiti along with the term

adivasi (indigenous) in the

textbooks.

## When a hill's razed

enforce the ban despite all

obstacles.

She said compensation

for workers of polythene

factories that will be shut

down will have to be

provided by factory owners.

FROM PAGE 3

discussed with specialists

and professionals.

"However, I would not

speculate at this moment,"

he said, answering questions

regarding the prospects of

bilateral relations and joint projects.

During the talks, the

two sides discussed issues

of mutual interest and

cooperation between

Bangladesh and Russia in

the international arena.

He also talked about

other areas of cooperation

- food security, agriculture,

shipbuilding -- in addition

to the Rohingya issue.

On December 30, 2024,

Khuzin presented his

credentials to President

Mohammed Shahabuddin.

## Hurt in gas

FROM PAGE 3

explosion when he lit a

gas lighter to smoke in the

bathroom.

Babul's namaz-e-janaza

will be held at the Society

Mosque in Gulshan

today after Zohr prayers.

Following that, he will be

buried in his mother's grave

at the Banani cemetery.

He is the youngest son of

reciter Kazi Sabysachi, son

of the national poet, Babul

Kazi's two elder sisters are

Khilkhil Kazi and Mishti

Kazi.

Regarding drives against

polythene, Rizwana said

the government will

## Save the Children

## Save the Children is the world's leading, independent organisation for children

## Invitation for Tender

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পৃথক - পৃথক ভাবে ফ্লোর  
প্রিয়ায় ভাড়া হবে = ৩০০,  
৩৩৮, ৮০০, ৯১৬, ৮৭০,  
৭১২ বর্ষাচূট পুরানা প্রস্তাৱ, ঢাকা  
০২৯৬২০৯৮০, ০১৭১১৯৩১৮২

সিরাজুল ইসলাম চৌধুরী  
সম্পাদিত  
সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতির তৈরামিক

২৩ বর্ষের দ্বিতীয় সংখ্যা

প্রকাশিত হয়েছে  
স্টলে খোজ নিন/গ্রাহক হোন  
প্রতি কপি ৮০ টাকা  
বার্ষিক চাপা (সভাক) ৮০০ টাকা

এজেন্সী ও পুরাতন সংখ্যার  
জন্ম যোগাযোগ করুন

সম্পাদকীয় বেগামোপ  
উত্তর পদব্যৱস্থা কেন্দ্ৰ  
কক্ষ ২০৪ (টেক্সেল সংগ্ৰহ)  
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০  
ফোন: ০১৩১৭০৫৯৮০  
০১৬২০-২৩৫৬১

## Conduct impartial probe

FROM PAGE 3  
perpetrators filmed during the recent attacks remain free.

Alik

Mri,

an organiser of Aggrieved Indigenous Students and Masses, accused the government of attempting to silence indigenous voices through violence. "The state is intentionally attacking us. They are creating a situation where indigenous people are neither acknowledged nor allowed to stay in this country."

Karim

Sikdar,

joint general secretary of JASAD, said, "While the head of government presents the graffiti to the world, the NCTB removes it. What message is the government trying to send?"

He

said

the recent attacks were tightening the grip of discrimination in the country.

Shamsul

Huda,

executive director of ALRD, pointed out that the constitution does not prohibit the use of the term "indigenous" and called for a directive to ensure its respectful use across state systems.

Prof

Jobaida

Nasreen of Dhaka University's Anthropology Department demanded an investigation into the organisations influencing the decision-making of the government.

"We

need

to investigate who these organisations are, what their intentions are, and why the government made changes based on a single demand [to remove graffiti with the word *adivasi*] from them."

She

warned

against empowering such

groups and called for the restoration of the graffiti within three days.

Meanwhile, Naripokkho, a women's organisation, in a statement yesterday, demanded that the government conduct an impartial probe into the attack on the indigenous group and reinstate the graffiti along with the term *adivasi* (indigenous) in the textbooks.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, strongly condemned the attacks, saying, "There are no words strong enough to protest this. The same graffiti we proudly display

globally is being targeted and attacked here - this is utterly unacceptable."

She criticised the lack of dialogue and transparency behind such decisions affecting marginalised communities. "Simply saying we are all Bangladeshis is not enough. Minorities live in constant fear, and that is a shame for us as a nation. Why should anyone live in fear in their own country?"

Shaheen Anam also highlighted the government's failure to restore trust among minority communities and its broader inaction on women's rights and ongoing oppression. "An incident occurs, we protest, and then go silent. Is this the new Bangladesh?" she asked.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, condemned the removal of graffiti, calling it an insult to the July uprising.

"The graffiti was removed based on the demands of a few individuals. What kind of decision is that? We do

not want to witness any incident based on mob mentality," he said.

Meanwhile, Naripokkho, a women's organisation, in a statement yesterday, demanded that the government conduct an impartial probe into the attack on the indigenous group and reinstate the graffiti along with the term *adivasi* (indigenous) in the textbooks.

## When a hill's razed

FROM PAGE 3  
requested for the list to be resent mentioning the names, and also asked the agencies to arrest the owners in connection with hill cutting.

"When a hill is razed, arrest its owner, not workers. Cutting of the hill will stop when the owners are brought to the book."

She called upon officials to enhance vigilance at night as hill razing activities are often carried out at that time.

"If a tree is felled, another can be planted. If a river is occupied, you can evict the encroacher. But if a hill is razed, you need to conjure magic to bring it back. So, you cannot allow the hills to be razed," she said.

She instructed dividing Chattogram's hilly areas in seven zones, and forming a volunteer team for each zone, comprising all state agencies to protect the hills.

Regarding drives against polythene, Rizwana said the government will

enforce the ban despite all obstacles.

She said compensation for workers of polythene factories that will be shut down will have to be provided by factory owners.

## Russian envoy

FROM PAGE 3  
discussed with specialists and professionals.

"However, I would not speculate at this moment," he said, answering questions regarding the prospects of bilateral relations and joint projects.

During the talks, the two sides discussed issues of mutual interest and cooperation between Bangladesh and Russia in the international arena.

He also talked about other areas of cooperation - food security, agriculture, shipbuilding - in addition to the Rohingya issue.

On December 30, 2024, Khuzin presented his credentials to President Mohammed Shahabuddin.

## Request for EOI for Fixed Asset Management Software (FAMS)

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST)

## Notification: "Consultancy Services for Developing Fixed Asset Management Software"

Ref. No. AUST/TO/FAMS/OTM/Tender-08/2024-25

Date: Jan. 16, 2025

This is to inform all consulting firms or individuals, that existing manually operated FAR (Fixed Asset Register) will be automated to ensure more accuracy and compliance with regulatory requirements.

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST) intends to enhance its Fixed Assets Management by developing a software. Interested consulting firms/individuals are requested to collect detail TOR from the AUST website. Hard copy of detail TOR is also available at Treasurer Office, AUST.

❖ Detail TOR to be collected showing Legal names and address of the consulting firms/individuals (i.e. up-to-date trade license, updated VAT and Tax Payment Certificate).

❖ Deadline of submission of EOI in hard copy at the Office of the Treasurer: Jan. 26, 2025.

Office of the Treasurer

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST)  
141-142, Love Road, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208  
Ph: 02 8870422 (ext. 201), E-mail: [procurement@aust.edu](mailto:procurement@aust.edu)  
AUST website: [www.aust.edu/notice](http://www.aust.edu/notice)



## Eastern University

Invites application for the position of

## Vice Chancellor

The Board of Trustees (BOT) of Eastern University is looking for competent Vice-Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor will perform his/her duties adhering to the Private University Act 2010, the Statute, the rules, regulations, and policy guidelines of the University. S/he will be accountable to the Board of Trustees.

**Qualifications:** The eligible candidate must be a Professor, hold both graduate and postgraduate degrees with all first-class (or equivalent) and a PhD from an internationally recognized university, with excellent academic attainments.

**Experience:** The candidate must have at least 20 years of academic, research, and administrative experience, including a minimum of 10 years of teaching experience at recognized universities. Experience as a Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor, or equivalent position of public and private universities will be considered an advantage. Experience in designing academic and administrative strategic and operational plans and maintaining an active portfolio of professional affiliations will be considered additional qualifications.

An attractive package of salary and benefits, including a competitive remuneration structure, a full-time car with a driver, and other appealing perks, will be provided for deserving candidates.

The BOT reserves the right to relax the requisite qualifications for exceptionally suitable candidates as per rules. Expressions of interest from qualified candidates, along with a complete CV and all relevant documents, should reach the following email address by the deadline.

The Chairman, Board of Trustees

Eastern University  
Road 6, Block B, Ashulia Model Town  
Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

E-mail: [jobs@easternuni.edu.bd](mailto:jobs@easternuni.edu.bd)Application Last date:  
31 January 2025

Coca-Cola Bangladesh Beverages Limited (CCBBL) have been present in the Bangladesh since 2009, offering a wide range of high-quality, refreshing beverage options to Bangladeshi consumers. Bangladesh is one of the top emerging markets and we are growing every day because of our people. Coca-Cola Bangladesh Beverages Limited has been witnessing exponential growth over the last few years, creating a strong foothold in the Bangladeshi business landscape. In accordance with our business plan and to cater our first growing market and due to the recent change in parent company, we are seeking to appoint a highly experienced, accomplished & result driven Finance expert to spearhead the transformation and integration project in Bangladesh.

**Position Snapshot:**  
Position Name : Finance Integration Leader  
Level : Senior Level  
Job Type : Temporary  
Location : Dhaka, Head Office

**Role Overview & Key Responsibilities:**  
We are looking for an experienced leader to coordinate the pipeline of Finance integration initiatives, lead key Finance projects in close collaboration with Group Office and other functions in Bangladesh as well as continuous improvement initiatives to contribute to operational excellence.

The individual in this role will also be responsible for ensuring the Finance capabilities are in place as per the new parent company standards and growth strategies can be realized by

- Lead adaptation of parent company Finance culture-vision and develop necessary processes to meet the future needs of customers.
- Lead all change management efforts during process, organizational and digitization initiatives to improve existing operations. Map out resources, create timelines and coordinate with relevant departments (SC, DT, HR, Sales) to have deep and effective change management structure.
- Provide insights and progress tracking on Transformation projects and strategic priorities within up and out of the organization.
- Prioritize strategic initiatives to optimize investment between country and customer opportunities.
- Lead internal project teams that can invest business opportunities to accelerate the capacity and capability of the Finance and work closely for their transition.
- Drive execution by ensuring coordination and collaboration between GO and functions, procedures, reporting, meetings, governance, costs, etc.
- Owner of the digital product: Uses automation and emerging technologies to eliminate manual processes. Together with Digital Technology partner, continuously improve the digital product and increase adoption.
- Follow the audit findings to improve processes if needed and educate the related people based on the new revisions.
- Sets KPI to measures the success of the process, support parent company's Quality growth Algorithm to reduce cost, grow the revenue and share these KPIs with the teams. Monitor the KPI performances through automated dashboards and uses data analytics and predictions to be more resilient and agile.

**Qualifications & Experience:**

- Master's in Business Administration
- More than 15 years of experience in beverages industry
- Previous experience of working in The Coca-Cola System will be an added value

**Skills and Competencies:**

- Accepting and building accountability
- Building trust & value-based relationships with sustainable organization capabilities
- Decision making & enhancing performance of others
- Establishing direction & focusing on customers
- Decision making & leading a successful team
- Thinking systematically & never accepting limits
- Leading through change & leveraging diversity

**Salary and Benefits:**

Basic Salary, House Rent Allowance, Conveyance Allowance, Festival Bonus, Leave Travel Assistance and other benefits as per company policy.

If you feel that you are the right candidate whom we are looking for, please apply your application and detailed CV with photograph, quoting the position within 15 days to [human.resources@cci.com.bd](mailto:human.resources@cci.com.bd) Only shortlisted candidates who match all the criteria will be called for further selection process.

\*\* Diversity and inclusion are an integral part of our culture and are one of the ways we bring our purpose and values to life. We are an equal opportunity employer, and we encourage everyone to explore a career with us regardless of their gender, physical abilities, religious beliefs, ethnic backgrounds, or social status. \*\*

**PRAYER TIMING**  
JANUARY 20  
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5-30 12-45 4-15 5-43 7-15  
JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-30 5-47 7-45  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Save the Children

Date: January 20, 2025

## Save the Children is the world's leading, independent organisation for children

## Invitation for Tender

Save the Children International (SCI) is hereby inviting request for proposal from the interested experienced bona fide vendors for construction work in Rohingya camp.

For details, please see the IFT schedules, which are available on <http://procurement.scibd.info/> under tender notification for free of cost. Downloaded copy is acceptable for tender participation.

## Description, Pre-Proposal Meeting, submission time &amp; date:

SL	Name of IFT	Reference No.	Pre-Bid Meeting schedule	Last date of RFP Submission
I	Construction of Composite Bamboo Shelters in Rohingya camp	IFT/SCI/CXB/FY-25/(Manual)/01	Zoom Meeting: 26/01/2025 <a href="https://zoom.us/j/95610590413?pwd=MYGEoUqk0LbPUsejTjaln4HMWo.I">https://zoom.us/j/95610590413?pwd=MYGEoUqk0LbPUsejTjaln4HMWo.I</a>	February 10, 2025, on or before 03:00 pm.

## Special Instruction:

- All activities in connection with the said procurement of services will be guided as per the SCI's Procurement Policies.
  - SCI reserves the right to accept or reject part/whole of any or all the application without assigning any reason.
- </div



Winners and jury members of the 23rd DIFF.



Noriko Yuasa receiving the award for Best Scriptwriter for Japanese film "Performing Kaoru's Funeral".



Shankha Dasgupta receiving the FIPRESCI Award for Best Feature Film for "Priyo Maloti".

PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN

## Curtains down for 23rd DIFF Cultural Adviser promises more investment

**Films, masterclasses, and premieres of fantastic Bangladeshi and international films marked the grand conclusion of the 23rd Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF).**

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

The festivities culminated with the highly anticipated screening of Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury's *Boli (The Wrestler)*, a celebrated film that won an award at the 2023 Busan Film Festival and was Bangladesh's official submission for the 97th Academy Awards.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki served as the chief guest, with Jalal Ahmed, chairman of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, presiding over the event. The festival concluded with a grand ceremony at the Bangladesh National Museum yesterday.

Ilias Kanchan, a juror in the Asian Film Competition section of DIFF, and Azmeri Haque Badhan, a jury member in the Women Filmmaker Section, attended the event.

While talking at the event, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki recalled participating as a volunteer in order to watch movies at the festival. "About 30 years ago, I was a volunteer at the festival. I became a

volunteer so that I could watch movies for free as I didn't have money."

The adviser emphasised that it's his core responsibility to ensure not only a proper festival but also that our country becomes a natural hub for culture that attracts the youth. However, he has too little time on his hands to achieve all of this.

"One thing I can tell you is that I will be a very good adviser if I become the next elected Cultural Minister. Today, I know where the problems lie and how to address them. As for holding our flagship Bangladeshi film festival, we lack a permanent venue, advanced projection technology, and a proper sound system. Now that I am here, I can at least initiate the process." The adviser also talked about allocating a permanent budget to local festivals.



This year's DIFF featured 220 films from 75 countries across 10 categories. Among them, 44 films from Bangladesh were showcased.

The closing event unveiled the winners in various categories, with the Best Film

Award presented to *Yakshanba (Sunday)*, directed by Shokir Kholikov (Uzbekistan). The Best Director Award in the Asian Film Competition section went to Haofeng Xu and Junfeng Xu for *Men Qian Bao Di (100 Yards)*. Rayan Sarlak received the Best Actor Award for his film *Tabestan-E Haman Saal (Summer time)*, while the Best Actress Award went to Diman Zandi from Iran for *Melody*, directed by Behrouz Sebt Rasoul.

Other notable awards included Best Script Writer to Takato Nishi and Noriko Yuasa for *Performing Kaoru's*

*Funeral*, (Japanese film), and Best Cinematography to Dilsat Canan for the film *Demo Ke Pelé Gozan Beni Zer (When The Walnut Leaves Turn Yellow)* directed by Mehmet Ali Konar (Turkish). A Special Jury Mention for Best Director went to Mahmoud Kalari for *Tabestan-E Haman Saal (Summer Time)* (Iran).

In the Women Filmmakers Section, *Scarlet*, directed by Maria Bobeva (Bulgaria), won the Best Short Film Award, while the Best Feature Film Award went to *Kunya, Ce Qui Vient Du Silence (Kunya, Which Comes from Silence)*, directed by Sarah Mallegol (France). Agustina Sánchez Gavier won Best Director for the film *Nuestra Sombra (Our Own Shadow)* (Argentina, Germany), and a Special Mention went to *Takoi Imennu Den (Not Just Any Day)*, directed by Klavdiva Korshunova (Moldova, Russia).

In the Bangladesh Panorama section, *Priyo Maloti*, directed by Shankha Dasgupta, received the FIPRESCI Award for Best Full-Length Feature Film. In the

Talent Section, *Lazy Noon*, directed by Monon Muntaka, won the FIPRESCI Award for Best Short Film, with *Phulera Poshak Porena*, directed by Aasif U Hamid, as the first runner-up and *Poitrak Bhita (Hereditary Homestead)*, directed by Mobarak Hossain, as the second runner-up.

The Spiritual Film Section awarded *Prishleec (The Alien)*, directed by Ivan Sosnin (Russia), as the Best Feature Film, and *Monte Clerigo*, directed by Luis Campos (Portugal), as the Best Short Film. A Special Mention went to *Swaha (In the Name of Fire)*, directed by Abhilash Sharma (India). The Audience Award went to *Padatik*, directed by Srijiit Mukherjee (India), and a Special Audience Award was given to *Guardia de Honor (The Guardian of Honor)*, directed by Josedito Altarejos (Philippines).

In the Children's Film section, the Best Children Film Badal Rahman Award was given to *Kytalyktaakh kyrdalym (Where the White Cranes Dance)*, directed by Michael Lukachevsky (Russia).

## NEWS

### HC may hear Chinmoy's bail

FROM PAGE 2  
only a government officer can file such a case under the government order.

But there is no government order for lodging the sedition case against his client, he said, adding that an individual has filed the case in violation of the relevant section of the CrPC.

Section 196 of the CrPC says, "No court shall take cognizance of any offence punishable under chapter VI or IXA of the Penal Code (except section 127), or punishable under section 108A, or section 153A, or section 294A, or section 295A or section 505 of the same Code, unless upon complaint made by order of, or under authority from,

the [government, or some officer empowered in this behalf by the government]."

Lawyer Apurba said the allegation brought against Chinmoy is false as he never disrespected the national flag.

On October 31 last year, Firoz Khan, former general secretary of Chattogram's Mohora ward BNP, filed the case with Kotwali Police Station of Chattogram, accusing Chinmoy and 18 others of disrespecting the national flag during a rally of the Hindu community on October 25 in the port city's New Market area.

On November 26, a Chattogram court sent Chinmoy to jail, rejecting his bail prayer after he was arrested in the capital on January 2 this year.

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

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

Chattogram Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Saiful Islam denied bail to Chinmoy, also spokesperson for Sammilita Sanatan Jagaran Jote, in the case on January 2 this year.

Earlier on December 11 last year, the same court rejected his bail petition.

### Woman raped on way home

FROM PAGE 12  
around 11:00pm on January 15.

The driver later picked up three more passengers and took a detour.

The vehicle stopped in an area of Chunarughat upazila, where the attackers took the victim to an isolated spot and raped her, the mother said in the case statement. They also attempted to rape the cousin, who managed to escape.

The cousin later returned to rescue the victim with the help of locals. The two returned home the next morning.

The victim's mother accused four individuals, including the autorickshaw driver, in the case.

The mother said the perpetrators snatched Tk 1.59 lakh that the bride-to-be had saved while working in Dhaka.

"All our dreams have been shattered by this incident," the mother said.

Nur Alam, officer-in-charge of Chunarughat Police Station, said police identified the auto rickshaw driver and were trying to arrest the other suspects.

### Arrest warrant

FROM PAGE 12  
owned by Shakib, had taken loans from the Banani branch of IFIC Bank for business purposes. The company issued two cheques of Tk 41.5 lakh, which were dishonoured due to insufficient funds.

### Trump to take oath

FROM PAGE 12

its founder and former president Ziaur Rahman.

Tarique said over 60 lakh people were repressed, with many others killed. "Have we endured the repression and persecution to shelter intruders and wrongdoers?"

Many people believe the BNP has the most potential to form the government if a free and fair election is held, he said.

Tarique asked if the party leaders and activists

would be able to stay well if a situation emerges in which someone else forms the government due to the wrongdoings of intruders or misguided BNP followers.

"We don't know who or what may come [to power]... but it won't be good for all of us."

If anyone else forms the government, every political activist belonging to the BNP should have the sense to recognise that it would not be good for the country, both from a local and international perspective.

"We still have time to stand by the people and behave according to their desires."

At the end of the day, a political party has to go to the voters. "If any of us indulge in wrongdoing before the [election] day, you will have to answer to the people when you go to them for their votes."

access, climate change, the need for better protections against gun violence, and immigrant rights.

The rally was held after Trump's incoming "border czar" Tom Homan told Fox News that a "big raid" would be carried out across the country shortly after Trump takes the oath of office on Monday.

Unlike traditional inaugurations of US presidents, at least seven sitting heads of state and two former leaders have been invited to attend Trump's swearing-in ceremony. According to Reuters, an estimated 500,000 guests are expected in total.

Usually, presidential inaugurations are a domestic affair: the president and vice president take the oath with US officials, past heads of state and other American VIPs present on the steps of the US Capitol building.

Participants are highlighting a range of issues which they say are under attack from Trump and his party's leaders, including abortion

rights, climate change, the need for better protections against gun violence, and immigrant rights.

"That example still shines before our eyes... if we ultimately need public support, why shouldn't we try to earn it through good deeds? Why should you turn a blind eye to unfairness? If the people turn away, we will have no place to go, no matter what we think of ourselves."

Without mentioning names, Tarique said some political forces were trying to raise their voices against the BNP due to the wrongdoings of intruders and some misguided party activists.

Winning the next election will not be as easy as some BNP leaders and activists think.

"We have our party's organisations even at the village level. But people matter and people are our strength and support. People showed on August 5 what happens if they are not with you. So, if we make any mistake, the people will show something again, and then you will have to face the consequences," he said.

The BNP leader called upon the party rank and file to remain united and stand against unfairness. "We must stand with the people in such a way that they understand we are with them, according to their desires. This should be our oath on this day, the 89th birth anniversary of Ziaur Rahman."

The commission recorded 1,676 complaints of enforced disappearances.

### Yunus listens

FROM PAGE 2

by various intelligence and law enforcement agencies between January 1, 2010, and August 5, 2024.

Other members of the commission are Justice Md Farid Ahmed Shibli, rights activists Nur Khan and Sazzad Hossain, and Brac University teacher Nabil Idris.

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her defence adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan, and senior police officers Monirul Islam and Md Harun-Or-Rashid were all involved in enforced disappearances, said a preliminary report submitted to the chief adviser on December 14.

The commission found prima facie evidence of their involvement. The commission recommends disbanding Rab because of its inalienable involvement in enforced disappearances.

The commission recorded 1,676 complaints of enforced disappearances.

### EC will stick to its role set by law

FROM PAGE 12

On January 14, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said holding the general election would be possible between July and August this year.

Nasir yesterday said that the commission would start updating the voter list soon and the task, involving 65,000 employees, would take no longer than six months.

The finalised voter list will be published on March 1 next year.

The voter growth rate has been estimated at 1.55 percent, he said.

### Around 200

FROM PAGE 12

In January 2015, the HC started hearing the appeals of the convicts and pronounced its verdict on November 27, 2017, confirming the death penalty of 139.

It commuted the death penalty of eight convicts to life imprisonment and acquitted five others who were sentenced to death by the trial court.

The HC upheld life imprisonment of 146 and acquitted 14.

## Main elements of Gaza truce deal

REUTERS

Here are the main elements of a Gaza ceasefire deal that went into effect yesterday after 15 months of conflict that has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and inflamed the Middle East.

-- A six-week initial ceasefire phase includes the gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from central Gaza and the return of displaced Palestinians to northern Gaza.

-- The deal requires 600 truckloads of humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza every day of the ceasefire.

-- Hamas will release 33 Israeli hostages, including all women (soldiers and civilians), children, and men over 50. Hamas will release female hostages and under 19s first, followed by men over 50.

-- Israel will release 30 Palestinian detainees for every civilian hostage and 50 Palestinian detainees for every Israeli female soldier Hamas releases.

-- Under the terms of the deal, Hamas will inform the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) where the meeting point will be inside Gaza and the ICRC is expected to begin driving to that location



People celebrate with Palestinian flags as they attend a demonstration in support of Palestinians in Gaza, amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, in Brussels, Belgium, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Houthis claim strike on US aircraft carrier

Warn of 'consequences' for any attacks on Yemen during Gaza ceasefire

AFP, Sanaa

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels claimed an attack on an American aircraft carrier yesterday and warned of "consequences" for any retaliation during the Gaza ceasefire.

"The Yemeni Armed Forces warn the enemy forces in the Red Sea of the consequences of any aggression against our country during the ceasefire period in Gaza," the rebels said in a statement.

"They will confront any aggression with specific military operations against those forces without a ceiling or red lines."

An initial 42-day truce between Israel-Hamas began yesterday.

The Houthis, who have attacked shipping in the Red Sea throughout the Israeli offensive



in Gaza, said they targeted the USS Harry S Truman and other "warships" with drones and cruise missiles.

"The American aircraft carrier was forced to leave the theater of operations," the rebels' statement said.

Part of Iran's "axis of resistance", the Houthis have repeatedly launched missile and drone attacks on Israel since the offensive in Gaza broke out in October 2023, claiming solidarity with the Palestinians.

They have also waged a harassment campaign against shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, severely disrupting trade routes.

On Friday, the Yemeni rebels warned they would keep up their attacks if Israel did not respect the terms of the ceasefire with Hamas.

Nigeria tanker truck blast toll rises to 86

REUTERS, Maiduguri

At least 86 people were killed and more injured in northern Nigeria on Saturday when a petrol tanker truck overturned, spilling fuel that exploded, the country's national emergency agency said.

The accident in Niger follows a similar blast in Jigawa state last October that killed 147 people.

"As of this report, over 70 bodies have been recovered, 56 individuals are injured, and more than 15 shops have been destroyed," the National Emergency Management Authority said in a statement.

"The injured have been transported to hospitals for treatment, while recovery efforts for the deceased are ongoing," it added.

## S KOREA POLITICAL CRISIS Protesters storm court after Yoon's detention extended

AFP, Seoul

Supporters of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stormed a Seoul court yesterday after a judge extended the impeached leader's detention over his ill-fated attempt to impose martial law.

Yoon said he was "deeply shocked and saddened" by the pre-dawn attack on the court, where his supporters smashed windows and doors.

Tens of thousands of people had gathered outside the Seoul Western District Court in a show of support Saturday for the president, who became South Korea's first sitting head of state to be arrested in a dawn raid this week.

AFP journalists saw hundreds of police officers charge into the court, with the force arresting dozens and denouncing an "intolerable illegal and violent incident".

The incident is the latest episode in South Korea's spiralling political crisis which erupted on December 3, when Yoon declared martial law and dispatched troops to parliament.

His attempt to suspend civilian rule lasted just six hours after lawmakers defied soldiers to vote it down. They later impeached the president, suspending him from duty.

## Trump holds victory rally before inauguration

REUTERS, Washington

President elect Donald Trump was due to take a victory lap yesterday with a campaign-style rally in Washington, DC, a day before he is sworn in for a second term four years after losing the White House to Joe Biden.

Trump's "Make America Great Again Victory Rally" - scheduled for 3:00 pm ET at the Capital One Arena - marks his first major speech in Washington since he urged his supporters to march on the Capitol on January 6, 2021, in protest against his defeat.

His rally remarks, along with his inaugural address today, could offer a preview of the tone he plans to adopt in the early days of his second term in office. In recent weeks, Trump has disconcerted foreign allies by musing aloud about taking over Greenland and the Panama Canal and turning Canada into a US state.

## 200K Syrians returned since Assad's fall: UN

AFP, Geneva

Nearly 200,000 Syrian refugees have returned home since the fall of Bashar al-Assad in early December, the UN refugee chief Filippo Grandi said Saturday ahead of a visit to the region.

Between December 8 and January 16, some 195,200 Syrians returned home, according to figures published by Grandi on X.

Turkey hosts some 2.9 million Syrians who have fled since 2011.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
Health Engineering Department (HED), Pirojpur Division

e-mail: [xenhedppur2019@gmail.com](mailto:xenhedppur2019@gmail.com) Phone: 0461-63307  
[www.hed.gov.bd](http://www.hed.gov.bd)

Memo No. : 45.02.0079.363.14.001.25- 22

Dated : 19/01/2025

### Invitation for e-Tender (IFeT) Limited Tendering Method (LTM)

Procurement Method	Limited Tendering Method (LTM) vide Approval reference : HED HQ memo no. 45.02.0000.009.20.11.24-24, Dated:05.01.2025
Brief Description of Works	Civil, Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification works etc.

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following packages . It's for all concerned that these have been published through e-GP Portal

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No	Name of Works	Document Price (BDT)	Tender Security (BDT)	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
1	1065352	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/1	Repair & Maintenance works of Matibagga Malyanhat Community Clinic at Gouripur union under Bhandaria Upazila in Pirojpur District.	1000	15000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
2	1065353	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/3	Repair & Maintenance works of North Bitabaria Community Clinic at Bitabaria union under Bhandaria Upazila in Pirojpur District.	1000	15000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
3	1065354	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/4	Repair & Maintenance works of Kapalir Hat Community Clinic at Bitabaria union under Bhandaria Upazila in Pirojpur district.	1000	13000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
4	1065355	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/5	Repair & Maintenance works of Pattasi Community Clinic at Pattiason union under Indurkani Upazila in Pirojpur district.	1000	13000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
5	1065356	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/6	Repair & maintenance works of Andar Manik Community Clinic at Mathbaria union under Mathbaria Upazila in Pirojpur district.	1000	15000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
6	1065357	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/7	Repair maintenance works of Uttar purba Sohagol Community Clinic at Sohagol union under Nesrabad Upazila in Pirojpur District.	1000	15000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
7	1065358	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/8	Repair maintenance works of Bishnukathi Community Clinic at Strengkathi Union under Nesrabad Upazila in Pirojpur District.	1000	15000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
8	1065359	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/9	Repair maintenance works of Sarengkathi halima Sattar Community Clinic at Sarengkathi Union under Nesrabad Upazila in Pirojpur District.	1000	15000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
9	1065360	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/10	Repair & Maintenance of Civil, Sanitary & Electrical works of Nurses Dormitory at Nalicity UzHC in Jhalokathi District.	1000	25000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
10	1065361	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/12	Repair & Maintenance of Civil, Sanitary & Electrical works of Nurses Dormitory at Kathalia UzHC in Jhalokathi District.	1000	23000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00
11	1065362	HED/PD/GOB-Health/2024-25/13	Repair & Maintenance of Civil, Sanitary & Electrical works of Uttar Pingri Community Clinic at Suktagor Union under Rajapur Upazila in Jhalokathi District.	1000	15000	02.02.2025 17:00	03.02.2025 12:00

These are Online Tenders where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the above mentioned Portal and no off-line tender/hard copies will be accepted. Supplementary information with guidelines are available in the National e-GP System and from the e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)) For submission of e-Tenders. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited on Online through any registered Bank's branches up to time specified in Online Notice. Interested persons may communicate with the undersignatories during office hours.

The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept any or reject any or all Tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

**পাওয়ার শ্রিড রাখলাদেশ পিএলজি**  
POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC  
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212  
www.powergrid.gov.bd  
স্মারক নং- ২১.২১.০০০০.৮৮৮.০৯.০০০.২৫৮৪

**e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

পাওয়ার শিল্পের জিএমডি, কালিয়াকারে দণ্ডরের আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টেলে  
প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

ID	Title of Works
1044795	Tree Trimming works of 230kV and 132kV transmission line of all substation under GMD, Kaliakair, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC.
1062616	Supply & Installation of IP Camera at Ghatal 132/33 kV grid substation under GMD, Kaliakair, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC.
1065703	Construction of 02 Nos. Fire Wall between 132/33 kV Transformers at Kabirpur 132/33 kV Grid Substation under GMD, Kaliakair, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC.

আগ্রহী টিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে [www.eprocure.gov.bd](https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য  
অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোহাম্মদ হাসানুল ইসলাম  
নির্বাচী প্রক্ষেপণী, জিএমডি, কালিয়াকারে

## Dhaka South City Corporation

Office of the Executive Engineer

Zone-1 (Nagar Bhaban)

Memo No.: egp/dscc/zone-01/09(1)/2024-2025

### Corrigendum Notice

This is for kind information to all concerned that the tender Memo no- egp/dscc/zone-01/09/2024-2025; Dated: 19/12/2024 has been made following amended for Tender ID: 1040207 due to change in BoQ. All concerned are requested to take necessary actions accordingly.

SL No	Tender ID & Package No	Amended Subject	As per Tender Notice published on e-GP	As per 1st Corrigendum published on e-GP	As per 2nd Corrigendum published on e-GP
01	1040207 WR13/Z_1/RFCs/2024-25	Development and repairing works for road and footpath of Bir Uttam Samsul Alam Road in ward no-19 of Zone-01 under Dhaka South City Corporation.	Document last selling date & time 19/01/2025 13:15	22/01/2025 13:15	28/01/2025 13:15
		Opening Date & Time	19/01/2025 17:00	22/01/2025 17:00	28/01/2025 17:00
		Last date & time for Tender/ Proposal Security Submission	19/01/2025 15:15		

## What was the point of a white paper?

Govt must take steps based on its recommendations

It is frustrating to know that more than a month and a half after the submission of the white paper on Bangladesh's economy, the government has yet to take steps based on its recommendations. This inaction—pointed out by the very man who led the 12-member committee that prepared what Chief Adviser Prof Yunus then called a "historic" document worthy of being taught in universities—not only questions the rationale for commissioning such a report but also risks deepening the present economic crisis. At a recent symposium, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya also lamented the lack of critical discussions on this issue.

True, our economic problems did not emerge overnight, nor can they be resolved by the interim government alone. These issues stem from years of mismanagement, entrenched corruption, and systemic regulatory failures, particularly during the Awami League's 15-year rule. The 30 chapter, 400-page white paper—submitted on December 1—unearthed the scale of these problems in exhaustive detail. For instance, it revealed that a staggering \$234 billion was laundered from Bangladesh between 2009 and 2023. Meanwhile, distressed assets in the banking sector soared to Tk 6,75,030 crore, leaving banks under provisioned and vulnerable to financial shocks. The report attributed these regulatory failures to the influence of business conglomerates, bureaucrats, and politicians, showing how laws and regulations were "tailored and retrofitted" to serve vested interests.

It also exposed the dire state of "technically bankrupt" and "illiquid" banks and how Bangladesh, lost in a "data fog," "sleepwalked" into the middle-income trap. Beyond banking and financial mismanagement, the white paper also offered an in-depth review of the macroeconomic and fiscal situation, alongside key sectors like education, health, energy, taxation, mega projects, poverty, and inequality. The question is: what is the government doing about its recommendations?

Among its key proposals, one was to establish an independent prosecution body to pursue follow-up actions on the stolen funds. The committee also urged the government to formulate a two-year mid-term economic plan and a six-month short-term strategy. Yet, there is no indication that these recommendations are being taken seriously. Instead, despite the paper's critical assessment of the existing tax regime, the government has opted to raise value-added tax (VAT) and supplementary duty (SD) on over 100 products and services rather than boosting direct tax collection—suggesting a preference for short-term fixes over structural reforms. Equally concerning is the continued ad hoc approach to banking and energy sector reforms.

This has to change. We urge the government to take ownership of the white paper's findings and incorporate them into policy decisions. Given the enormity of our economic challenges, it must make the most of its limited time before elections to lay the groundwork for reforms while establishing discipline in macroeconomic management, as Prof Rehman Sobhan suggested at the symposium. The importance of phased, strategic action cannot be overstated.

## Make police a pro-people force

Reform commission's proposals should be reviewed carefully

We welcome the Police Reform Commission's recommendations to implement extensive measures to transform the police force into an institution of accountability. The commission's report, submitted to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on January 16, includes crucial proposals to curb excessive use of force, prevent abuse of power, and abolish the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), among other reforms. It also proposes the formation of a statutory body—the Independent Police Commission—to ensure accountability and neutrality within law enforcement agencies. These recommendations are both timely and necessary, but they will only yield positive results if implemented effectively.

Over the past decades, particularly during Awami League's 15-year rule, public trust in the police has eroded drastically due to corruption and political meddling. This distrust deepened during the July uprising when police brutality—including indiscriminate shootings and killings of protesters—further exposed deep-seated systemic flaws. Following the fall of the regime on August 5, the need for police reform gained renewed urgency. Against this backdrop, the Police Reform Commission's report outlines strategies to rectify these issues and establish genuine accountability.

Its emphasis on precise, proportional, and rule-based use of force—similar to UN peacekeeping standards—is a crucial step forward. Aligning our policing with international norms by allowing the use of force strictly in self-defence will help reduce undeserved harm to life. Assessing Rab's necessity by reviewing its past human rights violations is equally essential for restoring public trust. Furthermore, introducing "clear-walled" interrogation cells to prevent custodial torture, and mandating GPS trackers and bodycams for officers on raids, will help curb extortion, arbitrary arrests, and enforced disappearances.

Other practical measures such as a citizen hotline for reporting police misconduct—including refusal to disclose identity during searches—will address some of the concerns about police. Ensuring the presence of a magistrate or a local government representative during arrests between dusk and dawn will serve as an additional safeguard against misuse of power. Moreover, increasing the number of female police officers is crucial, particularly given the rampant violence against women in our society and the harassment they face when seeking legal assistance.

However, we must remember that any success of such initiatives hinges on the cooperation of political parties, particularly the ruling one. Resistance from within the police force and other vested interests could also pose obstacles to proper implementation. Nonetheless, with strong commitment and support from all stakeholders, these reforms could lead to a more accountable, rights-focused police force and help restore public confidence.

## From 1969 to 2024: Echoes of resistance through the ages



Anu Muhammad  
is a former professor of economics from  
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ANU MUHAMMAD

Mass uprisings played a significant role in Bangladesh's history. For instance, during the Language Movement of 1952, a situation akin to a mass uprising arose, leading to the formal recognition of Bangla, although, in reality, that spirit has yet to be fully embraced even today. However, the movement, which went on to claim several lives, marked a major turning point in our history.

The next major mass uprising occurred in 1969, leading to the fall of Ayub Khan, the military general of Pakistan. That event significantly advanced Bangladesh's path to the Liberation War. Then came the mass uprising of 1990, which ended the autocratic regime of Ershad. And after that, the mass uprising of 2024 overthrew the authoritarian Sheikh Hasina government.

This means that political mobilisation of people against injustice, oppression, or authoritarianism often manifested in mass uprisings in Bangladesh's history, taking the form of a cultural and political language of resistance. However, mass uprisings are not always national in scope. Sometimes, they occur locally. For example, in 2006, the Phulbari incident saw a localised mass uprising, forcing a multinational corporation to withdraw from the area and compelling the government to sign an agreement with the people. There is no precedent for such an incident where a multinational company was forced to leave a region and the government was compelled to negotiate directly with its people. This only happened because of the mass uprising.

At the national level, when comparing the mass uprisings of 1969, 1990, and 2024, several similarities emerge, although critical differences exist among these events. Let us analyse the differences between the mass uprisings of 1969 and 2024.

We can see some parallels between the events of the 1969 uprising—which reached its peak on January 20 of that year—and those of 2024.

The 1969 uprising was directed against a military general who had

established a powerful autocratic regime and was globally recognised as an "Iron Man." In 2024, we witnessed the fall of another autocrat widely known as the "Iron Lady." Another commonality is that both uprisings occurred at the end of a perceived period of development. During Ayub Khan's era, significant development was showcased, with 1969 marking the celebration of the "Decade of Development" that ostensibly began in 1958. Major infrastructure projects were undertaken, such as



Unlike the 1969 movement, the 2024 uprising emerged from a decentralised, spontaneous rejection of authoritarian rule.

PHOTO: MONOROM POLOK

the construction of Islamabad as Pakistan's new capital, the building of dams, the expansion of rural and district roads, etc.

During this period, political protests and resistance in East Pakistan led to the Pakistani government designating Dhaka as the second capital. This resulted in significant infrastructural development in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, including the National Parliament building designed by Louis Kahn. The Bangladesh Agricultural University and Jahangirnagar University were also established, and land reforms were introduced—all part of the "Decade of Development" narrative.

Similarly, under Sheikh Hasina's government, we saw the implementation of significant infrastructure projects such as

By contrast, during Hasina's regime, while inequality was not regional, class-based disparities worsened significantly. The suppression of dissent by law enforcement agencies including the police, RAB, and BGB became rampant, along with widespread extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, and abductions. Furthermore, the ruling party's student and youth wings, such as the Chhatra League and Jubo League, were notorious for their acts of violence and oppression—much deadlier than the student mercenaries of the Ayub regime.

The protests of 1969 reached a turning point with the killing of student leader Asaduzzaman on January 20. A political activist affiliated with Maulana Bhashani's

NAP and the underground communist movements of that time, Asad was shot dead while leading a procession. He became a symbol of the mass uprising, bolstering people's resolve and inspiring cultural expressions, including Shamsur Rahman's famous poem *Asader Shrit*.

Similarly, in 2024, the death of Abu Sayeed marked a turning point. On July 16, Abu Sayeed was shot dead during a peaceful protest at Begum Rokeya University. His death sparked widespread outrage, with cultural and artistic responses emerging in the form of sketches, graffiti, poems, and songs. This parallels the cultural impact of Asad's death, showing how the deaths of individuals at critical points can galvanise a movement.

A major difference between the 1969 and 2024 uprisings, however, lies in the political leadership that backed the movements. The 1969 movement was buttressed by organised political forces and their demands, such as Awami League's Six-Point Movement, Maulana Bhashani's Fourteen-Point Programme, and the Eleven-Point demand of the *Sarbadaliya Chhatro Sangram Parishad*. There was a centralised leadership, involving known political figures such as Maulana Bhashani, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Moni Singh and student leaders affiliated with the movement.

In contrast, the leadership of the 2024 movement was decentralised; the protests were largely driven by the collective anger of ordinary people rather than any coordinated political strategy. While activists from left and right-wing political groups participated in the uprising, no specific political party took on a leading role. This lack of structured leadership has left the outcome of the 2024 uprising uncertain, in contrast to the clear trajectory of the 1969 uprising, which eventually led to the Liberation War in 1971.

These uprisings, however, demonstrate commonalities in their resistance to authoritarianism, a legacy of infrastructural development concealing inequalities, and the symbolic impact of individual sacrifices. However, the differences in political leadership and clarity of goals between the two movements highlight the unique challenges of the 2024 uprising. Though it emerged from a decentralised, spontaneous rejection of authoritarian rule, it lacks a clear roadmap for the future. It has its strength as a grassroots movement but is vulnerable in terms of long-term direction.

## Malaysia migration crisis shows where reforms are needed



Mohammad Inzamul Haque  
is project manager at Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU).

On December 29, 2024, a group of Bangladeshi workers who had failed to migrate to Malaysia gathered for a protest in front of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. They demanded the government's support in retrieving their passports and recruiting fees from the concerned agencies. Some of these agencies had falsely promised to send them to Malaysia in future, while others had closed their offices or pressurised the migrants to settle for lump sum payments. Despite the government's repeated assurances of reimbursing the recruitment fees, a majority of the workers have neither received their money nor their passports back from the recruiting agencies.

Although Malaysian Premier Anwar Ibrahim promised to consider the entry of these 18,000 workers into Malaysia during his visit to Bangladesh on October 4 last year, the matter appears to have stalled.

From 2009-2024, Bangladeshi migrant workers' access to the Malaysian labour market was restricted multiple times and, on every occasion, a syndicate was blamed for the debacle. Due to the repeated closure of the market as a direct impact of the infamous syndicate system, Malaysia-bound workers who failed to migrate had to suffer psychologically

and financially. The operation of the Foreign Workers Centralised Management System (FWCMS), a web-based platform owned by the private company Bestinet in Kuala Lumpur that facilitates recruitment of migrant workers to Malaysia from different countries, has been alleged to be the key instrument of a syndicate involving powerful agencies in that country. Out of the 15 countries allowed to recruit migrant workers in Malaysia through Bestinet's system, only in the case of Bangladesh is there a separate arrangement restricting the participation of all recruitment agencies from the country.

The founder of the company, a Malaysian Dato of Bangladeshi origin, is alleged to be the mastermind behind the syndicate along with his accomplice, a former secretary general of the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA). When the Malaysian labour market was set to reopen in 2022 after four years and an MoU was signed between the two countries, the Bangladeshi government relinquished the responsibility of selecting Bangladeshi recruiting agencies to Malaysian authorities. No specific guidelines were put in place for the selection of the agencies, which allowed unscrupulous agencies

to form the syndicate. As a result, out of the list of 1,520 agencies submitted by the Bangladeshi government, only 25 agencies were initially selected. Later, the number was increased to 101 in different phases. This primarily facilitated individuals linked to the fallen regime—such as MPs, councillors, and government officials—in setting up recruitment

**Due to the repeated closure of the market as a direct impact of the infamous syndicate system, Malaysia-bound workers who failed to migrate had to suffer psychologically and financially.**

businesses. A section of the 101 agencies selected has been alleged to receive Tk 150,000 per worker from agencies not enlisted in the syndicate.

Media reports inform that the syndicate single-handedly increased the migration cost to Malaysia, raising it from the government-set Tk 78,990 to an average of Tk 5,44,000. The misery of those, who were unable to board flights to Malaysia even after paying the full migration costs, knows no bound. Now some of them have to bear the brunt of loans they incurred for trying to go abroad for a livelihood. Many migrant workers do not receive the promised jobs upon arrival at the destination country. Other issues they face include unavailability of quality food and living conditions, wage theft, prolonged joblessness, mental and physical torture and being jailed under false charges.

Realising the damage caused by Bestinet to migrant workers, it is of utmost importance that the perpetrators be brought to book. Media reports further inform that Bangladesh has recently requested Malaysia for the extradition of the two businessmen wanted for alleged money laundering and human trafficking crimes. Since then, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission has also detained a Bangladeshi company director with a Datuk title on charges of corruption.

On Bangladesh's part, a case was filed against 103 individuals, including a former minister and secretary. In addition, immediate steps should be taken to ensure that agencies reimburse the full recruitment fees charged to migrants and return passports to the approximately 18,000 migrants who were unable to travel to Malaysia. Experts suggest that migrant workers who are unable to secure jobs despite paying hefty fees should receive compensation five times the amount they paid. The syndicate system not just causes sufferings to migrant workers but also tarnishes the country's image. The interim government took several positive steps to protect the interests of migrant workers, but the issues associated with the syndicate system of the Malaysian labour market must be addressed. Ensuring accountability should be the first step. Furthermore, the government should negotiate a bilateral agreement with provisions to ensure that all eligible recruiting agencies participate in the recruitment process when the market reopens, the errant agencies are penalised and the exploitation of migrants both at home and abroad is prevented.

# The self-sabotaging president: Joe Biden's broken legacy



Ashfaque Swapian  
is a writer and editor based in Atlanta, US.

ASHFAQUE SWAPAN

Today, Donald J Trump takes over the White House. If his recent antics are any guide, it is quite likely there'll hardly be a dull moment. With his proposal to include Canada as the 51st state of the US and capture the Panama Canal and Greenland, Trump is already in the eye of a media storm.

Before the Trump media frenzy completely sucks up the oxygen, let's take stock of the reputation of his predecessor.

I still remember the joy of supporters that greeted the election of President Joe Biden four years ago. It wasn't just his supporters who welcomed a return to normalcy, civility, and quite frankly, a degree of sanity to the White House.

Many people heaved a sigh of relief. No more wildly provocative tweets at 3 am to rile up Trump's enemies.

Farewell to the parade of dubious cabinet appointees, a surprising number of whom had to quit under a cloud. No more outrageous gossip coming out of disgruntled former associates which turned the White House into tabloid territory.

Finally, we had a proper president to do justice to the gravitas of arguably the most powerful office in the world.

What a difference a four-year term makes. As Biden left office, Americans didn't exactly burst into tears.

According to a CNN Poll, he left office with a 36 percent approval rating. It's a huge climbdown from his 60 percent approval rating at the beginning of his term.

"Americans broadly view Biden's four years in office more as a failure than as a success," CNN reports.

Yet his supporters claim—with some justice—that Biden's achievements are considerable. He

steered the nation through the Covid crisis and left the country with an economy in a relatively robust state, which is an envy for the rest of the world.

In his first two years in office, Biden passed a major bill to rescue the economy from COVID, a bipartisan law to rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure, the first gun-safety law in decades, the largest climate investment in history, a law to lower the price of prescription drugs, as well as bills to help veterans and spur the semiconductor industry," writes Dan Pfeiffer, a former adviser to President Barack Obama.

Then why are Americans so unhappy with Biden?

There are multiple reasons, including Biden's critical flaws.

Biden's predicament must be considered in the context of the brutal political landscape in the Western world. Massive post-pandemic disaffection has left incumbents buffeted by populist outrage. UK Conservatives have been unceremoniously kicked out of power; Canada's Justin Trudeau has quit; Germany's Olaf Scholz is likely on his way out, and France's Emmanuel Macron is teetering.

In the US, inflation led to a sharp rise in grocery and gas prices that hit voters' pocketbooks.

There is also the uncomfortable fact that US media, like its population, is increasingly polarised. For avid watchers of right-wing Fox News, their view of any leader from the Democratic Party is likely to be jaundiced. But it is also true that Biden's own shortcomings provided the critical impetus to his downfall.

Biden would have done himself and

his party a huge favour by declaring himself a one-term president from the get-go. Instead, in a fit of extraordinarily selfish hubris, Biden chose to remain until his party elites had to force him to leave. His recent claim that he could have won the election is mind-boggling.

Biden also tarnished his own legacy—in my view irrevocably—when

Beyond the US, Biden's reputation will be permanently stained for his complicity in Israel's unconscionable genocide of Palestinians. He may claim credit for the recent ceasefire breakthrough between Hamas and Israel. But the fact remains that the ceasefire deal was ready in May; why did it get signed now? Reports suggest that Trump, waiting in the wings,

on Iraq. When UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter's principled stand undermined his phony argument for destroying Iraq's non-existent weapons of mass destruction, Biden attacked Ritter viciously.

For most of the world, excluding the delusional bubble in the US and its mostly European allies of the "rules-based order," America's blind support for Ukraine and attacks on Russian President Vladimir Putin reek of sanctimonious hypocrisy when one considers its coolness to the vicious attacks of Saudi Arabia and its allies on Yemen and Israel's terrible slaughter in Gaza and Lebanon.

Even in his farewell speech, Biden's warning against the rise of an oligarchy in the US, while true, carries little moral weight.

"The very richest Americans are among the biggest winners from President Joe Biden's time in office, despite his farewell address warning of an 'oligarchy' and a 'tech industrial complex' that threaten U.S. democracy," Bloomberg reports.

"The 100 wealthiest Americans got more than \$1.5 trillion richer over the last four years, with tech tycoons including Elon Musk, Larry Ellison and Mark Zuckerberg leading the way... The top 0.1% gained more than \$6 trillion."

The New York Times offers a devastating appraisal of Biden's legacy. "President Biden ran for the White House promising to be a transitional figure, then once he got there began thinking of himself as a transformational one. But after a tumultuous four years in office, it turns out he was really neither," Peter Baker writes in The New York Times.

"Instead, Mr. Biden will end up in the history books as an interregnum between two terms of Donald Trump, a break in the middle of a chaotic period of change, for good or ill. Mr. Biden had hoped to make Mr. Trump an asterisk in the American story, soon to be forgotten. Now he will be the one trying to make his case for posterity."



US President Joe Biden leaves the stage after his speech at the State Department in Washington, DC, on January 14, 2025.

PHOTO: REUTERS

There is no denying the dreadful fact that towards the end of his presidency, he was often too senile, and an unduly deferential media was complicit in maintaining the laughable fiction that Biden was fully functional. Long before his disastrous debate performance with Trump, there were alarming signs of his senility on TV including a propensity to go on tangents or offer a phantom handshake, among other embarrassing quirks.

History offers some telling clues about Biden's moral frailty. Biden's 1988 presidential campaign crashed and burned following accusations that he had plagiarised a speech of

he pardoned his son Hunter Biden. Even more egregious was a blanket indemnity for Hunter—a terrible moral descent for a man who once epitomised the rule of law against the much more wayward Trump.

History offers some telling clues about Biden's moral frailty. Biden's 1988 presidential campaign crashed and burned following accusations that he had plagiarised a speech of

warmongering tendencies. As a US senator from Delaware, he was gung-ho for years on a massive US attack

on Iraq. When UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter's principled stand undermined his phony argument for destroying Iraq's non-existent weapons of mass destruction, Biden attacked Ritter viciously.

## Non-toxic toys are essential for protecting our children



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WALIULLAH BHUIYAN

Toys play a crucial role in enriching children's activity and fostering developmental growth. They ignite imagination and serve as a foundation for improving cognitive and motor skills. Thus, choosing non-toxic toys is crucial for ensuring the safety and well-being of our children. Such toys not only provide fun and enjoyment but also protect them from harmful chemicals, making playtime a healthier experience.

However, a disturbing reality has emerged from a recent study by the Environment and Social Development Organisation (ESDO) and BAN Toxics, which revealed that numerous toys available in Bangladesh contain harmful chemicals that pose serious health risks to children. This unsettling revelation underscores the hidden perils associated with commonplace playthings and highlights the urgent necessity of safer, eco-friendly alternatives for our kids.

The ESDO study revealed approximately 80 percent of toys found in Dhaka's popular markets contain hazardous heavy metals—such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and chromium. Since all toys are distributed from Dhaka, those sold across the country pose a similar threat to children on a national level. These toys—primarily composed of recycled plastics—frequently exceed safety limits established by the European Union (EU). For instance, a toy water cup was discovered to have lead level at 1,380 ppm, significantly surpassing the EU's safety limit of 90 ppm.

Furthermore, a doll set was found to contain 1,500 ppm of chromium, which is far above the acceptable threshold. Even elevated concentrations of cadmium, arsenic, and barium were found in children's mugs and stationery items. This is particularly concerning because these heavy metals can easily enter children's bodies through saliva when they play with them.

Moreover, research has reliably

highlighted the shocking risks associated with toxic metals in children's toys, which have serious implications for physical, cognitive, and neurological development. For instance, lead exposure is known to cause developmental delays and cognitive impairments, while mercury and cadmium threaten kidney function and respiratory



Eco-friendly toys crafted from natural materials by local artisans can be a safer alternative for children.

PHOTO: COURTESY

health.

Despite the severe risks, a staggering 88 percent of parents remain unaware of toxic metals presence in toys, while 64 percent do not know whether the toys they purchase are safe for their children's health. This lack of awareness leaves children vulnerable to long-term health risks. Alarmingly, the toxic metals are not just found in local toys; they are also present in the imported ones sold at top-tier stores in Dhaka. This is why raising awareness among parents—especially those with young children—is critically important. Educating consumers about the potential hazards in toys is the

Safer, eco-friendly toys crafted from natural materials—such as wood, organic cotton, and recycled fabrics—offer a much-needed solution. These toys shield children from harmful chemicals and also foster a sustainable environment.

There are some emerging brands that produce toxin-free, safe toys that promote learning through play for children. Some of these toys are also handcrafted by female artisans. Customers can buy these toys for their children if these products are widely available online and in retail stores. The benefits of getting eco-friendly toys are numerous—

first step in driving a behavioural shift towards prioritising safety. Otherwise, parents are unlikely to seek out safer alternatives for their children, consequently perpetuating the cycle of exposure to harmful toxins.

### Eco-friendly alternatives

ESDO has been publishing reports for the past 10 years in Bangladesh. However, there have been no noticeable change in customer perception among toy manufacturers and policymakers. Children's toys are as crucial as baby food. While baby food focuses on physical growth, toys assist children in cultivating their cognitive and mental well-being. But the pressing question is: are we providing parents with viable alternatives?

Despite the severe risks, a staggering 88 percent of parents remain unaware of toxic metals' presence in toys, while 64 percent do not know whether the toys they purchase are safe for their children's health. This lack of awareness leaves children vulnerable to long-term health risks.

they are chemical and toxin-free, providing peace of mind for parents. Furthermore, they are sustainable and biodegradable. Many of these toys, locally crafted with care, are made in Bangladesh. This can also provide support for local artisans and promote sustainable livelihoods and traditional crafts.

Reviving nostalgia through handmade toys

The past can evoke fond memories for many of us. Although toys were often crafted from household items—such as dolls made from scraps of cloth or cars carved from wood—these creations were simple, safe, and filled with creativity. They not only brought joy but also taught us how to create and imagine. Rediscovering these homemade toys can offer

today's children similar experiences, reminding us of the charm and value of simplicity.

Results from the ESDO study should prompt us to make more thoughtful choices regarding the toys we provide our children. Stricter regulations are necessary, and we, as parents, also possess the power to drive change.

Choosing safe, eco-friendly toys is a proactive step towards safeguarding our children's health and nurturing a sustainable environment. By opting for toxin-free alternatives, we can invest in a safer, healthier future for our children. Although some may argue that eco-friendly options are limited, let's embrace the simplicity and safety of these choices, giving our kids a joyful and secure childhood.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
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তারিখ: ০৯-০১-২০২৫

### লিখিত পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাপত্য অধিদপ্তরের স্মারক নং-ন-২৬(অংশ-৩)/৫৩/ঢাপত্য প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুযায়ী ৭(সাত) ক্যাটাগরির নন্দেগোটেড পদে নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে লিখিত পরীক্ষা নিম্নবর্তিত ছান ও সময়সূচি অনুযায়ী অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

পরীক্ষার কেন্দ্র	পদের নাম	পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের তারিখ	সময়
ডাইলস লিটল ফ্লাওয়ার ফ্লু এন্ড কলেজ ৮৫, কাকরাইল, ঢাকা-১০০০।	সহকারী মডেল মেকার	২৪-০১-২০২৫ (শুক্রবার)	সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
	অফিস সহায়ক	২৪-০১-২০২৫ (শুক্রবার)	সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
	ড্রাফ্টসম্যান (নকশাকার প্রেত-২)	২৪-০১-২০২৫ (শুক্রবার)	দুপুর ০৩:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকেল ০৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
	স্টেম্বুড়ারিক-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	২৪-০১-২০২৫ (শুক্রবার)	দুপুর ০৩:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকেল ০৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
ভিকারনিসা নূন ফ্লু এন্ড কলেজ প্রধান শাখা ১/এ, নিউ বেইলী রোড ঢাকা-১০০০।	অফিস সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাকারিক	২৫-০১-২০২৫ (শনিবার)	সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
	ড্রাফ্টসম্যান (নকশাকার প্রেত-৪)	২৫-০১-২০২৫ (শনিবার)	দুপুর ০৩:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকেল ০৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
	গাড়িচালক	২৫-০১-২০২৫ (শনিবার)	দুপুর ০৩:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকেল ০৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত

Yousaf Delan  
নেতৃত্ব অধিবাস  
সদস্য-সচিব

বিভাগীয় নিয়োগ/পদোন্নতি/উচ্চতর প্রেত প্রদান কর্মসূলী  
ঢাপত্য অধিদপ্তর, ঢাকা।

# SACRIFICED FOR DEVELOPMENT

State Development Projects and Marginalisation of the Adivasis of the Chittagong Hill Tracts

AZIZUL RASEL

Despite conducting thorough investigations into the project's meteorological, flood control, and financial aspects, the government did not consider it necessary to consult the Adivasis or indigenous people, who were the primary residents of the area. Government departments were aware that a significant number of people would be affected by the construction of the Karnaphuli hydroelectric dam at Kaptai, Rangamati, a district within the CHT region. In the 1950s, there was a discussion about establishing the headquarters of the CHT at Kaptai, Rangamati. However, concerns about the potential inundation of large land areas and environmental deterioration due to the dam's construction led many government officials to oppose this decision. Officials also anticipated large-scale violent protests following the dam's construction.

The state was already aware that the British government had planned a hydroelectric project on the Karnaphuli River in the CHT. In 1906-07, the British colonial government first inspected the Karnaphuli River to assess the feasibility of constructing a dam for hydroelectric power generation. However, little is known about that investigation. In November 1922, Mr. Grieve, a temporary engineer, was appointed to further examine and identify a suitable site for the hydroelectric dam. Mr. Grieve conducted a comprehensive investigation and submitted a detailed report to the relevant department. His findings suggested that approximately 28,000 to 40,000 KW of electricity



Pakistani President Ayub Khan Visiting the Kaptai Dam in 1962.

provides reflections on this issue:

"The 10,000 acres of flat land reserved in Kassalang for rehabilitation shall also go under water, which means that rehabilitation work in this region must stop. There is no question of planning a model town there. It is scheduled to be taken up next year... There should be no rehabilitation below 133 R.L. The majority of the rehabilitation area explored and allotted by us is below 133 R.L... All these have been abandoned. The vast plain between Mahalchari and Panchari will go under water and has to be abandoned."

construction of the Karnaphuli Paper Mills at Chandraghona in the CHT. The Adivasis of the CHT had to endure a double blow from these two massive development projects in the 1950s—the Karnaphuli Hydroelectric Project Scheme and the Karnaphuli Paper Mills. Both projects displaced a large number of Adivasis and exhausted their livelihoods. Even the deputy commissioner of the CHT was dissatisfied with the extensive land acquisition by the state's Development Department. In his letter to the commissioner of the Chittagong division, he writes:

"The Development Department of the Government of Pakistan has been negotiating with me for some time for land in Chandraghona for a Paper Mill. Their requirements were vastly more at the end than they were expected to be at the outset. In fact, when the commissioner and I visited the area last year, we thought they would need practically one quarter of what they now demand. I offered them double the original area, but they wanted the whole, which included the bazar, a supplies Godown, the Police Station, the Post Office, the C and W.D., an Inspection House, and a number of private dwellings and

to the 'tribal' chief. However, the jum cultivators received no compensation. Furthermore, the Labour Commissioner of East Pakistan instructed the Karnaphuli Paper Mills authority not to employ 'tribal' people from the CHT. The government also proposed transferring Chandraghona from the CHT region to the Chittagong district to exploit the area more conveniently.

In its proposal, government administrators suggested repealing the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900, which was passed by the British colonial government.

This Regulation restricted the influx of Bengali people into the CHT while isolating the Adivasis from other parts of Bengal. Willem van Schendel observes, "Far from regional autonomy or the protection of 'tribal' rights (as some would have it), it marked the onset of a process of 'enclavement' in which the hill people were denied access to power and were subordinated and exploited directly by their British overlords." Nevertheless, the Adivasis believe the CHT Regulation of 1900 offered them some protection. The abolition of this Regulation led to a significant influx of the Bengali population into the CHT. However, when the government policymakers proposed the "Proposal for exclusion of CHTs from the category of tribal area," they did not consult the local people. For the policymakers, the region was extremely poor and backward, and the Adivasis lacked political training. They believed the Adivasis lacked political or administrative institutions. Before 1961, there was no district or local board union. They noted that the Adivasis still maintained 'tribal' habits and traditions. For them, before the construction of the Karnaphuli Hydroelectric Scheme, the Adivasis had practically no contact with the outside world. The top government officials repeatedly stressed that most people in the CHT lacked the political consciousness to perceive the impact of the change. They opposed any referendum because they believed the Chiefs and Headmen of the community would control the wishes of the people. In their proposal to exclude the CHT from the category of tribal area, the policymakers' understanding of the Adivasis reflected the West's perception of the East as 'Other,' as Edward W. Said argued in his influential book *Orientalism*. A confidential report on the 'Proposal for exclusion of the CHT from the category of tribal area' provides insight into the state policymakers' mindset:

"Although considerable enlightenment



Chakma Raja's home before (L) and after (R) the construction of the Kaptai Dam.

could be generated upon the project's completion. Further investigations were carried out in 1945 and 1946, led by E.A. Moore, the superintendent engineer of the East Bengal Circle. The British colonial government was close to implementing the project, having collected detailed meteorological and other essential data. The Bengal government had already proposed the utilisation of electricity in various mills and factories in East Bengal and had outlined the departments responsible for the dam's construction, along with an estimated project cost. However, due to political upheaval in the 1940s, the British colonial government could not proceed with the project.

Following the establishment of Pakistan, the state revived the Karnaphuli hydroelectric project in 1948. In addition to local engineers, the Pakistan government hired J.L. Savage, an American engineer, to expedite the project's construction. The Karnaphuli hydroelectric scheme was officially sanctioned in June 1951, with the expectation that electricity would be available for sale by the end of 1960. The project was anticipated to deliver an average continuous power output of 40,000 KW during the monsoon and 20,000 KW at other times. Construction of the Karnaphuli hydroelectric scheme began in 1957 and took almost five years to complete.

rest of the province or from abroad if necessary, and they can live quite happily and comfortably."

In the government's confidential report, the high officials noted that, regardless of what might have happened, they could not alter the plan. The confidential report continues:

"The chief secretary feels that the rehabilitation plans and programme already settled and approved need not undergo any material change or disruption, except that care should be taken to avoid constructing any valuable installations (V.I) such as tarred or concrete roads, model town, official headquarters or otherwise hospitals, schools or colleges, the Rajbari of the Chakma chief, and so on below the level up to which water would rise in the event of a high flood when the dam is ultimately raised another 13 ft."

The construction of the Kaptai dam was a massive blow to the Adivasis of the CHT. It displaced more than 100,000 Adivasis, constituting 25% of the region's population. The government's rehabilitation sites were further inundated between 1965 and 1966. Over 40,000 Adivasis had to flee the country barefoot, seeking refuge in Tripura, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh. It is not that the state was unaware of the possibility of further inundation after the project's completion; the state simply remained silent. The government's confidential report

After the Partition, the Karnaphuli hydroelectric scheme was implemented in a very short time. Construction began in 1957 and was completed by 1962. A significant portion of arable land, arguably the most fertile in the CHT, was submerged. It is estimated that around 40% of the CHT's agrarian land was inundated due to the Kaptai dam's construction. A government confidential report discusses the difficulty of making the rehabilitation plan in such a short time:

"It is impossible to alter the rehabilitation plans so drastically at such short notice without taking the people into confidence, and the psychological effects of these changes are going to be colossal and catastrophic. The coffer dam has been closed, and next year water will rise up to 120 ft... People have, therefore, got to be evacuated somewhere. Even if they are settled on steep hill slopes and persuaded to grow fruit trees and tea, the scheme is not likely to take shape, be approved, and commence for another two years, and will begin yielding results only after 7 or 8 years. During this period, a population of nearly a lakh and a quarter of persons (300 sq. miles of a most densely populated area)..."

Apart from the Karnaphuli hydroelectric scheme, the fledgling postcolonial state undertook various development projects. One significant project was the



Layout plan of the Karnaphuli Hydroelectric Project. Courtesy: National Archives of Bangladesh.

fields. In fact, they demanded the whole of Chandraghona excluding the Baptist Mission Hospital."

The large-scale land acquisition by Karnaphuli Paper Mills was not properly compensated. The Mills evicted and dispossessed a large number of Jummas from their fertile jum land, leaving them in a vulnerable condition. These poor Adivasis were not adequately rehabilitated. The Karnaphuli Paper Mills authority allocated only a nominal amount of money

is slowly creeping into tribal life, the bulk of the population continues passionately to adhere to old tribal laws, customs, and traditions, handed down from generation to generation, which even today largely regulate their pattern of living. An overwhelming majority still live in a world of their own and have little in common with the people inhabiting the rest of the country. They have peers across the border with whom they have far greater ethnical affinity, and even though the lure from outside is greater, they have mostly stuck to their old homes because their old way of life has not been disturbed. The tribals are yet incapable of comprehending political or other fundamental rights. Nonetheless, they enjoy, in quite a large measure, all the fundamental rights exercisable by persons elsewhere in the country."

The Karnaphuli hydroelectric dam at Kaptai significantly impacted the biodiversity and environment. Due to the dam's construction, much wildlife was submerged, and their habitats were destroyed. Indirectly, the dam inundated a large area, putting pressure on the wildlife habitats in other parts of the CHT, as the displaced population from the Kaptai region was forced to clear forests in different areas, thereby shrinking wildlife habitats throughout the CHT.

#### Conclusion

Frantz Fanon, an Afro-Caribbean French psychiatrist, revolutionary thinker, and philosopher, prophetically apprehended the tribulations of the once-colonised and underdeveloped countries. Fanon writes: "The cracks in it explain how easy it is for young independent countries to switch back from nation to ethnic group and from state to tribe—a regression which is terribly detrimental and prejudicial to the development of the nation and national unity... As we have seen, its [national bourgeoisie] of once colonised underdeveloped countries' vocation is not to transform the nation but prosaically to serve as a conveyor belt for capitalism, forced to camouflage itself behind the mask of neocolonialism." The nature of capitalism in Africa or other colonised regions in the world differed from capitalism in the Western world. It is more appropriate to say that the Black, non-Western, and Indigenous experience of capitalism differs from that of Western people. Recently, some scholars term this form of capitalism, brought by the colonialists, as 'colonial racial capitalism.' They argue that this nature of capitalism persists today. Throughout the British colonial intervention and in the postcolonial states of Pakistan and Bangladesh, the states persistently continued the colonial and neocolonial exploitation of the Adivasis of the CHT through so-called development projects.

All the primary sources used here are from the National Archives of Bangladesh. I am grateful to the staff of the National Archives, particularly Elias Miah, for their generous support.

Azizul Rasel is a faculty member at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (on leave) and a PhD candidate at McGill University, Canada.



Kaptai Dam in 1965.

# Star SPORT

DHAKA MONDAY JANUARY 20, 2025, MAGH 6, 1431 BS

**'Too old but still here!'**

REUTERS, Melbourne

Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova wrote "Too old but still here!" on the camera as she left court after beating Donna Vekic to reach her fourth Australian Open quarterfinal on Sunday.

The Russian 27th seed said she was surprised to make it to the last eight but thought the question of whether 33 was too advanced an age to compete was better directed elsewhere.

"I'm just having fun this year with this signing and calling myself too old to be on tour, which kind of part of it is true," she said.

"The question is to the young girls, because I'm still here and I'm in the quarterfinal."

Pavlyuchenkova said she sat her team down last year and explained that she would be taking a different approach to preparations for her 20th season as a professional.

## Djokovic sets up blockbuster ALCARAZ clash

**Irrepressible 10-time champion Novak Djokovic set up a blockbuster Australian Open quarterfinal Sunday with Carlos Alcaraz after downing Czech Jiri Lehecka. The 37-year-old Serb, who is gunning for a record 25th Grand Slam title, beat the 24th seed 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) on Rod Laver Arena.**

Djokovic has now made it into the last eight at Melbourne Park for the 15th time, a record he now shares with Roger Federer and one ahead of Rafael Nadal and John Newcombe.

Djokovic also extended his own all-time mark to 61 for most quarterfinal appearances at majors, three ahead of Federer.



In a blockbuster quarterfinal on Tuesday, Djokovic will square off against Alcaraz, who progressed after Jack Draper retired hurt during their last-16 match when the Briton was losing 7-5, 6-1.

Djokovic and Alcaraz have played each other seven times with the



Serb leading 4-3, including victory in their last clash in the Paris Olympics final.

Alcaraz is already a four-time Slam winner aged 21 but has never gone beyond the Australian Open quarterfinals.

## Competing leagues and exodus of stars creating humdrum BPL

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI, from Chatogram

Rangpur Riders star Alex Hales played his last game for the franchise in the current edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) on January 9 in Sylhet. Just three days later, he appeared for Desert Vipers against Abu Dhabi Knight Riders in the ILT20 in Abu Dhabi.

This is the life of a franchise cricketer in the current cricketing climate, one day you are here, the next day you are in some other place. Priorities change quickly for players while competition amongst leagues to attract the best players grows more intense every year.

"Alex would have stayed for the whole tournament if there was no scheduling clash with ILT20," a source close to the development said.

Even though Hales made just six appearances for Rangpur in this edition, he left his mark by scoring 218 runs at an average of over 54 and a strike rate of 140. The Englishman also scored an unbeaten 113 which lit up the tournament early on.

Hales' departure was another drawback to the excitement factor for the BPL which already suffers from a dearth of renowned T20 stars.

The Big Bash League, SA20 and ILT20 are the three marquee T20 leagues currently clashing with the BPL, of which the latter two have become the preferred destination



**Fortune Barishal opener Dawid Malan, one of the few big foreign players in the Bangladesh Premier League, helped his side to their fifth victory with a match-winning unbeaten half-century against Chittagong Kings in Chatogram yesterday.**

for most of the foreign stars.

Although South Africa's SA20 and the UAE's ILT20 are both relatively new leagues, they have the financial might to attract big stars, as seen with Hales.

Enamul Haque Jr, the assistant coach of Chittagong Kings, felt BPL had a scheduling issue.

"Definitely it's a scheduling problem since the big stars want to play in ILT20 or SA20. In 2012-13, many big stars played in the tournament here. In fact, I played alongside them for Chittagong Kings," Enamul said.

"If there is a scheduling clash with BPL, everyone would prefer to play in Dubai or South Africa. If we can shift it to December, this problem could be solved since the players would play here first before going there," he said when asked what BPL needs to do to draw bigger stars.

BCB's cricket operations in-charge Shahriar Nafees informed that a schedule change remains unlikely in the near future.

"The January February window we use [from beginning] was approved by the ICC till 2027. So, our schedule partially clashes with SA20 and heavily clashes with ILT20. We can only change the window after 2027," he informed The Daily Star.

The excitement factor is mitigated if stars leave midway or after two-three appearances and it is one question that the BCB will have to address going forward.

## Conte pleased with Napoli growth

REUTERS

Napoli manager Antonio Conte praised his side following a narrow win over Atalanta at Saturday, highlighting the significant growth the team has shown over the past few months.

Romelu Lukaku's late header secured a 3-2 victory for Napoli, boosting their Scudetto hopes and avenging their 3-0 home loss to Atalanta in November.

"I had already said before the match that this team has grown a lot. Don't forget that just over two months ago, Atalanta put three goals past us," Conte told reporters.

"I think if we'd had even more time to go through the process, we'd have done even better. The team has above all grown in dealing with difficulties, that is what I want to underline."

## What to WATCH

**SONY SPORTS 2 AND 5**  
Australian Open 4th round Live from 9:00 am  
**T SPORTS**  
BPL

Dhaka vs Sylhet Live from 1:30 pm  
Chittagong vs Rajshahi Live from 6:30 pm  
**STAR SPORTS 2**  
SA20 Paarl Royals vs Joburg

**Super Kings**  
Live from 9:30 pm  
**SELECT HD1**  
Premier League Chelsea vs Wolves Live from 2:00 am (Tuesday)

## Allowance hike for Swadhin Bangla Football Team members

SPORTS REPORTER

National Sports Council (NSC) on Sunday decided to increase the monthly allowance from Tk 3000 to Tk 20,000 for the living members of the Swadhin Bangla Football Team, following a directive from the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Currently, 19 members of the Swadhin Bangla football team are alive.

The decision will come into effect from today. The Ministry of Youth and Sports formed a three-member committee comprising its joint secretary Dr Sheikh Mohammad Jubayed Hossain, deputy secretary of Ministry of Liberation War Affairs and NSC's finance director Saidur Rashid in regards to the matter.

The NSC has been disbursing a monthly allowance of Tk 3000 to the living members of the Swadhin Bangla Football Team from its own funds for the last 21 years but many members of the team had requested for a hike in the allowance.

The committee, which was formed on December 23, 2023 and submitted the report on January 13, 2025, said in its report that Tk 3000 allowance is negligible considering the current economic situation and inflation. The committee pointed out the fact that the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs disburses Tk 20,000 to each listed freedom fighter.

## Brighton rock woeful Man Utd

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United crashed to a dismal 3-1 defeat against Brighton as Ruben Amorim's problems mounted on the day Old Trafford paid a sombre tribute to legendary striker Denis Law.

Amorim's side were hoping to mark Law's death aged 84 by producing the kind of entertaining display that was the hallmark of the United star's teams.

Instead, they crumbled to a sixth defeat in 11 league games since Amorim arrived from Sporting Lisbon to replace the sacked Erik ten Hag.

United are languishing in 13th place and although they are 10 points above the relegation zone, they are far from certain to avoid being dragged into the survival fight on the evidence of this wretched display.

Yankuba Minteh set the tone for United's moribund performance with an early opener for Brighton.

Bruno Fernandes equalised with a penalty before half-time, but second half goals from Kaoru Mitoma and Georginio

Rutter left United in turmoil.

After a gritty draw at Liverpool, an FA Cup third round win with 10 men at Arsenal and a 3-1 win over lowly Southampton, United looked as if they might have turned a corner.

But, in truth, they were lucky to beat Southampton and all their flaws were laid bare against a dynamic Brighton team who have won six of their last seven league meetings with United.

Amorim's side have failed to keep a clean sheet in 12 matches in all competitions, with both their leaky defence and error-prone keeper Andre Onana exposed by Brighton.

It was a depressing result on an emotional day for United after Law passed away on Friday.

Law, diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia in 2021, is the third top scorer in United's history, with 237 goals in 404 appearances.

Before the match, there was a minute's applause and both teams wore black armbands throughout the match.



Off-spinner Sajid Khan celebrates with Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan after spinners ruled the roost in Multan to help hosts Pakistan thrash West Indies by 127 runs on the third day of the first of the two Tests on Sunday. Sajid took 5-50 for match figures of 9-115 while leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed snared 4-27 in the second innings as West Indies were dismissed for 123, falling well short of their victory target of 251. Pakistani spinners claimed all 20 West Indian wickets in the game, with left-arm Noman Ali claiming match figures of six for 83, while West Indies' left-arm Jomel Warrican had led the spin attack for the tourists with a career-best 7-32.

PHOTO: AFP

## PROCUREMENT OF CBS1 (95 GSM) CHEQUE PAPER

Sealed quotations are inviting from any bonafide Indentors/suppliers/manufacturers against supplying of 10,000 (Ten thousand) reams CBS-1, 95 GSM (as per Bangladesh Bank specification) sensitized cheque paper having size 29.00X21.50 inches each sheet which must be imported from abroad. The tender schedule and particulars of quotation will be available at Central Accounts Division, Pubali Bank PLC, Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, on payment of Tk. 5,000.00 (Taka five thousand) only (non-refundable) in the form of payment order favoring "Pubali Bank PLC, Head Office, Dhaka" during the office hours till 27 January 2025.

Mohammad Liton Miah FCA  
GM, Division Head & CFO

CENTRAL ACCOUNTS DIVISION  
Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.



Kylian Mbappe was in inspired form, scoring twice to guide Real Madrid to a comeback 4-1 win over visitors Las Palmas on Sunday that lifted the defending champions to the top of the LaLiga standings. Real leapfrogged Atletico Madrid, who were stunned 1-0 at lowly Leganes on Saturday, to sit top on 46 points, two ahead of their local rivals in second.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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## Don't indulge in any misdeeds

Tarique tells BNP leaders and activists, warns them of consequences for mistakes

UNB, Dhaka

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has urged party leaders and activists not to give "shelter to intruders".

He also urged them to refrain from wrongdoings, reminding them that the people may once again show their strength as they did on August 5 if the activists make mistakes.

Speaking virtually at a discussion yesterday, he also said the government's accountability must be ensured through timely elections.

"I humbly request all the soldiers of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia all over Bangladesh, please don't allow intruders to crowd around you...please don't get misguided," the BNP leader said.

The BNP organised the discussion at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, marking the 89th birth anniversary of



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## 2009 BDR CARNAGE Around 200 granted bail in explosives case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal dealing with a case filed under the Explosive Substances Act regarding the 2009 BDR mutiny granted bail to suspects who have been acquitted by higher courts in the BDR carnage case and have no pending appeals against those acquittals.

Judge Md Ibrahim Mia of the Metropolitan Special Tribunal 2 of Dhaka gave the order after holding a hearing on their bail petitions at a makeshift courtroom inside the Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj, Special Public Prosecutor Jewel Munshi Sumon told The Daily Star.

"Around 200 people have been granted bail. The exact number of those granted bail can only be confirmed upon receiving the court's written order," he said.

Earlier, some 400 accused filed bail petitions with the court, said a court staffer.

Yesterday, the judge also recorded statements of prosecution witnesses Major (retd) Syed Md Yousuf.

With Yousuf, a total of 284 prosecution witnesses testified before the court.

The BDR carnage on February 25-26, 2009 resulted in the massacre of 74 people, including 57 army officials, at the BDR headquarters in Pilkhana.

On November 5, 2013, a Dhaka court handed death sentences to 150 BDR members and two civilians, and life imprisonment to 160 others for their role and involvement in the carnage.

A total of 256 people, mostly BDR soldiers, were given jail sentences.

The court acquitted 278 others, but the prosecution later appealed against the acquittal of 69.

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## LAUNDERED MONEY Govt to send teams abroad to get it back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government is going to send teams to Dubai and other tax havens to identify Bangladeshis' ill-gotten assets abroad and bring the money back.

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed revealed the decision yesterday and said sending teams alone would not be enough. "We also need concrete evidence [against the money launderers]," he said.

"We have taken various steps to identify and repatriate laundered money. But to be very pragmatic, we may not be able to recover all the money," Salehuddin said.

"However, our objective is to send a message that this [money laundering] will not happen again," he said at the 9th edition of the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards Bangladesh Grand Finale, organised

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Illegal tree logging continues in the remote Remecri area of Thanchi, Bandarban. Despite the clear evidence of such activities along the Naf, there is almost no enforcement of the law. Deforestation makes the hills prone to mudslides, putting local communities at serious risk

PHOTO: MONG SING HAI MARMA



BNP leaders and activists placing wreath at the grave of former president Ziaur Rahman in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar to pay homage to the party founder on his 89th birth anniversary yesterday. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Trump to take oath as US president today

Reports say America's 47th president will issue 100 orders on day one

AGENCIES

Donald Trump will take oath as America's 47th president on Monday noon (BST 11:00pm) in Washington DC, sealing one of the most remarkable political comebacks in recent history and inaugurating a term that promises to remake the American state and overturn the international system.

The president-elect landed in Washington on Saturday ahead of his inauguration, with the billionaire Republican set to attend a series of events and celebrations before reclaiming the presidency.

Recent inaugurations have been held on the steps of the US Capitol overlooking the National Mall, but Trump announced Friday the ceremony was moving indoors because of unusually cold weather forecast to hit Washington.

"I think we made the right decision," he told NBC. "The weather was really looking bad in terms of the coldness, and I think it would have been dangerous for a lot of people."

Following Saturday's private party, Trump is expected to lay a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery on Sunday before attending a rally of his supporters

in Washington.

On Sunday night, the tradition usually is that the president-elect stays at Blair House, the president's guest house next to the White House. Trump, along with the incoming First Lady Melania Trump, will then pray at St John's Church on the inauguration day morning, located right across the White House, before President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden host them for tea in the White House. All four will then depart for the US Capitol, for a much smaller ceremony than planned.

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts will administer the oath to Trump, while SC Justice Brett Kavanaugh will do the same for the vice-president-elect JD Vance. Trump will then deliver his inaugural address, the theme of which

he told NBC News this weekend will be "unity and strength".

Trump has signalled his intent to announce a slew of executive orders minutes after taking office on Monday.

When he met with Senate Republicans earlier this month at the Capitol, Trump said he was preparing more than 100 executive orders for his first day, reflecting a pledge to bolster immigration enforcement, improve border security

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Woman raped on way home from capital  
Victim's family sues four

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Moulvibazar

A man was arrested in a case filed in connection with the gang rape of an 18-year-old woman on her way home to Habiganj for her wedding from Dhaka, where she worked as a domestic help.

Police held the suspect, Parvez Mia, 25, on Saturday.

The incident occurred in Chunarughat upazila on January 15.

Police said Parvez admitted to his involvement during preliminary interrogation.

The victim was admitted to a hospital for treatment.

Her cousin, also a domestic help, was accompanying the bride-to-be when the victim was returning home to Nabiganj upazila. The cousin, aged 17, was also assaulted.

According to the case lodged by the victim's mother on Saturday, the two cousins hired an auto-rickshaw after arriving at Shayestaganj upazila on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway

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## 'Our blood will be spilled but border will remain secure'

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The border is completely secure and no one from the other side will be able to cross into Bangladesh, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said yesterday.

"The BGB is always alert. No one can breach our border as long as we are alive. Our blood will be shed, but the border will remain secure," he said.

The adviser made these remarks during the certificate distribution and closing ceremony of the 137th Survey and Settlement Training Course 2024-25 for BCS cadre officials (administration, police, forest, and railway) and Bangladesh Judicial

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## EC will stick to its role set by law

Says CEC; door-to-door visits for updating voter roll starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission will not be involved in politics, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin said yesterday.

He said this when a reporter asked for his take on BNP's demand for election in the middle of this year.

He also informed that the Election Commission would begin its door-to-door visits today to update the voter list.

Nasir made the comments at an event in the capital's Agargaon in which the UNDP handed over laptops, scanners, and other equipment to the commission.

The commission is preparing for the next polls in line with the timeline given by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, he said.



## UK MPs withdraw report over bias

Say it unduly painted Hasina regime in good light

STAR REPORT

A group of UK MPs has withdrawn a controversial report on Bangladesh after complaints that it was biased towards the ousted government of Sheikh Hasina, The Guardian reported yesterday.

The all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on the Commonwealth issued a report on Bangladesh last November that criticised the current regime in Dhaka but was accused of significant inaccuracies.

Officials say, however, that it is no longer being distributed and is "under review" after a Labour MP complained about it in the House of Commons.

"The report in question remains an internal document under review and has been shared with the [Foreign Office] as part of the group's broader deliberative process," a spokesperson told the UK-based newspaper.

"It is not intended for wider dissemination, and the APPG will not be taking the matter further or making any follow-ups."

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## CHEQUE DISHONOUR CASE Arrest warrant issued against Shakib Al Hasan

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued an arrest warrant against cricketer and former Awami League lawmaker Shakib Al Hasan, along with three others, in connection with a cheque dishonour case involving IFIC Bank.

Dhaka's Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ziaudur Rahman passed the order after Shakib and the others failed to appear before the court as directed.

On December 18 last year, a summons was issued requiring them to appear before the court yesterday following a case filed by Shahibur Rahman, a relationship officer at IFIC Bank.

According to the case statement, Agro Farm,



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