

ACC seeks info on public servants with dual citizenship

Says it found evidence of such employees laundering money

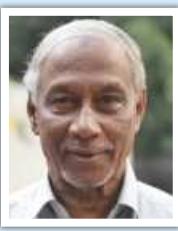
BAHARAM KHAN

The Anti-Corruption Commission is seeking information about government officials and staffers, judges and employees of courts, and elected public representatives who have dual citizenship in violation of service rules.

It sought the same information about commissioned officers in the armed forces.

The ACC in a letter on January 12 asked senior secretaries and secretaries of all ministries to provide details of officials and employees of government, autonomous, and semi-autonomous institutions, who have citizenship of another country.

The letter, signed by Md Mozammel Haque, director general (money laundering) of the ACC, also asked for information about any dependents, of officials and employees, with dual citizenship.



"Taking strict action against government employees with dual citizenship is a good move... Corrupt officials will not admit to wrongdoings. The government should collect information and dismiss these corrupt individuals from service."

BADIUR RAHMAN, former chairman of NBR

According to section 40 (l) of the Government Service Act, 2018, no government employee is allowed to be a citizen of another country. If a government employee violates this rule, the government may dismiss them after providing a reasonable opportunity to explain. In such cases, a departmental probe is not required.

The ACC's move comes in the wake of complaints that some government employees are involved in money laundering.

An ACC official said allegations of high-ranking officials laundering money and having dual citizenship started surfacing after the fall of the Hasina regime.

ACC probes also found evidence in this regard, said the official preferring anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

"In many cases, even lower-level employees such as drivers and office assistants have been accused of laundering money. To ensure that no

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The stage is being set for the much awaited Amar Ekushey Book Fair as the construction of stalls is going on in full swing at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyana. The annual month-long fair, organised by the Bangla Academy, is held every February.

CPD paints a bleak picture of economy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The economic measures taken by the government are yet to deliver substantive changes to provide relief to people's lives and businesses, says the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

The private think tank came up with its assessment of the state of Bangladesh's economy for the fiscal year 2024-25 in a paper titled "Navigating Expectations in Turbulent Times".

Presenting the paper in a briefing at its office yesterday, CPD Executive Director Fahmida Khatun said the interim government formed on

August 8 last year had launched reform initiatives in many sectors, including those related to the economy.

"However, no significant changes to bring relief to the general public and businesses have been observed. Six months have passed in the current 2024-25 fiscal year, yet we have not seen any significant economic vibrancy," she added.

The economist emphasised a coordinated approach to provide relief to the people, protect vulnerable low- and limited-income households, and ensure macroeconomic stability.

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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prevention of tax evasion, avoidance
- Strong monitoring to stop hoarding
- FTAs, comprehensive economic partnerships to increase export
- Low-interest credit for SMEs
- Proper estimation of rice demand
- Specific plan to end rising debt cycle
- Freezing of accounts, liquidating assets of wilful defaulters

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Passengers boarding a Jamalpur Express train from the capital's Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday noon. Train services across the country resumed early yesterday after over 26 hours of suspension. Train drivers and staffers had gone on strike early Tuesday to demand special allowances after retirement.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

1st phase of Biswa Ijtema set to begin tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first phase of the Biswa Ijtema, one of the largest congregations of Muslims, will begin on the bank of Turag tomorrow.

Followers of Maulana Zubair Ahmed will attend the first phase from January 31 to February 5 while those of Maulana Saad Kandhalvi will take part in the Ijtema from February 14 to 16 in the second phase.

Habibullah Rayhan, media coordinator of the Zubair faction of the Tabligh Jamaat, said the followers of Maulana Zubair from 42 districts will have their Akheri Munajat (concluding prayers) on February 2, and those of 22 other districts will have their Akheri Munajat on February 14.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Polls may come sooner than later

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

As speculations swirl around the timing of the next general election, remarks from election commissioners and historical precedents suggest that the highly anticipated 13th national polls may take place this December or next January.

Sources within the Election Commission said they were considering December for the election because holding it between February and June might not be feasible on account of Ramadan, Higher Secondary Certificate exams and monsoon.

National polls are usually not held during the Ramadan – the month of fasting for Muslims. Election dates are also scheduled in a way so the preceding three weeks of campaigning do not coincide with the days of Ramadan.

Electoral engineering during this time is typically avoided, as it seriously limits campaigning, for which candidates get 21 days.

Polls during Ramadan, which is expected to begin on February 17 or 18 next year, may also lower voters' participation and challenge campaign logistics.

"If we follow the usual practice, we won't be able to hold the election until mid-April. But

Rail services resume after 26 hours

Train workers call off strike as govt meets almost all demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rail services across the country resumed after more than 26 hours as train staffers called off their strike early yesterday.

Railway officials said many trains were running late and that it would take one more day for everything to normalise.

Meanwhile, the government has issued a circular accepting the major demands of the protesting train workers.

Mojibur Rahman, general secretary of Bangladesh Railway Running Staff and Sramik Karmachari Union, made the announcement for calling off the strike around 2:45am yesterday, after a meeting at the residence of the railways adviser on Minto Road.

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গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়নাধীন প্রকল্পের আওতায় Bangladesh Single Window (BSW) System ইতোমধ্যে কার্যকর করা হয়েছে। BSW মূলত একটি অনলাইন প্লাটফর্ম, যা ব্যবহার করে একজন আমদানিকারক-রপ্তানিকারক পণ্য খালিসের জন্য প্রযোজ্য সব ধরনের সার্টিফিকেট, লাইসেন্স ও পারমিট (CLP) এর জন্য অনলাইনে আবেদন করে স্বয়ংক্রিয়ভাবে CLP সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। CLP গ্রহণের পূর্বে Business Identification Number (BIN) ব্যবহার করে BSW সিস্টেমে (Website: bswnbr.gov.bd) নিবন্ধন করতে হবে। এ সিস্টেম ব্যবহারের ফলে আমদানি-রপ্তানি কার্যক্রমে যে সুবিধা সমূহ পাওয়া যাবে সেগুলো হলো:

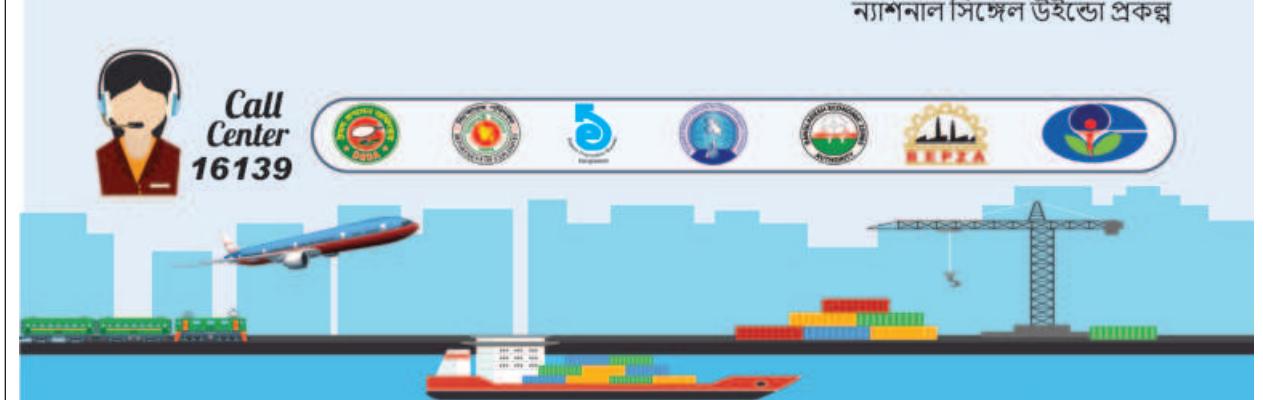
- একটি কমন প্লাটফর্মে আমদানি-রপ্তানি পণ্যের জন্য প্রযোজ্য সার্টিফিকেট, লাইসেন্স এবং পারমিট সংগ্রান্ত সকল কার্যক্রম সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল সংস্থা কর্তৃক যুগ্মভাবে অনলাইনে সম্পন্ন করা হবে;
- সরকারী কাজে ব্যক্তিগত যোগাযোগ (ইউনিয়ন ইন্টারেকশন) না থাকায় স্বচ্ছতা ও জবাবদিতি নিশ্চিত হবে;
- পণ্য আমদানি-রপ্তানির ক্ষেত্রে সময় ও ব্যয় ত্বাস পাবে;
- দেশি-বিদেশী ব্যবসায়ীদের মধ্যে আস্তা সৃষ্টির মাধ্যমে বিনিয়োগ ও বাণিজ্যের প্রসার ঘটবে।

০১. প্রাথমিক পর্যায়ে সার্টিফিকেট, লাইসেন্স ও পারমিট ইস্যুকারী ১৯টি সংস্থার মধ্যে নিম্নবর্ণিত ৭টি সংস্থার ক্ষেত্রে গত ০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ খ্রি তারিখে সরাসরি BSW সিস্টেমের মাধ্যমে CLP এর আবেদন দাখিল ও ইস্যু করার কার্যক্রম শুরু করা হয়েছে:

১. ওষুধ প্রশসন অধিদপ্তর (DGDA);
২. বিষ্ফেল পরিদপ্তর (DoEx);
৩. রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড (EPB);
৪. বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় কর্তৃপক্ষ, রাসায়নিক অস্ত্র কনভেনশন (BNACWC);
৫. বাংলাদেশ অর্থনৈতিক অঞ্চল কর্তৃপক্ষ (BEZA);
৬. বাংলাদেশ রপ্তানি প্রক্রিয়াকরণ অঞ্চল কর্তৃপক্ষ (BEPZA); এবং
৭. পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর (DoE)।

০৩. জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ডের পরিপ্রক্র নং: ১(৩৩) NSW প্রকল্প/মন্ত্রণালয়ের সাথে যোগাযোগ/২০১৮/২৪১৮; তারিখ: ১৪ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ অনুযায়ী, ৩১ জানুয়ারী ২০২৫ খ্রি। তারিখের পর হতে আমদানি ও রপ্তানি প্রযোচনালয় শুল্কযোগ্যনের ক্ষেত্রে উক্ত ০৭টি সংস্থা কর্তৃক ইস্যুকর্ত সার্টিফিকেট, লাইসেন্স ও পারমিট BSW সিস্টেমের মাধ্যমে দাখিল কর্তৃপক্ষে আস্তা সৃষ্টির মাধ্যমে বিনিয়োগ ও বাণিজ্যের প্রসার ঘটবে।

[জুয়েল আহমেদ]
প্রকল্প পরিচালক
ন্যাশনাল সিঙ্গেল উইন্ডো প্রকল্প



BNP to hit street in Feb for election by year end

Say party's Standing Committee members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP is set to take to the streets demanding general elections by the end of this year and protesting the rising prices of essentials, said several standing committee members of the party.

Before Ramadan, the party will hold a rally in the capital and in district towns across the country, said sources present at a BNP standing committee meeting held last night.

The BNP will launch public engagement programmes across the country from mid-February to garner support, said several standing committee members.

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman attended last night's meeting through a video link.

Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, a member of the committee, said the BNP would reach the public through its programmes.

Salahuddin Ahmed, another member, at a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday said, "We are planning to launch a movement to correct the interim government's mistakes and pave the way for a democratically elected government."

The party leaders think the government should be brought to the right path, he said, adding that if the

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Nilkhet: where stories once lived

HASAN MEER

Nilkhet is not merely a name on Dhaka's map; it is an emotion. A place steeped in layers of memory, significance, and quiet reverence for the book lovers of this bustling city. Nilkhet book market was a treasure trove where the curious minds of Dhaka came to seek knowledge, stories, and dreams. Those narrow, serpentine alleys lined with shelves brimming with second-hand books offered a kind of solace that only the faint rustle of old pages can provide.

For generations, Nilkhet symbolised more than just commerce – it was a rite of passage. "I used to come here with my father," recalls Ahmed Hasan, a banker who still cherishes those memories. "He would buy me books... I would get Bangla comics like Betal, Mandrake, or Nonte Fonte. Unfortunately, I cannot do that with my son anymore as they don't really have any such books for children."

Once upon a time, the market catered to diverse literary tastes. From Tin Goyenda to Masud Rana, from Archies to Tintin, Nilkhet was where fables and

adventures found eager readers. Classics stood alongside dusty Sheba Prokashoni papers and English literature, while comics were stacked high, waiting to ignite young imaginations.

These days, however, the market wears a different face. Guidebooks for competitive exams – BCS, MBBS, and university admissions – have taken over. Vendors sell what the people demand, and sadly, that no longer includes novels, poetry, or whimsical comics.

"Nilkhet is not the same," says Shahana Azim, a retired professor of Bangla. "Books are not found here anymore; instead, there are notebooks and guidebooks. It feels like the heart of Nilkhet is missing."



For vendors like Sajib Bhuiyan, it's a matter of survival.

"We sell guidebooks because that's what customers want," he says with a resigned shrug. "Not many people look for novels or poetry anymore. We do have some English fiction, but they don't sell much."

"The transformation of Nilkhet reflects a broader shift in society's priorities. The relentless pursuit of grades, jobs, and material success has eclipsed the unhurried joy of losing oneself in a story. Those who still visit for fiction or poetry now scour the pavements, where a few lucky finds might linger, hidden on the bottom shelves or in shadowed corners," says Rosa Akter, a research coordinator at an NGO.

And yet, amidst the overwhelming

presence of guidebooks, there remains a whisper of what Nilkhet once was. The nostalgia lingers like the faint scent of ink on weathered pages. It is a place that still holds the echoes of laughter and discovery, of fathers passing down the gift of reading to their children, of afternoons spent hunting for that one elusive title.

In the words of Gabriel García Márquez, "What matters in life is not what happens to you, but what you remember and how you remember it." Nilkhet, in its current state, may no longer be the same dreamscape it once was, but in the memories of its visitors, it is still a sanctuary of stories. And as the sunlight filters through the gaps between the tin roofs and the book-lined paths, it's hard not to believe that somewhere within its labyrinth, the soul of Nilkhet still endures.

The days of finding dreams in its dusty alleys may be gone, but the longing for those simpler, story-filled times remains eternal. For those who knew it in its glory, Nilkhet will forever be more than a market – it will be a chapter of Dhaka's heart.

EU warns Russia of sanctions over any attack in space

AFP, Brussels

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said yesterday the bloc could hit back with sanctions against any attacks in space, pointing to hostile actions by Russia.

"We are already the targets of hybrid warfare. Including in space – with systematic jamming of satellite navigation signals," Kallas told a conference in Brussels.

"There are risks to our satellites, the ground infrastructure, and our space industries from kinetic, electronic, and high-energy weapons.

1st phase

FROM PAGE 1

The followers of Maulana Saad will offer their Akheri Munajat on February 16, said Mohammad Sayem, media coordinator of the Saad faction of Tabligh Jamaat.

This is the first time the first phase is going to be held over six days with two concluding prayers.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam yesterday said he hoped that the 58th Biswa Ijtema will be held peacefully.

Speaking to reporters after inspecting the Ijtema ground, the IGP said that an unfortunate incident took place over this Ijtema, but both sides have shown responsibility.

The IGP gave updates on the tightened security measures, saying, "The security system and technology are much better now... Rab is still involved in the security work. We are ready to deal with any kind of sabotage or unpleasant incident."

Gazipur Metropolitan Police Commissioner Nazmul Karim Khan said, "We have held a coordination meeting with the city corporation, deputy commissioner, Roads and Highways Department, fire service, army, and Rab. After the meeting, we completed the overall security arrangements for the Ijtema."

He added that police would monitor the venue with drones so that they could take quick action if any incident occurs.

"We have implemented a five-layer security system. Every inch of the ground will be monitored from 16 watchtowers and through 335 CCTV cameras. We will keep law enforcers on duty on 35 rooftops and 20 check points. We will have 20 mobile teams to ensure that no one can occupy the footprint. We have placed 6,000 uniformed police personnel inside the ground," he said.

On December 18 last year, at least four people were killed and 50 others injured in a clash between the two factions of Tabligh Jamaat over control of the Ijtema ground.

ACC seeks info on public servants

FROM PAGE 1

sector remains exempted, letters have been sent requesting information on all government employees, public representatives, judges, and commissioned officers in the armed forces who obtained the citizenship of another country," said the official.

Asked, another official said judges of any division of the Supreme Court is covered by the letter.

In the letter, the ACC said a number of unscrupulous officials and employees are "concealing information and obtaining passports from foreign countries..."

To cover up their misdeeds and evade punishment, these officials are residing in foreign countries using the passports of those countries, it said.

The letter said, "With multiple passports, these officials are transferring abroad wealth acquired through corruption and are enjoying the wealth there. The ACC's investigation has found such evidence."

The commission said such activities not only promote corruption in the country but also harm the economy.

After acquiring foreign citizenship, the officials appear reluctant in discharging their duties, it added.

The ACC said it issued the letter empowered by section 2 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947, section 110 of the Bank Companies Act, 1991, and section 21 of the Penal Code.

It said all commissioned officers in the armed forces, court employees and judges, government employees receiving salaries from state revenue, officials and employees of autonomous, semi-autonomous, and state-owned companies, and elected public representatives at various levels are public servants.

The commission urged the authorities to be mindful of the dual citizenship issue while appointing people to jobs.

Asked whether ministry employees would voluntarily disclose their dual citizenship status, a secretary,

speaking anonymously, told The Daily Star that such information is rarely provided willingly.

However, the ministry will seek information from all employees and forward the collected data to the ACC, he said.

Badiur Rahman, former chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), told The Daily Star that taking strict action against government employees with dual citizenship is a good move.

"However, the approach of the government raises doubts. Corrupt officials will not admit to wrongdoings. The government should collect information and dismiss these corrupt individuals from service. Sending letters in this manner will only alert them instead," said Badiur, also a former secretary.

According to the Statistics of Government Servants 2023, the number of posts in the revenue sector is 19,16,519. At least 14,43,518 officials and employees are currently in service.

CPD paints bleak a picture of economy

FROM PAGE 1

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the CPD, said the think tank had been consistently calling for an increase in the tax-to-GDP ratio for years. The country's development activities have become increasingly dependent on debt due to the low tax-to-GDP ratio.

However, increasing tax revenue through higher value added tax (VAT) may worsen the situation for people already struggling to cope with high inflation, he said.

"It was a great opportunity to increase direct taxes and reduce tax evasion," he said, referring to the timing of the interim government's formation after the fall of the Awami League regime.

He said the government should take appropriate measures to curb tax evasion because the government receives only a portion of what people are supposed to pay.

Answering a question regarding low investment amid political uncertainty, Mustafizur said political instability is not the sole deterrent to investment.

"If uncertainty were the main reason, then why did investment not increase over the past 10 years when the Awami League government continued without political instability?" he asked.

If a conducive environment for investment is created such as a one-stop service and adequate infrastructure – investment could flow in, the economist said.

"If we cannot provide a one-stop service, if we cannot ensure gas supply, and if we haven't set up an ETP [effluent treatment plant] in Savar over the last 10 years, then how can we expect investments to come in?"

Political and economic reforms must go ahead in parallel, which is a medium-term process, Mustafizur

said. Meanwhile, the country should transition to a democratic process within the announced timeframe, he said.

"In that case, what is necessary is political consensus to continue the reform process, which would be a significant achievement of the July uprising," he added.

While discussing the CPD's assessment, Fahmida said total revenue collection recorded an "extremely low" marginal growth of 3.7 percent during the July-October period of FY 2025.

Inflation was higher in rural areas than in urban areas for 16 out of the last 21 months (from April 2023 to December 2024), which is particularly concerning, as purchasing power in rural areas is already low, she said.

In a positive development, export performance during the first half of FY 2025 indicates not just high growth, but also an increase in domestic value retention. However, export earnings continue to be volume-driven.

Thanks to high export and remittance earnings, the balance of payments situation and overall external balance are now in a relatively better position. Diversification of export destinations and goods could provide further stability, Fahmida said.

Regarding remittance growth, she said the reduction of informal hundi transactions after the July uprising has led to more remittances coming through official channels. However, remittance earnings are still low compared to the overall export of manpower.

About the recent increase in VAT, she said it would place an additional burden on the people.

The digitisation of the tax system could help raise revenue, and efforts should focus on curbing tax evasion, Fahmida said.

"Spiralling debt has trapped the power and energy sector in a vicious cycle that will likely persist."

She also said the government must continue its efforts to cut unnecessary projects. Nearly completed should be prioritised to ensure their quick completion.

The CPD provided seven recommendations to address the economic challenges. These include prioritising the prevention of tax evasion, limiting tax avoidance, and strengthening compliance systems to create a more inclusive fiscal base and reduce revenue leakage.

It recommended limiting intermediaries by connecting farmers directly to buyers, and regulating the hoarding and stockpiling of rice.

Given the changed global and regional trade dynamics, renewed efforts should be made to tap into the export potential of neighbouring countries in South Asia, East Asia, and South East Asia by pursuing free trade agreements and comprehensive economic partnerships.

The CPD also recommended designing a subsidised credit facility with lower interest rates to support Small and Medium Enterprises.

A proper estimation of annual rice demand is crucial, the report said. Additionally, a specific two-year plan should be developed to end the rising debt cycle that has entangled the power and energy sector.

Furthermore, the think tank recommended freezing the bank accounts of wilful defaulters and their immediate family members, liquidating their assets and temporarily nationalising their businesses.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD, was also present at the event.

Rail services resume

FROM PAGE 1

The announcement came following the assurance of Railways Ministry Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan meeting the workers' demands.

From Dhaka, Dhumketu Express left Kamalapur Railway Station for Rajshahi at 6:30am, said Station Master Anwar Hossain. Other scheduled trains also left the station, but some were running late, he said.

Bangladesh Railway Director General Afzal Hossain said some trains were delayed as it took time for the workers on strike to get back to work.

"We hope the service will be normal within tomorrow [today]," he told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

The government has withdrawn the ceiling on the special remuneration the newly recruited assistant locomasters (assistant train drivers) get for their extra work.

The finance ministry issued a circular in this regard yesterday. It was one of the major demands of the train workers.

Railways Ministry Secretary Fahimul

Islam confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

Currently, the assistant locomasters get 100 percent "running allowance" (a special allowance for their additional work), but the allowance is capped at their monthly basic salary.

Secretary Fahimul said after yesterday's circular, that cap has been removed, allowing them to be paid as much as their additional work.

Meanwhile, the union yesterday received the minutes of the meeting held in the wee hours of yesterday. The minutes say that the locomasters, who joined the service before 2022, will get all the benefits, including those they will get after retirement.

"All of our colleagues have joined work as our demands were met," Saidur Rahman, acting president of the workers' union, told this newspaper.

Locomasters (train drivers), guards, and some others staffers observed the nationwide work abstention from early Tuesday for the special allowance after retirement and other demands.

delimitation, but it is unable to start working in this regard due to legal issues.

"Still, we're confident. We have to overcome these challenges. We're doing our preliminary work and homework so that as soon as the rules of the game are fixed, we can jump into action."

He added that the EC has also begun the new voter registration process.

POLLS OF THE PAST
Bangladesh has witnessed 12 national elections since independence.

Of them, only two – in 1986 and 1990 – were not held in the typically dry months between October and March. Since the restoration of democracy in 1991, six of the seven national polls were held in winter.

The first national election in independent Bangladesh was held on March 7, 1973. The next was held on February 28, 1979, and the third on May 7, 1986.

The fourth parliamentary election was held on March 3, 1988, and the fifth general election on February 27, 1991, under an interim government.

The sixth parliamentary election was held on October 1, 1996, and the seventh on June 12, 1996, under a caretaker government.

The election to the eighth parliament was held on December 30, 2018, and the 10th on January 7, 2024.

The seventh general election was held on June 12, 1996, barely four months after the sixth election, as the Awami League and other opposition parties forced the BNP-led government to step down and hand over power to a caretaker government to conduct the election. Opposition parties had boycotted the February 1996 election.

As Bangladesh inches closer to the election season with some political parties' calls for polls growing louder, the current situation points towards an election coming on soon.

Israel delaying aid delivery to Gaza

Say Hamas officials, warn it could impact release of hostages

AGENCIES

Two Hamas officials yesterday accused Israel of delaying the delivery of vital humanitarian aid to Gaza, as agreed in the ceasefire deal, and warned that it could impact the release of hostages.

"We warn that continued delays and failure to address these points (delivery of key aid) will affect the natural progression of the agreement, including the prisoner exchange," a senior Hamas official told AFP.

Another Hamas official said the group had asked mediators to intervene in the issue. Both spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter. Israel, however, dismissed the accusations, and said it had received a list of hostages, held by Hamas, to be released today as part of a ceasefire agreement in

DHAKA

ACC seeks info on 13 Purbachal plots from Rajuk

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ACC Commission has sent a letter to Rajuk seeking information on plots allocated to 13 individuals, including former lawmaker Sheikh Helal Uddin, and former Jubo League chairman Fazle Shams Parash, both cousins of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The list includes: former civil aviation and tourism minister Rashed Khan Menon; former lawmakers Sadek Khan (Dhaka-13), Abdur Rouf (Kushtia-4), MM Shahin (Moulvibazar-2), Aslam Hossain Soudagar (Kurigram-1), and actress Suborna Mustafa (reserved parliamentary seat for women); Supreme Court judges Naima Haider and Jafar Ahmed; former SC judge MA Shahidul Haque; and journalists Zillur Rahman (Channel i) and Shakil Ahmed (7i Television).

The letter, signed by ACC Deputy Director Md Salahuddin was sent on January 19. The letter has already been received, but senior officials have declined to comment on it, said Rajuk sources.

An ongoing investigation is examining allegations against Hasina of abusing power and engaging in irregularities and corruption, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, to allocate six plots of 10 kathas each in the Purbachal New Town Project to herself and other family members. The ACC has filed six cases in this connection.

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MATCHES

Rights orgs, BFF condemn attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights organisations strongly condemned the recent disruptions and violence targeting women's football matches in Joypurhat and Dinajpur.

Quoting news reports, they mentioned that in Joypurhat, a girls' football match at Tilakpur High School field was disrupted when vandals damaged the venue.

Similarly, in Dinajpur's Hakimpur upazila, a women's football match ended in clashes that injured at least 20 people.

Both incidents were reportedly fueled by groups opposing women's participation in sports, undermining their right to recreation and empowerment.

"We believe sports is a powerful tool for the empowerment of women and girls, fostering confidence, leadership, and social inclusion," said Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam in a statement.

It is particularly concerning that, despite bringing glory to the country by winning international titles, women's sports face such regressive attacks in a sovereign and independent nation.

She described the disruptions as unacceptable in a country committed to gender equality and women's empowerment as constitutional and policy imperatives.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad echoed similar concerns, emphasising the alarming nature of such misogynistic and fundamentalist attacks at a time when Bangladeshi women are excelling in sports both nationally and internationally.

"It is particularly concerning that, despite bringing glory to the country by winning international titles, women's sports face such regressive attacks in a sovereign and independent nation," the organisation said in a press release signed by President Fauzia Moslem and General Secretary Maleka Banu.

Both organisations urged local administrations and law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of women in sports and take strict action against those responsible for inciting violence.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

COURT CORNER

SC clears way for hiring 3,173 under technical edn board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for 3,173 candidates to join as junior instructors (tech) or physical education instructors (10th grade) in various polytechnic institutes and technical schools and colleges.

The apex court stayed for four weeks a High Court order that on January 27 halted recruitment of the 3,173 candidates under the Technical Education Board.

The SC also asked the government to submit reports on police verifications about the candidates in three weeks.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Reafat Ahmed passed the order.

AHSANULLAH MURDER SC sets Feb 26 to hear appeals against HC verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday fixed February 26 to hear the appeals challenging the High Court verdict in the then Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master murder case.

A bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Reafat Ahmed set the date following a prayer moved by defence lawyer Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal.

Assailants killed freedom fighter Ahsanullah Master and student Omar Faruq Ratan and wounded 17 others as they fired at a rally of Sweekhahasebok League, a pro-AL body, at Noagaon near Ahsanullah's house in Tongi on May 7, 2004.

The next day, Ahsanullah's brother Motiur Rahman filed the case against 19 people, including Nurul Islam Sarkar, a Jubo Dal leader.

On April 16, 2005, a Dhaka court sentenced 22 people to death and gave life terms to six others over the murder.

ILLEGAL BRICK KILNS HC summons 8, including DCs and UNOs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned eight high officials -- three divisional commissioners, three deputy commissioners and two upazila nirbahi officers -- for allegedly their failure to comply with its directives for shutting down illegal brick kilns.

The divisional commissioners of Dhaka, Chattogram and Khulna; the deputy commissioners of Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts; and the upazila nirbahi officers of Dhaka's Savar and Dhamrai upazilas were asked to appear in person and place their explanations before the HC on that day.

On November 13, 2022 and November 28 last year, the HC issued directives to close illegal brick kilns across the country.



Golden marigolds adorn the fields of Char Khagria village, where commercial flower cultivation flourishes along the Shankha river in southern Chattogram. Covering an area of 100 hectares, the vibrant landscape bursts with marigolds, roses, gladiolus, and chrysanthemums, offering new employment opportunities. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

FIRE SERVICE AND CIVIL DEFENCE Proposal for 73 units stuck in red tape

SHARIFUL ISLAM

To address growing risks from urbanisation and industrial expansion, the Department of Fire Service and Civil Defence submitted a project proposal to the home ministry in 2023 to establish 73 specialised firefighting and rescue units.

However, the department officials said there has been no progress on the Tk 4,137 crore "Fire and Rescue Special Operation Wing (FARSOW)" project over the past year due to a bureaucratic tangle.

The proposed units aim to handle emergencies such as chemical hazards, road and rail accidents, and disasters requiring heavy equipment and K-9 (dog) search teams.

If implemented, the project would set up units in 13 key locations -- Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Gazipur, Mymensingh, Chattogram, Cumilla, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barishal, Sylhet, and Rangpur.

These locations were chosen for their strategic importance in disaster management, including potential earthquakes and risks posed by critical installations like the Rooppur power plant, officials said.

The specialised units would include -- 10 K-9 Search Units for rapid victim detection; 13 Hazardous Material (HazMat) Teams for chemical emergencies; 10 Heavy Equipment Units with advanced tools like turntable ladders, HazMat tenders, breathing apparatus tenders, and chemical tenders; 10 Road and Rail Rescue Teams with vehicles operable on both roads and railway tracks; five Communication Units to ensure uninterrupted



EACH UNIT TO INCLUDE

- 10 K-9 Search Units
- 13 Hazardous Material (HazMat) Teams
- 10 Heavy Equipment Units
- 10 Road and Rail Rescue Teams
- 5 Communication Units for uninterrupted connectivity
- 5 Special Multi-Action Response Teams (SMART)

connectivity during crises; and five Special Multi-Action Response Teams (SMART) for VVIP security, according to documents.

Despite its importance, the project has been excluded from the Annual Development Plan for two consecutive fiscal years, an official involved with the project said.

"We submitted the DPP along with a feasibility study on October 31, 2023, as per the government's decision," the official said. "Since then, there has been

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

25pc of adults suffer from hypertension

Says govt data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One in four adults in Bangladesh has hypertension, but only 14 percent manage to keep their blood pressure under control, according to the Bangladesh Hypertension Control Initiative under the government's Non-Communicable Disease Control Program.

This information was shared at an event titled "Inauguration Program of Expansion of Bangladesh Hypertension Control Initiative" at the CIRDAP auditorium in the capital yesterday.

The event was organised by the NCDC, National Heart Foundation, and Resolve to Save Lives, an organisation focused on heart disease prevention.

The event emphasised strengthening hypertension detection, treatment, and follow-up at primary healthcare centres in the country.

NCDC launched the Bangladesh Hypertension Control Initiative in 2018 to enhance hypertension care at upazila health complexes and community clinics. The programme was piloted in four upazilas of Sylhet -- Beinabazar, Bishwanath, Golapganj, and Fenchuganj. Following the pilot, it expanded to 54 facilities in 2021 and 182 facilities in 2022.



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at a meeting with Open Society Foundations Chairman Alex Soros at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

'Help us bring back stolen money' Yunus tells Open Society Foundations chief Alex Soros

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Open Society Foundations Chairman, Alex Soros, has said they will explore ways to support the interim government's reform initiatives.

He said the student-led mass uprising has given "great opportunities" to set a new course for the country. He made the remarks when the foundation headed by Alex Soros and president Binaifer Nowrojee called on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

The foundation is active around the world, using grant giving, research, advocacy, impact investment, and strategic litigation, said a press release. The foundation leadership discussed Bangladesh's efforts to rebuild the economy, trace siphoned-off assets, combat misinformation, and carry out vital economic reforms, according to a press release of the chief adviser's press wing.

They also discussed issues ranging from economic reforms, media, recovery of stolen assets, the new cybersecurity laws and how to improve them and the Rohingya crisis.

The chief adviser asked the foundation to help the country in "asset tracing" to bring back some 234 billion dollars siphoned off during Sheikh Hasina's 16-year long rule.

New accreditation policy for journos within a week Says CA's deputy press secy

BSS, Dhaka

A new policy on accreditation cards for journalists will be published within a week, said Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad Majumder yesterday.

Speaking at a media briefing at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital, Azad said a committee has been formed to formulate the policy.

The committee will recommend necessary measures to ensure free journalism.

Once the recommendations are made, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, along with journalist representatives, will finalise the policy.

Azad said several provisions in the 2022 accreditation policy are considered objectionable. The committee will recommend removing those, including the requirement to promote government development projects, which contradicts the principles of independent journalism.

He also criticised a provision requiring journalists to notify government agencies before

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

RECOMMENDATIONS
No more mandatory promotion of govt projects
Remove travel notification requirement for journos
Introduce district-level accreditation system
Single card with 3 years validity



A crowd gathers to purchase products at reduced prices from this OMS Truck in the Nilkhel area yesterday. The service allows them to purchase rice at Tk 30 per kg and flour at Tk 28 per kg, providing some financial relief to those struggling amid turbulent economic times.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

BAJITA SCHOOL IN PATUAKHALI Fund crunch stalls construction work

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The construction of a new building of Bajita Secondary School in Patuakhali's Mirzaganj upazila has remained stalled for four years.

The Education Engineering Department in Patuakhali initiated construction of a new building for the school in the 2020-21 fiscal year with an allocation of Tk 80.75 lakh, after the old building became dilapidated and risky for conducting academic activities. A contractor, Selim Mia, was entrusted with the construction work with a stipulated deadline of one year.

The contractor managed to complete only 60 percent of the work by the expiry of the deadline and sought an extension of the deadline repeatedly before halting the work eventually, said school head teacher Babul Hossain.

As such, students and teachers are



suffering immensely, being compelled to continue classes in the old, shabby, one-storey building with only three classrooms, amid much risk.

On September 23 last year, a ceiling fan got loose and fell on two 10th-grade students in a classroom. "Due to a shortage of classrooms, we often have to attend classes outside," said 10th grader Marufa.

Salman Talukdar, another student, urged the authorities concerned for prompt steps to complete the construction.

Selim Mia said, "I have been paid only Tk 27 lakh of the allocation so far, which is not enough to complete the work.

I will complete it soon if the funding issues are resolved."

Moshfiqul Rahman, executive engineer of EED, said, "We are working to resolve funding issues as soon as possible and instructed the contractor to complete the project quickly."

New accreditation policy

FROM PAGE 3

traveling abroad. "There will be a recommendation to cancel it," he said.

The existing practice of issuing accreditation cards based on circulars will be discontinued. Under the new policy, a maximum of 15 journalists or 30 percent of a news outlet's staff will be eligible for accreditation.

Regarding freelance journalists, Azad said only those with at least 20 years of experience in journalism or individuals working for press freedom will qualify for freelancer cards.

Previously, the principal information officer had the authority to issue accreditation cards. Under the new policy, a committee comprising representatives from various organisations -- including journalists -- will make the final decision.

If a journalist is denied accreditation, they will have the right to appeal. The appeal board will include representatives from sectors, such as media and judiciary.

For district-level journalists, a system will be introduced to issue cards at the district level. Azad said

instead of permanent and temporary cards, a single card will be issued with validity of three years.

Under the new policy, an accreditation card will not be cancelled solely because of a criminal case unless a final verdict is issued against a journalist.

If a final charge sheet is filed, the committee may suspend the card.

Azad also said accreditation cards of 167 journalists have been cancelled, but only seven have applied for reconsideration.

Proposal for 73 units

FROM PAGE 3

no movement on the project," he added.

Officials also claimed whenever they tried to move forward with the project, it got stuck in paperwork and multiple layers of approval.

The project also proposes recruiting 2,972 additional personnel and acquiring essential equipment to strengthen the FSCD. Scheduled for completion by June 2027, it will be implemented on FSCD-owned land, according to official documents.

Currently, fire service operates with 14,570 personnel and 537 fire stations nationwide. However, staff are frequently reassigned for major events and VVIP duties, weakening station capacities.

A separate proposal to acquire 34 new types of essential equipment, submitted last year, also remains pending.

The proposed equipment includes 214 remote control fire water monitors, 29 river ambulances, 133 water bowsers, 14,950 personal detection devices, 611 combined firefighting and rescue vehicles with

railway drive systems, 19 radiation protective suits, 633 firefighting drones, 631 crash tenders, 38 rescue airboats, and 75 Hazmat and decontamination vehicles.

According to the proposal, the department currently has 217 types of equipment, but most are in insufficient numbers.

For instance, it has only 15 turntable ladders (TLs) against a requirement of 75, of which just five reach 68 metres -- the tallest in its fleet. FSCD has requested 106 TLs to meet demand.

2020UNDP-sponsored study recommended expanding the fire service's capabilities, including the creation of aviation and marine units, but no steps have been taken.

FSCD Director General Brig Gen Muhammad Jahed Kamal said as the FARROW project was not included in the 2024-25 ADP, they have sent a DPP with modifications for inclusion in the revised ADP.

Regarding equipment procurement, he said, "Since purchasing all the required equipment would cost over Tk 12,000 crore, the ministry has asked us to submit proposals for phased procurement."

Rights orgs, BFF

FROM PAGE 3

BLAST in another statement mentioned that this type of anarchy surrounding women's football matches is truly deplorable and entirely contradictory to Articles 19 (equality of opportunity), 27 (equality before the law), and 28 (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, etc.) of the Constitution.

"Additionally, it is a punishable offence under the country's existing criminal laws and goes completely against the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)," it added.

The organisations called on community leaders, civil society organisations, and policymakers to stand against regressive forces threatening women's

rights and progress.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF),

in a press statement, said it disapproves of the

vandalisation that took place centring women's

football matches.

"Football is for everyone and women

footballers have all the

right to play sports. To

create barriers in women's

sports is against the

development of sports.

The Bangladesh Football

Federation believes that

everyone must come

forward to continue the

participation of women in

sports," it said.

"We urge the authorities concerned to carry out a proper investigation and take necessary steps and ensure that no obstacles are created for women to play football."

Execute sentences

FROM PAGE 5

family's experience of being held captive for 36 hours during the mutiny.

"Innocent women and children were unjustly dragged, tortured, and imprisoned in the quarter guard. We never imagined that people who were responsible for ensuring our security would betray us in this way," she said.

"There is no scope to say

the convicted mutineers

were innocent," she said, urging the government to implement the verdicts swiftly. "Justice must be served to remove this stain on the armed forces," she added.

The families denounced any attempts to question the fairness of the BDR court's verdict and stressed that those convicted were directly involved.

নতুকলা বিভাগ, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় নিয়মিত মাস্টার্স (১ বছর, ২ সেমিস্টার) প্রোগ্রাম শুরূ আসন্নে

ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

২০২৩-২০২৪ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নতুকলা বিভাগের শুরূ আসন্ন মাস্টার্স প্রোগ্রামে ভর্তি কর্তৃত অনুমতি আর্থিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়সমূহ মেটেক প্রিভেট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মুহূর্তী কমিশন (ইউকেজিপি) কর্তৃত অনুমতি আর্থিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়সমূহ মেটেক প্রিভেট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মেটেক প্রিভেট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মুহূর্তী কমিশন (সম্মান) ডিপ্রিভেট প্রিভেট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়সমূহ নিয়মিত মাস্টার্স প্রোগ্রামে শুরূ আসন্নে ভর্তি জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবেন। প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই নতুকলা প্রার্থী হতে হবে। প্রার্থীকে দ্রাঙ্ক (সম্মান) পর্যাক্রান্ত ৮,০০ কেলো মূল্যমত পিলিপি ৩,২৫ দ্বিতীয় বিভাগে ৫% নম্বর অবস্থার হতে এবং মাধ্যমিকসমূহ ও উচ্চ মাধ্যমিকসমূহ পর্যাক্রান্ত মোট ৬.৫ থাকতে হবে। তবে কেন পর্যাক্রান্ত মূল্যমত পিলিপি ৩,০০ এর কাছে থাকতে হবে। নতুকলা প্রোগ্রামে শুরূ আসন্ন মাস্টার্স প্রোগ্রামে অবশ্যই আবেদন করতে পারবেন। অর্থাৎ প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই আবেদন করতে পারবেন। অর্থাৎ প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

স্বর্তন তথ্য ও আবেদনপত্র প্রিভেট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নতুকলা প্রোগ্রামে অবশ্যই আবেদন করতে পারবে।

<https://ssl.du.ac.bd/post/notification> প্রোগ্রামে আবেদন করতে পারবে।

যোগাযোগ: নতুকলা বিভাগ, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, কলা ভবন (মীচ ভবন), কক্ষ নং-১০১৯

ফোনাবলো: ০১৯২২২৪৭৯৬৯

GD-311

NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
High Court Division
(Statutory Original Jurisdiction)

COMPANY MATTER No. 74 OF 2025

An application under section 81(2) read with section 85(2), 183 and section 396 of the company at Companies Act 1994

Adam Tamizi Haque

-----Petitioner

versus

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies & Firms and another

-----Respondent

Notice is hereby given that an application under section 81(2) read with section 85(2) and section 396 of the company at Companies Act 1994 was moved in the Honorable High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner for condoning delay in holding Annual General Meeting of the company namely is **Haque Brothers (industries) Ltd.** for the year 2022 and 2023 and thereby allowing holding the AGM for the said years that the company bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division upon hearing the learned Advocate for the petitioner has admitted the said application vide order dated 20.01.2025.

Any person interested in the said application may appear before the Hon'ble Court. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of charges

(Md. Golam Hasnaen)

Advocate

Supreme court of Bangladesh
Suite No 503, Bangladesh Shishu Kallayan Parishad Bhabon
22/1, Topkhan Road, Dhaka-1000

Mob-01912370869

NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
High Court Division
(Statutory Original Jurisdiction)

COMPANY MATTER No. 78 OF 2025

An application under section 81(2) read with section 85(2), 183 and section 396 of the company at Companies Act 1994

Adam Tamizi Haque

-----Petitioner

versus

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies & Firms and another

-----Respondent

Notice is hereby given that an application under section 81(2) read with section 85(2) and section 396 of the company at Companies Act 1994 was moved in the Honorable High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner for condoning delay in holding Annual General Meeting of the company namely is **Haque and Company Limited changed from Haque Limited changed from Haque and Company Limited** for the year 2022 and 2023 and thereby allowing holding the AGM for the said years that the company bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division upon hearing the learned Advocate for the petitioner has admitted the said application vide order dated 20.01.2025.

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(Md. Golam Hasnaen)

Advocate

Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Suite No. 503, Bangladesh Shishu Kallayan Parishad Bhabon
22/1, Topkhan Road, Dhaka-1000

Mob-01912370869

NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

COMPANY MATTER NO. 46/2025

Md. Kawser-Uz-Zaman (Rubel).....Petitioner

An application under section 81(2) read with section 85(2), 183 and section 396 of the company at Companies Act 1994

Adam Tamizi Haque

-----Petitioner

versus

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies & Firms and another



BDR MASSACRE

'Execute sentences of those convicted'
Demand family members of slain army officers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of army officers slain in the 2009 Pilkhana massacre have demanded the immediate execution of sentences for those convicted in the incident.

There is no scope to claim that the convicted soldiers of the then Bangladeshi Rifles (BDR), now Border Guard Bangladesh, are innocent, they said at a press briefing at the RAWA Club in the capital yesterday.

They also said the demand for their release is completely illogical.

Saqib Rahman, son of slain Col Quadrat Elahi Rahman Shafique, said some BDR members had recently secured bail through legal processes.

"We have noticed that the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and some BDR members are demanding the release of all convicted personnel, including those sentenced to death or life imprisonment. We firmly state that these individuals were involved in the killings and torture of army officers and their families," he said.

He said an independent commission could help identify the masterminds behind the massacre. "We want a fair trial," he added.

Fabliha Bushra, daughter of slain Lt Col Lutfar Rahman Khan, shared her

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BARISHAL UNIVERSITY

36 classrooms for 10,000 students

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Academic activities at Barishal University (BU) have been significantly disrupted due to an acute shortage of classrooms, hindering the smooth operation of academic schedules.

Established over a decade ago, the university has been unable to open any new departments beyond the existing ones, largely due to an accommodation crisis.

BU began its journey on a temporary campus in 2011 before relocating to its 50-acre permanent campus in Karnakati on January 24, 2012. However, little progress has been made in infrastructure development since the move.

At present, a single five-storey building accommodates administrative offices, academic facilities, and six faculties comprising 25 departments.

According to BU sources, the university has only 36 classrooms for its 25 departments and approximately 10,000 students. Each year, around 1,440 new students are enrolled. Of the existing classrooms, 15 departments have been verbally assigned a single classroom each,

though the requirement is at least 3-4 classrooms per department.

This shortage forces students from different departments to share classrooms, leading to confusion, delays, and frequent rescheduling or cancellation of regular classes.

The disrupted academic schedule has, in turn, increased the workload for teachers and caused session delays for students.



"When one batch is using a classroom, another has to wait outside for their turn. This makes it difficult for students to attend multiple classes in a day. Sometimes classes are divided between the academic and administrative buildings. The rise in student intake has worsened the situation, depriving us of a conducive learning environment,"

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Workers unload pineapples from a truck in the Khulna Boro Bazar area yesterday. These fruits are brought from Rangamati and then sold at a wholesale rate of Tk 10-12 per piece at local markets.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

2 killed, one hurt in van-bike collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Two people were killed and another was injured in a head-on collision between their motorcycle and a covered-van in Dinajpur yesterday.

The deceased are Shahinur Islam 30, and Sukhdeb Kumar Roy 42.

The accident occurred around 10:00am on the Parbatipur-Phulbari highway at Hajir Mor, said Parbatipur Model Police Station OC Chitta Ranjan Roy.

OC Chitta Ranjan said the covered-van driver was detained.

Water crisis hampers Boro cultivation

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Hundreds of farmers in Moulvibazar are facing uncertainty regarding the cultivation of Boro paddy this year due to a severe water shortage from the Manu River Irrigation Project.

The crisis has become a recurring issue during every Boro season, leaving many farmers unable to prepare their paddy seedbeds.

Zahidur Rahman, a farmer from Baneshree village, said, "My land once used to yield 20 maunds of paddy. Now I am in doubt whether I will be able to cultivate the land amid the alarming shortage of irrigation water."

Sajjad Hossain, a farmer from Kandigaon village, echoed him.

Farmers in Rajnagar upazila are also experiencing similar struggles.

Farmer Miftaur Raman said the 105 kilometres of irrigation canals have become heavily silted, hindering water flow and making it difficult to distribute water for irrigation.

The Manu River Irrigation Project, launched in 1983, was designed to control floods, drain water, and provide irrigation for about 14,000 hectares of farmland in Moulvibazar Sadar and Rajnagar upazilas.

Jamal Mia, a farmer from Parashimail, said, "Every single day is critical for us ahead of the Boro season. If the saplings are not planted now, the cultivation will

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Man stabbed to death in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was stabbed to death in the capital's Turag area yesterday.

The deceased is Md Shahriar, 24. He used to work at a private company.

Quoting witnesses, Md Rahat Khan, officer-in charge of Turag Police Station, said Shahriar had an argument with Md Riaz, a flexi-load shop owner, in front of a store around 4:30pm.

At one stage, Riaz stabbed Shahriar and fled the area, said the OC.

Shahriar was taken to nearby Lakeview Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The body was sent to Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for an autopsy. The OC said police recovered a knife from the spot.

He said according to locals, the two also had a fight on Tuesday over some issue.

Police are looking for Riaz.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নিবাহী পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
শিশু-মাতৃ স্বাস্থ্য ইনসিটিউট
মাতুয়াইল, ঢাকা-১৩৬২

Ref No. ICMH/Admin/2024-25/1151

Date : 29/01/2025

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/ Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contact support desk contact numbers.

e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Dr. Mohammad Ahsanul Haque, Joint Director, Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka-1362 for the Procurement of:

Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/Proposal Publication Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing/Opening Date & Time
1067738	Procurement of Anesthetic Medicine for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067739	Procurement of General Medicine for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067740	Procurement of Surgical Instruments for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067741	Procurement of Lab. Medicine Reagents for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067742	Procurement of Radiology Items for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067743	Procurement of Fire Extinguisher for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067744	Procurement of Linen for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067745	Procurement of Electrical Items for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067746	Procurement of Plumbing Items for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067747	Procurement of Stationary for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067748	Procurement of Computer Parts for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067749	Procurement of Computer Accessories & Software for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067750	Procurement of AC Parts for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1067751	Procurement of Printing for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1069780	Procurement of Lab. Medicine Hematology & Biochemistry Reagents for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1069781	Procurement of Lab. Medicine Automated Hb Electrophoresis Reagents for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00
1069782	Procurement of Lab. Medicine Automated Biochemistry & Electrolytes Reagents for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	30-Jan-2025 12:00	16-Feb-2025 16:00	17-Feb-2025 12:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursuer.

e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list; accepted tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

(Brig. Gen. Md. Emdadul Haque)
Executive Director
Institute of Child & Mother Health
Matuail, Dhaka-1362.

যোগো নং ১১৫২(২) প্রক্রো.



e-GP Tender Notice

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

SL No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work	e-Tender last selling date & time	e-Tender closing date & time
1	1070341	21feb/2025	Weather coat, whitewash, distemper, enamel paint, window glass, paint on doors and windows and cleaning of bathroom on the north side of the physical education centre gymnasium inside and outside on the occasion of Great Martyrs Day and International Mother Language Day, 2025.	09-02-2025 13:30	09-02-2025 15:30
2	1070418	21feb/2025	Providing a fence, stain (decoration) at the Central Shaheed Minar, fence on the side of field of Kazi Motahar Hossain Bhabani and fence and check post from Doel Chittar to the physical education centre on the occasion of the Celebration of the Great Martyrs Day and International Mother Language Day, 2025.	06-02-2025 15:00	06-02-2025 15:15

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal ([http://www.eprocure.gov.bd](https://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 branches of any registered bank branches. Further information and guidance are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Abdul Mannan
Executive Engineer (Zone-1)
University of Dhaka

GD-314

Sabina Yasmin to make her grand comeback tomorrow

Legendary singer Sabina Yasmin is set to make her grand comeback in the exclusive HSBC event titled *Ami Achi Thakbo*, on January 31 and February 1 in the capital.

These performances will mark her much awaited return after a year of personal trials. Sabina Yasmin, a cornerstone of Bengali playback music for over six decades, will sing 12 to 15 of her classic hits, accompanied by a 16-member orchestra led by Foad Nasser Babu and Jahangir Sayeed.

Musicians like Ujjal Sinha, Nur E Alam Shojib, and Monir uz Zaman will perform live with a focus on original instrumentation.

Md Mahbub ur Rahman, CEO of HSBC Bangladesh, called the event a tribute to Yasmin's remarkable career.

Known for songs like *Shob Sokhire Par Korite* and *O Amar Bangla Ma*, Yasmin has received numerous awards, including the two highest civilian awards, the Swadhinata Padak and Ekushey Padak.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?



'Dhaka Makers 3'

The third edition of *Dhaka Makers*, backed by City Bank, is just around the corner, bringing five days of vibrant festivities celebrating art, design, and craftsmanship.

With over 80 makers, 19 workshops, over 300 art pieces, and over 10 heritage crafts, this edition promises an immersive experience for art enthusiasts, designers, and craft lovers alike. From fashion and lifestyle to art and sustainable goods, *Dhaka Makers 3* is set to be a hub of inspiration and community engagement.

DATE: JANUARY 30 – FEBRUARY 3
TIME: 10AM – 10PM
VENUE: ALOKI, TEJGAON

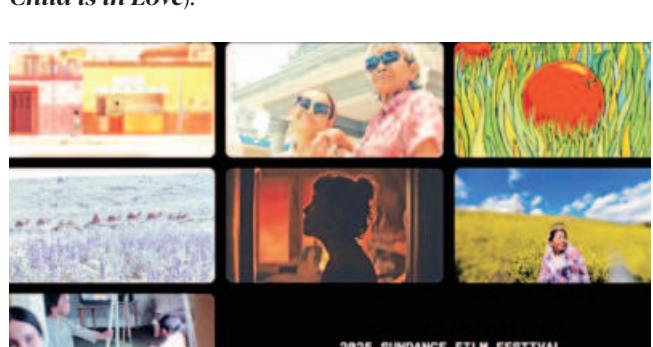
Sundance Film Festival announces Short Film Award winners

The 41st Sundance Film Festival, a leading independent film event, which ran from January 23 to 28, screened over 100 films across venues in Park City and Salt Lake City, Utah.

From 12,098 short film submissions, *The Masterpiece* by Alex Lora Cercos won the Short Film Grand Jury Prize.

Other winners include *Say Hi After You Die* (Short Film Jury Award, Kate Jean Hollowell), *The Stag* (International Fiction, An Chu), *Bob's Funeral* (Nonfiction, Jack Dunphy), and *Bug Diner* (Animation, Phoebe Jane Hart).

Special Jury Prizes for Directing were awarded to Masha Ko (*The Looming*) and Makoto Nagahisa (*Pisko the Crab Child is in Love*).

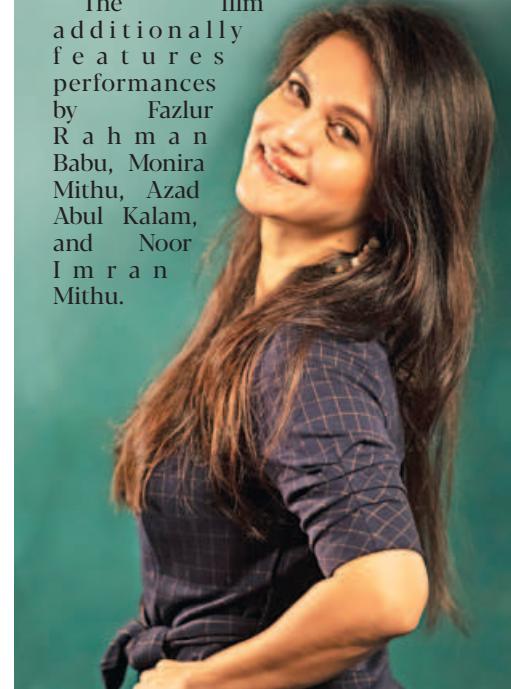


Mithila-Nayeem arriving this Valentine's Day

FS Nayeem and Rafiath Rashid Mithila, a popular duo from the TV drama scene, are now set to hit the big screen with their upcoming film *Jole Jwole Tara*. Directed by Arun Chowdhury, the movie has been in the works since the two actors signed on three years ago.

The project, which received a government grant for the 2020-21 fiscal year, began filming in October 2021 in Manikganj during the pandemic. Despite wrapping up in just three weeks, the film's release has faced several delays. Last year, it was even scheduled for release, but the plan was shelved due to the mass student-led protests in July. Now, the director intends to release the film on Valentine's Day.

The film additionally features performances by Fazlur Rahman Babu, Monira Mithu, Azad Abdul Kalam, and Noor Imran Mithu.



Jonas Brothers to star in new Disney holiday film

The Jonas Brothers are making their return to Disney with a holiday film, tentatively titled *Jonas Brothers Christmas Movie*.

The comedy will follow Kevin, Joe, and Nick Jonas as they encounter a series of escalating challenges while racing from London to New York to celebrate Christmas with their families. The film is set to premiere later this year on Disney+.

The band joined Disney's Hollywood Records in 2007 after parting ways with Columbia Records following their debut album, *It's About Time*. That same year, they made their Disney Channel debut on *Hannah Montana* with Miley Cyrus.

The Jonas Brothers made their film debut in 2008 with Disney Channel's *Camp Rock*, starring alongside Demi Lovato.



Shajal confirms role in 'Jinn 3'

At the heels of the success of *Jinn*, Jaaz Multimedia's horror franchise is set to continue with *Jinn 3*, once again featuring Shajal Noor in the lead role. Kamruzzaman Roman will direct this third instalment in the film franchise, expected to release during Eid.



Speaking to The Daily Star, Shajal confirmed the news, stating, "This is wonderful news for me, and *Jinn 3* will be full of surprises for the audiences. We will start shooting very soon. Nusrat Faria and several other artistes will also be part of the film."

The first instalment brought Shajal immense love from the audience. "A film only gets a sequel when it attains widespread appreciation from audiences. I am happy to see the *Jinn* franchise progressing creatively," the actor added.

NEWS

Arakan Army disrupts trade

FROM PAGE 12

to an associate of a high-ranking Myanmar military officer. "The seizure seems intended to put pressure on the junta. The Arakan Army is also trying to secure a share of the cross-border trade."

Jasim Uddin, general manager of Teknaf Land Port, the only private land port in the country, highlighted the sharp decline in trade since November 2023.

"Before then, around 50 cargo ships docked every day. But after the fighting intensified along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, the number dropped. Since July 2024, when the fighting reached Maungdaw township, only three to five ships have been arriving each month," he said.

Port officials said three ships had to wait for several days to return to Myanmar from Teknaf due to threats from the Arakan Army.

Lt Col Ashiqur Rahman, commanding officer of Bangladesh

Bangladesh's tone

FROM PAGE 12

demand stricter measures to curb drug trafficking."

The meeting also discussed India's construction of barbed wire fences within 150 yards of the zero line – a move that requires mutual consent from both countries.

"Any development within this zone must be approved by both countries. We'll ensure this principle is upheld," the adviser said.

Bangladesh will push for discussions on river water-sharing, seeking fair implementations of existing treaties.

Jahangir said industrial waste from India enters Bangladesh through Agartala, violating the environmental agreement between the two countries.

"Our agreement mentions Effluent Treatment Plants and Sewage Treatment Plants, but it needs to be explicitly stated in the treaty. We'll raise this issue during the discussions."

The meeting at the Secretariat, chaired by the home adviser, was attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser for Home Affairs Khuda Baksh Chowdhury, BGB Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzaaman Siddiqui, and senior officials from the home ministry.

Among other issues at the BGB BSF conference will be illegal infiltration and human trafficking.

Jahangir pointed out disputes in Feni's Muhuri Char, where issues with border demarcation remain unresolved.

In the first six months of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh imported 11,129 tonnes of goods worth around Tk 113 crore through Teknaf Port. During the same period, 636 tonnes of goods valued at approximately Tk 64 lakh were exported to Myanmar.

The imported items include dry fish, frozen fish, betel nuts, onions, ginger, coconuts, wood, and other goods. Bangladesh's main exports to Myanmar are cement and potatoes.

Contacted, a foreign ministry official told The Daily Star that the ministry was not in a position to contact the Arakan Army. Bangladesh maintains formal communication with the Myanmar Army governing the country. "We hope that the Arakan Army will release the ship for their own interest."

Asked about the slump in the trade, the official, who preferred anonymity, said the trade between the two countries is not that significant for Bangladesh.

Evaly's Rassel

FROM PAGE 12

Earlier, the prosecution sought the highest punishment mentioned in the existing law for the couple.

During the trial, the court recorded statements of two prosecution witnesses, including the complainant of the case.

On February 4 last year, Taufiq Mahmud, a customer, filed a case against the couple for misappropriating Tk 14.10 lakh from him.

According to the case statement, Evaly sold various products on different media using "eye-catching advertisements".

Responding to one of the ads, Taufiq ordered a motorbike on March 20, 2021 and paid Tk 2,45,000 for it. On April 3, he ordered two more motorbikes and paid Tk 5,90,000 for those. However, the authorities failed to deliver the three bikes within the stipulated time of 45 days.

Taufiq then contacted Evaly's Dhanmondi office and the authorities concerned issued two cheques as reimbursement. However, the bank requested not to deposit the cheques on the specified date as there was "not enough money".

As none of his money was returned, he sent a legal notice to Evaly on January 28 asking it to return his money within 15 days. That too was not complied with.

AL won't be allowed

FROM PAGE 12

repeated or apologised for this?"

Shafiqul Alam told a press conference at the Foreign Service Academy.

"Have Awami League men said, 'We do not support the killings carried out by Hasina'?" We want leadership with a clean image. I don't see it. Rather, many are lying and spreading rumors and propaganda," he said.

Shafiqul also wrote on Facebook, "Unless AL apologises for these massacres, killings and blatant corruption and until its tainted leaders and activists submit to justice system and they are purged and tried over their crimes -- and until AL separates itself from its current leadership and its Fascist ideology, there is no way it will be allowed to hold protests."

The interim government will not allow any attempt to push the country towards violence, he wrote.

"Since it took over in early August, the Interim Government has not stopped or banned any lawful protests. We believe in freedom of assembly and freedom of association. One report this morning said at least 136 protests took place alone in Dhaka in the past five and a half months. Some of these protests triggered massive

Binimoy linked

FROM PAGE 12

"We are now working to replace it [Binimoy] with a new platform under the control of Bangladesh Bank. We are in discussions with the Gates Foundation, which has an

internationally applied application already launched in 15 countries. We plan to test and implement it quickly," the BB governor said.

Speaking about problems in tax policy, he said officials of the National Board of Revenue function like a government within a government, with the authority to register taxpayers, assign taxes, impose penalties, and even oversee appeals through their own colleagues.

This leaves no way to circumvent their control, often resulting in the victimisation of taxpayers, he said.

Mansur also said he hoped the reforms in the political and other sectors would bring about the necessary checks and balances, and accountability. "This is the only way to ensure good governance in the country."

NR Chairman Abdur Rahman Khan said tax rates would be made reasonable in the upcoming budget, which he said would not be an ambitious one.

Import duties will also be adjusted accordingly, and the tax net will be expanded wherever there is potential for revenue collection, according to the

traffic congestion. Yet, the IG [inspector general of police] has never imposed any restrictions on the protests.

"But should we allow the Fascist Awami League party to hold protests? The video footage of July and August clearly show that AL party activists took part in the killings of peaceful protesters who included young students and minor children. The party leadership headed by Sheikh Hasina is responsible for the massacres, murders and mayhem during the July mass uprising."

He further said, Hasina established a kleptocracy and murderous regime. Under her watch, 234 billion dollars were siphoned off by her cronies, according to the Interim government.

Her family is now being investigated for making billions of dollars from corrupt deals, he wrote.

He added that no country allowed a bunch of killers and corrupt gangs to make a comeback. "No country allows a reset without accountability. The interim government represents the will of the Bangladeshi people who will react to the protest by the killers. We will not allow any attempts to push the country into violence. Anyone [who] dares to hold illegal protests under the AL banner will face the full power of the law."

NBR boss.

"Businesses will not be pressured, and the VAT rates will be reduced if necessary," he said, adding, "Taxes can be a pain for the payers, but they should not be killed by it."

Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear, said the government must lower the revenue collection target by reducing its expenditure.

"We cannot continue spending more than our income throughout our lives while constantly overburdening the same people for revenue. This is not sustainable," he said.

Syed Mohammad Kamal, country manager of Mastercard in Bangladesh, said the government should introduce incentives for digital payments.

Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman and chief executive director of PRAN-RFL Group, discussed the effects of high duties and taxes on products like juices and biscuits.

Mashru Arifin, CEO of City Bank, said a group embezzled money from the bank, and the Corporate Social Responsibility funds of the bank were misused by the Shuchona Foundation and the Centre for Research and Information (CRI). Hasina's daughter, Saima Wazed Putul, is the founder of Shuchona while CRI was the Awami League's research wing.

Implementing

FROM PAGE 12

increase food production, expand industrialisation, and ensure economic freedom.

"So, I think the revenge of the leaders and activists of the BNP will be successful on the day we are able to implement the 31-point outline. Only on that day will we succeed in taking revenge on the undemocratic and evil forces who want to subdue Bangladesh," he observed.

The BNP leader said they would begin implementing the 31-point proposal if they come to power, and it would be an ongoing process. "We will make it even better gradually."

He said many people believe the BNP has the brightest prospect of running the country by winning the next election.

Tarique, however, said BNP leaders and activists at all levels must prepare themselves and change their mentality to bring about a positive change in the country.

The BNP leader warned that various quarters are preparing to malign the BNP and are spreading propaganda against the party both locally and internationally. "We'll face them politically."

"But it's the responsibility of all BNP leaders and activists to ensure that the people keep their trust in the BNP. We must change our mindset and be confident that we'll be able to bring about change," Tarique said.

Tarique also responded to various questions from the participants at the workshops.

In response to a question, he said if the party returns to power, it will take steps to ensure the rights of the physically challenged individuals and provide them with a comfortable life.

The BNP leader said the party plans to arrange health camps soon at the divisional level to provide necessary treatment to people with disabilities.

Tarique said it also plans to establish a mechanism to ensure fair prices for farmers' produce and maintain a balance between demand and supply by dismantling the syndicates.

Action will be taken against market syndicates if they indulge in any foul play."

He stressed the importance of increasing soybean production in Bangladesh to reduce dependency on foreign countries for edible oil.

Tarique also underscored the need for addressing the problems in the banking sector and restoring public confidence in it, as state reforms will be difficult without strengthening the financial sector.

INTERNATIONAL

SOUTHERN LEBANON

Israeli drone strike injures five people

REUTERS, Beirut

Five people were injured in an Israeli drone strike targeting the southern Lebanese town of Majdal Slem yesterday, the Lebanese health ministry said.

On Tuesday, Israeli airstrikes injured 36 people in Nabatieh, a major town in south Lebanon, according to the health ministry. The Israeli military said it had struck Hezbollah vehicles that were transporting weapons on the edge of Nabatieh.

The Israeli army also detained three people yesterday in southern border town of Maroun al-Ras, Lebanese state news agency NNA reported.

Israel has carried out strikes in southern Lebanon although Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah and Israel agreed on a ceasefire in late November, ending a conflict that killed thousands of people since it was ignited by the Gaza offensive in 2023.

Israel has not yet fully withdrawn its forces from southern Lebanon and said it will keep operating against any threat posed to the state of Israel and its citizens.

Japan sees record number of teen suicides

AFP, Tokyo

Japan saw a record number of suicides among school pupils in 2024, health ministry data showed yesterday.

The latest data among those in elementary through high school edged up to 527 from 513 cases in 2023, the ministry said.

The total number of people of all ages dying by suicide fell 7.2 percent to 20,268, sharply lower from the record high of 34,427 cases in 2003.

The number among people aged younger than 20, including those at school, also fell to 800 in 2024 from 810 in 2023, the latest data showed.

"We regard this very seriously," Keiichiro Tachibana, deputy chief cabinet secretary, told a regular press briefing.

"We will continue do our utmost to take measures to protect children's lives and to realise a society where no one is pressed into taking their own life."

The health ministry was expected to issue its analysis of the data in March after more figures become available.

Japan annually sees the number of teen suicides rise at the end of every summer break in late August through early September.

This prompts the government and media to heighten public calls for struggling teens to seek help.



Men believed to be Romanian military contractors lined up to undergo a security inspection before crossing the border into Rwanda at the La Corniche Border Post in Gisenyi, Rwanda, yesterday. Rwanda-backed fighters controlled most of the besieged DR Congo city of Goma as residents slowly emerged from their homes after days of deadly fighting in the key mineral trading hub.

PHOTO: AFP

Trump immigration crackdown intensifies

ICE arrests surge to 1,000-1,200 daily; White House offers federal employees financial incentives to quit

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump's top homeland security official joined officers in an immigration enforcement operation that arrested several people in New York City on Tuesday, in the Trump administration's latest effort to promote its nationwide crackdown.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who was confirmed as secretary over the weekend, posted a video and photos of the NYC operation on X early Tuesday morning, highlighting the arrest of an alleged suspect and saying the Trump administration was "making our streets safe."

The Trump administration stepped up immigration arrests in recent days with about 1,000-1,200 arrests per day, according to ICE, far above the daily average of 311 in fiscal year 2024. The nationwide operations included arrests in Chicago on Sunday where a TV personality documented with a film crew.



The increase came after the agency sent an email to staff that said the Trump administration was "demanding" 1,200 arrests on Sunday, according to a person familiar with the matter. The arrest goals had been discussed on internal ICE calls, a second person familiar with the matter said.

White House spokesperson Steven Cheung criticized a Washington Post report on Sunday about arrest quotas for ICE officers as "fake news."

The Trump administration said on Tuesday it is offering financial incentives to 2 million civilian full-time federal workers to quit as part of plans to drastically shrink the size of the US government. The move followed an attempted freeze on federal funding also ordered by Trump that opponents blasted as unconstitutional. The emailed severance offer put the lives of US civil servants into disarray hours after the healthcare system for millions of low-income Americans was disrupted in the confusion of the decision to cut off federal aid.

The move followed an attempted freeze on federal funding also ordered by Trump that opponents blasted as unconstitutional. The emailed severance offer put the lives of US civil servants into disarray hours after the healthcare system for millions of low-income Americans was disrupted in the confusion of the decision to cut off federal aid.

Plane crash in South Sudan kills 20

AFP, Juba

A plane has crashed in the north of South Sudan killing at least 20 people, Unity state minister for information said yesterday.

The aircraft came down near the oil fields in Unity State at around 10:30 am local time (0830 GMT) shortly after taking off for the capital Juba.

The plane crashed 500 metres away from the airport. 21 people were on board. As for now, there's only one survivor," Gatwech Bipal Both told AFP by phone.

He said the aircraft, chartered by the Greater Pioneer Operating Company and operated by Light Air Services Aviation Company, was on a routine mission to the area. "The state government is in a deep sorrow by this accident," he said, saying there would be an investigation.

"Although most people predicted that this might be a mechanical collision."

he wondered if it was right to mention the July uprising in the same paragraph as the 1971 Liberation War.

He said the Awami League committed crimes against humanity and people would decide if the party can participate in the election.

Trials must be held for Sheikh Hasina and other AL leaders whose decisions have led to the massacre of people. "Therefore, both the individuals and the organisation must face trial."

The interim government has not prioritised the trial of the AL as an organisation.

There were talks of amending the International Crimes Tribunal Act to hold trial of the organisation, but the government backtracked on it. Some advisers say they want the Awami League to face trial, but they have done nothing to ensure that trial.

"Some say that they [the AL] will not be allowed to take part in the election. But what does the law say about it? The Election Commission will announce the schedule. Those who are registered will be able to participate in the election."

He said a new party was using the government apparatus to win elections.

"I welcome the emotions, aspirations, and party formation efforts of student leaders, but these factors must be taken into consideration."

ইউনিভার্সিটি ল্যাবরেটরি স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ



শিক্ষা ও গবেষণা ইনসিটিউট

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০

ফোন: ৯৬৬১৯২০-৭৩/৮৬৬০, ৮৬৬১, ৮৬৬২

Wanted

Applications in plain paper from Bangladeshi nationals are invited for three (03) permanent vacant posts of **Lecturer in Accounting, Lecturer in Fine Arts and Lecturer in Music** at University Laboratory School and College, I.E.R. Dhaka University, Dhaka in the pay scale of 22,000/-23,100/-50,530/-53,060/- (National Pay Scale-2015) along with other admissible allowances.

The applicants must have Masters with Honours and B.Ed/M.Ed degree from any govt. approved University. The applicant must have 1st division or CGPA 4.00 out of 5.00 scale at SSC and HSC level. The applicants must have one first class or CGPA 3.25 out of 4.00 scale at BA (Hon's) or Master's level. The approved condition either at SSC or at HSC will be flexible for the candidates securing the first class or the highest CGPA in both BA (Hon's) and Master's examination. No third class/division/CGPA below 3.00 at any level of academic career is acceptable.

Eight (08) sets of application along with a full Bio-data, duly attested copies of all academic certificates, recent 8 copies of passport size photographs and a Bank Draft/Pay Order of Tk 750/- (seven thousand fifty) in favour of the Principal must reach the undersigned by 20/02/2025.

Applicants already in service must apply through proper channel.

GD-310

Principal (In-charge)

ইউনিভার্সিটি ল্যাবরেটরি স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ



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ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০

ফোন: ৯৬৬১৯২০-৭৩/৮৬৬০, ৮৬৬১, ৮৬৬২

Part Time Teacher Wanted

Applications in plain paper from Bangladeshi nationals are invited for a **part time Teacher in English** (English & Bengali Version) at University Laboratory School and College according to the rules of Dhaka University.

The applicants must have Masters with Honours and B.Ed/M.Ed degree from any govt. approved University. The applicant must have 1st division or CGPA 4.00 out of 5.00 scale at SSC and HSC level. The applicants must have one first class or CGPA 3.25 out of 4.00 scale at BA (Hon's) or Master's level. The approved condition either at SSC or at HSC will be flexible for the candidates securing the first class or the highest CGPA in both BA (Hon's) and Master's examination. No third class/division/CGPA below 3.00 at any level of academic career is acceptable.

Three sets of applications with full Bio-data, duly attested copies of all certificates and marks sheets, recent passport size photographs must reach the undersigned by 20/02/2025.

Applicants already in service must apply through proper channel.

GD-309

Principal (In-charge)

OFFICE OF THE CHUADANGA POURASHAVA

Disrtict: CHUADANGA

Memo No. : CHUA/Poura/2025/182

Date: 29/01/2025

Corrigendum e-Tender Notice No: 01/2024-25

Corrigendum e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of Works as mentioned in the following table:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Nature of Works	On-line(e-GP System) tender publication date & time	On-line(e-GP System) tender closing date & time
1055844	LGCRP/Chuadanga /2024-2025/W-09.	Rehabilitation of Dense Carpeting Road and RCC Drain Work	08.01.2025 10:00 AM	06.02.2025 14:00 PM
1055845	LGCRP/Chuadanga /2024-2025/W-10.	Construction of RCC Drain Work	08.01.2025 10:00 AM	06.02.2025 14:00 PM
1055846	LGCRP/Chuadanga /2024-2025/W-11.	Rehabilitation of Dense Carpeting, RCC Road and RCC Drain Work	08.01.2025 10:00 AM	06.02.2025 14:00 PM
1055847	LGCRP/Chuadanga /2024-2025/W-12	Rehabilitation of RCC Drain Work	08.01.2025 10:00 AM	06.02.2025 14:00 PM

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

The fees for downloading the e-tendering documents from the national e-GP Portal have to be deposited on line through any registered banks branches up to 06.02.2025 at 13:00PM

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

29.01.2025

(M Saifullah)
Chief Executive Officer
Chuadanga Pourashava
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Whom do the bureaucrats serve?

Existing bureaucratic culture is holding the government back

When the Awami League government fell on August 5, 2024, following weeks of mass movement, there was a widespread sense of hope that better days lay ahead. The interim government took office on August 8, promising an efficient, pro-people governance system in line with the spirit of the July uprising. Unfortunately, over five and a half months on, it is struggling to even get on the track of that promise, thanks largely to a non-cooperative, past-bound bureaucracy.

According to a recent report by Samakal, several advisers of the interim government have expressed frustration at being unable to carry out their duties properly due to a lack of support from the bureaucrats. Adviser Nahid Islam even spoke about this publicly. As a result, the government has failed to complete 70 percent of the tasks it had set for itself, which is staggering. These unfinished tasks include crucial issues such as the posting of deputy commissioners, withdrawal of politically motivated cases, distribution of free school textbooks, procurement of necessary equipment at various government offices, etc—all matters that needed prompt response.

Apparently, bureaucrats are still being sluggish, resistant, and mostly "strategic" in their work knowing the transient nature of this non-political administration; they are cautious to avoid potential trouble when a political party comes to power through election. Strong resistance is also coming from those who benefited from various perks under the Awami League regime; there are allegations that these officials are intentionally creating bottlenecks for the current administration.

As frustrating as this situation is, it is not entirely unexpected. Bureaucracy in Bangladesh has historically been politicised, used by the ruling party of the day to varying extents. This abuse peaked under the Awami League's rule, which politicised almost every level of government and provided perks and benefits to officials in exchange for loyalty. In return, these officials helped it maintain its authoritarian grip, stifling democratic practices and good governance. This led to a bureaucratic system so entrenched in corruption that any indication of change or reform triggers adverse, almost visceral reactions from bureaucrats fearing they might lose their positions of power and comfort.

Today, some of the old players may have changed, but the old system remains firmly in place. A properly functioning government requires a supportive and efficient bureaucracy. To achieve this, our outdated bureaucratic system must be dismantled to make way for a healthy, accountable system. Bureaucrats must realise that their job is not to pander to the rulers, but the people—the taxpayers. They must check their self-serving attitudes and heed the public demand: to uphold the integrity of their duties.

Persistent mugging in Dhaka quite worrying

Police must step up to prevent such incidents

The persistence of muggings and lootings in Dhaka has left residents in a constant state of fear while outdoors. Reportedly, criminals are no longer waiting for the cover of darkness, with daylight muggings becoming increasingly common. The situation is particularly severe in Mohammadpur, where organised gangs armed with sharp weapons are often attacking people in broad daylight. While such crimes were widely reported in the aftermath of the fall of the Awami League government, police efforts to curb them have remained inadequate even after nearly six months.

According to an intelligence report, there are at least 432 high-risk spots for mugging across the city, with Mohammadpur alone accounting for 108. Residents report frequent incidents in areas such as Bosila, Tin Rastar Mor, Dhaka Udyan, Nobodoy Housing, Chand Udyan, Bosila Garden City, 40 Feet Road, Chandrima Housing, Ekota Housing, and Nabinagar. Many of the crimes are allegedly committed by teen and youth gangs. While Mohammadpur has been a hotspot for quite some time, muggings are also rampant in Dhamondi, Asad Gate, and other neighbourhoods. Reportedly, the authorities have identified 205 active muggers in Mohammadpur alone. The question is, what are they doing to prevent them?

Recently, a video that went viral on social media showed a teenage boy hacking another with a machete in broad daylight in Dhaka Udyan. On January 25, three young men stopped a college student's rickshaw near Dhaka State College on Nurjahan Road and snatched his phone at knifepoint. The incident was caught on a security camera, while multiple bystanders witnessed it. Unfortunately, despite the availability of CCTV footage in many such incidents—some of which have gone viral—many criminals remain at large. More alarmingly, the victims are often stabbed or hacked. Clearly, the city's law and order situation has worsened in recent months, despite expectations to the contrary.

But why are the police still failing to protect all citizens? Ensuring public safety is their fundamental responsibility. Since the August 5 political changeover, law enforcement agencies have repeatedly assured us that they are increasing patrols and surveillance, yet mugging incidents abound. Recently, the IGP stated that police must adopt a zero-tolerance policy against extortion and mugging. It is time for such pledges to translate into action. Dhaka's residents need safety and security, not empty promises.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Mahatma Gandhi assassinated

Mahatma Gandhi, internationally esteemed for his doctrine of nonviolent protest (*satyagraha*) to achieve political and social progress, was assassinated on this day in 1948.

EDITORIAL

'The BRT project was flawed from the start'

Dr Md Shamsul Hoque, professor of civil engineering at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), talks to Monorom Polok of The Daily Star about the maiden BRT line in Dhaka that opened last month.

The Gazipur-Airport BRT project has incurred massive expenditure. How would you assess its potential to alleviate traffic congestion?

To address this issue properly, it is essential to first consider the broader ecosystem of public transport. Public transport encompasses various modes, with buses forming the base of the productivity pyramid. A standard bus system can manage up to 4,000 passengers per hour per direction (PHPD) at most. To enhance capacity in densely developed urban areas, systems with greater productivity are necessary. This is where the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems come into play. By providing buses with dedicated lanes, they can operate with increased efficiency and immunity from congestion caused by smaller vehicles.

For instance, BRT systems in Jakarta and Istanbul allow buses to reach speeds of up to 70 kilometres per hour, competing with the efficiency of metro systems. Metros, operating on fully segregated tracks, provide faster and more reliable services, making them particularly attractive to urban commuters. However, when implemented properly in dedicated corridors, BRT systems can achieve comparable levels of efficiency.

The concept of BRT stems from the notion that buses can be rapid and efficient within a dedicated and controlled environment. Globally, cities like Curitiba in Brazil and Bogotá in Colombia are considered the gold standards for BRT implementation. These systems exemplify flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and high productivity. However, a well-executed BRT system requires substantial infrastructure, such as dedicated lanes, controlled access points, and barriers to separate BRT lanes from other traffic. The design of these barriers depends on the level of enforcement needed. Unlike metro systems, BRT systems do not demand extensive land acquisition but rather a reallocation of road space. Prioritising buses and isolating road sections for public transport are central to their success.

When implemented with dedicated stations resembling those of metro systems, BRT services offer faster, more reliable alternatives that encourage commuters to transition from private cars to buses. This modal shift gradually reduces congestion and fosters a sustainable commuting culture. Moreover, older, unorganised bus systems can be phased out and replaced by more structured and efficient BRT services. The success of BRT systems globally—adopted in over 180 cities—demonstrates their viability as cost-effective solutions for urban congestion, particularly during peak hours.

How do these global standards align with the specific context of the Gazipur-Airport BRT corridor?

particularly given the prevalence of large trucks, inter-district buses, and pedestrian traffic in the area?

The effectiveness of BRT systems relies on specific prerequisites. Road width is a critical factor; a minimum of 12 lanes is typically necessary to implement a BRT system effectively. This ensures that even after allocating two lanes for the BRT, there remains adequate space for non-BRT traffic. In certain cases, 14 lanes may be required. Unfortunately, many corridors in Bangladesh, including the Gazipur-Airport corridor, do not meet these criteria. While the corridor was intended to be widened near stations, this plan was poorly executed, leaving insufficient space for the system's proper functioning.

Another challenge lies in the modal composition of traffic. BRT systems are most effective in areas with high concentrations of small private vehicles, facilitating a modal shift from cars to buses. However, the Gazipur corridor runs along

Could you elaborate on the flaws of the project, particularly regarding the suitability of the chosen corridor and its alignment with the original Strategic Transport Plan (STP)?

The Gazipur-Airport BRT project has been plagued by significant planning and design flaws from its inception. The corridor, with its narrow roads and industrial character, was inherently unsuitable for a BRT system. These factors should have been identified during the feasibility study but were overlooked, allowing the project to proceed without addressing these critical issues.

The placement of infrastructure further compounded the problems. Footpaths were narrowed to accommodate footbridges, reducing pedestrian space in an area where walking is the primary mode of transport.

The original plan for BRT-3, as outlined in the STP, proposed the route through a densely populated urban area. However, the current



Dr Md Shamsul Hoque

industrial zones dominated by large trucks and inter-district buses, with very few private cars. Additionally, approximately 90 percent of workers in these industrial zones walk to their destinations due to the short distances involved. This undermines the two main prerequisites for a successful BRT system: adequate right of way, and high volume of smaller vehicles.

Pedestrian traffic poses another challenge. Industrial workers frequently cross roads to reach factories, creating a constant flow of pedestrians. Physical barriers introduced by the BRT system can lead to a social divide, restricting workers' movement. Even if footbridges or escalators are installed, they are impractical given the high pedestrian volume and workers' time constraints.

Delays of even a few minutes can result in wage deductions, prompting many to bypass these barriers and cross the BRT lanes directly.

alignment lies outside built-up areas, where demand for such a system is minimal.

Additionally, a fundamental aspect of BRT systems is their ability to serve multiple destinations along the corridor, encouraging high passenger turnover and maximising productivity. The Gazipur-Airport BRT, however, functions more like an intercity bus service, with limited stops and long travel times. This design reduces turnover, rendering the system less efficient and productive.

What operational challenges arise from the coexistence of the BRT system with existing inter-district buses in the Gazipur-Airport corridor, and how does this affect its effectiveness?

BRT systems are usually designed to replace existing bus services within their corridors, creating a streamlined and disciplined transport network. However, in the Gazipur Airport

corridor, inter-district buses continue to operate alongside the BRT system, undermining its purpose. These buses provide flexible, personalised services, stopping wherever passengers need, unlike the fixed stations of a BRT system. Consequently, commuters are less likely to switch to the BRT, resulting in minimal modal shift and rendering the system ineffective.

Successful BRT systems thrive in urban settings with high volumes of small vehicles and commuters. The Gazipur-Airport corridor, however, is characterised by industrial traffic, large vehicles, and limited private car use.

Experts say the BRT's permanent infrastructure, including flyovers, may restrict future modifications. Can you elaborate?

Yes, unlike flexible BRT systems in cities like Jakarta and Chinese metropolises—which utilise lightweight and adaptable infrastructure—the Gazipur-Airport BRT has been implemented with permanent structures, including flyovers. This rigidity precludes future modifications, such as upgrading the corridor to accommodate a metro system—a critical limitation in a rapidly urbanising country like Bangladesh.

Furthermore, the corridor's repurposing from a national highway to a BRT system has disrupted its original functionality without meeting the needs of its users. Narrow footpaths and poorly placed infrastructure have further marginalised pedestrians, compounding the system's inefficiency.

What lessons can be learnt from this project for urban transport planning in Bangladesh? What are your recommendations for the future?

The Gazipur-Airport BRT project highlights the consequences of inadequate planning and coordination in urban transport. So, going ahead, Bangladesh must prioritise comprehensive and integrated transport strategies, addressing key issues such as narrow roads, unorganised bus services, and insufficient pedestrian infrastructure. To make urban transport smoother and more reliable, a franchising system for buses must be introduced to ensure better service. Different transport options, like BRT and metro rail, need to work together so that people can travel easily. This integration must be properly planned and executed, and a dedicated team should be formed under the public transport authority to keep things running efficiently. Safe, accessible walkways must also be prioritised instead of inconvenient footbridges. Finally, learning from successful BRT systems worldwide can help us find practical and affordable solutions that work for us.

How the 7-college issue can be solved



Dr Samina Luthfa
teaches at the Department of
Sociology, Dhaka University.

SAMINA LUTHFA

The possibility of the seven colleges each becoming an independent university has been a long debated topic. This presents significant challenges, however, given the scarcity of resources in terms of land, infrastructure, and supporting workforce. However, establishing one university for all seven colleges is viable.

The current model, in which the seven colleges are administered by Dhaka University (DU), has proven ineffective. The execution of this model has demonstrably strained the university's resources. Besides, DU teachers have received no real support to incorporate this added work pressure, leading to a slow, inefficient cycle where the students suffer the most losing years of their lives. This arrangement has not served the colleges either, because of persistent academic and administrative challenges as well as a lack of communication between the university administration and college authorities and students. With

no signs of improvement, the students have been rightfully demanding a change for years.

While this "unhappy marriage" has placed undue stress on all involved, the complexities of creating new universities necessitate careful consideration of various factors.

Two steps can help in solving this problem efficiently. The first is to establish an independent commission that can co-opt the four member committee headed by the chairman of the University Grants Commission, which was created by the education ministry last month. This commission would be tasked with evaluating and addressing the students' demands. The second step is inclusive decision-making. All stakeholders, including diverse representatives from all seven colleges, must be involved in the decision-making process. This includes teachers, administrative high-ups, and some students from each of the seven colleges as well as some education

experts and government officials.

Internal resistance, particularly

from within the colleges and even

within the ministry, is anticipated.

However, resolving the seven-college

problem is paramount. The current

uncertainty jeopardises the lives and

futures of both students and teachers

of Dhaka University and the seven

colleges. I welcome the decisive move

from the DU administration to sever

ties with the seven colleges. This is

good news for all involved.

Now, we need to prioritise addressing the issues of these colleges. First, we need to recognise that the teachers and students of these colleges are citizens as well as members of the academic community, and we have a responsibility to protect them from harm. Also, students are urged to remain peaceful and avoid provocation. Any escalation of the situation must be prevented. Patience and collaborative effort are essential for a resolution.

Reports from various sources

indicate that provocation has been

incited through some social media

platforms, especially Facebook. It is

crucial to identify and bring those

involved in such instigation to book.

The frequent formation of mobs,

including cyber mobs targeting

individuals, is deeply concerning. It is

hoped that the authorities will hold

perpetrators accountable.

For the sake of the colleges' future,

my humble proposal is to turn them into a federative collegiate university, where the colleges will be in charge of the education, syllabi and to some extent residence of the students.

Unlike the Ox-Bridge model, I propose a University College, London model.

However, it will be an interim option

where the colleges/new umbrella

university will gradually decide the

nature of this union. The university

can be an administrative body, looking

after the admission and examination

processes. Meanwhile, the umbrella

university should admit only bachelor

level students and stop admitting

higher secondary level students.

The colleges, meanwhile, can be

transformed into Higher Secondary

institutions, keeping the current

teachers, admin staff, and higher

secondary students. Existing teachers

should be encouraged to join these

seven government higher secondary

colleges. The university authorities

should initiate recruiting university

faculty members for the institutions

For stability, holding the national election should be prioritised



THE STREET VIEW

Mohammad Al-Masum Molla
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MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The debate surrounding the timing of local government elections in Bangladesh has intensified in recent weeks, with some advocating for holding them before the national election. Doing so, however, may not lead to more harm than good, as organising and completing local elections could delay the national election, which may further deteriorate the country's already fragile law and order situation and its political instability.

One of the most pressing concerns is the time and logistical complexity of conducting local elections. With over 4,500 union parishads, municipalities and city corporations across the country, the process would take approximately one and a half years to complete. That would inevitably push back the national elections, leaving citizens

government remains in power.

Furthermore, local elections in Bangladesh have historically been plagued by violence and unrest. The competitive nature of local politics, often driven by major political parties, frequently turns these elections into battlegrounds, where violence is more of an expectation than an exception. Party-backed candidates, eager to assert control over local resources and power, often resort to muscle power, intimidation, and financial influence to secure victory. Given the current volatile political environment, it seems unlikely that this trend will change.

Therefore, holding local elections now, before the national election, would place additional strain on the already overburdened law enforcement agencies who are struggling

Local elections in Bangladesh have historically been plagued by violence and unrest. The competitive nature of local politics, often driven by major political parties, frequently turns these elections into battlegrounds, where violence is more of an expectation than an exception. Party-backed candidates, eager to assert control over local resources and power, often resort to muscle power, intimidation, and financial influence to secure victory.

waiting even longer to elect a new government. Considering Bangladesh's current situation, such a delay could be dangerous: it risks disillusioning voters, prolonging an already tense political situation, and extending the period during which the unelected interim

to improve the law and order situation across the country. Bangladesh is already in the midst of a prolonged political crisis. Citizens have been deprived of their right to vote for over a decade, with elections in 2014, 2018 and 2024 either boycotted or contested by

the opposition amid accusations of voter suppression and unfair practices. If local elections are allowed to take precedence, it would be a dereliction of duty to the people who have waited far too long for a fair and transparent national election.

Moreover, the interim government is not mandated to oversee local elections. Its primary responsibility is to conduct parliamentary elections, which are the

allow for robust local governance. In reality, however, these institutions have been reduced to ceremonial bodies with little real power. Local governments should ideally be self-governing, capable of managing resources, delivering services, and addressing the needs of their communities. Instead, they are often rendered powerless due to the centralisation of authority in Dhaka.

This centralisation, where bureaucrats

governments would erode their control over the population. Over time, local governments have become tools for political patronage, used to secure votes and political support for national elections. This manipulation of local government, coupled with entrenched corruption and weak institutions, has made the prospect of free and fair local elections an anathema to the political establishment.

There is no doubt that local governments must be empowered and freed from political interference. However, just holding local elections is not enough. It must be ensured that local governance bodies have the autonomy, resources, and authority to serve their communities effectively. Empowering local governments is not only necessary for improving governance but also for upholding the moral obligation enshrined in Bangladesh's constitution, which mandates elected representatives with local governance. The continuation of centralised power is a violation of this principle and undermines the democratic foundations of the nation.

Given that the major political parties in Bangladesh have promised to focus on national governance and reconciliation, it may be more judicious to hold local government elections after the parliamentary election is concluded. This would allow the formation of a stable national government, thereby reducing tensions related to local elections. The priority should be to stabilise the national political environment. Besides, the people of Bangladesh have waited long enough to vote, and the longer they are deprived of this right, the greater the risk of deepening social and political discontent.

While local governance is critical for ensuring effective and accountable government, holding local elections before national elections would only delay the democratic process and worsen political instability. Bangladesh cannot afford to sacrifice the national election process for the sake of local elections. The national election must be held first, followed by the empowerment of local governments in a manner that ensures peace and stability.



The competitive nature of local politics, often driven by major political parties, frequently turns local elections into battlegrounds.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

only legitimate way for the people to restore democratic legitimacy. Prioritising local elections before national elections risks undermining the role of the interim government and further delaying the democratic process.

The deep structural issues facing Bangladesh's local government system must also be addressed. The country's local governance framework is dysfunctional at best and entirely ineffectual at worst. Bangladesh has a multi-tier system of local government—comprising district, upazila, and union councils, along with municipalities and city corporations—which theoretically should

frequently control local councils, has stunted the development of local governments and their capacity to serve citizens effectively. Essential services that should be delivered at the community level, such as healthcare, education and infrastructure, are often delayed, disrupted or simply remain unavailable. Although elections are held every five years, the imposition of unelected officials and the central government's pervasive control over local councils frequently lead to a breakdown in local governance.

The root cause of this dysfunction lies in the vested interests of major political parties, who fear that empowering local

Two cats in the yard

LETTERS FROM THE UK



Dr Geof Wood
is a development anthropologist and author of several books and numerous journal articles, with a regional focus on South Asia. He is also emeritus professor of international development at the University of Bath, UK.

GEOF WOOD

Over the years, I have been in debt to Neil Young, the American songwriter and performer with a social heart. (With David Lewis and Rick Gregory, I once published *Trading the Silver Seed* [1996] about aquaculture in Bangladesh.) It is time to use him again with "two cats in the yard." Angela, my wife, and I have had two cats in our house in Bath, with an interval between them. Fudge died of old age (19 years) in December 2023; I was in Bangladesh and grieved quietly. We acquired Clover in May 2024; I was in Bangladesh and rejoiced quietly.

But Fudge and Clover tell a story between them. In common, they were both rescue cats, formally adopted by us. Fudge reflected a strong story of security and happiness, including in the garden surrounded by other cats and wildlife (badgers, foxes, squirrels). She managed the cat flap well, so she could choose her outside and inside timings. And she delivered many presents of beheaded rats to thank us for being in her service. Clover, by contrast, was found as a stray, in a sad condition, at just over a year old. She was brought back to physical health by the rescue home before being adopted by us. But was she restored to mental health, after her feral period, abandoned in the streets of Bath? She is intensely wary, highly alert to danger, suspicious of the cat flap to the garden, nervous and on her guard outside, and she needs safe spaces inside for lengthy periods of introversion and sleep—her version of "under the duvet."

It occurs to me that this feline contrast is an allegory for our times, as we move into 2025 with many heightened uncertainties immediately ahead of us. Security undermined for the erstwhile comfortable, a need to be constantly alert, sniffing the winds, searching for the cues, strategising in the context of political lunacy globally, while watching our more national and local leaders needing to tread a narrowing path of options for our well-being and welfare. Bangladesh is on the frontline of these dilemmas, while the UK is also on a tightrope albeit at a higher general standard of living but with high inequalities and

uncertain prospects with dangerous men (mainly men) lurking in the dark shadows of the dark web as well as neighbourhoods and corridors of power. There seems to be an overwhelming desire among near anarchic populations, an outcome of decades of alienating neoliberalism, to do harm to others. This desire in itself reflects inequalities-rich plutocrats controlling media platforms and tabloid newspapers to fire up street-level goondas with oversimplistic populist messages, to back up their divisive language

To be honest, with global inequality already so high and obvious, I am not sure there is much deeper self-interested purpose to be discerned. But the knock-on effects of these occupants of the pram, sensationalising their short-lived power, are of course massively dangerous and consequential for the

The Southport killings of children in the UK last summer prompted riots all over the UK, mindlessly unconnected to those murders, but hitching a ride on racial othering before the identity of the perpetrator even emerged. Self-appointed vigilantes following plutocratic cues to terrorise grieving communities.

A reinforcing cause for concern is a recent poll among Gen Z and Millennials in Britain, which found that 21 percent agreed with the proposition that the best system was a strong leader without elections, contrasted to only eight percent above the age of 55. And this sentiment is strongest among men than women.

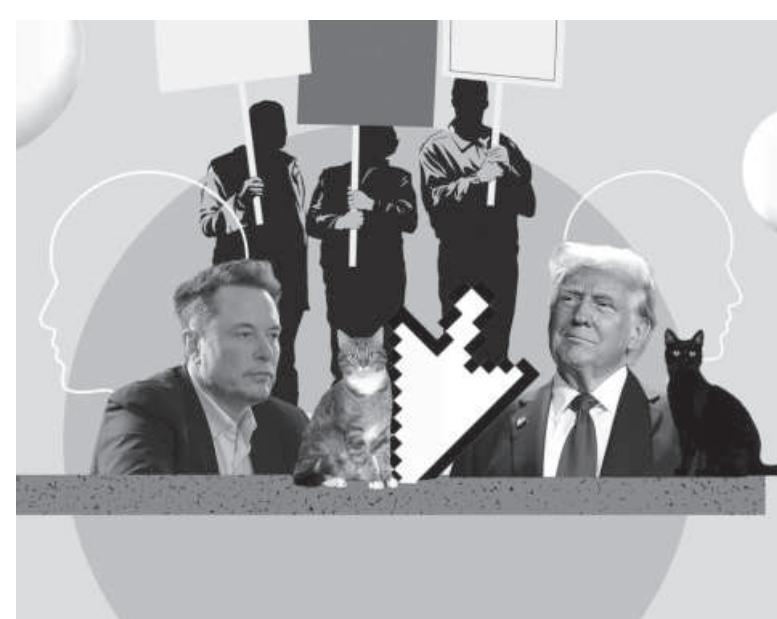
Where might we find the pushback to these tendencies? Where might a renewal of decency be found and nurtured? I have been reading Will Hutton's *This Time Make No Mistakes: How to Remake Britain*. The reference to "this time" is the incoming Labour and Starmer

government with a big landslide—albeit more artificial this time than for Blair in 1997. Hutton writes for *The Observer* in the UK—a left-of-centre, influential newspaper among socially progressive thinkers and activists (rather like *The Daily Star*), and has long advocated pragmatic social democratic politics, steering a course between individualist neoliberalism and over-dogmatic collectivism. He is a pragmatist with a social conscience. He lays out the room for manoeuvre in the present world to offer security and decent work with hope via state leadership to invest in productivity while protecting those disrupted by the innovation and changing labour markets, which is embedded in even socially acceptable capitalism. His agenda is the pursuit of the Polanyian critique that while capitalism might provide the bulk of livelihoods, the humane principle of welfare supports for disrupted humans cannot be left solely to the commoditised labour

market. There needs to be an element of decommodification through regulation and social insurance.

But as Bangladesh moves further into an industrialised and services economy, described by some like Debapriya Bhattacharya as the Fourth Industrial Revolution and away from the Faustian bargains of pre-capitalist agrarian relations, so the arguments encapsulated by Hutton will have more relevance and force for a country like Bangladesh. I would have his book on the reading list of any social science degree course around the world.

So, despite the gloom of advancing autocracy, I support the complex optimism of Hutton. He writes about the "We" society rather than the "I" society. Let us push these narcissistic disruptive forces to the margins and allow Clover, the new four-legged member of our household, the confidence to venture out with trust in the world around her to give her the secure space to be herself.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

rest of us. Disaffected and alienated global brownshirts, vicariously living out the plutocratic dream through beating up people and their institutions. January 6, 2021, in Washington DC, was a case in point with no prospect of redress. The US Constitution, designed in a different era of genteel elites (albeit content with slavery or its Jim Crow version) who could never imagine a degenerate in the White House, cannot prosecute a sitting president. Has Donald Trump in effect brownshirts the US? And does this liberate other puppets and proteges around the world to do likewise? It seems to have already given out that licence.

Tender ID	Pacakge No.	Name of works	Tender Security Submission Date and Time	Last Selling Time	Tender Closing Time
1069151	25 e-GP/Sup/JRD/2024-2025	Supplying of 196.00 Nos Skilled & 550.00 Nos Unskilled Labour for Routine Maintenance Work of Different Roads of Jamalpur Road Sub-Division-1, Under Road Division Jamalpur during the year 2024-2025.	20-02-2025 11.30	19-02-2025 17.00	20-02-2025 12.00
1069169	36-e-GP/JRD/2024-2025	Installation of Traffic Sign/Signal at Different Chainages of Jamalpur-Chachua -Mukttagacha Road (R-462) and Jamalpur (Nandibazar)-Dhanua Kamalpur -Raumari -Datbhanga Road (R-464) of Jamalpur Road Division During the year 2024-2025.	20-02-2025 11.30	19-02-2025 17.00	20-02-2025 12.00
1069170	37-e-GP/JRD/2024-2025	Manufacture & Installation of Traffic Sign-Signal at different location of Joydebpur-Tangail-Jamalpur National Highway (N4) under Jamalpur Road Division during the year 2024-2025.	20-02-2025 11.30	19-02-2025 17.00	20-02-2025 12.00

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)

Jamalpur Road Division, Jamalpur.

Phone No.0981-63691

email:eejam@rhd.gov.bd

Date: 28-01-2025

e-Tender Notice

These are online Tenders, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no off line/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

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28.01.25
(Md. Nawajish Rahman Biswas)
ID No-602246
Executive Engineer (CC) RHD
Road Division, Jamalpur

Milestone man SMITH stands tall

Steve Smith stood unbeaten on 104 after crossing 10,000 Test runs as he and fellow centurion Usman Khawaja, also unbeaten on 147, helped Australia pile up 330-2 in 81.1 overs before rain stopped play on Day 1 after the tourists elected to bat first against Sri Lanka in Galle at the start of the two-match series yesterday.

- Smith took the crease in the first session with 9,999 runs and calmly nudged his very first delivery to mid-on for a single off Prabath Jayasuriya.
- He became the 15th batter to 10,000 Test runs and only the fourth Australian to achieve the feat after Allan Border, Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting.
- This was Smith's 35th Test hundred and the right-hander is now just next to Alastair Cook in the list of most Test hundreds in Asia by a visiting captain. Cook leads the chart with six tons in



PHOTO: AFP

26 innings in Asia while this was Smith's fifth century in 22 innings in the continent.

Smith and left-handed opener Khawaja put on an

unbeaten stand of 195 for the third wicket -- just five runs short of the highest third-wicket stand by an Australian duo in Sri Lanka. Adam Gilchrist and Damien Martyn's 200-run stand in Kandy in 2004 is the highest in this regard.

'They paid me nothing'

SPORTS REPORTER

In the latest episode of the country's most popular cricketing soap opera, also known as the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), Sri Lankan all-rounder Lahiru Samarakoon has left the Durbar Rajshahi camp, claiming to have received "nothing" in the form of payments.

The 27-year-old left for Sri Lanka on Wednesday after warming the bench for Rajshahi since playing in their opening fixture against Fortune Barishal on December 30 in which he conceded 64 runs from his four overs in Mirpur.

"They [Durbar Rajshahi] have given me nothing, zero," he told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

Durbar Rajshahi have been at the centre of the payment-related drama, failing to make player payments on several occasions. The players had boycotted a practice session in Chattogram over payment issues and upon returning to Dhaka, they played a match without any foreign players -- an unprecedented event in the history of the tournament -- after they refused to take the field for not being paid.

Samarakoon had already filed a complaint to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on January 21, saying that he had not received "a single penny".



SPORTS REPORTER

Rangpur Riders' late-tournament slump, while not jeopardising their top-two finish in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), has created opportunities for Durbar Rajshahi and Chittagong Kings.

Rajshahi have completed their 12 league matches, securing back-to-back wins over high-flying Rangpur to reach fourth place. Chittagong -- another team at the heart of this BPL's players' payment issues -- following yesterday's five-wicket win against Rangpur are now in contention for a top-four spot with two matches remaining.

Khulna Tigers, meanwhile, are the only other side vying for a playoff place alongside Rajshahi and Chittagong.

Despite having started the league phase with eight wins on the trot, Rangpur lost a bit of firepower as Englishman Alex Hales left for ILT20, Pakistan's Khushdil Shah departed for the Champions Trophy camp, while Soumya Sarkar only returned following an injury.

At Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, the game hung in the balance when Chittagong needed 20 runs from three overs. However, Haider Ali's four consecutive sixes off Akif Javed sealed the game.

Asked if the departure of foreign stars hampered their momentum, Rangpur batter Saif Hassan said, "We won three matches even after Alex Hales went back. I think we've lost our momentum a bit.

We have to bring back the momentum. We've got a match left, that's very important. If we can win that, I hope we will get through to the final straight."

However, it will be difficult to find an immediate replacement for Khushdil, who played important knocks in Rangpur's early forays this season. The franchise will now look to finish on a high with their last match against Khulna Tigers today, a do-or-die affair

council once again sat with the franchise owners over payment issues. However, Chittagong's representatives were unable to attend.

It was learned that incentives would be given to all four teams that make the playoffs. "The tournament's prize money was increased," a BCB source said. Asked if it would help with payments for the franchises, the source obliged by saying, "Something like that."



for the latter.

While Khulna face an uphill task against Rangpur, Chittagong can ensure third spot in the table with a win against Sylhet Strikers, a franchise already out of contention for the playoffs.

Damage control on agenda

Rajshahi and Chittagong have been through extraordinary circumstances that have highlighted the mismanagement of the ongoing BPL. Yesterday, the BPL governing

It is also likely that ticket sales money will be shared with the franchises, but it could not be determined whether all seven franchises would get a share.

The board's leniency and struggle to get the BPL on to the field have led to intense criticism. The board may have reminded the owners about their commitments and responsibilities, but damage control appears to be of importance as the BPL nears its conclusion.



PHOTO: FORTUNE BARISHAL

Left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam was the wrecker-in-chief yesterday as he finished with figures of three for just two runs in his two overs, including a wicket-maiden, to help Fortune Barishal bundle out Dhaka Capitals for 73 in 15.3 overs -- the lowest total in this edition of the Bangladesh Premier League. Barishal chased the total down in just 6.3 overs -- a BPL record fastest chase -- to win the contest by nine wickets in Mirpur, confirming a top-two finish.

United, Spurs eye Europa League last 16

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United and Tottenham are among the sides aiming to ensure direct passage to the Europa League last 16 in Thursday's league phase finale with nine places in the knockout stages up for grabs.

The struggling English giants are labouring in the bottom half of the Premier League table but do sit in the top eight of the Europa League.

United boss Ruben Amorim is desperate to have two free midweeks for extra time on the training field to try and embed his ideas after a turbulent first two months in charge.

United have found Europe's second-tier competition much easier to negotiate than domestic duties with four consecutive wins meaning they just need a point away to FCSB.

The Romanian champions, though, can also secure a top-eight finish should they pull off a famous victory.

"We have to surpass ourselves, but we have done this before many times, so we will do it again," said FCSB striker Florin Tanase.

Spurs manager Ange Postecoglou is clinging to his job by a thread after a disastrous run of six Premier League defeats in seven games plucked Tottenham into a relegation battle.

A mounting injury list has been a major factor in their troubles and victory over Elfsborg in north London could buy Postecoglou time to get some of his star names back for the last 16.



Nigeria players celebrate after closing out their Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup campaign with a hard-fought six-run win over Ireland on the final day of the Super Six stage in Bangi, Malaysia yesterday. Having qualified as the first West African nation to feature in the competition, Nigeria finished third in Group 2 with just a point less than second-placed England -- who made it through to the semifinals along with unbeaten group champions South Africa. Nigeria also recorded their first-ever win in the tournament with a dramatic two-run victory over New Zealand earlier in the group stage.

Women's training rocked by boycott

SPORTS REPORTER

The endless loop of hope and despair of Bangladesh women's football team took a turn for the worse on Wednesday after some senior players boycotted the planned first training session with head coach Peter Butler, who returned to Dhaka following a contract extension recently.

According to sources inside the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), a section of senior players of the team skipped the training session, which was supposed to be held at the BUET ground, after having declined to sit for a meeting with the English coach.

Butler had guided the women's team to successful defence of SAFF Women's Championship in October last year, despite having been at odds with the senior players throughout the campaign in Kathmandu.

Despite the public rift between the coach and the senior players, BFF's women's wing chairman and executive committee member Mahfuza Akter Kiron had repeatedly insisted that Butler was the right person for the job. Eventually, Butler, a former English Premier League footballer, was handed a contract extension for two more years, which will see him guide the team AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers in June this year, the SAFF Championship and the Asian Games next year apart from FIFA friendlies.



The team comprising 30 players had started their preparation under assistant coach Mahbubur Rahman Litu from January 15 as part of preparation for two FIFA friendlies against hosts UEA on Feb 26 and March 2.

None of the players could be reached for a comment on the issue, but it was learnt that the players had also demanded a renewal of contracts, which had expired in October last year.

"I am working on this matter [dispute between players and the coach] and I can't tell you anything more until tomorrow," women's wing chairman Kiron told The Daily Star.

Asked whether they sat with the senior players before reappointing Butler following the dispute, Kiron said, "It is better to ask the BFF president about this because the BFF president reappointed Butler."

While it is true that Tabith, also a businessman and a politician, did make the final call on the coach's reappointment, women's football is Kiron's portfolio and it was her job to ensure the thaw between the coach and the senior players is broken before he takes charge of the team again.

Whether Butler is the sole reason for the training boycott or the fact that the unresolved issue of the contract extension of women footballers is involved here, the situation is a sad one for the players because they are the ones who are suffering. They are suffering because they are not treated with enough respect, whether in terms of meeting their financial demands or in terms of taking their opinion into consideration.

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'AL won't be allowed to hold protests' CA's press secy says it must apologise first, its leadership tried

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam has said the Awami League will not be allowed to demonstrate until it apologises and its leadership faces trial for the killings during the July uprising.

He made the comments yesterday, a day after the AL announced on Facebook that it would begin from February 1 a nine-day programme that includes hartals and blockades in protest at what it said were rising prices of essentials, deteriorating law and order, and killings of leaders and activists.

"Does any leader or worker of the Awami League regret committing genocide? Had they begged pardon? You saw 71 children get killed and shots fired at them from helicopters. Has anyone

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



People head to work in a foggy morning on a three-wheeler on Khulna City Bypass. The vehicle they are travelling on is illegal and in no way supposed to be on the highway. It also lacks any lights that could help other fast-moving vehicles see it in the foggy weather. The photo was taken at Aranghata yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

BGB-BSF CONFERENCE Bangladesh's tone will be different

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Bangladesh will adopt a stronger stance in the upcoming 55th director general level conference between Border Guard Bangladesh and India's Border Security Force, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said yesterday.

The four-day conference will take place in New Delhi from February 17.

At a press briefing following an inter-ministerial preparatory meeting at the Secretariat, Jahangir said, "Our tone [during the talks] will be different."

He emphasised that the killing of unarmed Bangladeshi civilians by BSF personnel and Indian miscreants at the border must end.

"This is unacceptable under any circumstances. We'll strongly press India to take effective measures to stop border killings."

He also highlighted concerns over the abduction of Bangladeshi farmers near the border and called for immediate action to prevent such incidents.

Regarding cross-border smuggling, Jahangir pointed to the large influx of illegal drugs, particularly Phensedyl, from India under the guise of medication.

"This issue will be addressed seriously, and we'll

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

30 killed in India's Kumbh festival stampede Say state authorities; 60 hurt; opposition blames tragedy on 'mismanagement'

REUTERS, Prayagraj

Dozens of people were killed in a pre-dawn stampede at the Maha Kumbh Mela in northern India yesterday, police sources and a Reuters witness said, as tens of millions gathered to take a dip in sacred river waters on the most auspicious day of a six-week Hindu festival.

State authorities said at least 30 people were killed and 60 were injured in the pre-dawn stampede. Three police sources and a Reuters witness put the toll at nearly 40.

Reuters counted 39 bodies inside the morgue of the local hospital. One of the three police sources and a fourth officer said all 39 were stampede victims. All three police sources said nearly 40 bodies had been brought to the morgue.

Bodies were still being brought to the Moti Lal Nehru Medical College hospital morgue more than 12 hours after the tragedy at the world's biggest gathering of humanity.

"More bodies are coming in. We have nearly 40 bodies here. We are transferring them out as well and handing over to families one by one," one of the sources said.

Senior police officer Vaibhav Krishna told reporters that 90 people were taken to the hospital after the stampede, of whom 30 died and the rest were being treated.

Opposition parties blamed the stampede on what they called the government's "mismanagement" and "VIP culture".

Arakan Army disrupts trade with Myanmar

Trade through Teknaf Port may come to a halt as rebel forces seize cargo ships

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Cross-border trade between Bangladesh and Myanmar through Teknaf Land Port is in disarray as the Arakan Army, a Myanmar-based rebel group, disrupts ship movement along the Naf river estuary.

With cargo being seized, intensified border tensions, and dwindling imports and exports, traders warn that the once-thriving trade route may soon be completely halted.

On January 16, the Arakan Army seized three cargo ships travelling from Yangon to Teknaf. While two ships were released on January 20, one remains in their custody.

"We don't know the exact reason for the seizure," said Ehteshamul Haque Bahadur, general secretary of the Teknaf Land Port C&F Agents Association.

The rebel group that controls much of the 270km border with Bangladesh has imposed an unwritten embargo on

ship movement along the Naf estuary. Bahadur expressed concern over the disruption of trade. "If this situation persists, traders may be forced to abandon their businesses in Teknaf. Resolving this requires collective efforts."

Importer Shawkat Ali, whose goods are on the seized ship, said yesterday that the Arakan Army is inspecting vessels on the Myanmar's territorial waters that are under their control.

Some goods from Myanmar are being imported through Chattogram Port. Shawkat, however, said using the Chattogram Port significantly increases costs and causes delays. "Shipping goods via Teknaf takes five to seven days, while via Chattogram requires at least a month."

A businessman, wishing not to be named, claimed that the Arakan Army is holding one ship hostage as it belongs

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

"Shipping goods via Teknaf takes five to seven days, while via Chattogram requires at least a month."

SHAWKAT ALI
an importer

Evaly's Rassel, wife jailed for two years over embezzlement



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced Evaly's founding chief executive officer Mohammad Rassel, and his wife Shamima Nasrin, former chairperson of the e-commerce platform, to two years' imprisonment in a case filed over the embezzlement of Tk 14.10 lakh from a customer.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Partha Bhadra pronounced the verdict in their absence in the courtroom.

He also fined them Tk 2,000, in default of which they will have to serve two more months in jail.

The punishment will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, said the magistrate in his judgment.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Implementing 31-point reform to be best revenge on AL Tarique tells party activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has urged party leaders and activists to work for the implementation of its 31-point reform outline.

He believes implementing the plan will be the best form of the BNP's revenge on the Awami League for its suppressive activities in the 15 years of its rule.



Tarique made the remarks while virtually addressing workshops organised for the BNP's Jashore, Jhenaidah and Narail district units yesterday. The leaders and activists of the units received training on the 31-point state overhaul proposal.

The BNP acting chairman said that he and his family had endured the same persecution as BNP leaders and activists under the Awami League's autocratic regime.

"Any repressed person wants to take revenge against their oppressors. You want it, I want it, and everyone wants it. But I think all the leaders and activists of my party will agree that I want to take that revenge by implementing our 31-point proposal," he said.

Tarique said BNP founder Ziaur Rahman and current Chairperson Khaleda Zia faced obstacles in their efforts to establish people's democratic and political rights, educate the country's children, create employment,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Peace talks with Ukraine possible

Says Putin, rules out speaking directly with Zelensky

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that his country could hold peace talks with Ukraine, but ruled out speaking directly with President Volodymyr Zelensky, whom he called "illegitimate".



The Ukrainian leader responded by saying that Putin was "afraid" of negotiations and was using "cynical tricks" to prolong the nearly three-year conflict.

US President Donald Trump has put pressure on both sides to end the fighting since assuming office on January 20, threatening tougher sanctions on Russia while claiming that Zelensky is ready to negotiate a "deal".

"If (Zelensky) wants to participate in the negotiations, I will allocate people to take part," Putin said, calling the Ukrainian leader "illegitimate" because his presidential term expired during martial law.

"If there is a desire to negotiate and find a compromise, let anyone lead the negotiations there... Naturally, we will strive for what suits us, what corresponds to our interests," he added.

Zelensky said that there was a chance to achieve "real peace" but that the Kremlin chief was frustrating efforts to stop the fighting.

"Today, Putin once again confirmed that he is afraid of negotiations, afraid of strong leaders, and does everything possible to prolong the war," Zelensky wrote on X.



Devotees around the bodies of the victims lying on the ground after a stampede during the Maha Kumbh Mela festival in Prayagraj, India, yesterday.

Binimoy 'linked to Joy's shell company' Ahsan Mansur tells Prothom Alo roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Binimoy, a platform to transfer money from one bank or mobile financial service to another, was linked to a shell company opened by Sajeeb Wazed Joy, Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur said yesterday.

Sheikh Hasina's son Joy created the shell company to introduce Binimoy, which is no longer functioning, after the previous government handed the work over to the ICT ministry, Mansur said.

He was speaking at a roundtable titled "Challenges and Prospects of Digital Transactions: VAT Hike Perspective", organised by the Prothom Alo at its office in Dhaka yesterday.

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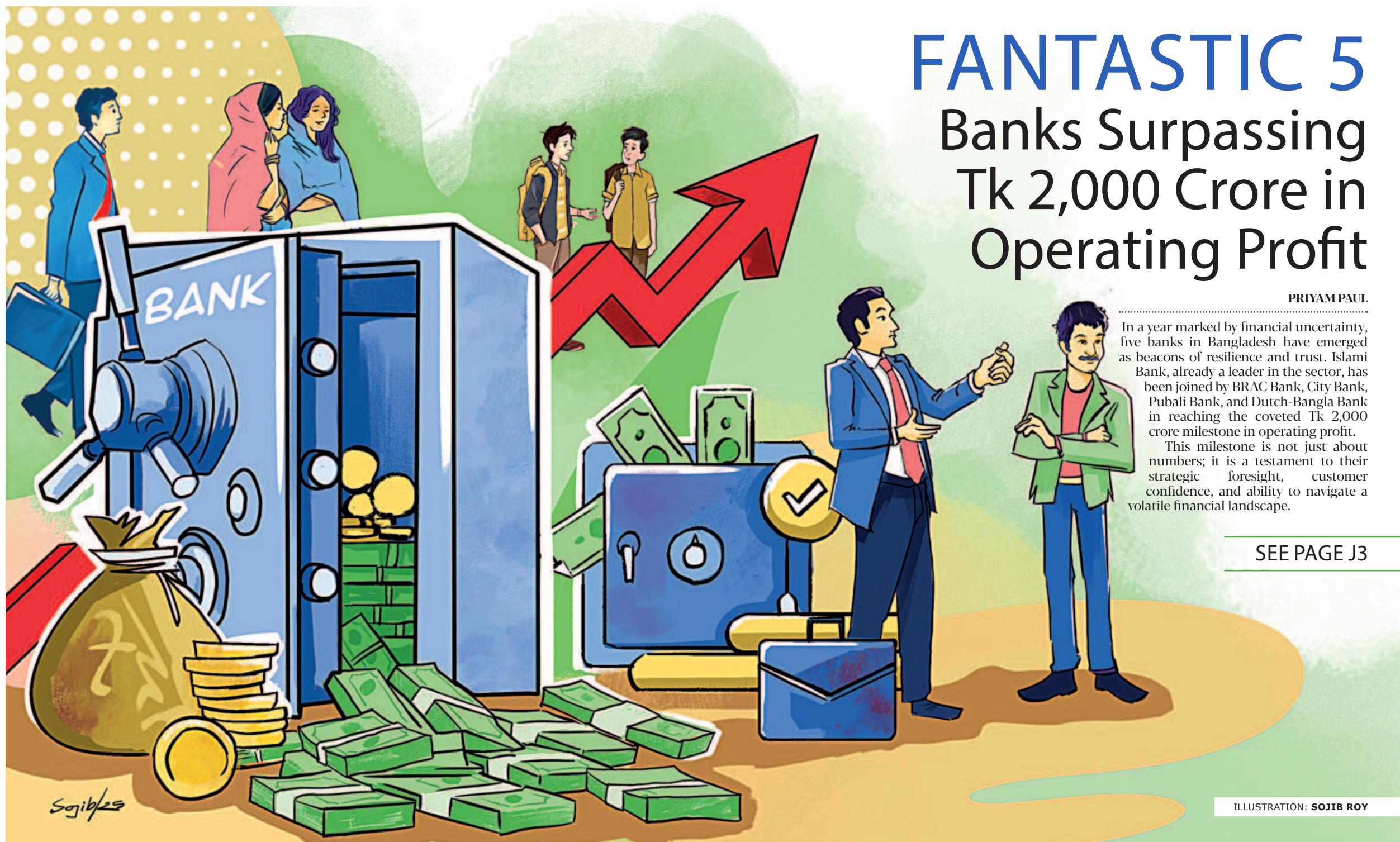
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FANTASTIC 5 Banks Surpassing Tk 2,000 Crore in Operating Profit

PRIYAM PAUL

In a year marked by financial uncertainty, five banks in Bangladesh have emerged as beacons of resilience and trust. Islami Bank, already a leader in the sector, has been joined by BRAC Bank, City Bank, Pubali Bank, and Dutch-Bangla Bank in reaching the coveted Tk 2,000 crore milestone in operating profit.

This milestone is not just about numbers; it is a testament to their strategic foresight, customer confidence, and ability to navigate a volatile financial landscape.

SEE PAGE J3

ILLUSTRATION: SOJIB ROY

Year	Operating Profit (Taka in Million)
2013	5,052
2014	5,812
2015	6,756
2016	6,120
2017	7,546
2018	9,050
2019	12,024
2020	10,921
2021	12,284
2022	13,250
2023	15,029
2024	22,853

It Wasn't Possible Without YOU

At Dutch-Bangla Bank, our success is built on your trust and partnership. Achieving Tk 2,285 crore in operating profit for 2024 celebrates not just our financial strength but the trust on us of 63 million clients.

Thank you for being part of our journey. Together, we're building a stronger, resilient Bangladesh.

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CUSTOMER CONFIDENCE Drives Our Growth



ABUL KASHEM MD SHIRIN
MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO, DUTCH-BANGLA BANK

The Daily Star (TDS): Your bank has recently achieved an annual operating profit surpassing Tk 2,000 crore. What does this milestone signify for your organization?

Abul Kashem Md Shirin (AKMS): Customer confidence is the key to our success. Keeping customer needs in mind, we have consistently launched segmented products such as Mobile Banking (Rocket), Agent Banking, VIP Banking, and Offshore Banking. These products have been widely accepted by the masses.

Our Core Banking, Retail, SME, Corporate, Treasury, and Digital products are developed based on customer needs. Through Branch Banking, Agent Banking, Mobile Banking (Rocket), CRM, and ATMs, we have established the largest banking network in the country.

The bank's card, IT systems, and data center are PCI DSS, ISO/IEC 27001:2013, and Tier-4 certified. Moreover, the bank has two Active-Active data centers.

All these initiatives make Dutch-Bangla Bank a trusted and reliable brand in the banking sector of Bangladesh.

TDS: What key factors contributed

to reaching this milestone despite the current challenges in the banking sector?

AKMS: We are now a happy family of over 6.30 crore customers, who have contributed to a substantial amount of low-cost deposits for the bank.

The bank maintains a strong liquidity base and has sufficient capital to finance large corporates.

We have kept NPLs at 3.71%,

areas for reform in the banking sector, and how should they be addressed to ensure long-term stability and development?

AKMS: The world is moving towards cashless transactions. Cash transactions should be made costly, while electronic transactions should be kept free, to discourage cash use and encourage digital payments.

To popularize QR payments,

which is in the lower bracket of the industry.

Dutch-Bangla Bank is a tech-savvy bank, with 8,250 units of ATMs/CRMs, which make up more than half of the country's total ATMs/CRMs.

These ATMs/CRMs are set up across Bangladesh, including in remote areas.

We also have a widely used app, NexusPay, which can be used both locally and internationally. NexusPay is the first fully cardless solution in Bangladesh.

TDS: Looking ahead, what strategies do you have in place to ensure continued growth and adaptability?

AKMS: In line with the current generation's needs, Dutch-Bangla Bank is preparing to launch several new digital banking services, with some already ready for launch. Furthermore, arrangements have been made for further financial inclusion through more innovative services.

The bank has established sub-branches in each Upazila of the country and agent outlets in each union/hat bazar so that rural people can access banking services at their doorstep.

TDS: What are the most critical

banks need to install QR codes in rural retail shops, allowing customers to make cashless transactions easily and freely.

Banking will be significantly impacted by technology, and new digital products will alter the landscape. Therefore, more investment needs to be made in technology, with a focus on cybersecurity.

Initiatives must be taken to bring banking services to the doorsteps of expatriates, allowing them to easily send foreign currency back home from abroad.

Dutch-Bangla Bank is a tech-savvy bank, with 8,250 units of ATMs/CRMs, which make up more than half of the country's total ATMs/CRMs. These ATMs/CRMs are set up across Bangladesh, including in remote areas.



MASHRUR AREFIN
MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO, CITY BANK

trouble, how long can I remain unaffected since I carry systemic risk on my shoulders?

So, there is joy, and there is trepidation.

TDS: What key factors contributed to this achievement despite challenges in the banking sector?

MA: It's a combination of courageous decision-making,

core banking business to exceed 81%.

A major investment will take place in the digital space in 2025. We have already started to launch across the organization our new core institutional philosophy, which is: happy employees generate happy customers, which generate happy shareholders. This philosophy works well if

The Daily Star (TDS): Your bank has recently achieved an annual operating profit surpassing Tk 2,000 crore. What does this milestone signify for your organization?

Mashrur Arefin (MA): This milestone is much more than a financial number for City Bank. It's a deeply personal and collective achievement—a testament to the dedication and resilience of our team, who dreamed of reaching Tk 2,000 crore in operating profit within a year from Tk 1,350 crore.

And, in the end, we reached nearly Tk 2,400 crore.

It feels especially significant because the banking landscape here is generally in tatters; it's highly earthquake-prone and uncertain. Customers are struggling to get their deposits back from many banks; many banks face basic capital shortfalls if proper audits on their loan books are conducted. In a country like this, City Bank's deposits grew by Tk 13,000 crore in just one year.

But this has two sides. First, it means that people trust our brand. Second, when a larger section of the industry is in

employee happiness, our overall customer-centric innovation, resilience in risk management, our ability to use technology as a game-changer, and our shared vision—between the bank's Chairman, board, and management.

TDS: Looking ahead, what strategies do you have in place to ensure continued growth and adaptability?

MA: Looking ahead, we will continue to focus on acquiring deposits at a cheaper cost. We will keep expanding throughout the country, with a special focus on rural areas. We will concentrate lending more on the Small & Micro segments, as well as Retail and Cards, rather than corporate, commercial, and medium segments. We will also reduce our dependency on earnings from treasury bills or bonds (last year, 19% of our total income, roughly Tk 4,000 crore, came from investment in government securities), and aim to generate more income from core banking business, such as interest income, fee and commission income, etc. Our goal is for our earnings from

there is a suitable business and operational model for it. We are currently implementing that model at City Bank.

TDS: What are the most critical areas for reform in the banking sector, and how should they be addressed to ensure long-term stability and development?

MA: The banking sector is at a crossroads. To secure a stable and inclusive future, reforms are essential. For me, the most critical areas are: 1) restoring public confidence; 2) inclusive growth, meaning financial inclusion isn't just a buzzword—it's a responsibility; 3) adapting to technology, which includes ensuring data privacy and cybersecurity; 4) sustainability in action, meaning that banking must look beyond profits; and 5) governance, which requires a cultural shift in the sector right now.

Lastly, I would say that reforms must be collaborative. Together—regulators, banks, and customers—we can create a banking sector that not only grows but uplifts society as a whole.

COUNTRY'S MOST SUSTAINABLE BANK

We aim to nurture a values-based banking ecosystem that achieves financial success, elevates society, and safeguards the environment. Our mission is to create a brighter and more sustainable future for everyone.



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Sir Fazle Hasan Abed
Founder Chairperson

VALUES

**Integrity • Innovation • Inclusiveness
Customer-centricity • Effectiveness**

GOVERNANCE

- Independent Directors constitute 67% of the Board, the highest in the banking sector
- The highest market capitalization and international investor shareholding in banking sector
- Top bank in Bangladesh Bank's Sustainability Rating for 4 years

RESPONSIBLE FINANCING

- Financing of **BDT 10,888 crore** among **6.31 lac** women customers
- Green and Climate Financing of **BDT 8,369 crore**
- Disbursement of **BDT 1 lac 70 thousand crore** CMSME loans to **14 lac** grassroots customers for 2 decades

PORTFOLIO DIVERSIFICATION

	Customer Deposits	Customer Loans	
Retail	48%	Retail	16%
Corporate	32%	Corporate	43%
SME	20%	SME	41%

CONSISTENT FINANCIAL SUCCESS

- Consistent growth in deposits, loans, and profits
- Bank with the lowest non-performing loans
- Adequate liquidity in local and foreign currencies

CREDIT RATING

Country's best in domestic and international credit rating



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S&P Ratings B+ **Moody's Investors Service B2** **GRB Ratings AAA**

PEOPLE TRUST Our Brand



MASHRUR AREFIN
MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO, CITY BANK

trouble, how long can I remain unaffected since I carry systemic risk on my shoulders?

So, there is joy, and there is trepidation.

TDS: What key factors contributed to this achievement despite challenges in the banking sector?

MA: It's a combination of courageous decision-making,

core banking business to exceed 81%.

A major investment will take place in the digital space in 2025. We have already started to launch across the organization our new core institutional philosophy, which is: happy employees generate happy customers, which generate happy shareholders. This philosophy works well if



দ্রুত ও নিরাপদে
পুবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
PUBALI BANK PLC
পাঠান প্রিয়জনের প্রয়োজনে...

পুবালী ব্যাংকের যেকোনো শাখা থেকে
রেমিট্যাঙ্গ গ্রহণ করলেই পাবেন সরকার
নির্ধারিত ২.৫% প্রশঠনা

**সাথে আবাদ আছে তিশ্চিত
আকর্ষণীয় পুরুষার**



The Best
Financial
Institution



OUR GROWTH is Built on Trust



The Daily Star (TDS): Your bank has recently achieved an annual operating profit surpassing Tk 2,000 crore. What does this milestone signify for your organization?

Mohammad Ali (MA): Our significant contribution lies in expanding our marketing efforts across various sectors and building a dedicated marketing team, particularly for our export-oriented customers. As a result, we have successfully onboarded numerous exporters over the past two to three years. This has led to a remarkable 61% year-on-year growth in exports, while imports have also increased by 50%, allowing us to maintain a balanced trade portfolio. Another key development has been the lifting of the 6% and 9% interest rate restrictions, which has allowed us to leverage our goodwill effectively.

However, the most profound impact has been on customer perception. We have consistently worked to enhance our brand image by highlighting our achievements, such as earning the prestigious Triple-A Rating, being recognized as the Best Financial Institution, and obtaining

ISO 27001 certification. At a time when the overall banking industry's reputation is facing challenges, we have positioned ourselves differently, reinforcing customer confidence.

As a result, our deposits have been growing steadily, increasing by 22-23% year-on-year, propelling us into the Tk 2,000 crore club.

TDS: What key factors contributed

to reaching this milestone despite the current challenges in the banking sector?

MA: Our non-performing loan (NPL) ratio stands at 2.66%, the lowest in the country. One of our key strengths has been our cautious approach to lending. Rather than immediately approving business proposals, we conduct thorough due diligence.

To uphold strong corporate governance, we have implemented a tiered evaluation system that scrutinizes loan proposals at multiple levels, from branch offices to the head office. This structured approach helps us maintain loan quality and mitigate risks effectively.

In my view, the banking industry's primary focus should be on asset quality. While creating assets is relatively easy, maintaining their quality is the real challenge. On the other hand, the liability side of banking is built on trust—the more confidence customers have in us, the greater our deposit inflow.

TDS: Looking ahead, what strategies do you have in place to ensure continued growth and adaptability?

MA: Our future planning is

instant responses. We've already developed two AI-enabled products for flat purchases and credit card applications, marking the start of our broader digital transformation roadmap, which will progressively automate and optimize banking services, providing real-time responses to financial proposals.

TDS: What are the most critical areas for reform in the banking sector, and how should they be addressed to ensure long-term stability and development?

MA: The banking sector is in dire need of reform, and it starts with the corporate governance framework. While corporate governance measures may be in place, they are ineffective if the individuals in management roles lack quality and expertise. To truly drive reform, we must prioritize the recruitment and retention of top-tier talent.

To attract and retain high-quality professionals, the banking industry needs to offer competitive compensation packages. This includes not only higher salaries but also enhanced benefits, enabling us to bring in the best talent from both within the country and abroad.

with advancements in AI, robotics, and data mining reshaping the banking sector. We aim to integrate these technologies into our operations, enhancing all product offerings, including corporate banking, international trade, retail banking, and leasing, so customers can access services from their premises. Decision-making will be AI-driven for

MOHAMMAD ALI,
MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO, PUBALI BANK

BRAC Bank leads with TRUST, INNOVATION AND IMPACT



The Daily Star (TDS): Your bank has recently achieved an annual operating profit surpassing Tk 2,000 crore. What does this milestone signify for your organization?

Selim R. F. Hussain (SRFH): First of all, I thank our 10,000-strong BRAC Bank team, whose dedication and hard work made this accomplishment possible; the credit for this success also goes to the Board of Directors for their strategic guidance.

Achieving an operating profit of Tk 2,000 crore symbolizes financial success and the incredible trust our customers and stakeholders place in us. In the current banking sector scenario, where challenges often outpace opportunities, this achievement reaffirms our commitment to staying customer-focused, transparent, and resilient.

This milestone boosts our confidence in becoming an even better bank that remains committed to financial inclusivity and sustainable growth. It reminds us of our responsibility to contribute meaningfully to Bangladesh's banking sector and the broader economy.

TDS: What key drivers helped accomplish this milestone despite

the challenges in the banking sector?

SRFH: At BRAC Bank, we view challenges as opportunities. Our well-governed, transparent, and accountable practices have led us to consistent financial success.

BRAC Bank's superior performance indicators in the Bangladesh banking sector are reflected in the highest market capitalization and the highest

SELM R. F. HUSSAIN,
MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO, BRAC BANK

challenges and thrive in the face of them.

TDS: What strategies do you have in place to ensure continued growth in 2025 and beyond?

SRFH: As we look toward 2025 and beyond, our vision is clear: to be Bangladesh's largest, most impactful, and most financially inclusive bank. By "impactful," we mean meaningful to all stakeholders—customers, co-

workers, shareholders, and the community.

We aim to make our services even more personalized, ensuring that every customer feels valued and understood. Financial inclusivity remains at the core of our mission, as we strive to reach underserved segments of society and bring them into the formal financial ecosystem. Ultimately, our goal is prosperity for all—a vision rooted in sustainable growth and shared success.

TDS: What strategies should banks adopt to improve financial performance and achieve sustainable growth?

SRFH: The key to sustainable growth in banking is simple but powerful: governance, good governance, and better governance. Banks must adhere to the fundamentals of sound financial management while fostering a culture of transparency and accountability. Emphasizing customer-centricity and innovation can also unlock new opportunities. BRAC Bank will continue to embed sustainability principles at its core for long-term positive impact on the people and society. The bank can deliver meaningful experiences and ensure long-term success by balancing technology and human connection.

Fantastic 5



FROM PAGE J1

Operating profit is a key indicator of a bank's overall performance, offering insights into its financial health and the quality of services provided to customers. Ultimately, this contributes to the bank's net profit.

At a time when many banks are struggling with liquidity crises and rising default loans, these five have defied the odds, leveraging strong governance, innovative banking solutions, and a loyal depositor base to set new benchmarks in the sector.

But what really drove this success? How did they outperform their peers in a challenging economy? As the final audits unfold, expectations are high that these banks will also report net profits exceeding Tk 1,000 crore.

Operating profit is a key indicator of a bank's overall performance, offering insights into its financial health and the quality of services provided to customers. Ultimately, this contributes to the bank's net profit.

"Operating profit encompasses the total installments collected, payments made, and administrative expenses. After deducting a 37.5 percent tax and making provisions for bad assets and loans, the remaining amount constitutes the distributable profit," says Md. Arup Haider, Deputy Managing Director and Head of Retail Banking at City Bank.

Bank insiders attribute the recent surge in operating profits primarily to the rise in loan interest rates, along with substantial earnings from commission income, bonds, treasury operations, and foreign exchange transactions.

Mohammad Ali, Managing Director & CEO of Pubali Bank, notes that the sharp increase in operating profits for certain banks is closely tied to instability in the sector. "Had all banks remained stable, neither our deposits nor profits would have grown at this pace. When depositors lost confidence in other banks, they shifted their funds to institutions they perceived as more secure, prioritizing financial safety over higher interest rates," he explains.

Islami Bank

Islami Bank, the first Islamic bank in the country, achieved the highest operating profit in 2024, totaling Tk 3,400 crore, a significant increase from Tk 2,261 crore in 2023. However, despite these impressive operating figures, the actual profit in 2023 was just Tk 610 crore, compared to a net profit of Tk 592 crore in 2022, when the operating profit was Tk 2,215 crore. This discrepancy highlights the impact of substantial deductions for bad loans and other expenses.

This year, while Islami Bank has set a new record for operating profit, its actual profit may see a considerable decline due to a large portion of loans issued to the S Alam Group remaining unrecovered. Nevertheless, the bank is optimistic about achieving better net profits in the near future, following an overhaul supervised by Bangladesh Bank aimed at restoring its financial position.

"Within five months, the board was able to add fresh Tk 8,500 crore in deposits. With good fund mobilization, the bank also made an operating profit exceeding Tk 2,000 crore. This achievement speaks volumes about the strategies taken by the board of directors, who are committed to safeguarding depositors' funds," mentions Obayed Ullah Al Masud, Chairman of Islami Bank Bangladesh.

BRAC Bank

BRAC Bank, the most SME-focused bank in the country, has emerged as the second-highest performer in terms of operating profit in 2024, reporting Tk 2,400 crore, a substantial increase from Tk 1,393 crore in 2023. The bank's net profit last year was Tk 730 crore, and in 2024, the actual profit is expected to exceed Tk 1,000 crore after adjustments. Managing Director and CEO of BRAC Bank, Selim R. F. Hussain states, "Achieving an operating profit of Tk 2,000 crore symbolizes financial success and the incredible trust our customers and stakeholders place in us."

Pubali Bank

Pubali Bank, the oldest bank founded by local entrepreneurs, recorded an operating profit of Tk 2,375 crore in 2024—a remarkable 55% increase from Tk 1,535 crore in 2023. That year, the bank's net profit amounted to Tk 679 crore.

Commenting on the bank's performance, Managing Director Mohammad Ali says, "We attracted significant deposits as several banks faced difficulties. Additionally, our focus on delivering better services and constant innovation played a key role in our strong year-end performance. However, the final net profit is subject to the central bank's inspection. I am optimistic that it will exceed Tk 1,000 crore."

SEE PAGE J4



Islami Bank
Bangladesh PLC. | Based on Islamic Shar'ah

A BANK OF EXCELLENCE

- Serving 25 million clients
- 400 branches & 265 sub-branches
- 2800 agent banking outlets
- 3000+ ATMs & CRMs
- Deposits of BDT 1.61 trillion
- Largest dealer in export & import
- Highest remittance collector
- Supporting 2 million entrepreneurs
- Generating 10 million employment by investing in 6000 industries
- Highest SME investment
- Provided micro-investments to over 1.8 million families
- Top taxpayer among banks



FIVE TOP BANKS BY OPERATING PROFIT

ISLAMI BANK

Year	Operating profit	Net Profit
2023	2261	610
2024	3400	

BRAC BANK

Year	Operating profit	Net Profit
2023	1393	730
2024	2400	

PUBALI BANK

Year	Operating profit	Net Profit
2023	1535	679
2024	2375	

CITY BANK

Year	Operating profit	Net Profit
2023	1350	615
2024	2287	

DUTCH BANGLA BANK

Year	Operating profit	Net Profit
2023	1431	800
2024	2285	



Fantastic 5



long-term stability and sustainable growth in Bangladesh's banking sector. With the industry at a crossroads, key stakeholders are advocating for strategic reforms, technological advancements, and stronger governance frameworks.

Obayed Ullah Al Masud, Chairman of Islami Bank Bangladesh, stresses the need for regulatory reforms to curb financial mismanagement. He reveals that tycoons linked to the former administration siphoned off \$17 billion, highlighting the urgency of stricter oversight. He advocates for Basel III adoption, stronger anti-money laundering measures, and corporate governance reforms, including board accountability and independent audits. Addressing non-performing loans, he calls for better credit risk management, asset reconstruction, and faster insolvency resolution, with ESG principles integrated into banking decisions.

Mashrur Arefin, Managing Director & CEO of City Bank, underscores the urgency of banking reforms, highlighting five critical areas: restoring public trust, ensuring financial inclusion, embracing technological adaptation, prioritising sustainability, and strengthening governance. He insists that the sector must undergo a cultural shift, with banks, regulators, and customers working together to build a more resilient financial ecosystem.

Selim R. F. Hussain, Managing Director & CEO of BRAC Bank, reinforces the significance of governance and transparency. He believes that sound financial management, coupled with innovation and a customer-centric approach, will be the key to sustainable banking. By balancing digital transformation with human connection, banks can create long-term value for both customers and society.

For Mohammad Ali, Managing Director & CEO of Pubali Bank, strong corporate governance and skilled leadership are essential. He argues that the banking industry must offer competitive salaries and benefits to attract and retain top-tier professionals, ensuring the sector is led by individuals with expertise and integrity.

Abul Kashem Md Shirin, Managing Director of Dutch Bangla Bank, emphasises the transition towards a cashless economy. He believes that discouraging cash transactions by making them costly, while keeping digital transactions free, will accelerate financial inclusion. He also stresses the need for wider adoption of QR payments in rural areas and improved banking facilities for expatriates to boost remittance flows.

FROM PAGE J3

Obayed Ullah Al Masud, Chairman of Islami Bank Bangladesh, stresses the need for regulatory reforms to curb financial mismanagement. He reveals that tycoons linked to the former administration siphoned off \$17 billion, highlighting the urgency of stricter oversight.

City Bank, known for its strong focus on consumer loans while maintaining a substantial portfolio of corporate and SME customers, joined the Tk 2,000 crore club in operating profit. In 2024, the bank recorded its highest-ever operating profit of Tk 2,287 crore, up from Tk 1,350 crore in 2023. The net profit for 2023 stood at Tk 615 crore.

Commenting on the achievement, Md. Arup Haider, Deputy Managing Director and Head of Retail Banking at City Bank, says, "Through consistent performance over the years, we reached a significant milestone in 2024 by crossing an operational profit of Tk 2,000 crore. City Bank fosters trust and delivers excellent service through strong corporate governance. Despite offering lower deposit rates compared to other banks, customers continue to trust us and deposit their money, prioritizing our services and reliability over higher interest rates."

Dutch Bangla Bank Limited Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited, a pioneer in mobile banking services in the country, achieved an operating profit of Tk 2,285 crore in 2024, up from Tk 1,431 crore in 2023. The bank's net profit in 2023 stood at Tk 854 crore. Its low cost of funds significantly contributed to this strong financial performance.

"We are now a happy family of 6.30+ crore customers. They have contributed to a huge amount of low-cost deposits for the bank. The bank maintains a strong liquidity base. We have sufficient capital to finance large corporates," notes Abul Kashem Md Shirin, Managing Director of Dutch-Bangla Bank.

Sustaining Growth: The Road Ahead As these five banks celebrate their record-breaking operating profits, their leadership remains focused on ensuring

ADHERENCE TO SHARI'AH PRINCIPLES is Our Key to Success



audit firms, motivated employees, and worked diligently to restore good governance. Within just five months, the board succeeded in adding fresh Tk 8,500 crore in deposits. This strong fund mobilization, along with the operating profit exceeding Tk 2,000 crore, underscores the effectiveness of the board's strategies in safeguarding depositors' funds.

strengthen our ethical foundation and ensure all operations align with these principles. Our focus is on balanced growth, efficient resource use, and cost-effective, accountable Strategic Business Units (SBUs). We will build resilience through a sustainable financial ecosystem that adapts to market dynamics. Enhanced connectivity, customized services, and advanced digital banking

OBAYED ULLAH AL MASUD,
Chairman, Islami Bank Bangladesh

TDS: What key factors have contributed to reaching this milestone despite the current challenges in the banking sector?

OUAM: Our operations are guided by adherence to Shari'ah principles, complemented by effective funds and risk management strategies. Islami Bank strategically deploys funds across sectors like SMEs and microfinance, holding the largest market share in the import-export business. The bank also collects around one-third of the country's remittances, significantly contributing to our revenue. In 2024, our total investments surpassed Tk 1,57,600 crore, with profits rising due to increased investment returns. The use of cost-free and low-cost deposits further boosted profitability. Total deposits reached Tk 1,61,000 crore, with cost-free deposits accounting for 13%. We also saw strong performance in Offshore Banking Units and Shari'ah-compliant securities.

This success is also a reflection of the bank's strong board of directors, whose prudent decisions have guided the bank through these turbulent times. The board was formed in response to the national call to protect depositors' funds. It reformed the management, set up independent

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TDS: Looking ahead, what strategies do you have in place to ensure continued growth and adaptability?

OUAM: By embedding Shari'ah values in our business, we aim to

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DIGITAL BANKING

city bank making sense of money

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