

# Titas Gas sinks further in red on system loss

New MD pledges to bring down gas leakages

ASIFUR RAHMAN

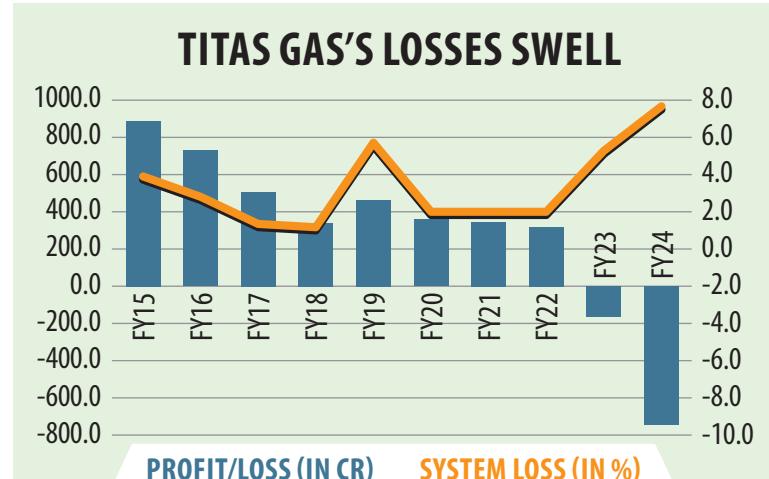
Titas Gas's system loss hit a decade high of 1,204 million cubic meters in fiscal 2023-24 -- enough to meet a month's import bill of high-priced liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Gas unaccounted for because of illegal connections, leakages from old or corroded distribution lines, pipeline damages caused by underground work of utility services, lack of information regarding actual gas use by non-metered customers, and measurement errors in intake points are counted as system loss.

Last fiscal year, Titas, the country's largest piped gas distributor, saw a system loss of 7.67 percent -- way past the acceptable 2 percent mark, according to Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission.

This was worth about Tk 2,945 crore, which is enough to meet a month's LNG import bill.

Subsequently, the once-profitable company's losses more than trebled



from a year earlier to Tk 744.08 crore in fiscal 2023-24, according to its latest annual report.

"Our first priority is to bring down the system loss," said Shahnewaz Parvez, managing director of Titas Gas since September 10 last year.

System loss can be brought down in two ways: removing illegal connections and replacing the old distribution pipelines.

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A family reunites with overwhelming joy and relief at the gate of Dhaka Central Jail as 168 former members of the erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles were released from different prisons after 16 long years yesterday. They were accused under the Explosive Substances Act following the 2009 BDR carnage.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7

## RELEASE OF EX-BDR MEN From jail to loving embrace of family

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

For the first time in her 17-year-old life, Juena Jamal Oishee yesterday truly saw her father Jamal Uddin Khan, a former sepoy of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), now the Border Guard Bangladesh.

"I was just one year old when my father was imprisoned. For the last 17 long years, I have only known him through stories," Oishee said.

Standing outside Kashimpur Central Jail 2, she said, "I can finally see my father ... Words cannot describe this feeling."

Yesterday, 168 members of formerly BDR were released from various prisons across Dhaka and Gazipur. They have been in jail for 16 years in a case filed under the Explosive Substances Act related to the 2009 Pilkhana carnage.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Polls likely by  
year end or  
early 2026

Says EC Masud

UNB, Patuakhali

Election Commissioner Abdur Rahmehl Masud has said the parliamentary polls are expected to be held by late 2025 or early 2026.

"We are fully concentrating on the national election now."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7

## GOVT'S NEUTRALITY Uprising leaders, BNP at odds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some key July uprising student leaders, including two interim government advisers, yesterday reacted strongly to BNP leader Mirza Fakhrul Islam's remarks that a "neutral government" will be required to hold the polls if the current interim administration fails to remain impartial.

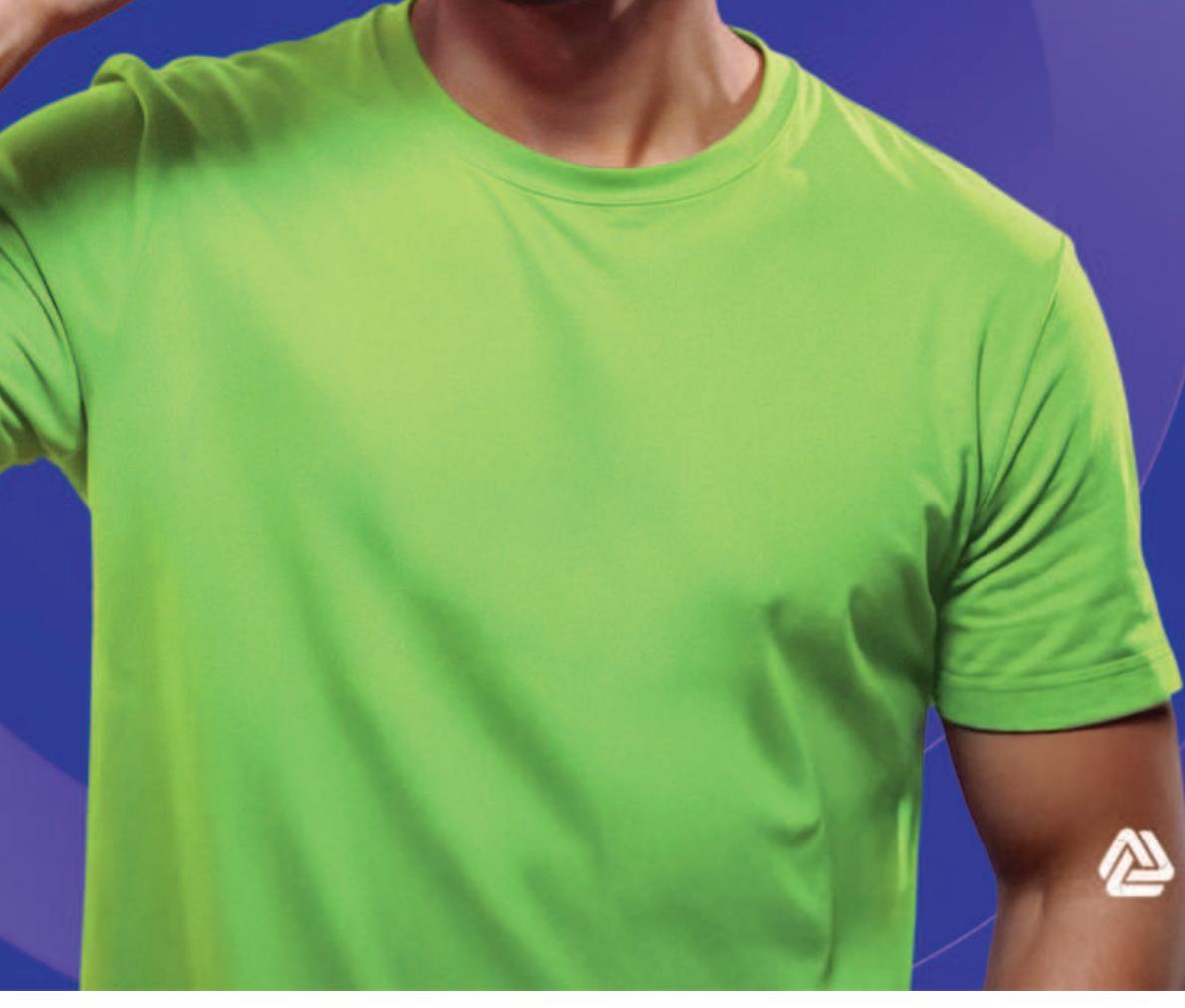
Nahid Islam, information and broadcasting adviser, in a Facebook post said the BNP secretary general's comment essentially hints at formation of another 1/11-like government of 2007.

"It was from the settlement of 1/11 that the Awami

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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## 71 Bangladeshis without valid papers held in Malaysia

AGENCIES

The Kuala Lumpur Immigration Department arrested 176 illegal immigrants, including 71 Bangladeshi nationals, during a raid in the Jalan Alor area of Bukit Bintang on Wednesday night, reports Malaysia's national news agency Bernama.

Kuala Lumpur Immigration Director Wan Mohammed Saupee Wan Yusoff said the operation, conducted in collaboration with Kuala Lumpur City Hall, began at 7:15pm (local time) following public complaints and investigations.

In addition to the Bangladeshis, the arrestees included 60 individuals from Myanmar, 24 from Indonesia, 16 from Nepal, three from Pakistan, and one each from Egypt and Sudan, Yusoff said.

The detainees are being investigated under Malaysian laws related to the absence of valid documentation and overstaying in the country, the report said.

All those arrested were taken to the Kuala Lumpur Immigration Headquarters, the immigration official told reporters after the operation.



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus talks to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk yesterday on the sidelines of World Economic Forum summit in Davos, Switzerland. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PID

## Titas Gas sinks further in red on system loss

FROM PAGE 1

Most of the pipelines of Titas were installed in 1968-69 and have leaks in many places, he told The Daily Star.

Titas Gas, which accounts for two thirds of the gas distributed in Bangladesh, has prepared the tender documents to replace the pipelines in Dhaka and Narayanganj. The tender will be floated next month.

"We will need overground and underground detectors to identify the leakages in pipelines. Then we will replace those pipelines under small clusters through the tender process," he said, adding that the small leakages will

be resolved immediately. However, it will not be possible to replace the pipelines that are below 6-7 meters underground.

"We will try to install new pipelines there."

Titas Gas has 35 vigilance teams that conduct drives regularly to remove illegal connections.

"We are trying as per our capacity. There are syndicates consisting of locals, contractors and some workers of Titas itself. We are identifying them."

Titas has ramped up its drive after the ministry of power, energy and mineral resources recently got its own executive magistrate.

"We have an area-wise routine for conducting drives. We are focusing

on the illegal pipelines connected to the industries as those consume much higher volumes of gas — sometimes 2,000 more than a household user," Parvez said.

Since September last year, Titas's vigilance teams have removed about 100 kilometres of illegal pipelines in Keraniganj, Kamrangirchahr, Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Savar, Tongi, Gazipur, Dharmondi, Mirpur, Gulshan, Mymensingh, Meghnaghat and Narsingdi.

Last fiscal year, about 2.5 lakh illegal connections were snapped, down from 3.27 lakh connections a year earlier, according to Titas's annual report.

About 420 km of illegal pipelines were removed, up from 390 km in fiscal 2022-23.

Connections to 110 industrial, 186 commercial, 54 captive and four CNG stations were disconnected in those drives.

Legalising the existing illegal connections would help reduce system loss and increase Titas's revenue, Parvez said.

"It's like whitening the black money."

For example, some households have legal connections for two to three burners but use the line for 10 to 12 connections.

"We couldn't charge for the extra use. If we legalise those connections, we could charge them,"

he said, adding that the policymakers have to make a call on this. The company has about 30 lakh customers at present.

To reduce gas theft, enforcement of the law should be strengthened.

For instance, the Gas Act has the provision to jail a person for illegal gas use. But this provision is never enforced.

"If we can set examples in some areas, illegal gas use may come down. Besides, we face obstacles from the locals. There have been some incidents where people attacked our staffers and officials. We only file regular cases against them but there are hardly any examples of due penalty," Parvez said.

Ijaz Hossain, former dean of engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, said theft, with the help of Titas officials, is the main cause of system loss, although some leakages do take place due to old pipelines.

"Some set up pipelines at night — strict actions should be taken against them. Besides, we do not have proper metering systems in many places. Meters should be installed in the offtake points to identify the places where most of the losses take place."

Besides, replacing the old pipelines is one of the major ways to reduce system loss, Hossain added.

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"I can't see any fruitful initiatives taken by the government so far," Rizwan grumbled, a 25-year-old student who took part in the protests that drove autocratic ex-leader Sheikh Hasina into exile on August 5.

Unemployment was a key driver of protests last year. Since the uprising, it has only grown worse.

At the end of September 2024, the number of people seeking employment in the country of 170 million hit 2.66 million, a six percent increase from 2.49 million the year before, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Educated Bangladeshis make up 87 percent of those without work, according to the BBS data.

The International Monetary Fund warned in September that economic activity had "slowed markedly, while inflation remains at double digit levels", with tax revenues down while spending pressures had increased.

For many, the euphoria of Hasina's ouster is fading.

## High growth

FROM PAGE 1

spiraled in July, provoking a violent crackdown that drew global criticism, although Hasina's government denied using excessive force.

The student protesters recommended Yunus as the chief adviser in the interim government tasked with holding fresh elections.

Yunus, who has promised to hold elections by the end of 2025 or early 2026, said he was not interested in running.

Known as the "banker to the poor", Yunus and the Grameen Bank he founded won the Nobel for helping lift millions from poverty with tiny loans of less than \$100 offered to the rural poor, too poor to gain attention from traditional banks.

"For me, personally, I'm not very driven by growth rates," Yunus said. "I'm driven by the quality of life of the people at the very bottom level. So I would rather bring an economy which avoids the whole idea of wealth concentration."

Ties between Bangladesh and India, who have strong trade and cultural links, have become fraught since Hasina was ousted and she took refuge in New Delhi.

Yunus has demanded that India send Hasina back to Bangladesh so she can face trial for what it says are crimes against protesters and her opponents, and crimes she is accused of committing during her tenure.

Calling India's rival China a long-term friend of Bangladesh at this difficult time, Yunus said the strained relationship with New Delhi "hurts me a lot personally".

Bangladesh-India relationship should be the strongest possible. You know, you cannot draw the map of India without drawing the map of Bangladesh," he said, referring to how Bangladesh's land border runs almost entirely alongside India's.

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## Step up fight against misinformation

CA urges Meta; UN report on July atrocities by mid-Feb

AGENCIES

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday asked Meta to take steps to tackle the spread of misinformation and fake news through Facebook in Bangladesh.

The chief adviser made the call when he held talks with Sir Nick Clegg, the head of global affairs at Meta, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum annual meeting in the Swiss city of Davos, Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Abdul Kalam Azad Majumder told BSS.

Prof Yunus said oligarchs and politicians linked to the ousted government led by Sheikh Hasina siphoned off tens of billions of dollars from Bangladesh during her 15 years of rule.

"These people are now spending their fortune to spread lies and misinformation about Bangladesh," Yunus told Clegg, who is also a former deputy prime minister of England.

Clegg said Facebook would continue to do fact-checking and digital verification in Bangladesh.

During the half-an-hour-long meeting, Clegg also offered Meta's expertise in drafting a new cyber security law. "We have a lot of experience here," he said.

The meeting was one of the over a dozen engagements



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## Tk 250cr assets of Salman F Rahman seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Financial Crime Unit of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has seized assets worth Tk 250 crore belonging to Salman F Rahman, adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The CID said the Beximco Group owner laundered money by exporting goods worth \$260,14,984 to his son's Dubai-based company, RR Global Trading FZE, under the names of Apollo Apparels Limited and Kanchipur Apparels Limited through 21 LCs/Sales contracts between 2020-2024.

A money laundering case is under investigation. Following a court order, approximately 2,000 decimals of land in Dhaka's Dothar and structures built on it have been seized. The current market value of these properties is Tk 250 crore.

The Financial Crimes Unit of CID has filed 17 cases against Salman and his associates for laundering \$83 million to various countries.

## Worker dies falling from ladder

UNB, Dhaka

A power company worker died after falling from a ladder while setting up an electric line behind the BSMMU hospital in Dhaka yesterday.

The deceased, identified as Zahid, 35, was employed by Moon Power Company. He was from Jamalpur, said Inspector Md Faruk, in charge of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital Police Outpost.

Zahid was rushed to BSMMU hospital, before being transferred to the DMCH emergency department for advanced treatment at 3:20pm. Doctors declared him dead at 4:25pm, the police officer said.

## Woman held for arson in Bangshal

UNB, Dhaka

Police yesterday arrested a woman for allegedly setting fire to a shoe factory in the Ganguli Lane area of Dhaka's Bangshal.

The arrestee, identified as Asma Begum, 28, was held while attempting to ignite a shoe factory. She was detained with a gas lighter around 10:30am, police said.

The fire broke out on the balcony of the second-floor room of Sanjid Shoe Factory. The blaze was brought under control by locals and firefighters, said Taleb Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP.

"Shortly after the fire, Asma Begum was found attempting to set fire to another factory in the vicinity. She was detained with the help of locals," Taleb said, adding that four of her accomplices managed to flee the scene.

Efforts are underway to arrest the other suspects, he said. A case was filed.

## 2 held with 10,000 govt textbooks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested two members of a syndicate involved in stockpiling government textbooks.

Speaking at a press briefing at the DMP Media Centre yesterday, Mohammad Nasirul Islam, joint commissioner of DMP (DB-South), said the two were arrested from the Banglabora area in Sutrapur on Wednesday.

Acting on a tip off, the DB conducted the raid and seized two trucks carrying 10,000 textbooks meant for free distribution to primary and secondary school students.

The arrestees are Sirajul Islam Ujjal, 55, and Md Delwar Hossain, 56.

The government provides free textbooks to primary and secondary school students at the start of each academic year.

However, a group has been undermining this initiative by illegally hoarding the free textbooks and selling them on the open market, said the joint commissioner.

The Kotwali Zonal Team of Lalbagh DB also conducted raids in several warehouses in Ispahani Lane, Banglabora, Sutrapur, and recovered the textbooks.

The seized textbooks are valued at around Tk 8 lakh.

These books, published by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), were of various subjects meant for students of classes one to nine.

The DB official said they would continue operations to arrest other members of the syndicate.



Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman being adorned with the 17th "Colonel of the Regiment" of the traditional East Bengal Regiment in Chattogram Cantonment yesterday.

PHOTO: ISPR

## ACC offices, special courts in all districts

Proposes reform committee

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Reform Commission has proposed a nationwide expansion of the ACC's activities to strengthen the anti-graft body's operations.

In its report submitted to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on January 15, the commission, led by Dr Iftekharuzzaman, recommended establishing ACC offices in every district and setting up special judge courts.

Currently, 36 regional ACC offices operate across 34 districts, with two regional offices each in Dhaka and Chattogram.

The districts without ACC offices include Rajbari, Manikganj, Netrakona, Natore, Chapainawabganj, Sirajganj, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Sathkhira, Narail, Meherpur, Barguna, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Khagrachhari, Brahmanbaria,

**We hope that if these recommendations are implemented, the ACC will become more dynamic.**

DR IFTEKHARUZZAMAN  
Head of ACC Reform Commission

### KEY SUGGESTIONS



- Form offices in all districts
- Special courts in all districts
- Avoid delays in probes
- Streamline complaint management

district ACC offices in a phased manner, ensuring each office is adequately equipped with the necessary logistical support.

The commission suggested establishing "special judge courts" in all districts with existing ACC offices.

They also proposed establishing such courts as soon as possible in districts where new ACC offices will be set up.

The report also suggested how to streamline complaint management and minimise delays in ACC investigations and inquiries.

To enhance efficiency, the commission recommended that recommendations from district or divisional review committees should not be re-evaluated by the central review committee of the ACC.

Furthermore, it advised granting district or divisional offices the authority to take post-complaint actions in cases involving offenses below a certain threshold, as determined by the ACC.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, also the executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said, "The reform commission has made several recommendations, including forming offices in all districts, to avoid delays in ACC investigations and inquiries and to streamline complaint management."

"We hope that if these recommendations are implemented, the ACC will become more dynamic."

The commission advised establishing



A boy rides a bike through a road dug up for drainage work in the Janata Housing area of Adabor yesterday. Despite the project running for over a week, there are no proper safety measures or barricades in place, putting pedestrians at risk.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Army chief adorned with 'Colonel of the Regiment'

BSS, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday urged all the members of the armed forces to be ready to face the challenges of 21st century through modern training.

He said this during his visit to Chattogram Cantonment where he was adorned with the 17th "Colonel of the Regiment" of the traditional East Bengal Regiment.

Colonel of the Regiment is a prestigious military position signifying leadership and guardianship over a specific regiment within the army, often with historical significance, said a release of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

On his arrival at the parade ground, the army chief was also given a guard of honour.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## We should focus on narrowing the trade gap

Foreign affairs adviser tells event in China

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain, who is now in China on an official visit, yesterday laid emphasis on narrowing trade gap and fostering regional connectivity with China to promote equitable growth.



He made the remark while delivering a keynote address at a seminar titled "Our Shared Vision for Peace, Stability, and Prosperity" in the Shanghai Institute for International Studies in Shanghai, said a foreign ministry press release.

He outlined a forward-looking vision for global peace, and stressed that economic cooperation is a cornerstone for sustainable development and stability.

Reflecting on global challenges, he noted that peace and security are collective responsibilities that demand inclusive economic frameworks and greater emphasis on empowering

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

## Most people lost trust in interim govt: GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The historic Mass Uprising Day will be observed today to commemorate the 1969 movement against the Pakistani military ruler Ayub Khan, which eventually led to the Liberation War and the emergence of Bangladesh.

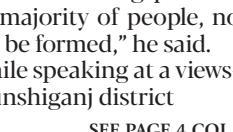
On this day in 1969, Matiur Rahman Mallik, a grade IX student of Nabakumar Institution, and Rustam Ali, a rickshaw-puller, were killed in police firing on demonstrators in Dhaka as the Pakistani rulers tried to suppress the uprising. The killings sparked protests that eventually saw the fall of General Ayub Khan.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus issued separate messages marking the day.

The president said the mass uprising of 1969 has inspired the people in all democratic movements and struggles, including the July-August student-peoples-led mass uprising in 2024.

The chief adviser said, "The mass uprising of 1969 against misrule and exploitation still inspires us."

It is responsibility of all, including the government that came into being as a result of the mass uprising of students, workers, and public, to remain respectful of the values of 1969 in building a democratic social system, he said.



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday deferred the date for hearing of the review petition filed by Jamaat-e-Islami leader ATM Azharul Islam, challenging the verdict that upheld his death sentence in a war crimes case, to February 20.

A full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed was scheduled to hold the hearing.

But the bench passed the deferment order as a judge of the bench is on a leave, advocate Mohammad Shishir, a lawyer for Azharul, told The Daily Star.

Barrister Abdur Razzaq, Barrister Ehsan A. Siddiqi and Advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir appeared for Azharul at the court.

## WAR CRIMES Azharul's review petition deferred

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## Koko's 10th death anniv today

UNB, Dhaka

The tenth death anniversary of Arifat Ramman Koko, the younger son of ex-president Ziaur Rahman and former prime minister Khaleda Zia, the founder and current chairperson of the BNP respectively, will be observed today.

BNP and its associate bodies have taken various programmes to mark the day with due solemnity.

Koko, also a sports organiser, died of cardiac arrest in Malaysia on January 24, 2015. He was 45 years old. He was buried at Banani graveyard.

## Two houses, 11 shops burnt

BSS, Noakhali

At least two houses and 11 shops were burnt in a fire that broke out at Hatiya on Wednesday night.

The fire originated from a cosmetic shop after an electric short circuit at Afazia Bazar of Shukchar union around 11:45pm. Two units of Hatiya Fire Service station brought the blaze under control after two hours, said Harun Ar Rashid, an official of Hatiya Fire Service station.

## Most people

FROM PAGE 3  
leaders in Dhaka.

Accusing the government of discrimination against his party, GM Quader said, "False murder cases are being filed against us. Whenever our leaders and activists take to the streets, false cases are lodged against them."

The political situation in the country is unstable and uncertain. Even those running the country do not know what will happen a month from now. Before August 5 last year, the Awami League seemed to dominate the country, but within a day, they disappeared."

"People are also annoyed with different groups showing off their strength these days. They are acting like ruling parties. Jatiyo Party is the only one standing against this tide in the field," he added.

Criticising the government for its failures in various areas, GM Quader said, "Price hikes have left people unable to manage their expenses with their income. Thousands of workers are becoming unemployed as factories are shut down."

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A bus parks to pick up passengers right next to a sign saying "No Bus Parking Here". In Dhaka, irony sometimes knows no bounds and blatant disregard for rules is the norm. The photo was taken opposite Dhaka College yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Medical waste poses severe health risks in Phulbari

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Improper management and lack of disposal facilities for the medical waste in Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur have led to serious environmental pollution and health risks due to negligence from the local authorities.

Despite government guidelines mandating proper waste management and incineration, these regulations remain largely ignored.

Medical waste -- including used needles, syringes, expired medications, and blood-contaminated materials -- is often dumped openly near healthcare facilities. Stray animals scatter the waste, creating foul odours and attracting disease-spreading mosquitoes and flies.

Experts warn that if immediate action is not taken, the current practices could lead to a public health crisis.



Locals said drug users collect discarded syringes for reuse, raising the risk of spreading diseases such as Hepatitis B, C, and HIV/AIDS.

Phulbari upazila hosts one health complex, four private clinics, and 13 diagnostic centres, none of which possess environmental clearance certificates. Most facilities lack

proper waste management systems, and licences remain unrenewed.

At the Phulbari Upazila Health Complex, medical waste is stored near the premises and collected by municipal vehicles only twice a week.

Dr Moshirul Rahman, health and family planning officer at the health complex, admitted that

the lack of incinerators and staff shortages exacerbate the issue.

Abdul Malek, a patient's relative, expressed concern over open dumping within the health complex, saying it pollutes the environment and spreads diseases.

Managers of private clinics, including Sabuj Kumar Mahanta and Faruk Hossain, said they have complained repeatedly to the Department of Environment, but to no avail.

Without proper disposal facilities, waste is often buried or dumped into rivers.

Contacted, Dinajpur Civil Surgeon Dr Md Asif Faisal emphasised the importance of incinerating medical waste. He said they have plans to coordinate with clinics to hire specialised waste disposal services.

Doi inspector Prabhat Rani said they are currently in process to hire a waste management contractor in this regard.

## Step up fight against

FROM PAGE 3

the chief adviser was scheduled for yesterday, the third eventful day since he arrived in the Swiss city on January 21.

In another meeting, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk told Yunus that the UN fact-finding report on the atrocities during the July-August uprising will be released by mid-February.

Türk said the report would be shared with the Bangladesh side ahead of its publication from the UN rights office in Geneva.

The chief adviser urged the UN human rights chief for his support in resolving the Rohingya crisis, which has worsened in recent months following the influx of new refugees from Myanmar.

Türk said he was in conversation with relevant stakeholders, including the UN special envoy on

Myanmar, Julie Bishop, in this regard.

Meanwhile, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told reporters in Davos that Prof Yunus urged global investors to invest more in Bangladesh, highlighting the country's business-friendly climate.

Alam said Bangladesh has eased condition on investment and improved capacity of Chattogram port. With a huge young population, Bangladesh can become an export hub, he added.

Agnes Callamard, secretary general of Amnesty International also met the chief adviser.

Meanwhile, DP World Group Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem met Yunus yesterday and discussed issues of mutual interest, said CA's Deputy Press Secretary Apurba

Jahangir.

DP World is a multinational logistics company based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. It specialises in cargo logistics, port terminal operations, maritime services and free trade zones.

Over 50 heads of state and government gathered at the WEF being held from January 20-25.

The Summit is being held under the theme of "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age" and it welcomed close to 3,000 attendees from over 130 countries.

### PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 24

Faz Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5-30 12-30 4-15 5-43 7-15  
JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-30 5-47 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Medical Information Officers for New Affiliate

**RADIANT**  
PHARMACEUTICALS

Radiant looks forward to recruiting a significant number of qualified young professionals to join its new affiliate for further strengthening its presence in the pharma market. The candidates should have the competence of promoting the products to the health professionals, willing to work as Medical Information Officers (MIO) and be prepared to be based at any place within Bangladesh. The incumbents will be responsible for the promotion of pharmaceutical products to the medical professionals in Bangladesh.

The candidates are required to have the following eligibility to apply:

- Masters/Honours (4 years) degree in any discipline with biological science up to HSC level. Candidates with concentration in Pharmacy, Biochemistry, Zoology, Biotechnology will be given preference.
- Good communication skills in both Bangla & English.
- Below 32 years of age.

Candidates whose credentials meet the requirements, may reach their resume along with a cover letter to the following address or to the e-mail: info.hr@radian.com.bd by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025. Please inscribe the position 'Medical Information Officer' on the top of the envelope or as the subject of your email.

## Radiant Pharmaceuticals Limited

SKS Tower (7<sup>th</sup> Floor), 7 VIP Road, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1206

www.radiant.com.bd

## 5 Bangladeshi women conquer Himalayan peaks

STAR REPORT

In celebration of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's "Sultana's Dream" being recognised as a Unesco "Memory of the World," five Bangladeshi women mountaineers embarked on a special Himalayan expedition, said a press release.

Inspired by "Sultana's Dream Unbound," the team recently returned to Bangladesh after overcoming the challenges of the Himalayan peaks.

Organised by Abhijatri and endorsed by Unesco, in association with the Liberation War Museum, the expedition was supported by Mastercard and led by Nishat Mazumder, the first Bangladeshi woman to conquer Mount Everest.

The journey highlighted Begum Rokeya's vision of women's emancipation.

Local organisers in Kathmandu announced plans to publish a Nepali translation of "Sultana's Dream," with Unesco's Memory of the World office in Bangkok celebrating the initiative.



## Shops running illegally on CWasa lands

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

At least 16 shops are being run illegally on lands of Chattogram Water Supply and Sewerage Authority in different areas of the port city.

Allegedly, the CWasa Employees Co-operative Society Limited built the shops on the government lands without permission.

Sources said the society receives Tk 2.5 lakh in advance payment and Tk 2,000-4,500 as monthly rent for each shop.

As per data from CWasa's estate department, there are seven shops on its land in Bolirhat, five in Monsurabad and four in Technical Intersection area, all constructed by the society between 2019 and 2023.

The society was launched in 1988, and currently has over 150 members.

Visiting the CWasa's colony in Technical Intersection area, this correspondent observed several businesses being run in the newly constructed shops.

"I rented the shop, paying Tk 5 lakh in advance and Tk



4,000 monthly," said Yeasin Akram Rabby, who runs a grocery shop.

Several other shopkeepers echoed the same.

"Initially, the society rented shops to its members to avoid internal conflict. Then the member rented it to me," said an occupant of a shop in Monsurabad pump house area.

The CWasa's estate department wrote a letter to the society in February last year, requesting it to stop constructing shops on its lands. A probe body was also formed by the ministry concerned to investigate the issue last year.

"We are yet to get the probe report. We also wrote to the society to stop this illegal activity. They, however, ignored the call," said Babul Alam, estate officer of CWasa.

Asked why they built shops by occupying state's land without permission, Mohammed Yousuf, president of the society, said they are doing commercial activities for the welfare of society members.

However, if these shops are built illegally, the CWasa can take action as per the rules, he added.

Contacted, Muhammad Anwar Pasha, managing director of CWasa, said, "I will look into the issue. Action will be taken as per rules if any irregularities are found."

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Residents of 16 villages in Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur have been suffering for the past eight years due to the incomplete construction of a bridge over the Chhoto Jamuna river.

The bridge, intended to facilitate local travel, remains unfinished, forcing villagers to take a 7-kilometre detour for what would otherwise be a 2-kilometre journey.

The project began under the leadership of former union parishad chairman Abdul Aziz Master. Using funds from the UP and community voluntary labour, six concrete pillars were constructed on the river. A temporary bamboo and wooden platform were then installed between the pillars to allow pedestrian use.

However, the lack of additional funding left the project incomplete, exposing the structure to weather damage and making it increasingly dangerous to cross.

Villagers from Polipara and Harhariapara in Phulbari upazila, as well as neighbouring areas in Nawabganj, expressed frustrations over the incomplete bridge, citing the significant impact it has on their daily lives.

They said long detours have made accessing schools, markets, and government offices more



challenging for hundreds of residents, including students and farmers, leading to reduced efficiency and financial strain.

Farmers from the affected villages also face increased transportation costs when bringing their produce to markets in Madhiahat and Khayerbari Hat, cutting into their profits.

Shamshe Ali, a resident of Harhariapara village, said, "Vehicles can't pass through the bridge, and it's only a matter of time before it collapses."

Abdul Aziz Master said approximately Tk 15 lakh had already been spent on constructing the pillars and estimated that an

additional Tk 10 lakh would be needed to complete the bridge.

He said despite repeated attempts to secure funding from the upazila parishad, political indifference has hindered progress. He also alleged that local Awami League leaders were unwilling to support the project as they would not receive political credit for it.

Contacted, Upazila Engineer Shafiqul Islam said he will visit the site soon to witness the situation firsthand.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mir Md Al Kamah Tamal said appropriate measures will be taken to alleviate the villagers' suffering.

**Insufficient funding halted the project. Authorities promise to address the issue, while villagers face increased travel costs and challenges.**

## JUDGES' APPOINTMENT Ordinance flawed, discriminatory Says SCBA president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recently formulated Supreme Court Judge Appointment Ordinance is flawed and discriminatory, said SCBA President AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon yesterday.

"There is no provision in the law for keeping representative from lawyers in the Supreme Judicial Appointment Council, who will select candidates for the posts of Supreme Court judges and recommend them to the president. The law is defective and discriminatory. I demand amendment of the law," he said while talking to reporters at the SC premises.

The interim government has issued an ordinance for recruitment of competent judges in the two SC divisions through a seven-member Supreme Judicial Appointment Council led by the chief justice.

Even though the constitution mandates formulating a law for appointments of judges, none of the previous governments did it.

## Toddler dies in freak accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A three and a half-year old girl was killed after she got entangled in the blades of a paddy-threshing machine yesterday at her house in Dinajpur's Birganj upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased is Jannatul, daughter of Md Ziaurul Islam.

The incident happened around 3:00pm in the courtyard of her home.

According to locals, the family was using a thresher in their courtyard. Jannatul wandered out of the house and became entangled in the machine's blades and sustained severe injuries.

She died on the way to a hospital.

Officer-in-Charge of Birganj Police Station Md Abdul Gafur said they are looking into the incident.

## Ex-whip Iqbalur among 692 AL men sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Former Jatiya Sangsad whip Iqbalur Rahim, also former Awami League lawmaker from Dinajpur-3, and 691 other AL men have been sued for allegedly attacking a procession brought out by BNP men in the district on July 21 last year.

Local BNP leader Mostafa Mahmud Rinku, a resident of Balubari in Dinajpur, filed the case against the named 192 AL leaders and activists and some 500 unidentified people yesterday, said Motiur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Dinajpur Sadar Kotwali Police Station.

According to the case statement, on July 21, 2024, leaders and activists of AL and its affiliated organisations attacked BNP supporters near the main gate of Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) when they brought out a protest procession.

Former AL MP Iqbalur instructed them to carry out the attack, Rinku said in the case.

The attackers used firearms, rods, sticks, machetes, petrol bombs, and crude bombs to carry out the attack. They also allegedly vandalised the vehicles carrying them.

<b>Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS)</b> University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000. <b>Invitation for Tender (National)</b> Date : ০৯-৩০-১৪৩০ বঙ্গাব্দ 21-01-2025 খ্রিস্টাব্দ				
SL No.	Name of supply	Last date of sale of Tender Documents	Last date of Submission of Tender Documents	Date & time of Opening of Tender Documents
01	Tender Ref. No. CARS/ST/P-374/OTM/2025 Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Equipment for Genomics and Proteomics Core Facility at the CARS	17-02-2025 Up to Office Hour	18-02-2025 Up to 10.30 am	18-02-2025 11:00 am
Place where detailed information will be found <a href="http://www.cars.du.ac.bd">www.cars.du.ac.bd</a> Or Notice board at the CARS University of Dhaka				

GD-260

Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS)  
University of Dhaka

বাংলা একাডেমি  
৩ কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম একাডেমি, বমনা, ঢাকা ১০০০

অমর একুশে বইমেলা ২০২৫

শিশু-কিশোর চিকাক্ষন, আবৃত্তি এবং সংগীত প্রতিযোগিতা

অমর একুশে বইমেলা ২০২৫ উপলক্ষ্যে বাংলা একাডেমি শিশু-কিশোর চিকাক্ষন, আবৃত্তি এবং সংগীত প্রতিযোগিতার আয়োজন করেছে। এবার বইমেলার প্রতিপাদ্য 'জুলাই' গান্ধীভূষণ: নতুন বাংলাদেশ বিনোদন। প্রতিযোগিতা তিনটি শাখায় (ক, খ ও গ) অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

প্রতিযোগীর বয়স

ক শাখা: সর্বোচ্চ ৮ বছর।

খ শাখা: সর্বোচ্চ ১২ বছর।

গ শাখা: সর্বোচ্চ ১৫ বছর।

উক্ত তিনটি শাখার প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক শিশু-কিশোর বা তাদের অভিভাবকদের আগমানী ২৮শে জানুয়ারি থেকে ৬ই ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৫ পর্যন্ত (ক্রম ও শিলিদার বাদে) প্রতিপাদ্য সকাল ১১:০০টা থেকে বিকাল ৪:০০টার মধ্যে বাংলা একাডেমির ডক্টর মুহুমদ শহীদুল্লাহ ভবনের নিচতলার অভ্যর্থনা কক্ষ থেকে আবেদনপত্র সংগ্রহ করে নাম তালিকাভুক্ত করতে হবে এবং জন্ম সনদ জমা দিতে হবে।

যোগাযোগ

চিকাক্ষন প্রতিযোগিতা: ০১৯২১৯৫৭১৩০

আবৃত্তি প্রতিযোগিতা: ০১৭১০৮০৯১৩০

সংগীত প্রতিযোগিতা: ০১৭২৩৪৩২৯৩৫

❖ চিকাক্ষন প্রতিযোগিতা ৭ই ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৫ শক্রবার সকাল ৮:৩০ টায়, আবৃত্তি প্রতিযোগিতা (প্রাথমিক বাছাই) ৭ই ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৫ শক্রবার সকাল ৯:৩০টায় এবং সংগীত প্রতিযোগিতা (প্রাথমিক বাছাই) ৮ই ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৫ শিলিদার সকাল ৯:৩০টায় অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

❖ প্রতিটি শাখার প্রথম তিনজন বিজয়ীকে পুরস্কার এবং অংশগ্রহণকারী সকাল প্রতিযোগীকে স্মারক উপহার প্রদান করা হবে।

ড. সরকার আমিন  
সদস্য-সচিব

অমর একুশে বইমেলা পরিচালনা কর্মসূচি ২০২৫

GD-265

## 8 years on, bridge remains incomplete

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Residents of 16 villages in Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur have been suffering for the past eight years due to the incomplete construction of a bridge over the Chhoto Jamuna river.

The bridge, intended to facilitate local travel, remains unfinished, forcing villagers to take a 7-kilometre detour for what would otherwise be a 2-kilometre journey.

The project began under the leadership of former union parishad chairman Abdul Aziz Master. Using funds from the UP and community voluntary labour, six concrete pillars were constructed on the river. A temporary bamboo and wooden platform were then installed between the pillars to allow pedestrian use.

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The project began under the leadership of former union parishad chairman Abdul Aziz

## KUBRA KHAN

### to tie the knot

Popular Pakistani actress Kubra Khan has announced that she will be tying the knot in February, according to a report by Geo News.

Rumours of Kubra's impending marriage had been circulating for some time. However, the actress remained tight-lipped about the matter. Recently, during an event, she confirmed the news while responding to questions from journalists.

The groom is actor Gohar Rasheed. The duo has shared the screen in several dramas, including *Jannat Se Aage*, which gained significant praise from audiences.

Kubra Khan, whose real name is Rabia Iqbal Khan, made her television debut in 2016. Aside from her work in dramas, she is also a regular face in films.



### WHAT'S THE HAPS?

#### 'It's in Our Nature'

Pathshala South Asian Media Institute presents *'It's in Our Nature'*, a photography exhibition featuring eight stories by students. The exhibition sheds light on the struggles, adaptations, and acceptance required to maintain nature's balance while also exploring societal issues that affect individuals and communities, ultimately shaping collective human experiences.

DATE: SUNDAY | JANUARY 26

TIME: 6PM-9PM

VENUE: DRIKPATH BHOBON, PANTHAPATH



### 'Boli: The Wrestler' to be screened at Burning Crab Festival



The critically acclaimed Bangladeshi film *Boli: The Wrestler*, directed by Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury, will be screened at the Burning Crab Festival in Cox's Bazar from January 29 to 31. The film, which won the top award at the Busan International Film Festival, has been showcased globally, including in Shanghai, Toronto, Los Angeles, and Dhaka. Representing Bangladesh in the Best International Feature Film category at the 97th Academy Awards, *Boli* highlights Chattogram's wrestling culture and coastal folklore, and features Nasir Uddin Khan alongside a stellar ensemble cast.

The Burning Crab Festival, curated by Japanese artist Jiro Endo, will take place at Mermaid Beach Resort along the Marine Drive under the theme "Take a Break".

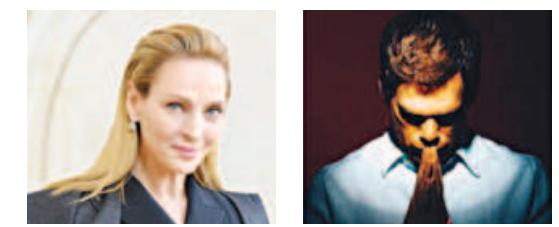
### Kaavish to headline 'Dhaka Dreams' concert today

The much-anticipated *Dhaka Dreams* concert is set to take place today at Senapranjan. The event will feature a lineup of artistes, including Level Five, Ghashphoring Choir, Shunno, and Arnob alongside singer Sunidhi Nayak, and the celebrated Pakistani band Kaavish as the headliner.

Kaavish landed in Dhaka last Wednesday and shared their excitement with fans through their verified Facebook page. They posted a photo taken at the Dhaka airport and captioned it, "See you on January 24."

The organiser, Blue Brick Communications, offered refunds for this rescheduled event, with requests closing on January 23 at 1:30pm.

Initially, a two-day occasion scheduled for January 10 and 11, *Dhaka Dreams* was postponed due to technical issues and has been lessened to a one-day event.



### Uma Thurman joins Michael C Hall in 'Dexter: Resurrection'

Hollywood veteran Uma Thurman has joined the cast of *Dexter: Resurrection*, starring Michael C Hall. She will play Charley, head of security for billionaire Leon Prater, and a former Special Operations officer.

Hall reprises his role as Dexter Morgan, the notorious serial killer. Returning cast members include David Zayas as Detective Angel Batista, James Remar as Harry Morgan, and Jack Alcott as Harrison Morgan. *Dexter: Resurrection* is a continuation of 2021's *Dexter: New Blood* and is set to premiere this summer. The franchise also includes a prequel, *Dexter: Original Sin*, which explores Dexter's early life, connecting the overall franchise's timelines.



### DiCaprio, Scorsese to adapt 'The Devil in the White City' for the screen

Leonardo DiCaprio and Martin Scorsese are set to reunite as the iconic star-director duo, to adapt Erik Larson's book *The Devil in the White City* for the silver screen under 20th Century Studios.

The true crime story follows serial killer HH Holmes and his "Murder Castle" in Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. DiCaprio has held the rights since 2010, but the project faced several unforeseen delays.

The movie adaptation, yet to have a script, is gaining traction with 20th Century's support under David Greenbaum and Steve Asbell. DiCaprio and Scorsese will produce the project, joined by Stacey Sher, Rick Yorn, and Jennifer Davisson from Appian Way.

## NEWS

### Country may face shortage

FROM PAGE 12

result in disruption of irrigation when cultivation of paddy begins, they added.

"This can even make food security uncertain," Imran said at the event at a hotel in the capital.

BIPPA President David Hasanat said, "We met government high-ups several times and asked for arrears, but found no solution yet. It will not be possible to meet the national demand during the summer if the payments are not cleared."

Do not portray power generators as villains then, he told reporters, adding that the summer was likely to be very hot this year.

The government owes independent power producers around Tk 16,000

crore.

BIPPA estimates that power demand will reach 18,000MW on hot days and heavy fuel oil-based plants will generate up to 4,149MW if the fuel is available.

In a presentation, Imran Karim said, they have been getting delayed payments since the last quarter of 2022, and currently they do not have the means to import fuel oil to generate electricity.

As per the contracts between power plants and Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB), the IPPs have rights to suspend power generation.

When the interim government has been planning on how to reduce power generation costs, saying the

ousted Awami League government has increased the cost illogically, the BIPPA recommends increasing electricity prices at retail level.

Comparing the pricing data of four countries, including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, Imran said, the price in Bangladesh is the lowest and the subsidy the highest.

"We want a logical price here as the lower price left the PDB to depend on the government subsidies which is why they are not able to pay the power producers."

David Hasanat said they also want investigation into who made excessive profit from the power sector with the help of unsolicited contracts with the PDB.

### Israel continues West Bank raids

FROM PAGE 12

could enter at any moment."

The Israeli military launched an operation in Jenin on Tuesday, saying it aims to "uproot militants in the camp and the city".

The offensive began just

days after a ceasefire deal paused fighting in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli assault has killed at least 10 Palestinians and injured 40 more, according to the Ramallah-based Palestinian health ministry.

Violence has surged throughout the West Bank since the conflict began.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "Operation Iron Wall", as it has been dubbed, will "eradicate terrorism" in the West Bank city.

Violence has surged throughout the West Bank since the conflict began.

erupted on October 7, 2023.

According to the Palestinian health ministry, Israeli troops or settlers have killed at least 850 Palestinians in the West Bank since the conflict began.

### Not possible to reopen

FROM PAGE 12

Currently, three factories are in operation.

Since September last year, the government has disbursed Tk 223.43 crore as financial assistance to Beximco Group so that it may pay dues to its laid-off workers and face the crisis.

The government is now preparing to pay the salary for January.

Meanwhile, the adviser also said the vandalism and road blockades carried out by protesting workers were unacceptable and that action would be taken against them.

The laid-off workers and employees of Beximco textile and garment units at a press conference yesterday morning urged the government to reopen the factories and reinstate their jobs.

The employees demanded that the government facilitate the opening of letters of credit so that the mills could import raw materials, operate the factories, and repay bank loans.

"The owners of the group are eager to resume operations of the 16 textile and garment factories," said Md Abdul Kajum, head of personnel administration at

Beximco Garment Division, at the press conference.

Beximco, one of the most talked-about industrial giants in Bangladesh, landed in hot water following the ouster of the Awami League government in early August last year.

Banks curbed finances owing to the default of a huge amount of loans, alleged to have been taken by the group using the influence of its Vice Chairman Salman F Rahman, who was an influential adviser to deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina. Salman is now behind bars.

Investigators found that Ziaul had transactions of approximately 6 million dirhams, around Tk 20 crore, in his accounts with First Abu Dhabi Bank, approximately 23 million dirhams, around Tk 75 crore,

with Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, and approximately 7 million ringgit, around Tk 75 crore, with Alfin Bank Berhad, Malaysia.

Additionally, he has an account in the Bank of America. The ACC has evidence that he laundered a significant amount of money using that account, officers said.

Ziaul owns a farmhouse, an eight-storey building in Dhaka, an eight-storey building in Barishal, a house in Jhalakathi, three flats and 3333.51 decimals of land in Dhaka. He has an investment of Tk 5 crore in the stock market and Tk 1 crore in savings bond, officers said.

The value of these properties acquired between 2009 and 2024 is Tk 15.77 crore.

According to the cases, Ziaul acquired assets worth Tk 22.27 crore which is inconsistent with his known sources of income.

There were suspicious transactions of approximately Tk 120 crore in eight of his bank accounts. He deposited \$ 55,000 into an account, violating the Guidelines for Foreign Exchange Transactions 2018 and the FEO Circular 6 dated February 3, 2020.

The complaint filed against Ziaul's wife, Nusrat Jahan, said she acquired assets worth Tk 18.59 crore that are inconsistent with her known sources of income.

There were unusual transactions of approximately Tk 222.50 crore in four of her accounts.

Ziaul was arrested on August 15.

### 80 shrines, Sufi centres attacked

FROM PAGE 12

their establishments will be met with strong resistance.

Representatives from various shrines and darbar sharifs in Dhamrai, Sirajganj, Mymensingh, Narsingdi, and Gazipur, which were attacked, also shared their accounts of the attacks at the press briefing.

To further illustrate the gravity of the situation, the organisation presented a documentary on the attacks.

Describing its four-point demand, the organisation called for a judicial investigation into the attacks. It urged the authorities to identify and ensure exemplary punishment of

those involved.

It also demanded heightened security for all religious establishments.

The organisation called for measures to protect religious harmony, coexistence, and peace and order of the country. It urged the authorities to issue directives through the Islamic Foundation and relevant ministries to ensure that no negative sermons about mazars, darbar sharifs, and Sufism are delivered at mosques or religious gatherings (Waz Mahfils).

On January 18, the government said at least 40 mazars and darbar sharifs have been targeted in 44

attacks since August 4 last year.

It said that 15 cases and 29 GDs were filed with different police stations in these connections. A total of 23 suspects have been arrested.

Hasan Shah Dipu Noore, however, said many of the victims could not lodge cases fearing reprisal.

Among those present at the press briefing were members of the Global Sufi Organisation's central executive committee, including Mohammad Ahsanul Haque, a teacher at Dhaka University's Persian language and literature department; Aftab Alam Zilani, Nasir Uddin Chishti, Maulana Tauhidul Islam Chishti, and Shah Alauddin.

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It said that 15 cases and 29 GDs were filed with different police stations in these connections. A total of 23 suspects have been arrested.

He went on to say that the suspended student may face expulsion if further investigations reveal evidence of serious offences.

Meanwhile, Prof Mohammad Saiful Islam, acting registrar, said the official

suspension letters were yet to be issued.

Earlier, on the night of July 14 and the afternoon of July 15, members of the now-banned Chhatria League were accused of attacking students involved in the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

On the same day, the central coordinator of the movement was reportedly pulled off a shuttle train and assaulted. There were also allegations of Chhatria League members

students involved in the movement being searched and beaten at different times.

Furthermore, on July 31, there were allegations of a bomb attack on a teacher's residence, reportedly carried out by Chhatria League members. Additionally, allegations of assault on Shah Riyaz, a journalist from Dainik Purbodesh working on campus, were also raised against Chhatria League members.

## Pak ex-PM Imran Khan calls off talks with govt

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan called off reconciliatory talks with the government yesterday, a week after a court handed him a 14-year jail term on graft charges, his party's chairman said.

Aimed at cooling political instability in the South Asian nation, the talks had started late last year ahead of the judgment in the land corruption case against the 72-year-old politician.

The graft case is the largest that Khan faces in terms of financial impropriety. It involves land given by a real estate tycoon to a welfare institution set up by Khan and his wife in return for illegal favours.

"Khan has called off negotiations," the party chairman, Gohar Khan, told reporters in comments telecast live by Geo News TV after he said he met the former premier in jail.

**Rubio affirms 'ironclad' US commitment to Philippines**

AFP, Washington

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Wednesday the US under President Donald Trump remained committed to the Philippines' defense, as tensions simmer with Beijing in the South China Sea.

In a call with his Philippine counterpart Enrique Manalo, Rubio "underscored the United States' ironclad commitments to the Philippines under our Mutual Defense Treaty," State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said.

Rubio, a longtime hawk on China, discussed the "dangerous and destabilizing actions in the South China Sea" by Beijing, formally known as the People's Republic of China.

"Secretary Rubio conveyed that the PRC's behavior undermines regional peace and stability and is inconsistent with international law," Bruce said.



Palestinians gather near damaged property after two Palestinian gunmen were killed in an Israeli raid in Burqin, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR Ready for 'mutually respectful' Trump talks

Says Kremlin; Russian strikes kill 3, wound 25 in Ukraine

AFP, Moscow

The Kremlin said yesterday it saw nothing new in US President Donald Trump's calls for Russia to end its military offensive in Ukraine, and that Moscow was ready for "mutually respectful" dialogue with him.

The US leader had on Wednesday threatened fresh sanctions on Moscow if Russia did not strike a deal to end its nearly three-year campaign against Ukraine.

Expectations are high that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Trump will soon hold a phone call to discuss the conflict, after the Republican pledged on the campaign trail to bring a swift end to the fighting.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia was "ready for equal, mutually respectful dialogue."

"We are waiting for signals, which we have not yet received," he added.

Trump has not said publicly how he sees the contours of a potential peace deal between Kyiv and Moscow. Putin has outlined maximalist demands that include the Ukrainian withdrawal from parts of its own territory still under Kyiv's control.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has meanwhile ruled out territorial concessions, though he said he would consider trying to secure the return

of land captured by Russia through "diplomatic" means.

Meanwhile, Russian aerial attacks on frontline towns in eastern and central Ukraine yesterday killed at least three people and wounded dozens, officials said.

The state emergency service posted images of a destroyed building and a damaged firetruck that were hit in the apparent double-tap attack.

"The attack left three people dead and wounded 25 people, including a two-month-old baby and four rescuers," the emergency services said in a statement.

They said Russian forces had launched a combined drone and missile attack at intervals, explaining that firefighters had been wounded in the "second" attack.

"We need more sanctions against Russia, more air defence systems to protect our cities and communities, and more weapons for our warriors on the front lines," President Zelensky said on social media.

The industrial city had an estimated population of more than 700,000 people before the Russian invasion in February 2022, and lies around 35 kilometres (20 miles) from the frontline.

**South Korea's Yoon never intended full martial law**

**Ousted defence minister testifies before court**

REUTERS, Seoul

A former South Korean defence minister charged with insurrection for his role in a short-lived martial law attempt told a court yesterday that he wanted a broader military deployment but was overruled by President Yoon Suk Yeol.

Kim Yong-hyun, who resigned after the December 3 martial law and is now jailed, testified before the nation's Constitutional Court, which is deciding whether to reinstate or fully remove Yoon from power after he was impeached.

Central to Yoon's defence is that he never intended to impose military rule. "Yes," said Kim when asked by Yoon's lawyers whether the president had shot down the defence minister's recommendation to mobilise all military units stationed in Seoul.

Kim confirmed he had also proposed sending some units to the opposition party headquarters and a left-wing polling firm.



A firefighting helicopter drops water over the Hughes Fire in Castaic, a northwestern neighbourhood of Los Angeles County, California, US, on Wednesday evening.

PHOTO: AFP

## Seven Texas cops hurt in shooting, gunman dead

AFP, Washington

A man in the US state of Texas shot and wounded seven police officers at an apartment where he had barricaded himself inside, before later being found dead by SWAT members, authorities said yesterday.

San Antonio Police Chief William McManus said officers responded to a "suicide in progress call" late Wednesday at an apartment complex north of the city.

"The first officer who arrived was shot, and six others subsequent to that were shot as well," McManus said in a video post on Facebook.

A man in his 40s "barricaded himself

inside the apartment for several hours," he said. "At the end of the event the suspect was found to be deceased," McManus added, noting it was not immediately known whether the suspect took his own life or was shot by SWAT officers at the scene.

At least four officers were transported to hospital with injuries that were non-life-threatening, he said. The conditions of the other three were unclear.

Shootings are alarmingly commonplace in the US, where there are more guns than people. Since January 1 there have been at least 16 mass shootings -- defined as a shooting involving at least four victims, dead or wounded -- across the country.

## PERSECUTION OF WOMEN

## ICC prosecutor seeks arrest of Taliban leaders

AFP, The Hague

The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor yesterday said he was seeking arrest warrants against senior Taliban leaders in Afghanistan over the persecution of women, a crime against humanity.

Karim Khan said there were reasonable grounds to suspect that Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and chief justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani "bear criminal responsibility for the crime against humanity of persecution on gender grounds".

Khan said that Afghan women and girls, as well as the LGBTQI community, were facing "an unprecedented, unconscionable and ongoing persecution by the Taliban."

"Our action signals that the status quo for women and girls in Afghanistan is not acceptable," added Khan.

ICC judges will now consider Khan's application before deciding whether to issue an arrest warrant -- a process that could take weeks or even months.

The court, based in The Hague, was set up to rule on the world's worst crimes such as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

It has no police force of its own and relies on its 125 member states to carry out its arrest warrants -- with mixed results. In theory this means that anyone subject to an ICC arrest warrant cannot travel to a member state for fear of being detained.

## TRUMP WITHDRAWAL

## Bloomberg steps in to help fund UN climate body

REUTERS, Washington

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's philanthropy arm said yesterday it will provide funding to help cover the US contribution to the UN climate body's budget, filling a gap left by President Donald Trump.

The new Republican president announced after taking office on Monday that he would withdraw the US from the Paris climate agreement and end the country's international climate funding. Trump had also withdrawn the US from the Paris deal in his first 2017-2021 White House term.

Bloomberg is a media billionaire who also serves as a UN special envoy on climate change.

"Bloomberg Philanthropies and other US climate funders will ensure the United States meets its global climate obligations," the organisation said in a statement, adding this included covering the amount the US owes each year to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Bloomberg Philanthropies did not give details of the amounts of funding or who the other climate funders are.

## Deliver on assurances to stranded workers

Govt should work with Malaysia to fast-track their travel

Our heart goes out to the over 18,000 Bangladeshis who missed the deadline to fly to Malaysia for work around eight months ago through no fault of their own, and are still waiting to travel, despite various assurances given to them over time. It can be recalled that Malaysia reopened its labour market to Bangladeshi workers in 2022—after a four-year suspension due to recruitment irregularities—but then announced a freeze on hiring foreign workers in March 2024. This affected prospective workers from 14 countries, including Bangladesh, who were asked to enter the country by May 31. However, despite obtaining clearance from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), completing other necessary paperwork, securing visas, and even purchasing plane tickets in some cases, thousands of Bangladeshis failed to enter Malaysia by that deadline.

The failure was primarily due to mismanagement by the previous regime and local recruiting agents. Since June, numerous promises have been made, but none have been fulfilled. To be fair to the current government, it appears to have made sincere efforts to address the grievances of these prospective migrants. However, the reality remains that these individuals have faced significant hardships to prepare for their travel. Many have incurred substantial debts—with some even selling their land—to cover travel related expenses. As they continue to wait, some have had to take on further loans, while others are struggling to cope with mounting interest on their existing debts. The psychological toll of this prolonged uncertainty has also been immense, with many families facing anxiety about their financial stability and future. Under these circumstances, the longer they have to wait to travel to Malaysia, the more debt-ridden and vulnerable they will become.

Recently, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul assured prospective migrants that they would be sent to Malaysia in phases, starting in late March or early April. He stated that those with BMET clearance and visas would begin travelling by the end of March, while those without BMET cards but with visas would be prioritised next. He further mentioned that individuals without BMET cards or visas should reclaim their passports and funds from the recruitment agencies, with ministry support in the process if necessary.

While we are encouraged by the law adviser's assurance, it is essential that these promises translate into action without further delay and that the timeline is followed without exception. Transparency and regular updates on the progress of the phased travel plan would help rebuild trust among the affected workers. Additionally, the government should ensure strict oversight of recruiting agents and agencies to prevent similar lapses in the future.

## Take steps to re-form river commission

Why has it not been done despite passing of five months?

It is deeply concerning that the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC), the so called guardian of our rivers, remains virtually nonfunctional even though over five months have passed following the fall of the Awami League government. According to a report by *Bonik Barta*, the interim government revoked the appointment of its then chairman in early September. Since then, this position has remained vacant, as have other posts in the five-member commission (the tenure of the remaining members ended in August). Moreover, several key office posts including secretary and director also remain unfilled. With only a skeleton staff available to keep the lights on, the commission has virtually become a rudderless ship, totally incapable of fulfilling its mandate to prevent river encroachment and pollution.

This is alarming considering how—despite there being a non-political government in place and a celebrated environmentalist at the helm of the environment ministry—degradation of rivers continues unchecked. The NRCC is supposed to play a leading role in this fight. Established in 2014 following a High Court ruling that granted rivers the status of “living entities,” it is supposed to coordinate with all relevant institutions to guide state efforts against any encroachment or pollution, and bring those responsible to book. Unfortunately, even a fully-staffed NRCC could not live up to that expectation, due partly to its lack of power and partly to the noncooperation of other agencies.

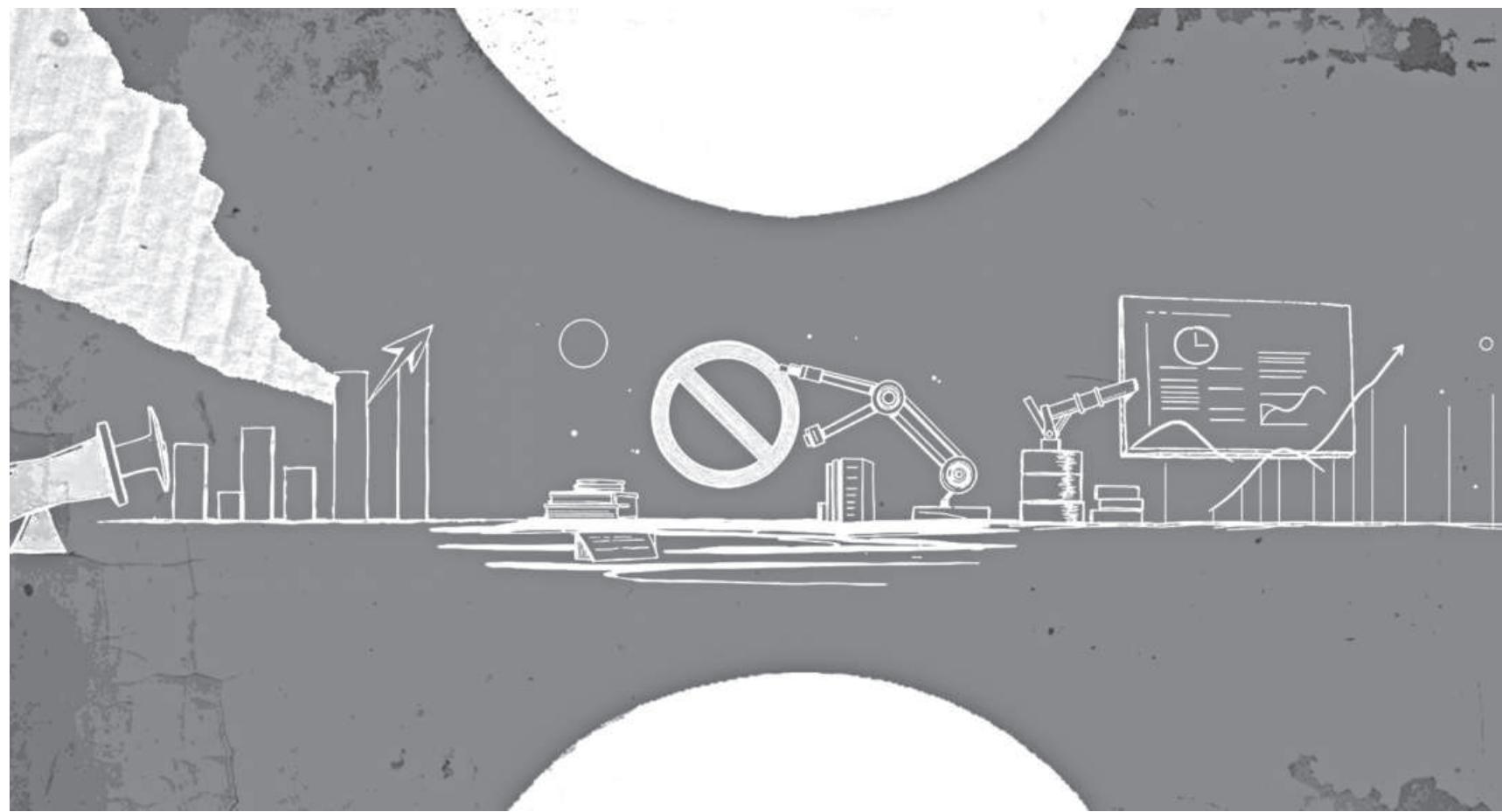
Despite that, activists warn that the current leadership vacuum has left rivers further vulnerable, and it is already having dire consequences. Over the past five months or so, we have witnessed how new politically connected individuals came into the fray to exploit rivers for their own gain. The unchecked pollution of our waterways is another alarming issue, threatening aquatic ecosystems and public health. Despite these pressing concerns, no effective steps have yet been taken to restore the commission's functionality. This is unacceptable. We urge the government to immediately appoint a competent leadership for the NRCC and ensure it has the authority, independence, and resources necessary to carry out its mandate.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Opportunity's Mars landing



On this day in 2004, launched in mid-2003, the six-wheeled robotic rover Opportunity landed on Mars and—like its twin rover, Spirit, which had landed on January 3—analysed rocks and soils and relayed pictures back to Earth.



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

### PREVENTING TAX EVASION

## How advanced analytics and proper automation can help

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M SOHEL RAHMAN, ANINDYA IQBAL and A. B. M. ALIM AL ISLAM

The year 2025 started with disappointment for Bangladesh, with the announcement of a significant increase in indirect taxes—value-added tax (VAT) and supplementary duty (SD)—affecting people from all income groups. Was it unavoidable? Couldn't the deficit of tax revenue be addressed by detecting and preventing tax evasion by unscrupulous wealthy individuals? A 2023 study by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) revealed that tax evasion costs Bangladesh up to Tk 223,000 crore a year. CPD further identified the loopholes through which tax evasion happens, such as: i) individuals reporting lower incomes; ii) unethical support from tax practitioners; iii) claim for more investment allowances; and iv) higher informal or cash-based transactions. It is understandably difficult, if not impossible, to close these loopholes with manual interventions. Proper automation, particularly the use of advanced AI-based data analytics techniques, can go a long way to deal with them.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR), the central authority for tax administration in the country, uses different software applications for collecting tax from various instruments, namely, income tax (e-return, recently introduced e-TDS), VAT (IVAS for organisational and EFD for retail), and customs duty (ASYCUDA). In spite of the apparent advancement in this regard, Bangladesh still has one of the lowest tax-GDP ratios in the world—around 7.5 percent (2022), compared to the Asia-Pacific average of 19.3 percent. Notably, for developing and developed countries, this ratio is 24.72 percent and 35.81 percent, respectively. In fact, according to data, only 43 lakh individuals submitted tax returns in FY2023-24, which is around 41 percent of the total TIN holders (1.04 crore, as of June 2024). Only a small portion of these returns—around seven percent, according to NBR data—go through post assessment eventually. This low number can be attributed to a manual assessment system and a lack of enough manpower to carry it out comprehensively. Despite the NBR using several software applications for tax collection, this crucial part is still manual. Hence, the true benefits of using these software still elude us to a great extent.

Now, let's take a look at something interesting. According to informed sources, 50-80 percent of flats in Dhaka are not shown in the tax return submission of their owners. Moreover, 60-80 percent of shops across the country don't pay any tax at all, according to different sources. Relevantly, like many other ill-planned initiatives, the implementation of electronic fiscal device (EFD) to collect VAT from retail shops was surprisingly (and questionably) given to a single

vendor (as a public-private partnership contract). And as we have learnt, that vendor has been able to achieve less than 15 percent of the target installation.

The NBR has taken initiatives to increase online tax return submission, suggesting that its top officials believe this would go a long way to solve our low tax-GDP ratio problem. The chief adviser also expressed hope that such an automation would reduce corruption. However, based on the perceived online adoption rate of the submitters, it can be safely assumed that there will still be more than 75 percent paper-based returns (currently more than 90 percent) in near future. Also, most of the wealthy people would submit paper-based returns through tax lawyers unless, of course, measures are taken to ensure their inclusion to the online submission filter, e.g. through appropriate incentivisation. Hence, the actual impact of online tax return submission is not likely to increase significantly as far as detecting tax evasion is concerned. So, we need to have a back-up plan.

### The existing software used and offered by the NBR are merely designed to automate some workflows without much forethought on performing advanced tasks of identifying undeclared incomes or tax frauds.

Efficiently digitising paper-based tax returns could be an option in this context, which, albeit challenging, is still possible with reasonable accuracy with the current advanced image processing technology.

Irrespective of their type, without assessing the tax returns automatically and cross-checking them with relevant data, such as mutation, electricity, gas, stock, bond, etc., it is not possible to detect tax evasion either for income tax or VAT. This demands extensive use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML)-based data analytics. It's high time we applied these state-of-the-art technologies to increase our national revenue. We believe that the current cabinet, being free of corruption and biases, is in a good position to make the NBR transparent and efficient.

Applying AI and ML-based analytics to identify anomalies (e.g. non-taxpayers having significant assets, shops providing low VAT with huge electricity/gas consumptions, etc) and thereby detecting tax frauds and/or evasions is a standard practice in developed countries. But to do this meaningfully, proper integration with relevant external systems (e.g. mutation and census data, electricity and gas meter ownership, etc) and automated assessment of all tax returns (submitted online or physically) are essential. Online tax returns do help

in systematically assessing the data in an automated way, which is definitely a progress towards the final goal. And what's positive is that some relevant external systems are already in a good shape to be interfaced with. For those systems, where online systems are still not available, we need to come up with a protocol to digitise and upload data at least once a year, particularly during or before the automated tax assessment event.

We have already alluded to a “Plan B” of efficiently digitising the offline tax return submission. This can be better facilitated with a carefully designed formatted spreadsheet, which should be downloadable and easily fillable by the assesses or their lawyers. It may be made mandatory that this spreadsheet must be filled up and printed if someone wants to avail the offline submission system as well. In parallel, we need to take a research and development (R&D) initiative to read, recognise and digitise such formatted printouts accurately.

The existing software used and offered by the NBR are merely designed to automate some workflows without much forethought on performing advanced tasks of identifying undeclared incomes or tax frauds.

problem is far different from those of other countries. Rather than taking the procurement of foreign software as a solution, which they often do, the NBR should take up the strategy (adopted by Western countries) of involving ML experts to do analytics in order to detect tax frauds.

It must be noted that in Bangladesh, there is a huge challenge in getting reliable data. Hence, new techniques need to be developed to identify, with high confidence, an individual's ownerships from indirect data sources (like utility bills) as well as that of his/her family members. Thus, it is imperative that ML experts (including those from academia) are involved with the NBR IT team to employ such techniques efficiently and transparently, and that there is no interference from internal vested interest groups who have created barriers against effective automation over the years.

An overarching change in the mindset of NBR is also in order. There are allegations that it has made unnecessary procurement of foreign software, costing a huge amount of foreign currency, for the Integrated Value-Added System (IVAS), which is limited with respect to design, usability, performance, adaptability, expandability, customer support, etc. NBR needs to put its trust in our local IT expertise in this context. In fact, millions of foreign currency

could be saved and better quality and contextually-appropriate software could be developed by the local industry using non-licensed, open source technology. Also, NBR needs to involve local experts in the planning and designing phase as well.

Changing NBR's mindset is also crucial in the context of strengthening its in-house IT team. The majority of the 83 members of the NBR IT team were promoted from the operator post. Around 40 engineers, who are supposed to take part in developing applications, are not involved in any significant application development, to the best of our knowledge. Are they intentionally left out? Even the simple e-TIN registration process has been developed and is maintained by vendors. Due to poor planning and technological decisions, NBR is vendor-locked in most of the cases. Most alarmingly, they are locked to some foreign vendors (e.g. for iVAS) where millions of foreign currency has been wasted. Needless to say, a number of these extravagant projects involved influential people of the last regime. We can only hope that this will change under the current management in the post-July uprising era.

Historically, NBR never involved reputed IT experts from academia in planning for development. The suggestions and recommendations of academicians and IT experts from different (procurement-related) committees, where government rules dictate the inclusion of such external experts, were usually ignored citing the limited scope of the committees. Now, under the auspices of the current apolitical interim government, there should be immediate intervention from the top to ensure proper automation and transparency. We believe that to reach the stage of a true IT-enabled revenue authority, there is no alternative to involving and engaging IT experts and academicians in the process. This may be in the form of a vibrant IT team with resident ML experts therein with involvement of one or more eminent researchers and academicians in an advisory role. An alternative and perhaps more sustainable approach could be to appoint a renowned IT expert from academia or industry as a member of NBR so that they could lead the IT transformation on a full-time basis, forming and guiding the in-house IT team of NBR. Often, engaging a reputed (local) organisation as a consultant for supervision, monitoring, and testing of to-be-developed IT systems becomes a barrier between the success and failure of an IT project. A full-time IT expert as a member would be in the right position and mindset to make such a decision prudently.

We suggest preparing a master plan/roadmap for the complete automation of NBR, perhaps in phases. This needs to be planned by IT experts, preferably through an institution with high IT expertise and fairness and transparency standards, to have the institutional backing, with a goal to identify the short-term and long-term doables for the complete transformation of the organisation. The ultimate aim would be to increase revenue, ensure transparency, prevent wastage of money, and provide better services to the stakeholders.

# Singapore's role in recovering stolen assets is crucial



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SYED MUNIR KHASRU

Impressive global rankings and statistics are a testament to Singapore's accomplishments as the world's fifth least corrupt country and the only Asian nation in the top 10. The country is also a leader in the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, ranking 16th out of 142 countries globally and fourth regionally in 2024, indicating its strong legal and regulatory framework.

Bangladesh and Singapore share a friendly and dynamic relationship, with Bangladeshi workers being a significant part of Singapore's 1.5 million migrant workers and a substantial addition to the country's economy. Over 160,000 Bangladeshi nationals are contributing to essential sectors such as construction and marine industries in Singapore. In 2022 alone, 64,383 Bangladeshi workers were hired in Singapore, setting a record, and their remittances contribute substantially to Bangladesh's economy.

Construction contracts worth \$32 billion to \$38 billion are anticipated to be awarded in Singapore in 2024, with a substantial portion benefiting from Bangladeshi labour. Meanwhile, Bangladesh trains around 5,000 workers annually at specialised centres certified by the Singapore authorities to meet the country's workforce demands. These collaborations underscore interdependence of their economies and a relationship based on mutual growth.

## Bangladesh at a crossroads

The ousting of Sheikh Hasina on August 5, 2024 has unleashed a wave of uncertainty as well as opportunities in Bangladesh. The interim administration, led by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, has vowed to root out corruption and restore good governance. The government has also formally requested the United Nations' investigation into the mass killings and human rights violations during Hasina's final months in power.

Yet, the remnant of embedded systemic corruption looms large in

Bangladesh against the backdrop of social, political, and economic reforms. Allegations against the Awami League government, including mismanagement of megaproject funds and money laundering, underline the overwhelming challenges that are to follow while restructuring the nation. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has launched extensive investigations into key figures of the former administration for alleged embezzlement and laundering of billions of dollars. Specific projects under scrutiny include the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (RNNP) suspected of financial irregularities amounting to around \$5 billion. Hence, these probes, though wearisome, represent a crucial effort to address years of unrestrained corruption, involving not only former politicians but also prominent business tycoons who have managed to evade justice by fleeing the country or stashing cash in convenient overseas destinations.

## A case in systemic corruption testing Singapore's institutional integrity

At the heart of the arising corruption allegations lies the S Alam Group, led by Mohammed Saiful Alam, who has been accused of laundering over \$1 billion through entities in Singapore and other countries. Alam's case has become a glaring indicator of financial systems being exploited

for illicit purposes. In fact, latest investigations have revealed that Alam funnelled significant sums through shell companies, leveraging his influence to secure questionable loans worth thousands of crores from Bangladeshi banks like Islami Bank, often coupled with collateral compensating for only a fraction of the loan value.

wealth. Reports indicate that funds from Bangladesh were routed to Singapore via offshore mechanisms, raising concerns about regulatory loopholes that might have facilitated such transactions. In this regard, the ACC has requested Singapore's cooperation in tracking these funds and ensuring accountability. Addressing these allegations can

built a base in Singapore.

## A moral and strategic imperative for Singapore

By taking just, fair, and decisive action and ensuring its financial systems are not exploited, Singapore has an opportunity to solidify its role as a leader in upholding justice and transparency. This is no less a moral test for the country as it is of legal consequences for a nation that is globally applauded for its rule of law. Singapore cannot afford to be perceived as a safe harbour for illicit wealth, especially embezzlement of public funds that exacerbate poverty and foment political instability elsewhere. At this critical juncture of the country, it is natural for Bangladesh to expect Singapore to address these allegations by freezing suspect assets and cooperating with Bangladeshi authorities.

By tackling these challenges head-on, Singapore will not only uphold the integrity of its own systems but will also support the global fight against corruption, defending rights of the less privileged, bringing to justice those who have plundered a nation's resources and drained the banking sector. As at least 10 Bangladeshi banks are on the verge of collapse and depositors scratch their heads for the money looted from their coffers, Singapore has a responsibility to help Bangladesh retrieve the ill-gotten money that has found its way into the Singaporean shore.



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

A view of the Monetary Authority of Singapore's headquarters in Singapore.

Building on S Alam's case, Singapore's role as a destination for the said laundered funds has raised concerns about its advanced financial infrastructure being exploited to channel and shelter illicit

help Singapore set a precedent for combating transnational financial crimes, consistent with the country's standing in global finance. There are also other controversial Bangladeshi industrial conglomerates who have

# The purloined escape

## Bangladesh's struggle with authority, absence, and illusion



Dr Faridul Alam  
writes from New York City, U.S.

FARIDUL ALAM

Sheikh Hasina's flight from Bangladesh under duress marked a momentous "event"—a term philosopher Alain Badiou employs to describe a "radical rupture" in the historical and political fabric. Her ignominious ouster, following a popular uprising, exposed deep political fractures. It seemed to signify the end of an era dominated by her authoritarian rule. Yet, its aftermath lingers like the spectral presence of a purloined letter: visible yet elusive, significant yet unresolved. Her escape, an act unfolding in plain sight, remains steeped in symbolic implications, clouded by the political and social dynamics it unleashed.

In Jacques Lacan's reading of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, the "lost letter" symbolises a hidden truth that remains elusive despite being in plain view. It is not absent in a literal sense, but displaced and misinterpreted. Similarly, Hasina's "purloined escape" embodies an act both present and absent. While her departure is a visible fact, its underlying significance remains deferred—a symbol open to multiple interpretations. Like the purloined letter, her flight disrupts the established order, evoking uncertainty and perpetuating the structures of power and resistance it was meant to dismantle.

Hasina's absence exemplifies Lacan's concept of deferred meaning, where significance is perpetually postponed. In Poe's story, the ongoing search for the letter creates the illusion of stability despite underlying turmoil. Similarly, Hasina's escape transforms her from a political leader into a symbolic figure whose influence lingers in her absence. The question of moving forward while grappling with the structures she left behind remains unresolved, caught in the paradox of her "absence of presence" and "presence of absence."

## Entrenched binaries and deferred relevance

Major political parties, notably the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami, struggle to assert relevance, clinging to their unforeseen adversarial posture. Despite, or perhaps because of, Hasina's dramatic departure, they remain entrenched in the binary opposition of Awami League versus BNP, failing to adapt to

a shifting political reality. Their efforts to position themselves against the interim government, already accused of being mired in inefficiency and elitism, ironically amplify Hasina's lingering influence.

This inability to evolve underscores their reliance on a familiar, albeit antiquated, political script. Rather than reimagining their roles in a post-Hasina polity, they perpetuate old rivalries, allowing her symbolic shadow to dominate. Their reluctance to transcend the oppositional framework—built on decades of political polarisation—delays the potential for meaningful reform. In this stasis, they fail to address systemic challenges that demand attention, undermining their relevance in an evolving political landscape.

## Revolutionary fervour meets institutional inertia

Meanwhile, the students who spearheaded the July uprising face the daunting task of translating revolutionary fervour into institutional change. The inertia of the very systems they sought to dismantle threatens to co-opt their idealism, reducing their efforts to yet another cog in the machinery of political stagnation. While their aspirations to launch a new political party reflect a desire for transformation, these efforts risk dilution through compromises with questionable political stakeholders, potentially undermining their revolutionary ethos.

The students' struggle is emblematic of a broader challenge: the collision between transformative aspirations and entrenched political structures. Their movement, though a catalyst for Hasina's ouster, now faces the task of sustaining momentum in a landscape rife with obstacles. The risk of becoming subsumed by existing political dynamics looms large, threatening to erode the revolutionary potential they embody.

**The interim government: Navigating fragile terrain**  
The interim government—tasked with navigating this fraught transition—bears the weight of stabilising a fractured polity. Yet, the entrenched remnants of Sheikh Hasina's regime, particularly within the business and civil-military bureaucracies,

persist. These institutions, far from collapsing, perpetuate an illusion of continuity. Their complicity reinforces the structures Hasina built, making her absence paradoxically more pronounced. In this sense, her symbolic presence haunts the nation's politics, raising doubts about whether genuine change is possible or if the illusion of her authority will endure.

The interim government's inefficiency and elitism further complicate this precarious moment.

Its increasing connivance of, if not entanglement with, entrenched

interests limits its capacity to enact transformative reforms, perpetuating the structures that enabled Hasina's authoritarian rule.

## Historical reckonings and structural flaws

This moment must be contextualised within Bangladesh's broader historical trajectory. Sheikh Hasina's rule was characterised by consolidation of power, suppression of dissent, and the erosion of democratic institutions. Her escape represents not only a political rupture but also a profound challenge to the nation's collective psyche. It forces a reckoning with the deep-seated issues that allowed her authoritarian regime to thrive.

The remnants of Hasina's centralised power structure—entwined with businesses, civil and military bureaucracies, and law enforcement—pose a formidable challenge. These institutions must not merely adapt to her absence, but critically interrogate the systems that sustained her rule. Bangladesh's true challenge lies not in pursuing the illusory stability of her presence, but in confronting the foundational flaws that perpetuated her authority.

## Beyond the illusion: Seizing the moment

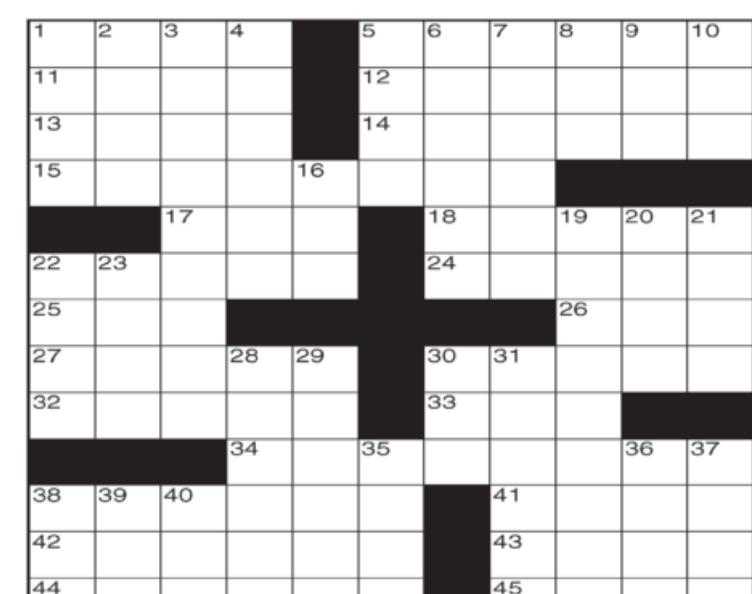
The lessons of *The Purloined Letter* remind us that the endless pursuit of illusory truths delays meaningful progress. Bangladesh must look beyond Hasina's absence to address the systemic issues that sustained her rule. Only by doing so can the nation hope to transcend the shadow of her legacy and build a more accountable and democratic future.

The stakes are high, and the path ahead is fraught with uncertainty. Yet, within this uncertainty lies the potential for transformation—a chance to reclaim agency and forge a new political order. Hasina's escape, like the purloined letter, is a conspicuous truth resisting resolution. The pressing question remains: will Bangladesh seize this moment to confront its past and shape a new future, or remain trapped in cycles of deferred meaning and contested power?

## CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	34	Boulder setting	16	"__ Now or Never"
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5 High school events	41	White House office shape	20	pitcher
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12 "The Stunt Man" star	43	Tear	22	Skirt edges
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25 Frozen over	25	May honoree	36	Moist
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27 Herrings' cousins	27	Nest builders	38	Auto
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4-27

## JANUARY 17'S ANSWERS

E	B	B	S		V	I	E	F	O	R
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A	G	E	N	T	S	P	S	S	T	

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO  
[dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
Sunamganj PWD Division, Sunamganj.  
Phone: 02-996600063; Fax: 02-996600063  
E-mail: ee\_sunam@pwd.gov.bd

Memo No: 25.36.9000.112-305

Dated: 22.01.2025

## e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders is invited in the National e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of following works, details are given below.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of work	last selling (date & time)	Closing date & Opening time
01	1067211	Construction of Model Mosque and Islamic Cultural Center at Shantiganj Upazila of Sunamganj District (Three storied building with three storied foundation (B-type) (Sub head: Main Building Civil, Internal Sanitary & Water supply, Electrical and Other Ancillary Works) Under the project of Establishment of 560 Model Mosques and Islamic Cultural Centers in each District and Upazila of Bangladesh.	23-Feb-2025 11:00	23-Feb-2025 12:30

This is an online tenders, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tenders, registration in the National e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches up to dated (mention in Notice). Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system and e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd))

22.01.25  
(Nazmul Hasan Hera)  
ID No. 202013013235  
Executive Engineer  
PWD Division, Sunamganj

GD-259

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD  
Narayanganj Road Division  
Narayanganj  
Phone: 7693468  
E-mail: [eenary@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:eenary@rhd.gov.bd)

## Invitation for Tenders

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Road Transport and Bridge/ Road Transport and Highway Division
2	Agency	Roads and Highways Department
3	Procuring Entity Name	Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Narayanganj
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not Applicable
5	Procuring Entity District	Narayanganj
6	Invitation for	Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System for 3rd Shitalakhya Bridge at 12th km of Madanpur-Madanganj-Sayedpur (R-113) Road for 3(Three) years under Narayanganj Road Division during the year 2024-2025
7	Invitation Ref No	35.01.6700.451.07.000.25-258
8	Date	23-01-2025

## KEY INFORMATION

9 Procurement Method Open Tendering Method(OTM)

## FUNDING INFORMATION

10 Budget and Source of Funds GOB

11 Development Partners (if applicable) None

## PARTICULAR INFORMATION

12 Project / Program Code (if applicable) None

13 Project Name (if applicable) None

14 Tender Package No. 01/Manual/PSN/NRD/2024-2025

15 Tender Package Name Toll Collection Activity and Operation &amp; Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System for 3rd Shitalakhya Bridge at 12th km of Madanpur-Madanganj-Sayedpur (R-113) Road for 3(Three) years under Narayanganj Road Division during the year 2024-2025

16 Tender Publication Date 24-01-2025

17 Tender Last Selling Date 25-02-2025 and 04.00 pm

18 Tender Closing Date and Time 25-02-2025 and 12.00 pm

19 Tender Opening Date and Time 25-02-2025 and 03.30 pm

20 Name &amp; Address of the office(s)

- Selling Tender Document (Principal) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Narayanganj

- Selling Tender Document (Others) (i) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Administration &amp; Establishment, Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka. (ii) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Dhaka (iii) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Munshiganj (iv) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Narshingdi

## NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

- Receiving Tender Document (i) Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Dhaka Zone, Alenbari, Tejgaon, Dhaka. (ii) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Narayanganj.

- Opening Tender Document Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Dhaka Zone, Alenbari, Tejgaon, Dhaka.

## INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

22 Eligibility of Tenderer As Per TDS

23 Brief Description of Services Toll Collection Activity and Operation &amp; Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System for 3rd Shitalakhya Bridge at 12th km of Madanpur-Madanganj-Sayedpur (R-113) Road for 3(Three) years under Narayanganj Road Division during the year 2024-2025

25 Price of Tender Document (Tk) 4000

Package No	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Weeks / Months
01/Manual/PSN/NRD/2024-2025	Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance	3rd Shitalakhya Bridge at 12th km of Madanpur-Madanganj-Sayedpur (R-113) Road	32.00 (Thirty Two) Lakh	36 Months

## PROCURING DETAILS

30 Name of Official Inviting Tender Shahana Ferdous

31 Designation of Official Inviting Tender Executive Engineer, RHD

32 Address of Official Inviting Tender Narayanganj Road Division, Narayanganj

33 Contact details of Official Inviting Tender Phone: 7693468, E-mail: [eenary@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:eenary@rhd.gov.bd)34 The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the Tender at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever. This notice will be available on RHD website [www.rhd.gov.bd](http://www.rhd.gov.bd) and on CPTU website [www.cptu.gov.bd](http://www.cptu.gov.bd).

Shahana Ferdous  
26/01/2025  
(Shahana Ferdous)  
ID No- 602161  
Executive Engineer, RHD  
Narayanganj Road Division

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BANGLADESH  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
E/M DIVISION- 3, KURMITOLA, DHAKA.

File No- 30.31.0000.432.07.001.24/400

## e-Tender Notice

Date : 22.01.2025

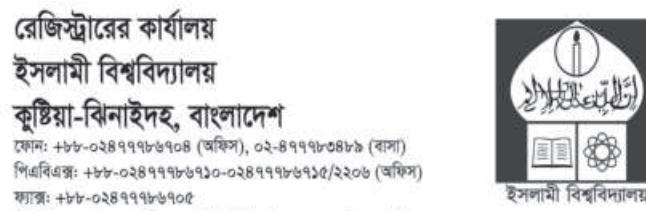
e-tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of following goods:

SI No	Name of Tender	Tender ID No	Last date & time of selling	Last date & time of closing
01.	Providing & Fitting/Fixing of Conveyor belt, Curve Belt & roller in/c other related tools & Accessories for departure baggage handling system at SAIA, Ctg.	167358	05-Feb-2025 16.00	06- Feb-2025 12.00
02.	Making, testing, Commissioning and adjusting of maintenance stair for passenger Boarding Bridge maintenance works at SAIA, Ctg..	1067094	05-Feb-2025 16.00	06- Feb-2025 12.00

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no office/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP portal is required. The fees for downloading the e-tender document from the national e-GP system portal, have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches up to dated (mention in Notice). Future information and guidelines are available in national e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)).

22.01.25  
(Jahangir Arif)  
Executive Engineer (E/M)  
E/M Division-3, CAAB, Dhaka.

GD-269



Office of the Registrar  
Islamic University  
Kushtia-Jhenaidah, Bangladesh  
Phone: +88-02477786704 (Office), 02-477783489 (Residence)  
PABX: +88-02477786710-02477786715/2206 (Office)  
Fax: +88-02477786705  
E-mail: registrar@iu.ac.bd, Website: [www.iu.ac.bd](http://www.iu.ac.bd)

স্মারক নং: প্রশা/ইবি-২০২৫/৩০৫

তারিখ : ২২/০১/২০২৫

Ref. No.

## নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

Date:

ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় বেতন ভাতাদিসহ নিম্নবর্ণিত পদগুলো পূরণের নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশের ছায়া নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নির্ধারিত ফরমে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রমিক	বিভাগের নাম	পদের নাম, স্থান্ধ্য ও বেতন ক্ষেত্র	আবেদনের বিষয়
০১.	আল-হাদীস এভ ইসলামিক স্টাডিজ	প্রভাষকঃ ০৫টি ছায়া [২২০০-৫৩০৬০/= প্রেড-৯]	আল-হাদীস এভ ইসলামিক স্টাডিজ
০২.	লোক প্রশাসন	প্রভাষকঃ ০৩টি ছায়া [২২০০-৫৩০৬০/= প্রেড-৯]	লোক প্রশাসন
০৩.	বাণিজ্যিক	প্রভাষকঃ ০২টি ছায়া (সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদের বিপরীতে) [২২০০-৫৩০৬০/= প্রেড-৯]	বাণিজ্যিক
০৪.	ডেভেলপমেন্ট স্টাডিজ	প্রভাষকঃ ০২টি ছায়া (সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদের বিপরীতে) [২২০০-৫৩০৬০/= প্রেড-৯]	ডেভেলপমেন্ট স্টাডিজ
০৫.	ফিজিক্যাল এভিলেশন এভ স্পোর্টস সায়েন্স	প্রভাষকঃ ০২টি ছায়া (সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদের বিপরীতে) [২২০০-৫৩০৬০/= প্রেড-৯]	ফিজিক্যাল এভিলেশন এভ স্পোর্টস সায়েন্স
০৬.	হিউম্যান রিসোর্স ম্যানেজমেন্ট	প্রভাষকঃ ০২টি ছায়া (সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদের বিপরীতে) [২২০০-৫৩০৬০/= প্রেড-৯]	হিউম্যান রিসোর্স ম্যানেজমেন্ট

আবেদন ফরম, নিয়োগের শর্তবলী ও অন্যান্য প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য অধ্যীন ব্যাংক (পিএলসি), ইবি শাখা, কুষ্টিয়া এবং ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের website: [www.iu.ac.bd](http://www.iu.ac.bd) এ প্রয়োজন আগবং ২২/০১/২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রার, ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া (অফিস চালাকী সময়ে) ব্যাবহার পৌছাতে হবে।

22/01/2025  
(এইচ.এম. আরু হাসান)  
রেজিস্ট্রার কার্যালয়  
ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

GD-262

## PSG rock City

PSG produced a stunning second-half fightback as they recovered from two goals down to beat Manchester City 4-2 in a Champions League thriller on Wednesday. All the goals came in the second half, with Jack Grealish and Erling Haaland scoring to put City firmly in control before goals from Ousmane Dembele, Bradley Barcola, Joao Neves, and Goncalo Ramos helped PSG to a crucial win.

- ➲ It is set to be an exciting final day in the inaugural league phase of the Champions League with 25 of the 36 teams still awaiting their fate.
- ➲ All 18 matches will be played at the same time -- on January 30 (Wednesday night at 2:00am in Bangladesh) -- with 16 matches having something on the line.
- ➲ Only two teams -- Liverpool and Barcelona -- have confirmed their top-eight spots, earning direct qualifications to the last 16.
- ➲ 11 teams -- from position eight to 18 in the standings -- only have a one-point difference, making it likely for Real Madrid, placed 16th, to leapfrog Leverkusen at eight and get into the spot to directly qualify for the last 16.
- ➲ Manchester City and PSG are in danger of elimination, with the former needing a win against Club Brugge to ensure a place in the play-offs.



PHOTO: AFP

## WC in sight for buoyant Tigresses

SPORTS REPORTER

History beckons the Bangladesh national women's team as they take on West Indies in the series deciding third and final ODI in St Kitts tonight in an attempt to not only clinch their maiden series win over the hosts but also to book a direct berth in this year's ICC Women's World Cup.

After suffering a crushing nine-wicket defeat in the series opener, the Tigresses' chances for a direct qualification in the World Cup looked very bleak. However, they bounced back strongly in the second game, winning the contest by 60 runs.

With 21 points, Bangladesh are seventh in the ICC Women's Championship standings -- a spot behind New Zealand, who are only ahead of the Tigresses due to a better net run rate.

A win for the Tigresses in tonight's contest against the Windies, with whom they are playing their first-ever bilateral series, would see them leapfrog New Zealand and become the sixth team along with hosts India, Australia, England, South Africa, and Sri Lanka to directly qualify for the World Cup in India later this year.

However, a defeat means Bangladesh will join West Indies, Ireland, Pakistan, Scotland, and Thailand in the World Cup qualifiers from which two top teams will book their places in the main event.

## 'BPL has to develop players for Bangladesh'

Rangpur Riders coach **Mickey Arthur** was all smiles during training sessions, inspiring his charges during the recent Chattogram phase of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). That he is leaving a trail could be surmised in training but also from results, with Rangpur leading the table on the back of eight wins on the trot, but there is a hard exterior beneath the laughter and soft words of the 56-year-old South African-Australian. In an exclusive interview with **The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi**, Mickey revisited their winning campaign in the recent Global Super League (GSL), how it helped transform the mentality of the likes of Soumya Sarkar, and more. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

**The Daily Star (DS):** How much of a difference do you see this BPL from your previous stint?

**Mickey Arthur (MA):** It's my second BPL stint and I did [work for] Dhaka [Dynamites] in 2015. I love the tournament; very fortunate to be part of a very good franchise. I do think the talent pool has gotten bigger, which is great for Bangladeshi cricket. Ultimately the BPL has to be good and it has to develop players for Bangladesh.

**DS:** How was winning the Global Super League with Rangpur?

**MA:** It was great. It allowed me to work with the players before the BPL so that when I arrived here, we kind of hit the ground running. Winning there meant we had confidence in our ability to win here. We found ways to win from difficult situations. Lot of the world took notice that our competition is good.

**DS:** You are always in great spirits and smiling during training sessions. But does Mickey get angry too?

**MA:** I've got to be. The one thing I know with players, if you give them a soft option, the players generally take it in international cricket and top-level cricket



doesn't allow you to be soft.

I'm onto the players all the time. Everybody makes mistakes. But you learn from your mistake and don't let it happen two or three times. I have a level of tolerance and then no more. Sometimes that's [tolerance] disguised, because I just want the best for every team I coach.

**DS:** How are you seeing the development of younger stars such as Mahedi Hasan?

**MA:** It makes me really proud. Mahedi is a wonderful cricketer. What I like about the players in GSL like Mahedi or Soumya, I was constantly on at them and telling them 'When you go and join your national team, create impact. Take that form and confidence into the next assignment.'

Cricket's a funny thing and when you get confidence you overcome a lot of things. It made me very happy.

I think the game's getting better because it's getting more dynamic. Skills are interchangeable [from franchise to internationals] but what changes consistently is the belief in your ability. I don't believe a player's ever out of form. I believe a player's out of luck, or out of runs, or just out of wickets. What changes is your confidence barometer.

**DS:** How is Soumya's process now after having lacked that confidence factor?

**MA:** I'd followed him, I'd coached against him. I understand his game because I've analysed him. Soumya has all the attributes of a very fine international player... but I think what was missing was his confidence because he'd been in and out of the Bangladesh team.

**DS:** How do you see Bangladesh cricket ahead of Champions Trophy?

**MA:** I think it's an exciting time for Bangladeshi cricket. Some very exciting players are coming through. Bangladeshi cricket doesn't need to stand back for anybody, as long as they're confident and have belief in their own ability.

## Payments, boundary size, suspicions headline BPL's Ctg phase

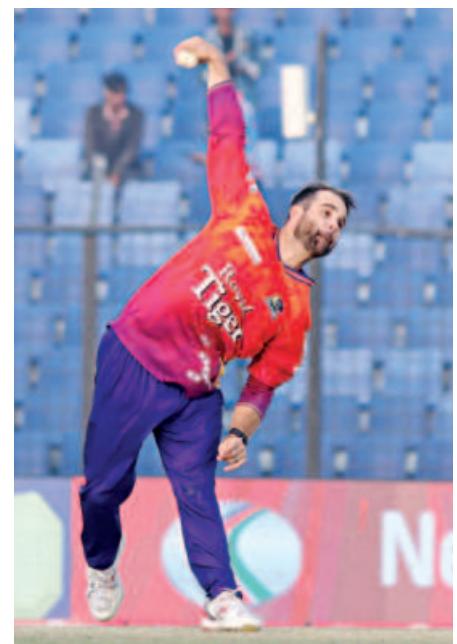
SHABAB CHOWDHURY

"No more cricketing questions? Surely boys, there's like 17 of you in here," Durbar Rajshahi all-rounder Ryan Burl quipped at a post-match press conference in Chattogram yesterday after navigating through a barrage of questions about player payments.

Burl played a match-winning hand with the ball, with figures of 4-22, as Rajshahi managed to put a stop to Rangpur Riders' juggernaut-like run with a 24-run win at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium. However, the 30-year-old Zimbabwean was mostly asked about whether he alongside the rest of the Rajshahi squad had received their payments -- a major discrepancy that had headlined the Chattogram phase of the tournament, eclipsing almost every on-field display.

No payment of players -- a very common problem throughout the history of the tournament -- doubled up on the intense rumours of spot-fixing, prevalent throughout the ongoing edition, and combined with the widespread scrutiny behind the disregard for having standard-sized boundaries.

At the end of the day, it was a significant win for the Taskin Ahmed-led side, who had boycotted a practice



session in Chattogram over payment issues; adding insult to injury following a string of losses. It put an end to Rangpur's eight-match winning streak and steered Rajshahi towards a top-four finish.

Burl expressed his delight at seeing his side emerge superior in a "do-or-die

scenario".

"It's a really happy feeling to be winning. It probably means much more to win against the number one team in the tournament so far."

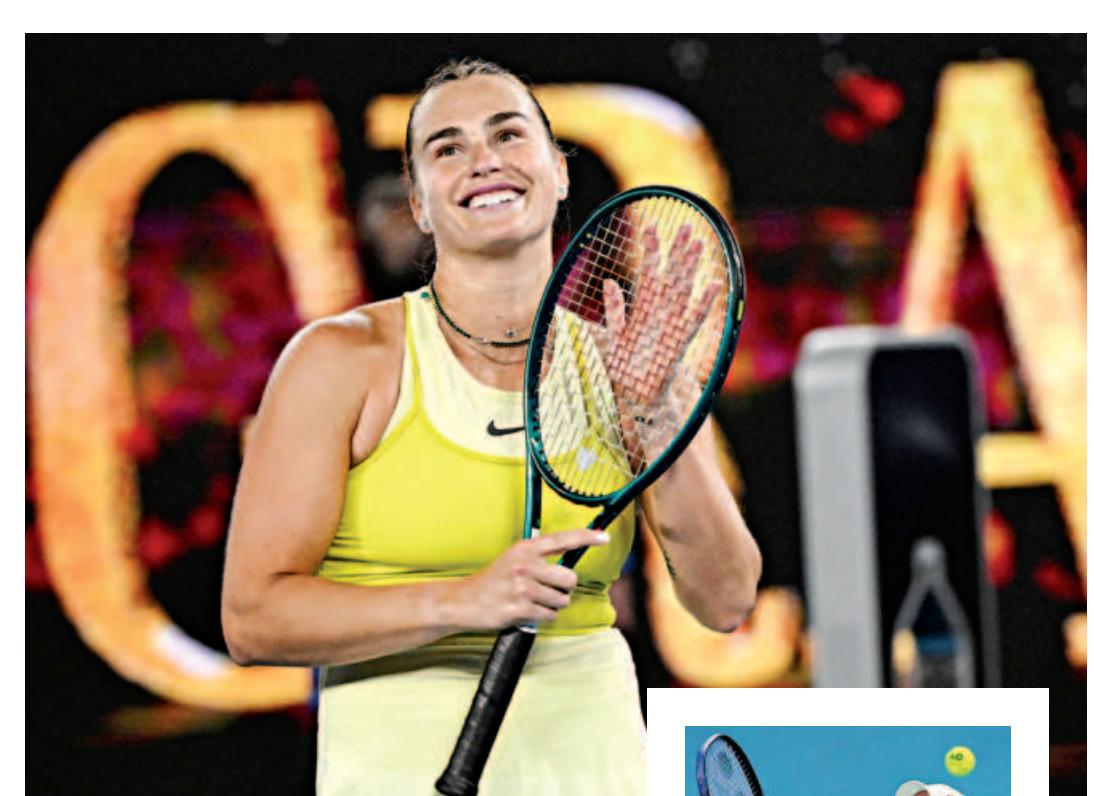
"Especially for us as we are in a bit of a do-or-die scenario where we need to win games to try and get to the qualifiers."

Having posted 170 for nine, Rajshahi managed to bundle out Rangpur for 146. Yasir Ali's 31-ball 60, laced with two fours and six sixes, laid the groundwork for the win for Rajshahi who, at one stage, were the 200-run run.

Sabbir Hossain's 19-ball 39 at the top of the order gave Rajshahi impetus before Yasir took command of the innings. But a flurry of wickets in the middle saw them lose steam.

Taskin and SM Meherob provided early breakthroughs for Rajshahi as Rangpur slumped to three for 15 in the fourth over. Saif Hassan and Khushdil Shah patched together a 40-run stand but after the former got dismissed for a 29-ball 43, Rangpur lost the plot.

A 26-ball 41 from skipper Nurul Hasan Sohan raised hopes but Burl, on his return from an injury, spun the Rangpur batters to a dizzy. Meanwhile, Taskin -- this edition's highest wicket taker so far -- finished with two four 20, extending his tally to 22 scalps.



Aryna Sabalenka is overjoyed after the double defending champion overwhelmed Paula Badosa 6-4, 6-2 with sheer raw power in the first women's singles semifinals of the Australian Open yesterday. The world No. 1 -- bidding to become the first woman to win three Australian Open titles in succession since Martina Hingis (1997-99) -- is set to face stiff resistance from [inset] Madison Keys, who stunned second-seed Iga Swiatek 5-7, 6-1, 7-6 (10-8) in a cagey affair at the Rod Laver Arena.

PHOTO: AFP

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## DEFAULTED LOANS Not possible to reopen Beximco's 16 RMG factories

Says labour adviser following  
laid-off workers' demand for  
resuming operation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Considering the sheer volume of Beximco's debt, the government does not think it's feasible to reopen the textile and garment factories that were taken out of production by the group, Labour Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain said yesterday.

"Although the employees of the group are demanding the reopening of the closed production units, it cannot happen now because these factories have so much debt that it's no longer viable to have them in operation," he said at a press conference at the Secretariat in the capital.

The adviser said Beximco Group's total bank debt stands at over Tk 40,000 crore, including Tk 29,925 crore taken against 32 factories in Beximco Industrial Park.

"Of those 32 factories, 16 exist only on paper. But these factories were used [as collateral] to take loans."

And of the total debt, Janata Bank alone is owed Tk 23,285.42 crore.

In December last year, Beximco laid off thousands of workers across its 16 textile and garment units, citing a decline in work orders from international clothing retailers and brands.

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## 80 shrines, Sufi centres attacked in last 6 months Says Global Sufi Organisation, demands judicial probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 80 mazars (shrines) and darbar sharifs (Sufi centres) were attacked by extremist groups across the country over the last six months, according to "Global Sufi Organisation".

The Bangladeshi organisation said the attacks involve vandalism, arson, looting, and murder.

During a press briefing at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, the organisation placed a four point demand -- an immediate judicial probe into all attacks, enhanced security for those religious structures, prohibition of anti-Sufi sermons at mosques and religious gatherings, and compensation for the damaged structures and the families of those affected in the attacks.

The organisation also sought executive orders directing law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of the religious establishments and their followers.

Hasan Shah Dipu Noore, a member of the organisation's central executive committee, said followers of Sufism are peace-loving and are not involved in any criminal activities. Every person in this country has the freedom to practice their own religion, he said.

"It is a matter of grave concern that followers of the Sufi saints are being attacked."

The Global Sufi Organisation said it represents 5,000 shrines, darbar sharifs, and their followers across Bangladesh. It warns that any attacks on Sufi followers and

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Risking life and limb, people cross the Tongi flyover. Buses frequently stop on the flyover to pick up and drop off passengers, blatantly ignoring a sign (not seen in the photo) that reads "No stopping here". This dangerous practice poses a serious risk to people. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

84 students  
suspended  
from CU  
Univ says they  
attacked students,  
journos during  
uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Chittagong

The authorities at Chittagong University have suspended 84 students on charges of attacking students and a journalist during the July mass uprising.

While the CU authorities did not disclose the duration of the suspension or the specific departments and academic years of those suspended, they confirmed that the students were affiliated with the recently banned Chhatra League.

The decision was made during a meeting of the university's Board of Residence, Health, and Discipline Committee on Monday.

The matter was disclosed to the media yesterday.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Administration) Prof Md Kamal Uddin said 73

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## Produce in US or pay tariffs Trump tells Davos elites

AFP, Davos

US President Donald Trump issued a blunt warning to global elites in a video message to the World Economic Forum yesterday: Make your product in the United States or pay tariffs.

Beamed on a giant screen in the Swiss Alpine village of Davos, Trump received a loud round of applause from political and business A-listers who had eagerly awaited his appearance all week.

Speaking from the White House, Trump touted his plans to cut taxes, deregulate industries and crack down on illegal immigration.

But he also had a tough message.

"Come make your product in America and we will give you among the lowest taxes of any nation on earth," Trump said.

"But if you don't make your product in America, which is your prerogative, then very simply you will have to pay a tariff."

In his wide-ranging speech, Trump made a link between the war in Ukraine and oil prices.

Trump said he would ask Saudi Arabia and the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to bring down crude prices.

"If the price came down, the Russia-Ukraine war would end immediately," he said.

The US leader then fielded question from the top executives of Bank of America, Blackstone investment firm, Spanish group Banco Santander and French oil and gas giant TotalEnergies.

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Federal judge  
blocks Trump's bid  
to restrict birthright  
citizenship

S Arabia promises  
Trump \$600b trade,  
investment boost

## Israel continues West Bank raids after Gaza carnage

Hundreds flee Jenin; 10 Palestinians  
killed, 40 more injured

AFP, Jenin

A Palestinian official said hundreds of residents of the occupied West Bank's Jenin refugee camp were leaving their homes yesterday, days into a large-scale Israeli raid in the area.

"Hundreds of camp residents have begun leaving after the Israeli army, using loudspeakers on drones and military vehicles, ordered them to evacuate the camp," where Israel's military launched an intense military operation this week, Jenin governor Kamal Abu al-Rub told AFP.

The army told AFP that it was "unaware of any evacuation orders for residents in Jenin as of now".

Saudi Arabia has condemned Israeli forces' attack in the occupied West Bank's Jenin area, the Saudi Press Agency said early yesterday.

The Israeli military said yesterday it killed two Palestinians overnight during the raid in Jenin.

The Ramallah-based Palestinian health ministry said Israeli authorities had informed it of the deaths of Nazzal, 25, and Shalabi, 30. "The bodies are being withheld" by the army, it added in a statement.

Salim Saadi, a Jenin resident who lives on the edge of the refugee camp, told AFP that the army had asked camp residents to leave between 9:00 am (0700 GMT) and 5:00 pm.

"There are dozens of camp residents who have begun to leave", he said. "The army is in front of my house. They

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Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl spotted in the wilderness of Hazarikhil in Fatikchhari of Chattogram. The majestic bird with a formidable appearance is also known as forest eagle-owl. The owl is nocturnal and often spends its day hidden in the dense foliage of large forest trees.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

## Ziaul Ahsan got Antiguan citizenship for \$2 lakh

ACC finds he also  
invested \$1.35m there

DIPAN NANDY

Ex-Major General Ziaul Ahsan and his family members got the citizenship of Antigua and Barbuda by spending \$200,000 and investing another \$1.35 million in the twin-island state in the eastern Caribbean Sea, investigators said yesterday.

There were transactions of at least Tk 170 crore in his accounts with banks in the US, UAE, and Malaysia, the Anti-Corruption Commission has found in an investigation.

Ziaul, who was the director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre, was relieved of his duties by the army after the fall of the Awami League regime in early August.

The anti-graft body

**HASAN AHMED**  
5 March 1964 - 24 January 2022  
Former Managing Director & Director

Today 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> death anniversary of Mr. Hasan Ahmed. His bereaved mother, brothers, sisters, officers and employees of the company seek forgiveness from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala for his departed soul.

**POPULAR JUTE EXCHANGE LIMITED**  
& Associated Companies  
1, Tolaram Road, Narayanganj.